

# Habitat Conservation Plan

for the Town of Irishtown-Summerside,  
Newfoundland and Labrador



August 2023



**Plant Contacts:**



**Town of Irishtown-Summerside**

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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 Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside was identified as having ecologically valuable and unique habitat located within its municipal planning boundaries.

The Agreement (attached as Appendix A) and this Habitat Conservation Plan indicates the Municipality'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.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the following partners for their support in the continued implementation and activities of the Habitat Stewardship Program: Environment Canada, The United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon, ~~the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation~~ and Wildlife Habitat Canada.

## **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.
- (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.

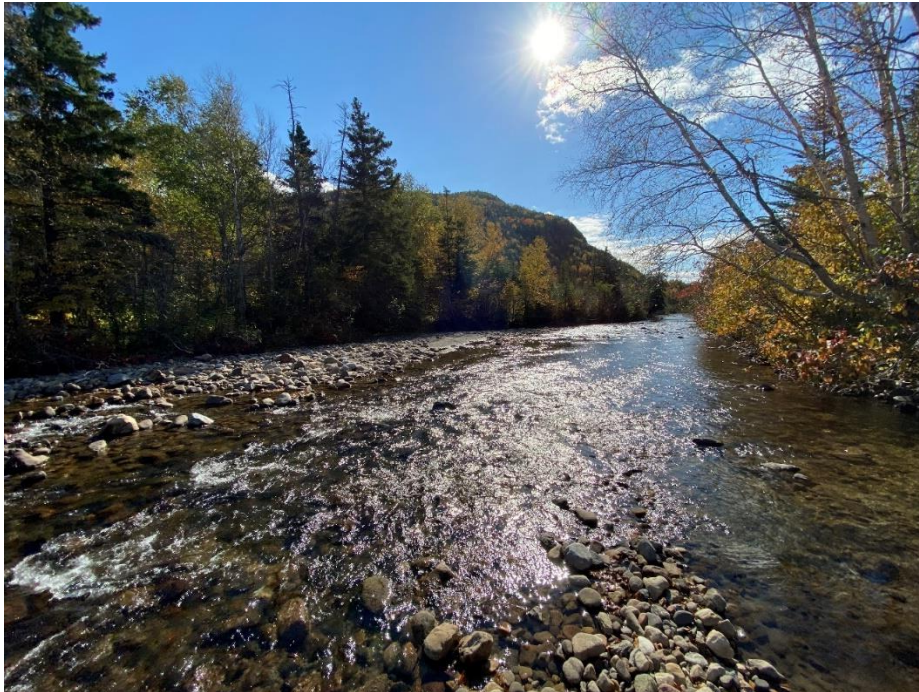
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## **Section 1: Habitat Conservation in Newfoundland and Labrador**

Globally, human development has resulted in the destruction, degradation, or alteration of many types of habitats. Consequently, in North America the number and diversity of wildlife species has been declining over the latter half of the twentieth century as natural habitats are regularly lost to urban, industrial, and



**Figures 1 - A beautiful view of lower Hughes Brook with riparian buffer intact. Taken fall of 2022.**

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 agreement 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

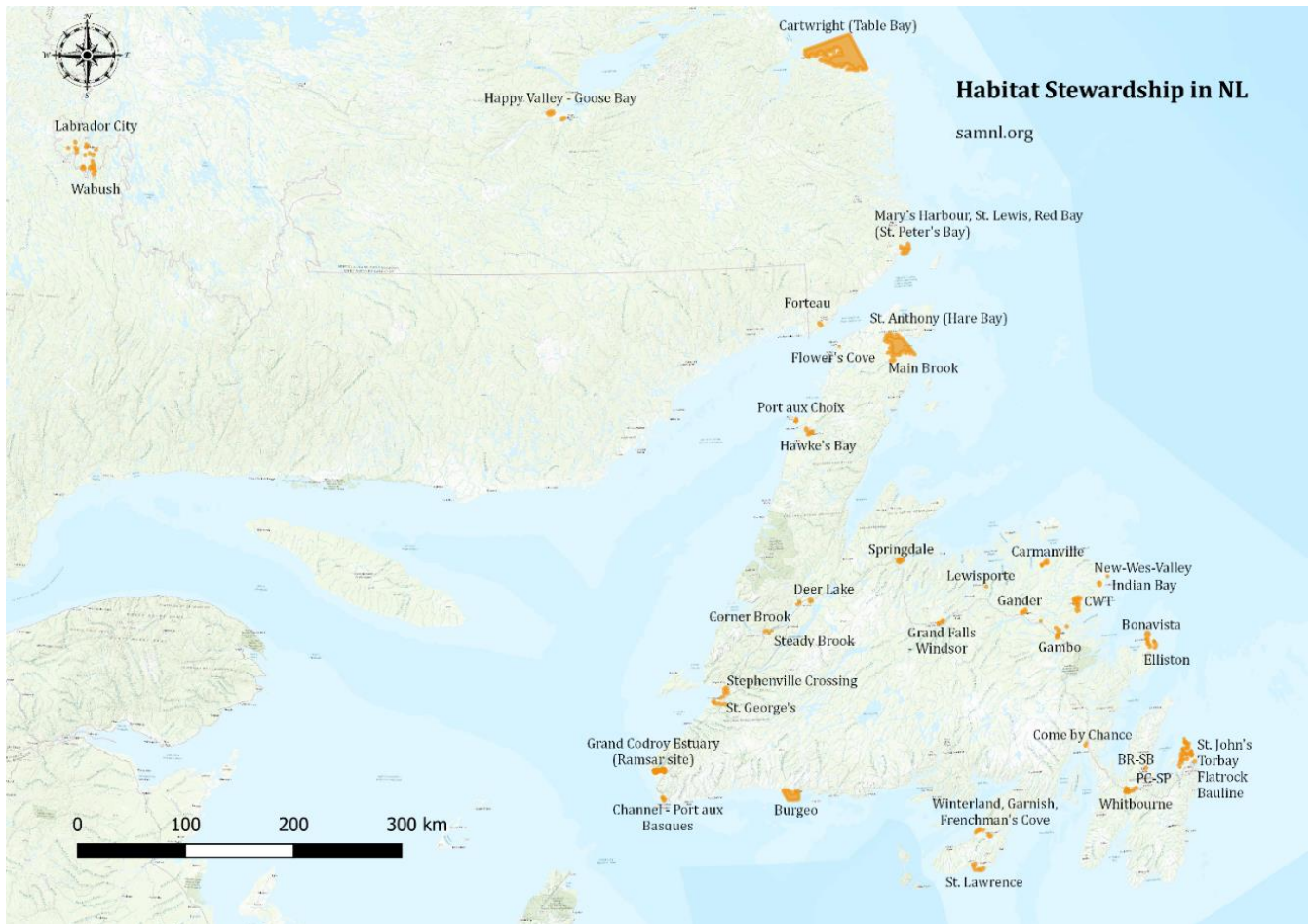
committed to its participation in the **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV)** in 1989.

The **EHJV (ehjv.ca)** seeks to conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat, often wetlands, for birds found across the six eastern Canadian provinces of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). Each province implements the EHJV 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 (SAM), Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS-a branch of Environment and Climate Change Canada), Intervale Associates Inc and Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).

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 throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and indeed, across North America (Figure 2). The

municipality of Irishtown-Summerside has the potential to contribute to this important environmental process, demonstrate conservation leadership, and protect important habitats for all future generations of humans and wildlife alike.



**Figure 2 - Map of Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreements**  
**Section 2: Roles of Stewardship Agreement Signatories**

When the Habitat Stewardship Agreement (Appendix A) was signed, each signatory (the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside) committed 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 Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside (this plan).
- Work with Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside on the review of any developments which may be proposed to take place within the designated Conservation Areas.

- Support Council and local groups in implementing the Habitat Conservation Plan; often with 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 Municipality:** The Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside, its Mayor and Council would be expected to:

- Ensure that the designated wildlife habitat areas (“Conservation Area”) are protected from destruction or degradation; the municipality 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 future proposed development activities that would occur in the “Conservation Area”.
- Incorporate the Conservation Plan into the Municipal Plan, through the next Municipal Plan Review or by making amendments to the present Municipal Plan. The Irishtown-Summerside Municipal Plan is prepared under the authority of the *Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000* and incorporating the Conservation Plan into the Municipal Plan provides the Town with authority to administer the Conservation Plan.
- Implement - over time and as opportunities allow - the Habitat Conservation Plan in the community with the assistance of the NL EHJV partners.
- Participate in the activities of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities (SAM) Inc.

### **Section 3: Wetlands, Habitat, and Wildlife in Irishtown-Summerside**

Irishtown-Summerside is a small community with a population of roughly 1400 people on the west coast of Newfoundland. The town, nestled on the north shore of Humber Arm in the scenic Bay of Islands, is the product of the amalgamation of the Town of Irishtown and the Town of Summerside, both incorporated separately in 1970. Named respectively for the background of the early settlers and for being on the “sunny side” of the Humber Arm, the area attracted settlers due to the rich salmon, herring, and lobster fisheries, as well as the potential to harvest and trade lumber and furs. As early as the 1700s, English and French fishers began to fish in the Bay of Islands, with permanent settlements following in the 1800s. As with other surrounding communities, the Corner Brook paper mill had a significant impact on Irishtown and Summerside in the 1920s, as more people were attracted to the area and the population of both communities grew to what they are today.



## Wildlife Habitat in Irishtown-Summerside

The entirety of the Town of Irishtown-Summerside is within what is known as the Corner Brook subregion of the Western Newfoundland Forest ecoregion. This ecoregion is characterized by humid climate and relatively longer frost-free periods. Though highly variable, it contains some of the best sites for forest growth. The dominant forest cover is generally Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) rather than Black spruce (*Picea mariana*), with Yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) also common.

The Bay of Islands, and the riparian and wetland habitats that surrounds it are rich habitat for dozens of bird species, including waterfowl such as American black duck, mergansers, goldeneyes, several gull and tern species, shorebirds such as Greater yellowlegs and Spotted sandpiper, songbirds, and raptors such as Bald Eagles. The online database eBird maintains a continually updating list of bird species found in Irishtown-Summerside, as well as in the surrounding communities. To view the list, go to

**[ebird.org/Canada/hotspots](http://ebird.org/Canada/hotspots)** and enter “Irishtown, NL” in the location search.

Centrally, the Hughes Brook waterway is a well-known ecologically and culturally significant waterway that flows through and forms the boundaries between the municipalities of Irishtown-Summerside, Hughes Brook, and Corner Brook. Through municipal planning, each town shares some responsibility for its management, and can have impact in the riparian areas. A freshwater waterway that runs to a saltwater marsh estuary before ultimately emptying into the Bay of Islands, Hughes Brook encompasses some of the most ecologically valuable habitat in Irishtown-Summerside. Home to muskrat, beavers, moose, dozens of songbird and waterfowl species, and more, it is also known breeding habitat for species at risk such as Rusty



**Figure 3- Rusty Blackbird (Wildlife Division photo)**

Blackbirds, as well as being a scheduled salmon river for Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*.)

### ***Irishtown-Summerside Conservation Area***

The Conservation Area covers approximately 36 hectares of prime riparian habitat



**Figure 4 - Hughes Brook Estuary and view of Irishtown-Summerside (Online photo)**

along the Hughes Brook waterway, with 5.5 hectares located to the north of the Northshore Highway (HWY 440) and 30.5 hectares located to the south of the highway. Most of the Conservation Area boundaries lie within the town’s current municipal land use zoning of “Conservation Area” (Figure 7).

The northern portion of the Hughes Brook Conservation Area spans from the Northshore Highway (Highway 440) to the northwestern municipal planning area boundary. The Conservation Area includes a 50 m buffer from the water’s edge of Hughes Brook, lying within the town’s conservation land use zoning, and starts upstream from the bridge to account for private land in the area.

The southern portion of the CA extends along Hughes Brook south from highway to where the brook enters the Bay. Generally, there is a 50m buffer applied from the wetted edge of the brook, with the buffer reduced in areas to account for private land. There is also a 30 m buffer on a tributary south of Jarvis Road and flows from the Highway leading to the brook.

## **Section 4: General Policies for Habitat Conservation in the Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside**

### **A) Incorporate your Habitat 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 Irishtown-Summerside Council will incorporate the Habitat Conservation Agreement and Plan concepts and maps into any resulting Municipal Plan or related Master Plan. The “Conservation Areas” **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, wildlife conservation will be at the forefront of management decisions. When council reviews/approves permits, regulations, developments or by-laws which could affect 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) Engage residents of Irishtown-Summerside in wildlife habitat conservation with support of the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Inc.**

When the Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside signed a Habitat Stewardship Agreement with the province, it was provided an opportunity to become a participating member of SAM (Stewardship Association of Municipalities, **samnl.org**). SAM is an incorporated, non-profit organization whose member municipalities contribute to the securement, enhancement, and restoration of 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 Stewardship Agreement featuring maps, photos, facts, and information on local attractions. This link can be included on your Municipality’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 your municipality (mayor, councilor, staff, or involved resident) to attend at least one of these meetings per year. This will connect Irishtown-Summerside to like-minded municipalities and link you to resources and training. You may also be

interested in co-hosting another SAM meeting in the municipality of Irishtown-Summerside; many municipalities enjoy this for the exposure it provides for their wildlife habitat 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](http://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 its partners, in particular the Wildlife Division, actively support municipalities in engaging community residents in conservation awareness, and habitat enhancement and restoration projects such as (but not limited to):

- 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. 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 stewardship agreement.**



## **APPENDIX A:**

# **Habitat Stewardship Agreement for the Municipality of Irishtown-Summerside**

**THIS AGREEMENT** made in Irishtown-Summerside, in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2023.

**BETWEEN: HIS MAJESTY THE KING IN RIGHT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**, as represented by the Honorable Minister of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture (herein called “the Minister”)

- of the one part -

**AND: THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF IRISHTOWN-SUMMERSIDE**, a municipal corporation pursuant to Section 15 of the *Municipalities Act, 1999* (herein called the “The Town”)

-of the other part-

**WHEREAS** the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has entered into an Agreement with others for the implementation of the 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, particularly birds, in the province;

**AND WHEREAS** the Minister proposed that certain important wildlife habitats within the Town be protected and enhanced through and with the cooperation of the Town in accordance with this Agreement;

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

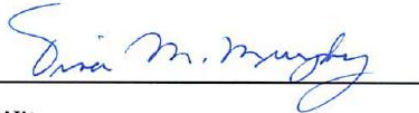


**NOW THEREFORE IT IS AGREED BY THE PARTIES AS FOLLOWS:**

1. The lands herein delineated and designated as a Conservation Area (being the lands outlined on a certain Schedule A annexed hereto) shall be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of this Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan for better protection of the habitat for wildlife.
2. Within the limits of its jurisdiction, the Town shall permit only those activities within the Conservation Area that have no negative or adverse impact upon the habitat or the wildlife which utilize those habitats.
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 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 Conservation Areas shall be recommended by the Town to be appropriately declared protected areas 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). 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 Conservation Area(s) shall do so in consultation with the Minister and in keeping with the principles of this Agreement.
5. The parties to this Agreement, their consultants, servants or agents, shall have and exercise reasonable rights of access to the Conservation Area(s) 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 Agreement.
6. If at any time during the term of this Stewardship Agreement the Parties mutually deem it necessary or desirable to make any alterations or additions to it, they may do so by means of a written amendment between them which shall be supplemental to and form part of this agreement.
7. Each of the parties hereto agree that they will exercise their best efforts to further develop management measures for more effectively carrying out of 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 the day and year first before written.

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




Witness

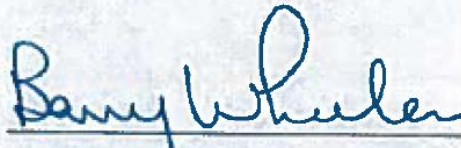


**HONORABLE ELVIS LOVELESS  
MINISTER OF FISHERIES,  
FORESTRY AND AGRICULTURE**

**THE SEAL OF** the Town Council of the Town of Irishtown-Summerside hereunto affixed in the presence of:



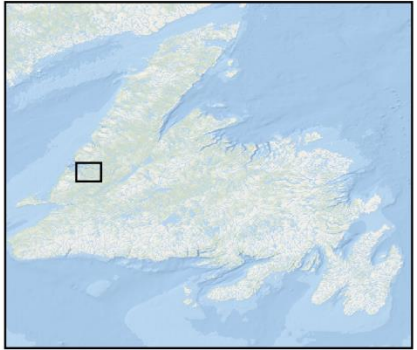
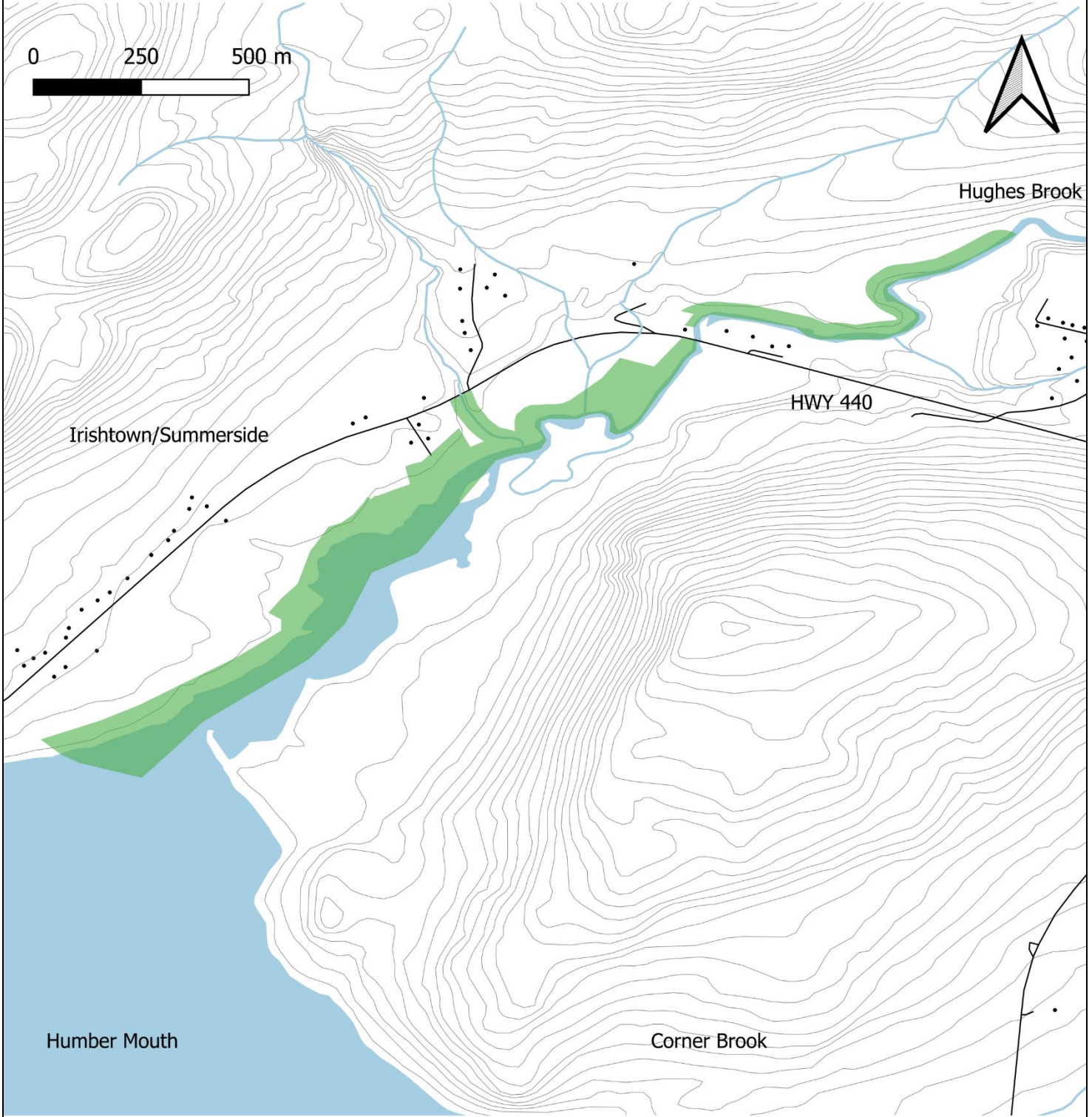
Witness



**THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE  
TOWN OF IRISHTOWN-  
SUMMERSIDE**

**Schedule A: Conservation Areas**  
 Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement  
 Municipality of Irishtown/Summerside, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

0 250 500 m



Legend	
	Conservation Area
	Road
	Water
	Contour Line
	Building



April 2023  
 Projection WGS 84