

Habitat Conservation Plan

for the Town of Flower's Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador



November 2020



Town of Flower's Cove
P.O. Box 149, Flower's Cove, NL
A0K 2N0



NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture
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Preface

In the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) some of the wildlife and wildlife habitats that are in greatest danger of being negatively impacted are those found within municipalities. In this province, the primary focus of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) is to conserve such valuable wildlife habitat through Stewardship Agreements. The Town of Flower's Cove was identified as having ecologically valuable and unique habitat located within its Municipal Planning Area.

This Habitat Conservation Plan indicates the Town's support for the long-term conservation of wildlife habitat and provides guidance in relation to managing activities which could impact the designated Conservation Areas (formerly known as "Management Units" and "Stewardship Zones").

Plan Objectives

- (1) To present an assessment of the habitats and wildlife species designated for conservation.
- (2) To recommend protection and enhancement strategies which will maintain and/or increase wildlife use in designated Conservation Areas (formerly known as "Management Units" and "Stewardship Zones").
- (3) To describe potential engagement initiatives designed to increase Council and public awareness of the value of 'their' habitat for conserving wildlife.
- (4) To empower Council and municipal residents to conserve these habitats through informed development decision-making with the support of residents.

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Section 1: Flower's Cove Habitat Stewardship Agreement

MUNICIPAL STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made at Flower's Cove, in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador this ninth day of October, 2002.

BETWEEN: **HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN IN RIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**, as represented by the Honourable the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation

(hereinafter called the "Minister")

- of the one part -

AND: **THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FLOWER'S COVE** a corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999*

(hereinafter called the "Town")

- of the other part -

WHEREAS the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has entered into a partnership with others for the implementation of the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program funded through the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk;

AND WHEREAS the parties hereto recognize that stewardship of the limestone barrens habitat is fundamental towards maintaining biodiversity and ensuring the conservation of this habitat;

AND WHEREAS the Minister proposes that certain important limestone barrens habitat within the Town be protected through and with the cooperation of the Town in accordance with this Agreement and a Conservation Plan developed hereafter;

AND WHEREAS the Town has agreed to enter into this Agreement for the purpose of protecting those areas of important limestone barrens habitat within its jurisdiction.

NOW THEREFORE THE PARTIES AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. The lands herein delineated and designated as a Stewardship Zone (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule annexed hereto and marked "A") shall be set aside, preserved and managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement including any Conservation Plan developed hereunder for better protection of the limestone barrens.

2. Within the limits of its jurisdiction, the Town shall permit only those activities within the Stewardship Zone that have no negative or adverse impact upon the limestone barrens habitat.
3. Within the Stewardship Zone, the Parties will establish Management Units identified in Schedule "A" and other Management Units as may be desirable from time to time which shall be subject to the terms and conditions of a Conservation Plan designated to protect the limestone barrens habitat.
4. The Conservation Plan shall be developed in cooperation with the Minister and the Minister agrees to provide such advice and expertise necessary or advisable for the development of the Conservation Plan.
5. The Town agrees that in the preparation of a Municipal Plan for the Town or any amendments to any existing Municipal Plan, the areas designated as Management Units shall be recommended by the Town to be appropriately declared protected areas under subsection 13(3) 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). The Town in passing regulations or by-laws related to the protected areas so designated under the Municipal Plan or amendments thereto and which may affect the Stewardship Zone shall do so in consultation with the Minister and in keeping with the principals of this Agreement.
6. The parties to this Agreement, their consultants, servants, or agents, shall have and exercise reasonable rights of access to the Stewardship Zone 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 Conservation Plan.
7. Each of the parties agree that they will exercise their best efforts to further develop management measures for more effectively carrying out their mutual intentions as expressed


in this Agreement.

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

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED

by the Honourable the Minister
of Tourism, Culture and Recreation
in the presence of:


Witness


**THE HONOURABLE THE MINISTER
OF TOURISM, CULTURE AND
RECREATION**

THE SEAL OF the Town Council of
the Town of Flower's Cove was hereunto
affixed in the presence of:


Witness


**THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE
TOWN OF FLOWER'S COVE**

Section 2: Habitat Conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador

Introduction

Human development has resulted in the destruction or alteration of many types of habitat 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 habitats are regularly lost to urban, industrial, and agricultural expansion.

Initially recognizing the importance of habitat conservation to waterfowl populations, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) formally committed to its participation in the **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture** (EHJV) in 1989. The mandate today has broadened and the EHJV partnership conserves, enhances, and restores wildlife habitat focusing on birds found across the six eastern Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and NL. However, 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 Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (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), Intervale Associates Inc, Birds Canada and Nature Conservancy of Canada.

As its primary contribution to the EHJV in NL, the provincial Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture created a "municipal habitat 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 forty municipalities have signed Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreements in NL becoming important links in a chain of conservation areas in NL and indeed, across North America. These agreements impact many types of habitat including wetlands, coastal beaches and dunes, forests and rare habitat types like the limestone barrens. The Town of Flower's Cove signed an agreement in 2002 seeking to conserve important ecological and cultural lands found within its planning boundaries including the limestone barrens.



Map of Habitat Stewardship Agreements signed in NL.

Roles of Stewardship Agreement Signatories

When a Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement is signed, each party commits to certain responsibilities:

The Province: The NL Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture, through its Wildlife Division, would be expected to:

- Write a Habitat Conservation Plan in consultation with the Town (this plan).
- Work with the town on the review of any developments which are proposed to take place within the designated Conservation Areas (formerly known in the Flower's Cove Habitat Stewardship Agreement as "Management Units" or "Stewardship Zones").
- Support Council and local groups in implementing the Stewardship Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan; often with the partners of the NL Eastern Habitat Joint Venture. This can include assisting in carrying out, where appropriate, and where mutual resources allow, wildlife and habitat conservation education, restoration or enhancement projects.

The Town: The Town Flower's Cove and its Mayor and Council would be expected to:

- Ensure that the designated Conservation Areas (formerly known in the Flower's Cove Habitat Stewardship Agreement as "Management Units" or "Stewardship Zones") are protected from destruction or degradation; the town is to contact the EHJV Program Manager at the Wildlife Division (contact info on Page 2) in a timely manner to allow a 30-day written review of proposed development activities.
- Incorporate the Habitat Conservation Plan concepts into the Town's next Municipal Plan draft or revision centrally through appropriate zoning and associated development regulations.
- As resources allow, implement, over time, the Habitat Conservation Plan in the community with the assistance of the NL EHJV partners.
- Participate, where possible, in the activities of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM).

Section 3: Limestone barrens, Habitat, and Wildlife in Flower's Cove

The Town of Flower's Cove is a community of roughly 270 people on the Great Northern Peninsula of the Island of Newfoundland. Captain James Cook labelled the area "Flour Cove" during his 1764 mapping expeditions, though the area has also historically been called French Island Harbour. The early 1800s saw many fishing ships to the area for the cod, herring, and seal fisheries. Today, it serves as the fishing, business and administrative centre for the area between Plum Point and Eddies Cove East. In addition to its historic lighthouse and bridge sites, Flower's Cove is known for its spectacular natural beauty, limestone barrens habitat, and rare thrombolite fossils.

Rare plants and fossils in Flower's Cove

The entirety of the Town of Flower's Cove is within the Strait of Belle Isle Barrens ecoregion, which is characterized by very cold and long winters, high precipitation rates, and an accordingly short growing season. Its proximity to Labrador means that this ecoregion is frequently visited by animal species that are typically found in more Arctic climates. Shallow soils and harsh weather contribute to the large swathes of exposed limestone bedrock in the region, creating habitat known as the "limestone barrens."

Newfoundland's west coast is theorized to have once been the edge of a tropical ocean where today's Limestone Barrens formed the bottom shallows of an ocean teeming with animals and plants. The death of these species deposited calcium and magnesium-rich sediments on the sea floor, which accumulated and hardened into thick layers of limestone (calcium-rich) and dolostone (magnesium-rich). As surrounding tectonic plates shifted, this shallow ocean was trapped between converging continents and the seafloor was thrust up and became land. As upper rock layers eroded away, the limestone and dolostone were eventually exposed. More recently, glaciation has scoured the landscape submerging the coastal lowlands and rain and frost have transformed the exposed bedrock into the barrens we see today.

Limestone bedrock underlies about a quarter of the Great Northern Peninsula but only 2% of this can be described as barrens. Limestone Barrens are found only in the windiest, coldest, coastal, and mountaintop sites that are unable to support forest or bog, however, despite climate conditions there are many tough and resilient species of plants that have adapted to a way of life in this unique habitat. The Limestone Barrens are home to many rare plants, three of which are found nowhere else in the world – Barrens Willow (*Salix jejuna*), Long's Braya (*Braya longii*), and Fernald's Braya (*Braya fernaldii*).



Left to Right: Long's braya, Barrens willow, Fernald's braya.

All three species, Barrens Willow, Fernald's Braya and Long's Braya, are listed as *Endangered* under provincial and federal Species at Risk legislation. The central threat to these species includes historical and potential habitat loss of limestone barrens. Other current threats include illegal off-road vehicle use (off trails), such as dirt bikes and ATV's, and dumping of fishing materials and wood piles over the plants.

The Limestone Barrens has yet another significant natural resource worth protecting: its prominent geological features. Today there is nearly no region of the limestone barrens that rises higher than 60m above what was once below sea level. Due to this geological history, the area is covered in ocean born fossils, including the rare thrombolites. Thrombolites are large, dome-shaped remains of algae and marine species. Though rarely found throughout the world, they are easily seen along the coastline in Flower's Cove. The limestone bedrock and fossils at Flower's Cove attract visitors from all over the world.



Thrombolite fossils in the Town of Flower's Cove.

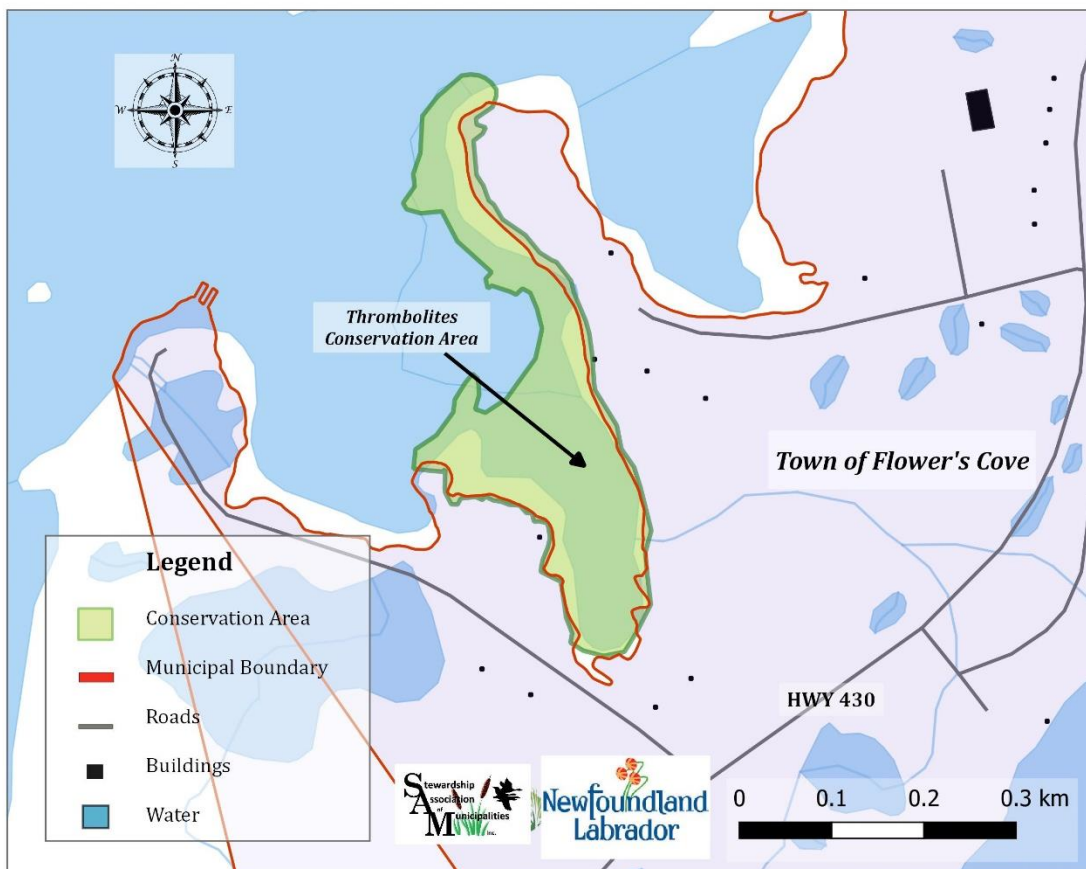
Flower's Cove Conservation Areas

Generally, the Town should encourage good stewardship of all wildlife habitat, and in particular limestone barrens habitat, found within its municipal boundary. The significance of the actions and efforts undertaken by local resource users, both positive and negative, cannot be overstated. The limestone barrens and the rare and unique species that inhabit them are everyone's to protect.

Following discussions with members of Council, and geospatial analysis, assessments of known biodiversity in the area, two main areas of land were specifically selected for inclusion within the Stewardship Agreement as what are now known as "Conservation Areas". They are described in greater detail below. Through the signing and implementation of their Stewardship Agreement, the Town of Flower's Cove has demonstrated its leadership in the conservation and stewardship of these precious habitats totalling 64 ha (157.5 acres).

Limestone Barrens Conservation Areas

1) Thrombolites Conservation Area



The Thrombolite s Conservation Area is found on the lower western border of the municipality, in the shoreline habitat where the Thrombolites and a portion of the Thrombolites walking trail are found. Thrombolites are the fossilized remains of primitive creatures. Though only found in a handful of places in the world, they are easily seen in Flower’s Cove, making the area and the associated trail system popular with visitors and locals alike.

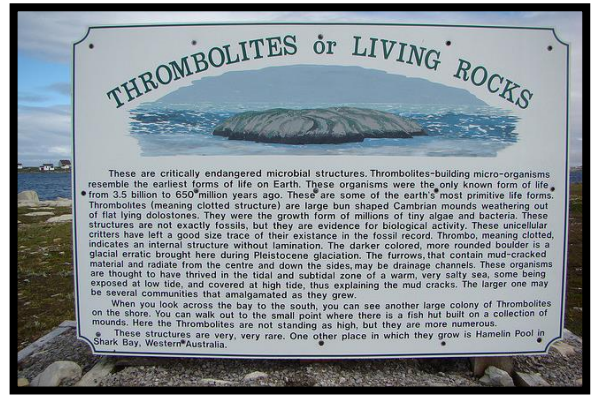
Given the coastal nature of the thrombolite fossils, the Conservation Area encompasses the coastal habitat along the water’s edge (shown in the figure above). The area as drawn encompasses not only the well known trail and the most visible thrombolites, but also extends roughly 35-50m along the coastline, covering the area where the water is shallowest and rich limestone beds are found. The total area covered by the conservation area is 10 ha (24.5 ac), though its true impact extends much farther. Good stewardship of this area entails managing not only the limestone habitat, but also the coastal marine habitat found there.



2) White Rocks Conservation Area

It is important to note that the White Rocks Conservation Area encompasses a portion of the well-loved White Rocks walking trail within its 54 ha (133 acre) area. This trail is a 20-30 minute loop, with portions of boardwalk, ample parking at its entrance, occasional seating areas and interpretive signage. The area provides important opportunities for local residents, students and visitors to learn more about the unique features of the Limestone Barrens. The Conservation Area was recognized and designed under the Stewardship Agreement to protect, first the limestone barrens habitat and wetlands within it, but also the integrity of that walking trail and boardwalk. However, it is important to keep in mind that maintenance or development work conducted in the area should be carefully

carried out in ways which seek to preserve the natural integrity of the limestone barrens and wetlands habitat.



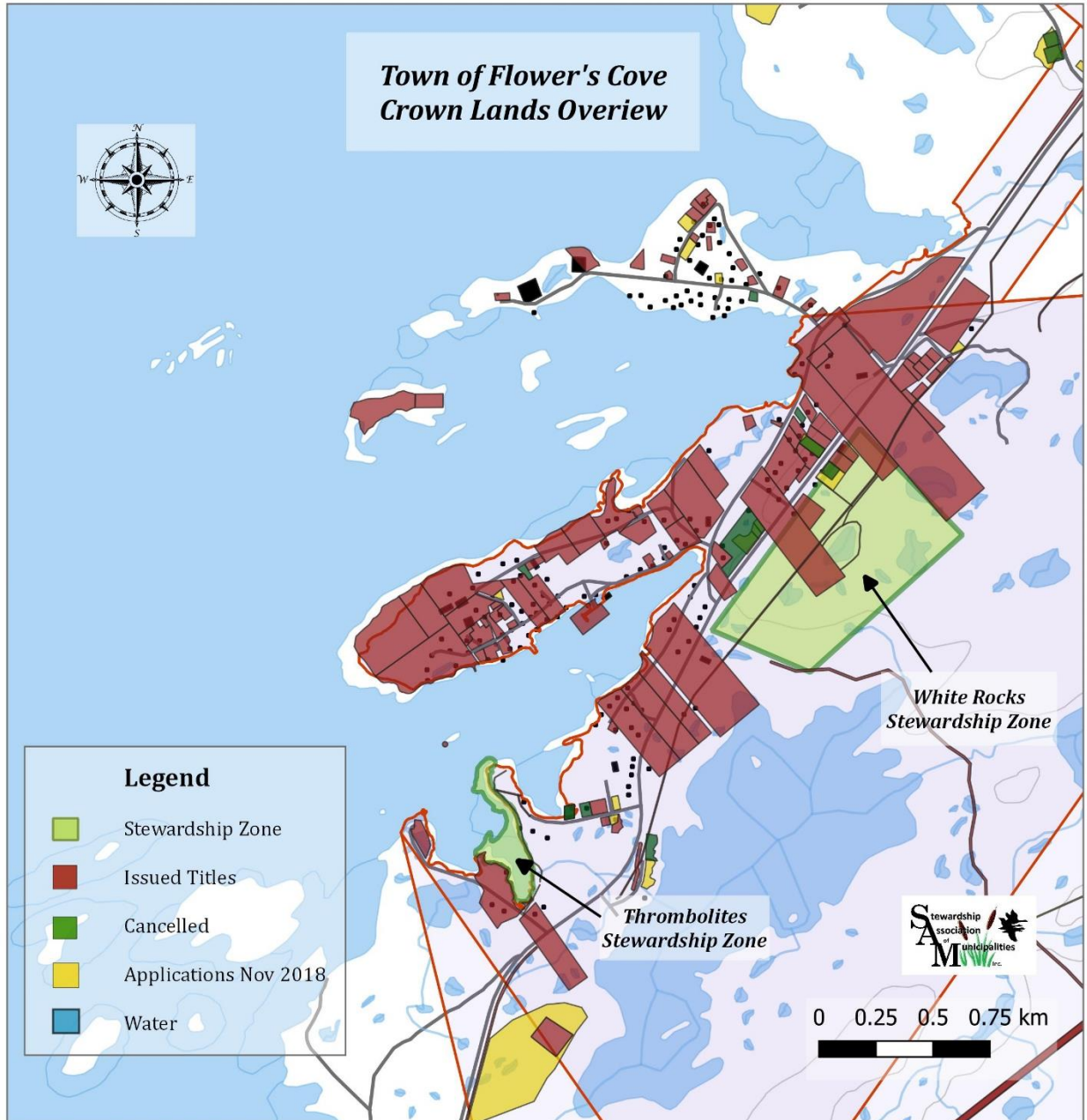
White Rocks walking trail and interpretive panel.

White Rocks Conservation Area



Crown Lands in Flower's Cove

There are several existing Crown Lands allotments in Flower's Cove, and ongoing development pressures are a potential threat to the ongoing conservation of the area. The map below shows current issued titles (in dark red), cancelled titles (in dark green) and applications for new titles as of November 2018 (in yellow.) In many areas, these titles overlap or border the designated Stewardship Zones. Development in these areas should take care to ensure that projects that threaten the integrity and conservation of the area are not permitted to move forward.



Section 4: Policies for Habitat Conservation

a. Incorporate your Stewardship Agreement into your Municipal Plan

During the preparation of any draft Municipal Plan, or during the process of a future Municipal Plan Review or development regulations, the Town Council will incorporate the Habitat Conservation Plan concept into any resulting Municipal Plan or related Master Plan. The Conservation Areas (formerly known as “Management Units” and “Stewardship Zones”) **shall be zoned Open Space Conservation, Environmental Conservation, Open Space Recreation**, or some similar consistent zoning designation within any future municipal planning documents as governed by the Urban and Rural Planning Act (2000).

b. Refer all possible developments to the Wildlife Division

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

c. Form a committee

We recommend that, where resources allow, or specific enhancement projects dictate, that the Town of Flower’s Cove establish a committee of council that can help you carry out some of the initiatives described in this plan. Such as committee might be known as a *Environment Committee, Wildlife Committee, Habitat Committee, Trails and Recreation Committee, etc.*

In our experience a dedicated committee can raise the profile of the habitat conserved by your agreement and increase public support. Many of these types of groups have found benefits in reserving spots in the group for a younger person, a high school student, or both. These committees can organize events, apply for grants, conduct cleanups and other projects, host hikes and walks, and many other activities including those described in Section 4.

d. Understand Fish and Wildlife Enforcement

A Stewardship Agreement does not affect hunting, trapping, or fishing rights; where these activities are safe and legal in a certain area, they will remain that way after designation. However, many municipalities are (rightly) concerned about hunting

and fishing activities that fall outside what is safe or legal no matter where they take place.

Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Officers can enforce regulations and can be contacted 24/7 at 1 877 820 0999. They can deal with a wide variety of other wildlife-related enforcement issues and are a good contact for poaching issues, hunting in inappropriate areas, and illegal hunting.

For enforcement officers to fully understand the problem and to be able to pursue a case, it is helpful to provide specific details. Without these details, it can be difficult for enforcement officers to properly follow up.

Enforcing regulations such as these can be complicated, especially where federal/provincial jurisdiction overlaps, and different species are covered by different laws. Partnering with enforcement officers to ensure accuracy, SAM has produced a guide about conservation and enforcement issues at samnl.org/resources.



**24 / 7 report line:
1.877.820.0999**

e. Promote wise use of ATVs in limestone barrens habitat

The use of all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), four-wheelers, and snowmobiles, is common in NL. While the use of these vehicles is essential for a variety of activities, their irresponsible use in limestone barrens and other sensitive wildlife areas can have negative impacts on the habitats and wildlife that inhabit them. In addition to the wheels tearing up plants and leaving clear tracks in the soil, the weight of the vehicles can compress the delicate substrate, damaging the soil and plants and changing the hydrology patterns.

The off-road use of all-terrain vehicles (AVTs) and trucks on limestone barrens habitat causes significant damage to these delicate ecosystems. Rare plants are often uprooted, flattened, cracked, or otherwise damaged, and the delicate substrate can be compacted, leading to changes in hydrology patterns. When these kinds of damages are sustained, it can take several decades for the systems to recover.

There are a number of existing regulations in place designed to protect ATV users and sensitive habitat. A summary of ATV Regulations and Safety Tips, as well as a link to the relevant legislation can be found at gov.nl.ca/snl/drivers/atvsafety/.

f. Work to reduce Marine Pollution

Perhaps one of the greatest ecological challenges facing coastal communities is reducing the amount of waste, plastic, garbage, and pollution that enters our waters. If waste disposal habitats are not changed, projections suggest that by 2050, there will be more plastics than fish in our oceans. The negative effects of plastic pollution in our marine ecosystems is well documented and frightening, causing marine life to die and for the toxins found in plastics to move throughout the food web and wind up on our dinner tables. For those that rely on ocean resources for food security and our livelihoods, the impact of this ecological disaster will be felt even more acutely.

Marine pollution is a problem that can seem insurmountable at times, but small actions can have a large impact. Promoting, developing, and implementing the following practices is a great way to start.

- Keep shorelines and waterfronts clean. Keeping debris away from shorelines and out of the water reduces how much waste gets carried in by wind and rain.
- Properly maintain boating and fishing equipment in order to minimize accidental release of oil into the water.
- Organize beach and waterfront clean-ups.
- Promote the proper disposal of single use plastics which can otherwise accumulate in our oceans and on our shores.
- Encourage reduction and diversion of waste.

The best way to reduce marine pollution is to cut it off at the source. Fewer plastics, diversion of organic waste to compost, and proper management of wastewater all result in less waste in our oceans.

g. Participate in SAM

When the Town of Flower' Cove signed a Habitat Stewardship Agreement with the province, it was provided opportunity to become a participating member of SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities, samnl.org). SAM is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose member municipalities together conserve, enhance, and restore important wildlife habitat. SAM represents its members on issues related to wildlife conservation. SAM will maintain a public page about your agreement featuring maps, photos, facts, and information on local attractions. This link can be included on your town's website; this will help increase residents' knowledge and understanding of the agreement and program. To view Flower's Cove's page, please refer to: samnl.org/flowers-cove.

SAM meets each spring (May or June) and fall (September or October) with host municipalities rotating among members and regions. Identify a representative of your town (mayor, councillor, staff, or involved resident) to attend at least one of

these meetings per year. This will connect Flower's Cove to like-minded municipalities and link you to resources and training. You may also be interested in co-hosting a SAM meeting in the Town of Flower's Cove in the future; many municipalities enjoy this for the exposure it provides for their wildlife habitat and associated projects.



Field trip at a SAM meeting in Grand Falls-Windsor. Staff photo

Section 5: Habitat Conservation and Education Strategies

This section presents ideas for community education, engagement, and habitat enhancement that could be implemented over time in the community. Community engagement and partnerships are the true strengths of any stewardship agreement.

One benefit that people receive from stewardship is the opportunity to increase their knowledge of nature. These projects are great for local groups, allowing hands-on involvement in conservation efforts. Communities across the province who have signed stewardship agreements have had great success becoming involved in exactly these types of projects and will also be resources for you to connect with, especially at SAM meetings. The ideas below, and many others, can be found at samnl.org/resources.

Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program

Central to many initiatives which may take place is the the Limestone Barrens Habitat Stewardship Program (LBHSP). This partnership of conservation agencies and individuals, established in 2001, aims to rectify the decline in Limestone Barrens habitat populations through the protection, restoration, and enhancement of that habitat. In an effort to protect this unique and fragile habitat, many federal agencies, provincial agencies, private corporations and members of the public have been working together to accomplish these goals. These partners are creating opportunities for people to learn about this special feature of the Newfoundland landscape, to share it with visitors, and to protect it for the future.

The program was primarily designed to develop and implement on-the-ground actions which encourage stewardship and responsible use of the barrens by residents, landowners and visitors. Activities of the program include raising public awareness of and providing information about conservation needs of the Limestone Barrens habitat and its species at risk and educating resource users and developers about the need to eliminate negative impacts on at-risk plants and their habitat; promoting environmentally friendly eco-tourism opportunities on the Limestone Barrens. We encourage the Town to reach out to find out what resources are available or ongoing to support projects you may be interested in becoming involved with.

Species at Risk Legislation

The Town should be aware that limestone barrens species such as Braya and Barrens Willow are governed by both provincial and federal species at risk legislation. The Government of Canada's Species at Risk Act (SARA) is designed as a key tool for the conservation and protection of Canada's biological diversity and fulfils an important commitment under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. The Act seeks to complement other existing federal, provincial and territorial legislation protecting wildlife. For more information on the purpose, process, and implementation of the act, see canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-enforcement/acts-regulations/about-species-at-risk-act. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) of Newfoundland and Labrador seeks to ensure the recovery of species deemed to be at risk. The Act makes it an offence to harm an endangered species. For more information on the ESA and to view officially listed species and recovery plans, see gov.nl.ca/ffa/wildlife/endangeredspecies.

Explore grants and funding

Many of the described activities and programs are free or can be funded through small community grants and via partnerships. Large grant applications may take several months to prepare if committees are involved. Allow enough time to apply for these grants and to obtain the letters of support that local partners such as SAM or the NL Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture may provide; keep an eye on deadlines as they approach.

SAM provides a regularly updated list of many grants that will be relevant to you along with their deadlines at samnl.org/resources.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency offers grants and funding to create opportunities for economic growth in the province. In the case of Flower's Cove, an ACOA grant may allow for the development or partial development of an interpretation centre and interpretive materials, improved or increased signage on trails and natural attractions, and increased or improved trail infrastructure. In many instances, SAM has been able to offer letters of support for member communities – don't hesitate to reach out to see if the Town's project might qualify!

Hire a Green Team

Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador (ccnl.ca) can help you hire summer Green Teams and interns, some of which can be funded by corporations at no cost to your organization. Students or recent graduates can work with municipalities on environmental projects. Municipalities with Stewardship Agreements have often received Green Teams. Examples of potential projects could include nest boxes, bird monitoring, trail maintenance, community outreach, wildlife surveys, and developing field guides. Green Team members and interns could help train local high school students in monitoring and could develop educational material designed to raise awareness for conservation and stewardship initiatives. Sharing a CCNL Green Team with neighbouring towns might be explored, especially if other towns are beginning environmental projects as well.



Find and place geocaches

Geocaches (small containers found via GPS; geocaching.com and various mobile apps such as c:geo) can be added alongside trails as well to provide a fun and inexpensive activity for walkers, hikers, and groups. It is a great idea to place geocaches near or at where you want people to go – to help them discover a new trail, a beautiful lookout, or an interpretive spot, for example.



A nanocache style geocache before installation (with house key for scale). Staff photo

Construct trails & put up interpretive signs

Many SAM municipalities have found that trails increase recreation and health for residents and improve tourism possibilities. When constructed carefully, trails can increase stewardship by allowing people to discover new areas. They can help residents and visitors connect to nature, especially where interpretive signage is used to help point out interesting landscape and wildlife.

Recreational and tourism opportunities can help raise awareness and educate visitors and residents about waterfowl and the importance of wetlands. Hiking, walking, birdwatching, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and geocaching are popular activities in many Conservation Areas across the province. Other activities such as photography and paddling (canoeing and kayaking) could be further encouraged as low-impact, healthy recreation opportunities for both residents and visitors.

In developing recreational and tourism opportunities, wildlife must be carefully considered during the planning process. Otherwise, human activities can negatively impact the resource that provides the attraction.

As part of the Stewardship Agreement, the Town of Flower's Cove was provided with a large highway road sign. Additional interpretive signage could possibly be funded through grants; for example, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation often funds trail and park projects (see funding opportunities link above for other possibilities)



Highway sign presented to the Town of Flower's Cove.

Watch wildlife

Local groups and interested volunteers can watch and monitor birds, plants, and wildlife in all areas of the Town. This can provide information on changes in populations and can indicate problems or progress. By involving residents, they become more aware of these special places.

iNaturalist and **Seek** are free smartphone apps for those interested in learning to identify plants, butterflies and other insects, other invertebrates, birds, fungi, and mammals. They can be used to build plant and wildlife lists for any area, as a learning tool, for school students, family nature walks, and just for fun.

iNaturalist is great for adults as each nature observations turns into a real scientific data point. It also has a neat feature where other experts will identify your sightings for you - after taking a photo, it will often be identified within a few hours by another experienced user on the app. Turn your location services on so that your sighting can be found on the map and so others can help with your identifications. **Seek** is best for kids as it never saves location data and provides fun badges.



ebird.org is another free website and app to record bird sightings. It is already very popular across NL with more than 10 000 bird lists submitted each year.

Start contributing to eBird at secure.birds.cornell.edu/casso/account/create

When watching wildlife, be mindful of tides and wetland (damp, soft, slippery) habitat, making safety your priority. Aim to cause as little stress and disturbance as possible to wildlife.

Help Flower's Cove residents enjoy nature

It's not just kids that enjoy the outdoors – adults and seniors benefit from spending time in nature as well. Birdwatching workshops have been successful in SAM communities, and snowshoe hikes in the winter or hikes in the summer are often enjoyed by adults as well.



Themes such as winter tracking or edible plant hikes can increase interest. Hikes can be inexpensive ways for adults in Flower's Cove to discover the natural areas of the town, socialize, and learn something new. CCNL Green Teams are required to give interpretive presentations as a part of their work programs; SAM's **Guide to delivering interpretive hikes** and field guides at samnl.org/resources could help CCNL Green Teams or summer staff lead hikes for residents and/or visitors. These could be used to create a small brochure and 'bird checklist' or wildlife list of the area, or as the basis for field guides which could be developed by a Green Team, high school, or a relevant committee.

Conclusion

We hope these ideas have you thinking about ways you could become involved in protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat in your area. Keep an eye on samnl.org, our newsletter, and our social media, where additional resources are added regularly – and we hope to see you at the SAM conferences each year. Remember, community involvement is the true strength of a Stewardship Agreement!






Appendix A: Schedule A map for the Town of Flower's Cove

Schedule A: Habitat Conservation Areas

Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement

Town of Flower's Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada



Legend	
	Conservation Area
	Municipal Boundary
	Roads
	Buildings
	Water



**Newfoundland
Labrador**

November 2020