

Hughes Brook Habitat Conservation Plan



Prepared: November 2025



Preface

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) some of the wildlife habitat that is in greatest danger of being negatively impacted is found within municipal planning boundaries. On this basis, the primary focus of the NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (NL EHJV) is to conserve such valuable wildlife habitat through Habitat Conservation Agreements with municipalities. The Town of Hughes Brook was identified as having ecologically valuable and unique habitat located within its municipal planning area. The intent of this Habitat Conservation Plan is to outline the scope of the 2025 Habitat Conservation Agreement designed to enact long-term conservation of areas of important wildlife habitat found within Town planning boundaries. Centrally, the Plan outlines the following objectives:

- (1) Presenting an assessment of the habitats and wildlife species designated for conservation.
- (2) Protection and enhancement strategies which will maintain and/or increase wildlife use in designated areas of wildlife habitat.
- (3) Describing potential engagement initiatives designed to increase Council and public awareness of the value of “their” habitat in conserving wildlife.
- (4) Supporting Council in conserving these habitats through informed development decision-making in partnership with community residents.

Acknowledgements

The Agreement signatories would like to thank the following partners for their financial and administrative support in the continued implementation of the Municipal Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program:

- Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon
- Wildlife Habitat Canada

Section 1: The NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture

Human development has resulted in the destruction or alteration of many types of habitats all over the world. The number and diversity of North America's wildlife species has been declining over the latter half of the twentieth century. Natural wildlife habitats are regularly lost to urban, industrial, and agricultural expansion.

Recognizing the importance of habitat conservation to waterfowl populations, in 1986 Canada and the United States (later followed by Mexico) signed the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). This committed these countries to a long-term partnership to protect wetland habitats. Twenty-four 'joint ventures' have been subsequently established across North America to achieve the objectives of NAWMP. The province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) formally committed to its participation in the **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV)** in 1989.

The **EHJV (ehjv.ca)** conserves, enhances, and restores wildlife habitat for birds found across the six eastern Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and NL. Each province implements the partnership slightly differently, with each provincial program coordinated by a separate program manager and involving the cooperation of international partners, including government agencies and non-governmental conservation groups. In NL, the program is administered by the provincial Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (Wildlife Division). Other NL partners include the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service (a branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada), Birds Canada, Intervale Associates Inc and the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

As its primary contribution to the EHJV in NL, the provincial Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands created a "municipal habitat conservation and stewardship program" to help municipalities conserve important wildlife habitat found within planning boundaries. The program signs formal agreements with municipalities so that when future land use decisions are made, the value of that wildlife habitat will not be forgotten and that future activities will not have negative impacts on the lands ability to sustain wildlife. Since 1993, over fifty municipalities have signed Habitat Conservation Agreements in NL becoming important links in a chain of conservation areas in NL and indeed, across North America.

Section 2: Roles of Habitat Conservation Agreement Signatories

In approving the 2025 Habitat Conservation Agreement (Appendix 1), the signatories, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Town of Hughes Brook, have agreed to work together to ensure the long-term conservation of designated areas of wildlife habitat on crown land found within the planning boundaries of the Town of Hughes Brook. These responsibilities are outlined in further detail below.

The Province: The NL Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands through its Wildlife Division, is expected to:

- Draft a Habitat Conservation Plan (this plan) in consultation with the Town.
- Work with the Town on the review of any future developments which would impact the designated “Conservation Area” keeping sustainability and wildlife and habitat conservation as the primary objectives.
- Support Council and local groups in implementing the Habitat Conservation Plan as opportunities allow, often with support of the partners of the NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture. This can include assisting in carrying out, where appropriate, wildlife and habitat conservation education, restoration, or enhancement projects.

The Town: The Town of Hughes Brook as led by its Mayor and Council are expected to:

- Ensure that the designated “Conservation Area” is protected from destruction or degradation keeping habitat sustainability as the primary management objective. The Town is to contact the NL EHJV Program Manager at the Wildlife Division to allow a 30-day written review of future proposed development activities.
- Incorporate the Habitat Conservation Plan into the Municipal Plan, through the next Municipal Plan review or by making amendments to the present Municipal Plan. The goal is to appropriately zone “Conservation Areas” to avoid unsustainable future land uses.
- Participate in the activities of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc (SAM). Our goal is to partner to implement, over time, and as opportunities allow, the Habitat Conservation Plan in the community, with the assistance of the NL EHJV partners.

Section 3: Areas of Designated Wildlife Habitat

Incorporated in 1975 and located northwest of Corner Brook on the north shore of the Bay of Islands, Hughes Brook is a small community nestled below the Long-Range mountains. The Hughes Brook waterway defines the northwestern boundary of the town. Due to these features, Hughes Brook has beautiful scenery with natural habitat found in and surrounding the town, particularly along the brook. An active community, Hughes Brook promotes participating in the natural environment through recreational activities like snowmobiling, hiking, biking, fishing, and hunting.

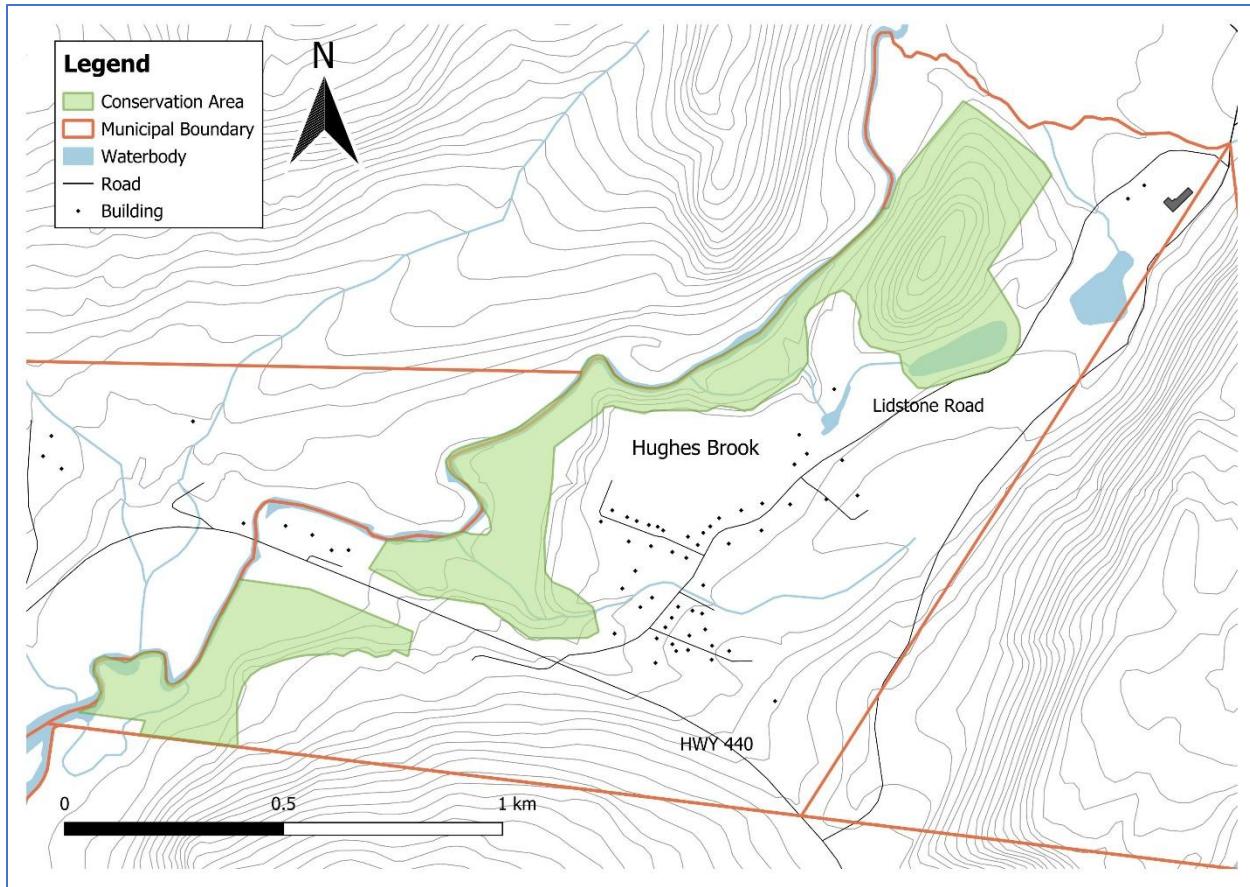


The municipality lies within the Corner Brook subregion of the Western NL Forest ecoregion. The Western NL Forest ecoregion is one of the largest on the Island of Newfoundland and includes much of the Long-Range mountains. The Corner Brook subregion has high climatic variation due to the peaks and valleys that are scattered among it. Much of Hughes Brook is within sheltered valleys and because of this, have long growing seasons with hot summers providing lush and healthy vegetation. Historically, the long growing season has resulted in land within and near the municipality being used for agriculture, with small-scale farming still taking place.

Hughes Brook Conservation Area

The Hughes Brook Conservation Area encompasses the Hughes Brook waterway, its riparian buffers and some nearby associated wetlands, including a small pond off Lindstone Road in the northern part of town. The boundaries have been purposefully drawn to avoid overlap with known crown land lots and occupied land. Similarly, the North Shore Highway (440) and associated road infrastructure that runs through the Conservation Area is excluded from this agreement.





Municipalities have many reasons to conserve undeveloped land, for example, flood risk protection, buffering waterways from pollution, allowing for recreational use, or to buffer residential development. Our mutual focus in identifying this area for inclusion within this Habitat Conservation Plan has been the area's documented importance for wildlife. The Hughes Brook waterway is a class 0 scheduled Atlantic salmon river, meaning no fish may be retained by licensed fishers but allows for the catch-and-release of two fish per day. Conserving the riparian buffers surrounding the river will help ensure the health of the brook for Atlantic salmon and other aquatic species.

Several bird species have also been documented in the area including American black duck, Wilson's snipe, Great black-backed gull, Bald eagle, Yellow-bellied flycatcher, Black-capped and Boreal chickadee, Swamp sparrow, Northern waterthrush, Downy woodpecker and a large variety of warbler species. Notably, at risk bird species have been found in the lower portion of the proposed area including Rusty blackbird and Olive-sided flycatcher. Both species are considered vulnerable provincially (*Endangered Species Act*) and are considered species of special concern federally (*Species at Risk Act*).

Section 4: Conservation Leadership by Hughes Brook

Incorporate the Habitat Conservation Agreement into Municipal Plan

During the preparation of any draft Municipal Plan, or during the process of a future Municipal Plan Review or development regulations, Council will incorporate the Habitat Conservation Agreement and Plan concepts and maps into any resulting Municipal Plan or related Master Plan. The Conservation Areas **should be zoned “Environmental Conservation” or “Environmental Protection”**, or some similar consistent zoning designation within any future municipal planning documents as governed by the Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000).

Refer future proposed developments to the Wildlife Division

Activities within the “Conservation Areas” will be managed whereby permitted activities do not result in the unsustainable loss of wildlife habitat or wildlife populations. As such, wildlife conservation will be at the forefront of management decisions. When council reviews/approves land use permits, regulations, developments or by-laws which could impact Conservation Areas, **Council will first consult with the NL EHJV Program Manager** at the Wildlife Division, Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands providing a 30-day notice period.

Engage residents in wildlife habitat conservation with support of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc.

Through the signing of the Habitat Conservation Agreement, the Town was provided an opportunity to become a participating member of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc (SAM). SAM is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose member municipalities together to secure, enhance, and restore important wildlife habitat and as a network of communities, contribute to provincial conservation of biodiversity. SAM also represents its municipal members on provincial issues related to wildlife and habitat conservation.

SAM maintains a public webpage about the Habitat Conservation Agreement featuring maps, photos, facts, and information on local attractions. This link can be included on the Town’s website; this will help increase residents’ knowledge and understanding of the agreement and program. To view examples of these pages, please refer to samnl.org/membership.

SAM meets each spring (May or June) and fall (September or October) with host municipalities rotating among members and regions. Identify a representative of the Town (mayor, councillor, staff, or involved resident) to attend at least one of these meetings per year as you might for an external committee of council. This will connect you to like-minded municipalities and link you to resources and training. You may also be interested in hosting a SAM meeting in the future; many municipalities enjoy this for the exposure it provides for their town, their special places and associated projects.



In addition to contributing to SAM membership, participating municipalities can avail of abundant environmental conservation resources on the SAM website: www.samnl.org/resources. It is the Stewardship Association's mandate to help support the conservation efforts of its membership.

On an ongoing basis, SAM and other partners of the NL EHJV, particularly the Wildlife Division, actively support municipalities in engaging community residents in conservation learning and awareness, and habitat enhancement and restoration projects. SAM staff regularly consult on, and facilitate support to municipally-led projects such as:

- grant funding applications.
- sustainable trail development and recreational infrastructure (bird blinds, boardwalks).
- educational outreach to and engagement of community groups.
- restoration of degraded and threatened habitats.
- enhancement of wildlife habitat through mechanisms such as nest box building or the placement of interpretive signage.
- scientific and technical assessment, and advice relating to municipal conservation programs.

With community engagement and the delivery of conservation programming, being a contributing member of SAM can increase environmental awareness and a build a more environmentally conscious community of stewards. In this way, the Town can be a leader in the province on wildlife and habitat conservation and conservation issues. We are excited to support your efforts as we broaden our existing partnership. It has been our experience that **community engagement and partnerships are the true strengths of any habitat conservation agreement**.

APPENDIX A:

Habitat Conservation Agreement for the Municipality of Hughes Brook

THIS AGREEMENT made in the Municipality of Hughes Brook, in the province of Newfoundland, this 22 day of November, 2025

BETWEEN: **HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**, as represented by the Honourable the Minister of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands (herein called the "Minister")

- of the one part -

AND: **THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF HUGHES BROOK** municipal corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* (herein called the "The Municipality")

-of the other part-

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has entered into an Agreement with others for the implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan through the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture;

AND WHEREAS the parties hereto recognize that the proper protection and management of coastal, wetland and upland habitats are fundamental tools in maintaining and enhancing the wildlife populations in the province;

AND WHEREAS the Minister proposed that certain important wildlife habitats within the Municipality be protected and enhanced through and with the cooperation of the Municipality in accordance with this Agreement and a Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereafter;

AND WHEREAS the Municipality has agreed to enter into this Agreement for the purpose of protecting and enhancing those areas of important wildlife habitat within the limits of its jurisdiction;

NOW THEREFORE IT IS AGREED BY THE PARTIES AS FOLLOWS:

1. The lands herein delineated and designated as a Conservation Area (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule annexed hereto and marked "A") shall be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement including any Habitat Conservation Plan developed hereunder for better protection of wildlife.
2. Within the limits of its jurisdiction, the Municipality shall permit only those activities within the Conservation Areas that have no negative or adverse impact upon the land, or on the wildlife which utilize those areas.
3. The parties may establish other Conservation Areas as may be desirable from time to time. Conservation Areas shall be subject to the terms and conditions of the Habitat Conservation Plan developed to enhance and protect the land, and the wildlife which utilize those habitats.
4. The Habitat Conservation Plan shall be developed in cooperation with the Municipality and the Minister agrees to provide such advice and expertise necessary or advisable for the development of the Habitat Conservation Plan.
5. The Municipality agrees that in the preparation of a Municipal Plan, or any amendments to any existing Municipal Plan, the areas designated as Conservation Areas shall be recommended by the Municipality to be appropriately declared protected areas as it prescribed under subsection 13(3)(f) of the Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000) (or such other legislation in amendment or substitution therefore as may be brought into effect from time to time).
6. The parties to this Agreement, their consultants, servants or agents, shall have and exercise reasonable rights of access to the Conservation Areas for all purposes necessary or incidental to this Agreement and, in particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, for the purpose of developing and carrying out the Habitat Conservation Plan.
7. If at any time during the term of this Conservation Agreement the Parties mutually deem it necessary or desirable to make alterations or additions to it, they may do so by means of a written agreement between them which shall be supplemental to and form part of this agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties have caused these presents to be executed in accordance with their respective rules and regulations the day and year first before written.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED
by the Honorable the Minister of Fisheries
Forestry and Agriculture in the presence of:

JENNIFER MEADUS
A Commissioner for Oaths in and for the
Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Jennifer Meadus
Witness

Blair D
MINISTER OF FISHERIES,
FORESTRY, AND AGRICULTURE

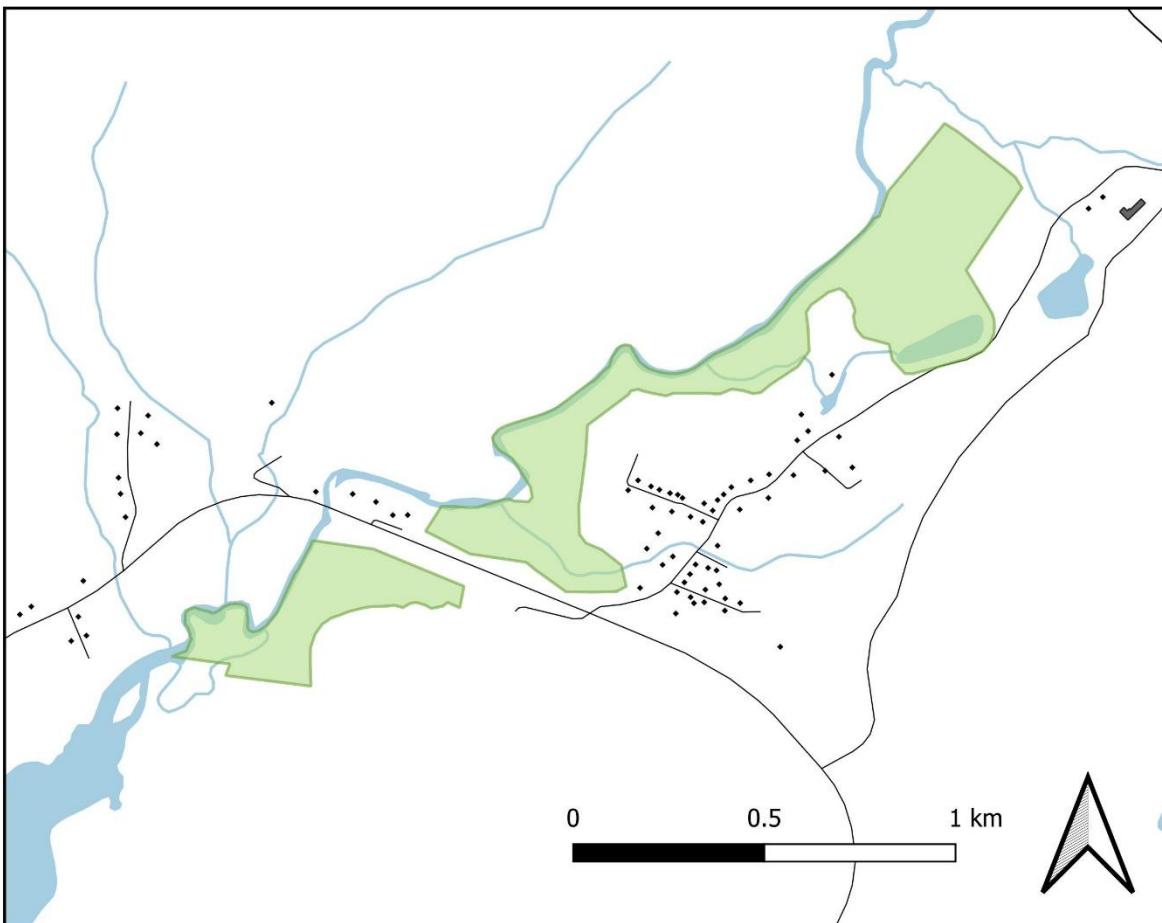
THE SEAL OF the Municipality of Hughes Brook, hereunto
affixed in the presence of:

Witness

John Price
THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF HUGHES
BROOK

Schedule A: Habitat Conservation Agreement Conservation Areas

Habitat Conservation Agreement
Municipality of Hughes Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada



December 2025
Projection: NAD 83