

Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps

July 2005 Volume 27. Issue 1.



People and Nature. Working.

NSYCC — MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR YOUTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps began in 1989 as a vision for getting youth involved with their communities and local environmental issues. Youth are the future, but more importantly *Youth Are Now*. The NSYCC strives to give Nova Scotia youth (aged 17-24) hands-on experience in environmental issues, which will increase their understanding of local and global environmental issues. Working in a team with Community Partners, the NSYCC has over 40 youth working across the province on projects falling under 4 primary groups: waste and resource management, environmental education, watershed management and air quality. These projects, along with the Environmental Leadership Projects (more on page 4) and NSYCC requirements, such as a minimum of two public presentations on their projects, are providing Nova Scotia youth with the skills to be effective and educated environmental stewards and well-rounded members of their communities. Please take the time to read through this newsletter and learn a little more about our projects and organization.

TAKING ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION IN THE HRM

Our first week at the Ecology Action Centre was punctuated by the launch of the Steer Clean program. This event took place at the Hillcrest Volkswagen on Robie Street in Halifax. The event was highly publicized through the media. Cars were crushed for recycling, and Mr. Lahey (Trailer Park Boys) made a guest appearance. As a result of the launch, the program has had a successful first week.

Aside from the Steer Clean program, we have spent the first week planning our activities for the rest of the summer, and attending training sessions. One training session was a bicycle safety course put on by Environment Canada.

Here we learned how to properly navigate the roads, as well as some off road maneuvers. Looking ahead, we hope to conduct various public information sessions to educate people about sustainable transportation options.

Sustainable Transportation Crew: Janice

*Ashworth
and Alex
Longmire
(Halifax)*



Photo by: Margo Ellen Gesser



LUNGS TO LICHEN

This lichen project is one of the only air monitoring projects in Nova Scotia using life forms to gauge air quality.

The life forms we are dealing with are lichens. Composed of fungus and algae, lichens are found primarily on trees and rocks and, in Nova Scotia, are most abundant in moist environments out of direct sunlight, such as thick forest canopy.

Over our two month project, sponsored by the Department of Environment and Labour, we will be using the unique sensitivity of certain lichens to air quality as our primary tool. We will be establishing monitoring plots throughout Nova Scotia, including nine in Cape Breton. The presence or absence of various species of lichen, affected by the local air quality, at these sites will be used as a base line of data for further monitoring of these sites. The further monitoring will be carried out by local groups, such as naturalists societies, schools, and nature enthusiasts.

Lichen Air Monitoring Project Crew: Heather Anderson, Andrew Norman, Christopher Taylor (Entire Province)

SORTING WASTE

Putting exactly what we are doing into a few words is not easy. It can be best described as

"proper quick-service restaurant waste disposal in accordance with Nova Scotia's *Solid Waste-Resource Management Strategy*". This entails visiting establishments with the intention of viewing the sorting system in place and educating and encouraging them to make simple adjustments to have 100% compliance with the *Strategy*. We do waste audits to see what sort of separation system would be efficient and obtain materials that we can provide to better their system. We teach the quick service restaurants about the two-bag recycling system as well as what goes in the green cart. We are very happy to come in and train their staff and the public on how to properly separate waste. In 2000, half the waste produced in NS was diverted from landfills, we intend to achieve an even higher goal.

Waste Check Crew: Kelly Meuse and Sheena Purdy (Yarmouth)



PLOVER LOVERS



Cape Sable Island is identified as an Important Bird Area because it is the nesting spot of many unique migratory bird species. The Welcome Center is a facility where tourists and locals can learn more about the surrounding bird life. As we work in the Center we offer information to birding enthusiasts, such as, the best birding spots and other environmental facts. The Welcome Center is a great environmental resource for our area. The Nova Scotia

Piping Plover Guardian Program is based around aiding the survival of this endangered species as well as raising public awareness. As we spend time on our beaches, the public learns of the efforts being made to save the piping plover and how they as community members can contribute to the efforts. Every effort, large or small, will make a significant difference for these fragile animals.

Important Bird Area Crew: Tiffany Comely and Robin Sears (Clark's Harbour)



**The NSYCC is
youth making a
difference now for
a cleaner Earth.**

TRACKING CHANGE AT BLUFF TRAIL

Working in collaboration with the Five Bridge Wilderness Heritage Trust, it is our goal to create a comprehensive index of the flora found along the first two loops of the Bluff Trail, a 30 km trail cut out of a relatively untouched area in the Woodens Watershed but sandwiched amidst many areas of development. The necessity of this project is therefore twofold. Firstly, the index will serve as a record of the present flora in the area which could be later used in studies of ecosystem community dynamics or could serve as a comparison for the effects of development on the area. Secondly, the index will be used to create a companion guide for people who use the Bluff Trail. Ideally, this will facilitate use of the area both recreationally and educationally which will help demonstrate the importance of the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail and similar areas in the HRM.

5 Bridge Community Trust Crew: Dave Mealiea and Krystle Olson (Hubbley)



NINE MILE RIVER PROJECT

ALIENS IN WOLFVILLE



Nine Mile River Crew in Action! Steph Rogers and Tyson Daoust put the Hydrolab in the river with the help of Erin Edmundson (Support Staff) and Kevin Garroway from the Saint Mary's University Community Base Environmental Monitoring Network (Community Partner)

Our project is aimed at monitoring the water quality of the Nine Mile River, obtaining baseline data for two kilometers of the river, and identifying problem areas based on shoreline classification. The results, which will include data such as suspended solids, E.coli, and coliform counts, will be used to determine the overall health of the river. Our findings will also be used to promote the importance of water quality in the river, and ways in which to improve and maintain river water quality.

To date, we have prepared our field sites to be monitored, classified, and mapped. We have also begun monitoring the water quality of the Nine Mile River by taking bi-hourly readings as well as an E.coli and coliform test. Our project will educate the community about the river, and what can be done to improve its health for the benefit of all living things that utilize this resource.

Nine Mile River Crew: Tyson Daoust and Steph Rogers (Halifax and Elmsdale)

This is no conspiracy: alien plant species are invading our backyards on a regular basis! The NSYCC students at Acadia's K.C. Irving Environmental Science Centre in Wolfville are working on an invasive alien plants project directed at raising awareness in the community. The Crew will be spending their summer gallivanting over the countryside on invasive plant patrol, working in the beautiful Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens, putting together a fun and educational play for students, and much more!

Invasive plants are a growing concern for communities. They can reduce local biodiversity, displace plants and animals, clog up streams and rivers, block cycling and walking trails, and cause costly damage to homes and properties! Educating members of the community is an effective way of addressing the problem while also creating a sense of environmental stewardship.

Alien Plant Crew: Suman Gupta, Thea Whitman and Jordan MacDonald (Wolfville)

The NSYCC has 25 projects throughout Nova Scotia this summer!

WATER AND WASTEWATER PROJECT

ROY BUILDING AUDIT

The Water and Wastewater Project has two components. Alex is working on an inventory of the dams and other water-course alterations, starting with HRM and branching out from there as time permits. The process of completing the inventory includes background research about the dams then going out to the sites to get recent photos as well as GPS coordinates. The purpose of this inventory is to get more organized with water management in the province.

Courtney is compiling a similar inventory of wastewater facilities in central, northern, and eastern Nova Scotia. Operational, approval, and contact information, GPS coordinates and recent photos are recorded for database inclusion. This database increases accessibility to site characteristics, and makes construction of conclusive site lists easier. She is also formatting a program to help facility operators improve treatment efficiency through better understanding of data obtained from sampling.

Water and Wastewater Crew: Courtney MacMullin and Alex MacKay (Eastern, Central and Northern NS)

Our two-person crew will be stationed here for nine intense weeks. Our mission: to raise environmental awareness within this corporate complex.

Phase 1: Assess the environmental practices of the offices and the building as a whole. Phase 2: Evaluate assessments and deliver feedback. We will then engage in non-confrontational negotiations to improve practices relating to energy efficiency, composting, water consumption, waste reduction and general environmental stewardship. Final Phase: To develop an audit/document that other buildings may use as a template for future environmental audits. We are well into our time here, and after thorough reconnaissance we have initiated contact with target organizations in preparation for Phase 1. Documentation is near completion. Stand-by for updates. Over and out.

Roy Building Crew: Maxx Hartt and Colleen Connolly (Halifax)

"OUR MISSION: To raise environmental awareness within this corporate complex."

TALKING TOX-FREE

Well, it's summer again- the time when salesmen and girl-guides alike will be banging on your door, looking to sell you some vacuum cleaners and cookies. But this summer, there will be someone else knocking- the Tox-free crew members!

We'll be coming to a doorbell near you to talk to you about the toxic products that you use at home. Our goal is to educate the public about some of the nasty side effects these products can have, especially on our environment. After all, a clean harbour starts at home!

Don't worry, we're not trying to sell you anything - except the idea of helping out your community! We'll even supply you with some free samples of alternative cleaning products that are better for the environment, and a book chock full of recipes for cleaners you can make yourself.

This summer, we want to make your home, and our harbour, tox-free!

Tox-Free Crew: Kaitlin Ryan and Trevor Marchand (Dartmouth)



"This summer, we want to make your home, and our harbour, tox-free!"



F.E.C.E.S. FABULOUS ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON SEPTICS

KEEPING THE SHORES SPARKLING

We've never thought this much about poop in our lives. Imagine yourself giving an entire community the first impression that you had a passion for poop. It's amazing how comfortable they still are to welcome us into their homes. But our project is more than just a bunch of poop, we are trying to change old habits of water use and hazardous waste disposal. We explain to community members the workings of septic systems, proper water consumption habits, and maintenance. We also give them free samples of biodegradable soap, sheets of information, and the toilet tank bank to reduce water during flushing.

When we aren't at home visits we are based out of Bennett Park building trails, cleaning up garbage, getting bitten by ants, arranging educational kids days, and trying to initiate a sports day for older youth in the area. The best environmental tips we've learned from our travels in the Mineville community are:

1. Ants won't walk on baby power
2. How to make laundry detergent from scratch
 - 1 cup grated soap of your choice (Castille recommended)
 - 1/2 cup borex
 - 1/2 cup washing soda (optional)
 - 3/4 cup baking soda

Use 1 tablespoon for light load, 2 tablespoons for heavy load.

Septic Awareness Crew: Kelly Mazerolle and Michael Morang (Mineville)

Along with the Pitu' Paq Organization and the municipal counties in Cape Breton, the Eskasoni Crew is working together to keep the shores of the Bras d'Or sparkling. These two University students are well on their way to making an influential impact toward promoting the Bras d'Or Lakes in being a Non-discharge zone. They will do community outreach education, publish brochures, signs and posters, as well as implement a website for public awareness of the designation soon to hit the Bras d'Or.

For more information contact the UINR at (902) 379-2163 or via email at alyssia@uinr.ca

Bras d'Or Crew: Norman Silliboy and Alyssia Jeddore (Eskasoni)

SAFE BOATING AND STORM DRAIN AWARENESS

During the past few weeks, NSYCC, in cooperation with the Atlantic Coastal Action Program - Cape Breton, has taken on three crew members for various projects. The Crew is currently working on Storm Drain Awareness and a Clean Boating Campaign in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

Storm Drain Awareness is designed to make the public conscious that reduction at source of harmful contaminants is vital to the sustainability of our watershed. This year, there is a new Sewage Treatment facility that breaks down normal waste water; however, it is incapable of breaking down harsh chemicals. These chemicals are then released back into our waterways. The crew members are taking initiative to paint yellow fish on every storm drain serviced by the plant.

“These chemicals are then released back into our waterways”

Boating is a very popular activity throughout Cape Breton. To alleviate detrimental effects to our waterways, there is a clean boating campaign. The crew has been presenting the public with helpful information and free bilge socks. These socks help reduce the amount of oil and gasoline pumped overboard into our water.

Public service announcements and press releases have been released for both projects. Posters and advertisements will be seen throughout the CBRM to alert the public of these initiatives. These projects are building blocks towards a cleaner, more sustainable future for Cape Breton Island.

ACAP-Cape Breton Crew: *Chris House, Hannah MacDonald, and Matthew Bryden (Sydney)*



Above: ACAP Crew paints fish on sewer drains to remind community members that the storm drains run to the ocean. Directly Above: A close up of a painted fish.

TRAINING CAMP 2005

This summer's NSYCC Training Camp was held over three days at the end of June at the AgriTECH Park conference facilities in Bible Hill. The annual Training Camp provides an opportunity for all the NSYCC regular crew members and ELP participants from all across the province to get together and learn about each other and about the NSYCC. The three days were filled with community-building activities, environmental workshops as well as some practical health and safety sessions. The Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps would like to extend a special thank you to the following people, without which the Training Camp would not have been possible: Victoria Bruce, Jim Mustard, Steven Michael (and family), Sharon MacKenzie, Tina Kane, Kathy Palko, Jason Rae, Sean McKean and Courtney's First Aids Aid and Safety Training Inc.



BUILDING TRAILS FOR LEARNING

The Oxford Regional High School in Cumberland County is adjacent to approximately 60 acres of mature private lands comprising of a wetland, abandoned farmland, and a mixture of tree species, including white, red and black spruce, eastern larch, white and jack pine, and grey birch. The property offers a unique opportunity to showcase a variety of wildlife habitat and forest ecosystems. The Northumberland Trail Education Initiative is the development of an interpretive trail throughout this property for the educational benefit of high school students and the community. This year the trail will be enhanced by developing interpretive signage, study plots and a 250m extension of the trail.

Northumberland Trail Education Initiative Crew: *Julian Merlin and Christie McClelland (Oxford)*

OUTDOOR LEARNING

My first two weeks with the Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps has been spent planning and organizing the two Wilderness Adventure Camps that the Natural Resources Education Centre puts on each summer. The first of the camps, for ages 7-9, starts on the 18th, and the second camp, for ages 10-12, starts the following Monday. There are close to thirty children in each camp, and we do a ton of really cool activities with them, including bringing in an entomologist for a bug hunt, a reptile show, a tree walk, a pond program, an afternoon of survival challenges, and other forest related activities. The Thursday night of the older camp is spent sleeping outside in brush shelters at a woodlot a few miles from NREC. We have a camp fire, and tell a lot of stories. These camps are great, because all of the kids and I both learn so much!

Environmental Education Centre Crew: *Wendy Holman (Musquodoboit)*

The NSYCC provides youth with competitive wages of at least \$8.50/hr. That's two bucks above minimum wage!



SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

So far in the Region 6 Solid Waste Management Project we have done a complete bin survey in many of the quick serve (fast food) restaurants in Lunenburg and Queens County. This survey is to see what type of solid waste bins are being utilized in each individual restaurant. The goal of the survey is to gather enough information to create a databank which will serve as a quick reference for interviews which will be conducted shortly after all the bin surveying is completed. A side project we have taken on is to monitor the public waste bin usage in the Region 6 area. The information gathered through this project will be used as a tool to design a more efficient waste disposal unit for the region. We are looking forward to seeing the results of this project.

Region 6 Waste Management Crew: *Dana Hazeldine and Matthew Randall (Liverpool)*



FLIPPING BURGERS AGAIN THIS SUMMER?

GET THINKING ABOUT NEXT SUMMER NOW SO THAT YOU CAN GET THE SUMMER JOB YOU REALLY WANTED!

The Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps is a government organization that links youth between the ages of 17 and 24 with community based environmental projects throughout Nova Scotia. NSYCC workers typically work in crews of two or more and are paid a competitive wage of \$8.50 per hour. Applicants must be students returning to school in Fall 2006 and preference will be given to those applicants with demonstrable interest in environmental issues. If you are interested in applying for a position with the Summer 2006 NSYCC team, please send your cover letter, resume along with an NSYCC application (see website) to nsycc@gov.ns.ca or 5151 Terminal Road, 5th Fl., P.O. Box 697, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3J 2T8.



NSYCC projects cover a variety of topics, from endangered species to septic tanks to sorting waste!

Contact us today about how to get involved!



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

After idling your car for only 10 seconds it is more cost efficient to turn the engine off.



People and Nature Working.

5151 Terminal Rd
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Halifax, NS B3J 2T8

Phone: 902-424-4924
Fax: 902-424-3571
Email: nsycc@gov.ns.ca

Website: www.gov.ns.ca/enla/youth



INTERESTED IN BECOMING A COMMUNITY PARTNER FOR SUMMER 2006?

Write a project proposal, which describes your project in depth and should include budgetary expectations. In order to be eligible for NSYCC crew member funding you must be able to demonstrate (in your proposal) that your project reflects one or more of the four core themes of the NSYCC. You should also demonstrate that the project will provide an opportunity for the personal growth and development of youth as well as having lasting and self-sustaining environmental and community benefits. You must also be able to show that the proposed project would follow all the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety standards and that you are able to provide one quarter of the wage costs as well as provide any materials, equipment, special equipment training, transportation required for the project and supervision and work space for two, three, or four crew workers. Proposals will be accepted starting October 2005 and the deadline will be March 4th, 2006. Send proposals to: Program Coordinator, Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, 5151 Terminal Road, 5th floor, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T8 or to nsycc@gov.ns.ca

MAKING GUYSBOROUGH COMPOST FRIENDLY

As we near the end of our second week of work, we are still smoothing out the kinks of our survey, gathering supplies for upcoming events and brainstorming goals for the summer. Our survey is to find out if people compost, and if they do, what and how much are they composting; and if they don't compost, why they are not recycling their organic material.

"FEED THE LANDSCAPE, NOT THE LANDFILL"

Also, another major part of our survey is to find out if residents in areas without green cart collection would like to see their municipality provide curbside collection. We have completed surveying Guysborough, Canso and Mulgrave and have found out some interesting results so far. We will be completing a public presentation at the 33rd Annual Guysborough Street Parade.

We started to work on a composting brochure will be distributed throughout our region. We also have plans for a litter clean up in a messy area in Guysborough and an educational day trip to the Guysborough Second Generation landfill site.
Backyard Composting Crew: Jeffrey Myers, Lindsey Hall, Matthew Avery and Victoria Hines (Guysborough)

A QUALITY PROJECT

Our first few weeks were spent gathering information and putting together a display board that we can take to festivals and locations this summer. We have traveled to two communities so far and we were able to speak with numerous people about safe drinking water. Most of our information deals with well and septic maintenance. We also have some information on oil tanks and bacterial testing. A lot of work has been put into this display and the public seems very interested in what we have to say. We have put together many booklets, some of which are geared more for children—this really comes in handy when we attend community festivals! We have been given composting and recycling bins from other offices that have been attracting many people to our displays as well. All in all we are really enjoying our jobs and we feel like we are learning a great deal!
Water Quality Crew: Danielle Bouchie and Elisha Boudreau. (Port Hawkesbury)

PARK RESTORATION LONG OVERDUE

Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps is working to help restore the Lockeport's beautiful Rood's Head Park. This summer we plan on restoring Rood's Head so that it will reach its full potential. Many improvements have been properly planned and this summer they will be accomplished. Some of our goals are: rock gardens, cleaning the beach debris, trimming alder's, filling in pot holes, cleaning buildings, making tent sites and pathways. We are already well on our way and have begun mowing, picking up garbage, cleaning and making pathways. This is the second year for the project and we plan on keeping up the pace with the great improvements made last year!

Rood's Head Park Crew: Shea Balish and April Whiteway. (Lockeport)

How would you like to spend 7 weeks in Costa Rica next summer? See our website for more information on the ELP Program!

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP/LIDERAZGO AMBIENTAL IN COSTA RICA!

Building a trail through the misty Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve. Constructing a road-side sign out of a dead tree you found in the forest. Cleaning a riverbank of debris and teaching English to the local school children. Walking from tree to tree by hanging bridges, listening for a toucan call, hoping for a glimpse of a spider monkey. Sharing everything with your fellow participants who have grown as close as family, not to mention your host families who are feeding you gallo pinto (rice and beans) like it's goin' out of style. This is the NSYCC's Environmental Leadership Program, an exchange between Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Costa Rica. Twelve youth from two countries were matched up this summer, spending two months spread out across rural Costa Rica, completing environmentally-based projects and participating in a unique cross-cultural exchange. Now, they have all returned, and it is the Costa Ricans' turn to live and work with their Nova Scotian counterparts. From the Sackville River to Blomidon Provincial Park, and from Trenton Park to the Municipality of Antigonish, these teams are hard at work and taking their Costa Rican adventure home with them.



"UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU CARE A WHOLE AWFUL LOT, NOTHING IS GOING TO GET BETTER. IT'S NOT."

- DR. SEUSS, "THE LORAX"

PRINTING FOR THE JOB YOU NEEDED YESTERDAY



HALIFAX

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