

CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NEW BRUNSWICK

ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT NO. 2017-18



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CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY SOLUTIONS

The Conservation Council's Climate Change and Energy Solutions program focused this year on making policy interventions and engaging the public to help New Brunswickers better understand the challenges and opportunities of shifting to a low-carbon economy.

Engaging the public on clean energy. The Conservation Council researched, analyzed and made accessible updated information on climate change and successful examples of renewable energy production and use in New Brunswick via more than 50 blog entries, countless social media campaigns, and online resources such as our renewable energy FAQ, video series on green energy, background materials on carbon pricing, and comprehensive resources to help New Brunswickers make their homes more comfortable and energy efficient.





Climate Change & Energy Solutions

We also held the first-ever Passport to a Low Carbon Future EcoHomes Tour, a tour of more than a dozen homes, public buildings and businesses in southern New Brunswick who have embraced energy efficiency and renewable energy. The highly successful tour gave New Brunswickers a chance to “look under the hood” of renewable technology at work in real people’s homes, and ask questions to New Brunswickers who are making the shift to a low carbon lifestyle.

Building coalitions for clean energy. Our Executive Director and a team of sharp, young Conservation Council campaigners attended the 24th Council Session of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in Charlottetown, P.E.I., last summer. The meeting focused on the issues facing North American coastal, shoreline, and riverbank communities and shared the innovative solutions coming from the local level.





Climate Change & Energy Solutions

Forging sound climate policies. Our staff intervened on several climate policy discussions at the municipal, provincial and federal government levels this year. Here are just some examples:

1. Presented our own internal review of EMO and NB Power's response to the February 2017 ice storm, which included a list of recommendations on how to minimize risks to citizens from climate change-induced extreme events prior to the release of the January 2017 Ice Storm review.

2. Called for a new forest management model after a federal report found climate change is likely to affect the viability of various species that make up our natural Acadian forest. The study, which you can read here, suggests the number of hardwood species, such as maple and oak, will increase because they fare better in warmer climates, but estimates there will be an overall decline in the size of the Acadian forest because the increase in hardwoods won't make up for the loss of softwoods.

3. Praised employment opportunities in green energy as a far more desirable and viable alternative to the proposed Energy East Pipeline after the proponent, TransCanada Corp., cancelled the project in the fall of 2017.



Hundreds of New Brunswickers took part in our first annual EcoHomes tour where they spoke with homeowners who had already made the transition to renewable energy, 2018.



Climate Change & Energy Solutions

4. Engaged coal workers and coal communities to help develop a fair federal coal phase-out plan as part of our Executive Director, Lois Corbett's role as co-chair of the federal government's Just Transition Task Force for coal phase out.
5. Submitted detailed technical comments on the federal government's coal phase out regulation.
6. Encouraged accelerated climate action following the release of the Auditor General's report on Canada's progress on climate change policy and action.
7. Offered recommendations to strengthen the provincial government's efforts on climate change following lacklustre commitments in the government's proposed climate change legislation and 2018-19 budget.





FRESHWATER PROTECTION

The first water protection strategy for N.B.

This year we celebrated the long-awaited release of New Brunswick's first water protection strategy. The Conservation Council played an active role throughout the two-year engagement process, including being a part of the 15-person working group formed to provide recommendations to the government on watershed management.

Following the release of the draft strategy on October 6, 2017, the Conservation Council released a free toolkit and pre-written letter to help the public and supporting groups respond to the government's call for public comments.

Our comments and 14 recommendations focused on the need for a science-based water protection strategy, involving baseline data, cumulative impacts, e-flows (the minimum amount of water required to sustain aquatic life in rivers and streams), and be tailored to each of the 13 primary watersheds and major rivers in N.B. Most importantly, we commented on the need to enshrine water quality objectives and watershed protection plans in new legislation.

On December 22, 2017, the water protection strategy was released and laid out smart steps to protect water, an ambitious timeline to enact them, and demonstrated what can happen when people speak up for clean water. We continue to closely monitor the implementation of the short-term and long-term actions laid out in the water protection strategy.



Freshwater Protection

A new water protection act



In the water protection strategy, we were happy to see a commitment to introduce a new water protection act by 2020 — legislation that will both make watershed protection action plans mandatory and legally enforceable and set science-based water quality standards.

In April, 2018, we received funding from the Environmental Trust Fund (ETF) to research, develop and communicate key information to the public and watershed groups on watershed planning. We also received funding from the Canadian Bar Association in July, 2018 to investigate how to give legal effect to the standards set out in watershed plans.

Using the Swim Guide App

This swimming season, we continued to maintain the information for more than a dozen recreational swimming sites throughout New Brunswick using the water quality app, Swim Guide. Swim Guide is a free mobile app used around the world that lets you easily find beaches close to you that are safe for swimming.

This year, the provincial government expanded water quality testing to eight provincial park beaches (the first action to come out of the water protection strategy) which we updated the information for daily. We also partnered with the Village of Cap-Pelé to add water quality information for Aboiteau Beach. The New Brunswick region page on Swim Guide continues to be one of the top pages visited:





Protecting the Nashwaak Watershed

This year the company behind the proposed Sisson mine project began seeking an amendment to Schedule 2 of the Metal Mining Effluent Regulation (MMER) to have four fish-bearing brooks in the Nashwaak Watershed redefined as Tailing Impoundment Areas. If approved by the federal government, Bird Brook, Sisson Brook, McBean Brook, and an unnamed tributary to the West Branch of Napadogan Brook will no longer be protected under the Fisheries Act and the company will be free to dispose of tailings and waste rock, burying the brooks under 90 metres of waste.

The Conservation Council was invited to participate in the consultation process and we also encouraged the public to attend the public consultation, hosted by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) in Cross Creek on March 15, 2018. The meeting was attended by a diverse crowd of 250 people and the Conservation Council was thanked for spreading awareness about the meeting. On April 16, 2018 we launched a letter-writing campaign, in partnership with the Nashwaak Watershed, which saw more than one thousand New Brunswickers submit comments to ECCC. We submitted our detailed comments on May 3, 2018. At the meeting in Cross Creek, an ECCC official stated that the MMER amendment process could take up to two years.

Surviving the St. John River flood



This spring record-high flooding hit the St. John River watershed. The historic flood left New Brunswick in a state of disarray – devastating thousands of properties from Fredericton to Saint John, causing upwards of \$80 million in damages. As the floodwaters rose, we warned the public about the risk of compromised sewage systems and oil storage tanks spilling into the St. John River, and contaminating the water. After the flood we asked New Brunswickers to submit stories on how the flood affected them.



MARINE CONSERVATION

This year, the Conservation Council's Marine Program continued working toward protecting New Brunswick's vibrant marine ecosystems and coastal communities. We focused on pressing marine issues by developing on-the-ground restoration projects, advocating for accountability and enforcement of environmental laws, and raising public awareness.

We put our values of collaboration and longstanding relationships with coastal stakeholders into practise, and maintained our reputation as a watchdog for the Bay of Fundy through our Fundy Baykeeper program.



Working with the Peskotomuhkati Nation

For several years the Peskotomuhkati Nation (also referred to as the Passamaquoddy Nation) has been leading the charge to restore important sea-run fish (like alewife/gaspereau) to their native spawning grounds in rivers within Peskotomuhkati territory. The Conservation Council has been a proud supporter in these efforts.

This year we worked with the Peskotomuhkati Nation and Eastern Charlotte Waterways to secure five years of support from the Government of Canada's Coastal Restoration Fund to help us better understand the rivers in the nations'



Marine Conservation

territory and to take action to improve fish passage and habitat for the many fish who belong in the rivers but are being harmed or blocked by dams, improperly maintained culverts, and damage to rivers from historic logging and other industrial activities.

The Peskotomuhkati Nation is currently in negotiations with the Government of Canada for recognition of their indigenous rights and territory. The Conservation Council stands firmly behind the Peskotomuhkati Nation in these negotiations and looks forward to continuing to work together to restore native fish, improve river and coastal habitat, and improve lives for those lucky enough to call Peskotomuhkati territory home.

Advocating for effective marine protected areas



The Conservation Council has long been working on developing effective protections for coastal and marine waters, such as playing an integral role in the protection of the Musquash Estuary Marine Protected Area. This year we continued to work with regional partners to advance the development of effective protections for productive and sensitive coastal waters.

Through our long-standing relationships with coastal partners and communities, we advocated for fair and effective protections to sustain vibrant ecosystems, increase the resilience of the Bay of Fundy to climate change, and support vibrant and sustainable coastal communities.



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This year we worked to further advocate for strong regulations and enforcement in the marine environment. We continued to engage in regulatory reforms on federal legislation such as the Fisheries Act to secure habitat protections that are critical to our Bay of Fundy fisheries, rebuild depleted stocks, and recognize Indigenous rights.

Our Fundy Baykeeper responded to cases of pollution in open pen-net salmon aquaculture, including illegal pesticide use and at-sea disposal of chemicals, and warned about the risks of farming salmon at a feedlot.



Marine Conservation

scale. We echoed the Environment Commissioner's report on aquaculture which sent a clear signal that the industry is lacking effective regulation and enforcement.

Our Fundy Baykeeper also responded to pollution incidents from other industries, such as charges against Irving Pulp & Paper for dumping harmful substances into the St. John River, and asserted that companies do not have the right to pollute our lakes, rivers, and oceans.

A watchdog for marine pollution and protection



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Working to beat marine debris and plastic pollution

We continued our longstanding efforts to address marine debris issues in the Bay of Fundy. Working with support from the province of New Brunswick through the Environmental Trust Fund, we continued our four-year project with local fisheries and academics to map and remove large debris from the sea bottom. We organized several beach clean-ups to raise awareness about marine litter, and engaged in communications to #BeatPlasticPollution and reduce the harm of litter to marine life.



Our response to the ‘pepsi lobster’ also received international coverage from major media outlets, such as the BBC. This lobster, found off Grand Manan with a pepsi logo imprinted on its claw, was a stark example of the staggering amount of garbage that is collecting in the ocean.

Raising New Brunswickers’ awareness about coastal & marine ecosystems

Through longstanding events and through new connections we continue to engage New Brunswickers, get them outside in our coastal ecosystems, and help them be stewards of the Bay of Fundy.

Our annual Musquash Paddle event in 2017 was attended by more than 50 people. This event provides opportunities for New Brunswickers to learn about and connect with the Musquash Estuary Marine Protected Area on a personal level, right from the water. We also attended community fairs and markets, and spoke to young New Brunswickers in their schools about the special nature of the Bay of Fundy and its importance in an era of climate change.



Marine Conservation

We also kept on top of major marine issues throughout the year to communicate these issues to the public and relevant stakeholders. For example, we followed the right whale story as it unfolded from mortality incidents to new management measures by the federal government to protect this endangered species.

We also attended community fairs and markets, and spoke to young New Brunswickers in their schools about the special nature of the Bay of Fundy and its importance in an era of climate change. We also kept on top of major marine issues throughout the year to communicate these issues to the public and relevant stakeholders. For example, we followed the right whale story as it unfolded from mortality incidents to new management measures by the federal government to protect this endangered species.

A healthy Northumberland Strait



This year the issue of E.coli contamination at Parlee Beach continued to divide communities along the Northumberland Strait. On April 20, 2018 the provincial steering committee set up to examine water quality issues at Parlee Beach released its final report and recommendations.

We welcomed the recommendation that the provincial government develop a comprehensive watershed protection plan for Shediac Bay. A watershed protection plan, combined with a new regulation to protect coastal areas under the Clean Water Act (as described in the provincial water protection strategy), is the most prudent and efficient way to ensure that our coastline and waters — from the Bay of Chaleur, along the Northumberland Strait to the Bay of Fundy — remain an important contributor to New Brunswick's long term economic development.



Marine Conservation

On April 23, 2018, we attended the Northumberland Strait Conference on Coastal Protection and Restoration, hosted by our friends from Save our Wetlands, Waters and Tourism (SWWAT). At the conference, our Executive Director Lois Corbett presented about the Conservation Council's work on freshwater protection and risks to New Brunswick's water. Lois also spoke about the water protection strategy and the steering committee's report, highlighting the need for all-party legislation and protective regulations. We continue to closely follow the work taking place along the Northumberland Strait!

Our Marine Program grows!

In May 2018 we welcomed a new member to our Marine Team! Irene Brueckner-Irwin recently completed a Master's degree in Environmental Studies, and comes to us with experience in local fisheries and marine protected area issues. The focus of her work will be engaging local coastal stakeholders on marine conservation issues.





FOREST CONSERVATION

Stopping the spraying of our forest

The Conservation Council continued its work to end the unnecessary and old-fashioned practice of spraying our forest with herbicides. We released a series of maps of showing spraying hotspots around popular N.B. lakes, rivers, and within municipal drinking water supply zones. Working with other organizations and friends across the province, we led a letter-writing campaign that saw more than 2,000 New Brunswickers email their MLA directly to call for an end to spraying in our forest.



Did you know? Between 2009-2014, N.B. invested more than \$122 million on forest management, running a total deficit of \$53.7 million, or an average loss of \$7-\$10 million per year.

New Brunswickers also continue to gather signatures on a petition we drafted in 2015 that has now been signed by a remarkable 34,000 people — one of the largest petitions in the history of the Legislative Assembly. The mounting pressure for change led several municipalities — including Petitcodiac, Tracadie-Sheila, and Moncton — to look at what they can do to end spraying in the woods of their communities. Our letter-writing campaign prompted the MLA for Petitcodiac-Gagetown to table a motion in the Legislative Assembly calling for a working group to study the practice of herbicide spraying in our Crown forest.



Speaking up in the City of Stately Elms

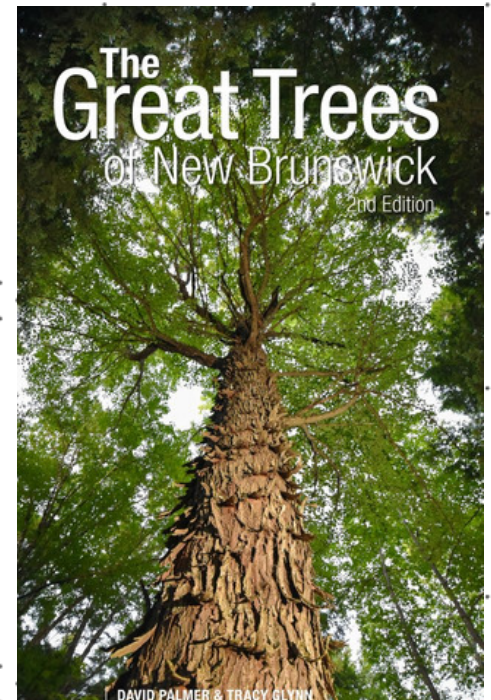
The Conservation Council supported and advised the grassroots organization Save Officers' Square as its dedicated volunteers worked to stop mature, historic and culturally-significantly elm trees from being cut down by the City of Fredericton.

Our Executive Director, Lois Corbett, urged city council to restart its controversial plan to overhaul Officers' Square with better public consultation, and urged councillors to create a tree bylaw to prevent similar issues in the future. Our Dr. Nadine Ives presented about the value of urban trees and best practices for embracing and preserving them in other jurisdictions around the world at a special public meeting about the Officers' Square plan.

Great Trees of New Brunswick Vol. 2

New Brunswickers love their iconic trees — and soon they'll have a new catalogue for the coffee table full of stunning images of the native trees we admire and the beautiful, heartfelt stories they inspire.

The second edition of The Great Trees of New Brunswick, a project by your Conservation Council in partnership with forester David Palmer and photographer Arielle DeMerchant, hits shelves from Fredericton publisher Goose Lane Editions this fall. Palmer joined CBC Radio's Information Morning host Terry Seguin for a multi-part series throughout the summer of 2018 offering a sneak peak at some of the trees featured in the book. The captivating collection is sure to be a staple for all New Brunswickers who love our woods and the beautiful variety of trees growing in our natural Acadian Forest.



Great Trees of New Brunswick Vol 2 is available at book stores near you!



Promoting science-based forest conservation

The Conservation Council worked to popularize the latest science on forest conservation, including hosting a popular talk with Dr. Matthew Betts on forest biodiversity in Fredericton, writing articles about Dr. Marc-André Villard's calls for better forest management to protect forest biodiversity, and promoting a study by Dr. Julia Linke and others that confirm satellite imagery data on forest loss in the Miramichi watershed.

Our former Forest Conservation campaigner participated in a speaker series about the impact of clear-cutting on New Brunswick's forests. Our Southeast Chapter's 2017 Beth McLaughlin Environmental Journalism Award was presented to NB Media Co-op writer Dallas McQuarrie for his articles on the declining health of New Brunswick's Acadian forest, harmful forestry practices such as clearcutting and herbicide spraying, and positive alternatives in sustainable forestry.

In June, we hosted award-winning filmmaker Neal Livingston for a discussion and 40th anniversary screening of *Budworks*, his film about the controversial, decades-long budworm spraying program in New Brunswick that was featured in Rachel Carson's seminal book, *Silent Spring*.



5 Days for the Forest

The second annual 5 Days for the Forest festival celebrated our forest in its fall glory with nature walks, live music, art and film in late September 2017. New Brunswickers young and old joined us for guided walks through Odell Park's old Hemlock forest, a Great Trees of New Brunswick slideshow and sneak peak presentation, the return of our ever-popular TREEvia night, the musical stylings and fantastic storytelling of musician Brent Mason during our OMISTA's Chews & Brews night, and a screening of the equal parts hilarious and inspiring film "Surviving the Fundy Footpath." The second edition of the festival achieved its goal of stirring up more awe for our Acadian forest.



Dr. Jim Goltz guides us on a walk through Odell Park's old Hemlock forest during 5 Days for the Forest, 2017.

A failing grade: forest report card

The Conservation Council released a forest report card in summer 2017 that assessed different public priorities for forest management. We surveyed various knowledge holders (forest scientists, naturalists, woods workers, First Nations organizations, etc.) and asked them to rank the status of Crown forest management on a number of criteria, including public participation, transparency and monitoring, watershed protection, climate change, old forest conservation, wildlife conservation, action on threatened species, protected natural areas, silviculture, diversity of products, revenue and treaties and Aboriginal rights.

The responses revealed that these public priorities are inadequately reflected in the current approach to Crown forest management in New Brunswick, and in many cases are getting worse. The report card makes a strong case for a modernized Crown Lands and Forest Act that ensures the public priorities for forest management.



LEARNING OUTSIDE

The Learning Outside project continued to grow and expand over the 2017 fiscal year. In the summer of 2017, we participated in a series of Pollinator Garden activities with the Sunbury Shores Arts & Nature Centre, based in St. Andrews.

As part of a larger project, Nadine Ives and our summer interns organised and planted pollinator-friendly gardens with the children at the Dragonfly Centre for Autism in St. Andrews, at Milltown Elementary School in St. Stephen, and Back Bay Elementary School. At each site, we engaged summer campers in games and activities related to pollinators and taking care of the gardens, in addition to helping the children plant the flowers.

Throughout the school year, we continued our series of outdoor, curriculum-linked activities at Lincoln Elementary Community School. We developed a number of activities linked to different subject areas and the seasonal happenings on the school's nature trail and wetland property. Nature always provides interesting things to study and explore.





Learning Outside



From January to March 2018, we led a series of four outdoor sessions with smaller groups of students, exploring animal adaptations to winter, animal tracks and signs, recording weather conditions, including snow depth and snow profile, and snowflake characteristics. We also strengthened our connections with NB Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning curriculum specialists at both the school district and departmental levels.

A highlight of the year was being invited to participate in a TV documentary series, entitled 'La Terre en Nous' produced by Manito Média (a French language and indigenous production company). 'La Terre en Nous' (the Earth in us) highlights people working on positive solutions to our planetary environmental crisis and features episodes on everything from sustainable farming to connecting children with nature.

Learning Outside hosted a wonderful day with a visit from the series host, Christian Pilon, who shared Métis traditional knowledge with us along the nature trail. We also organised a Great Minds Think Outside session for 'La Terre en Nous.' The series is scheduled to air on APTN and Radio-Canada TV in 2019.

In addition to leading the Learning Outside project, Nadine continued to be busy as a Great Minds Think Outside team member, co-facilitating seven hands-on, outdoor, experiential, professional learning sessions for teachers on their own school grounds. This collaborative program has proven very popular with teachers and every year we receive more requests for sessions. Nadine also represents Learning Outside and the Conservation Council as Chair of the Professional Development team of the NB Sustainability Education Alliance and Chair of the Communicating Biodiversity team of the NB Biodiversity Collaborative.



Learning Outside

Networking and outreach in 2017-2018 included hosting a booth at the Greener Village Open House in September 2017 and attending the Outdoor Play Forum (November 2017), the Anglophone West School District STEAM Expo in Woodstock, NB (March 2018) and Landscape New Brunswick's Designing Naturalized Playgrounds workshop (March 2018).

In Spring 2018, we were awarded a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) PromoScience grant, which enabled us to hire Jonna Karhunen as a part-time Learning Outside assistant in September 2018. Having Jonna on board has already greatly increased our reach and capacity and we expect great things for Learning Outside in the coming year.



Both kids and parents alike had a blast at Nadine's springtime bird feeder workshops, 2016.

We are grateful for continued financial support from the NB Environmental Trust Fund (ETF) and to the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) for the PromoScience grant, which has allowed us to greatly expand our capacity moving forward in 2018-2019 and beyond.





BUYLOCALNB™

Our ever-popular BuyLocalNB™ project continued to grow this year, with more than 500 local producers now featured in the online directory and a passionate following of more than 9,000 people on social media who share our content and help spread our message.



Driving an average 200,000 hits to our website each month, our social media accounts engage the public daily and promote the directory by highlighting seasonal events and industry trade shows, profiling new businesses and their achievements, sharing interesting and relevant stories, and promoting producer content that speaks for itself and gives our followers a sneak peak at the people and places they are supporting when they choose local — whether it's apple picking, petting zoos, haunted corn mazes or farmers markets.

To our surprise (and pleasure), the variety of businesses profiled in our directory continues to grow, threatening the need for additional categories specific to smaller niche markets like mushroom spores, alpaca fur, bee pollen, biodegradable packaging and more.

Brand recognition is spreading, and other groups are starting to notice. Buylocal groups like ExcellenceNB and ShoplocalNB are jumping on the bandwagon alongside Buy New Brunswick, which provides us new avenues for cross-promotion and collaboration, while community Facebook groups like Buylocal Sackville and Buylocal Stanley are co-opting our social media model to drive additional traffic to their area's businesses. We're seeing a stark increase in news stories covering local businesses and farms.

Last but not least, a large part of our BuyLocalNB™ program is getting out to community events and farmers markets to showcase the project and the important role that buying locally plays in strengthening our local economies and reducing the environmental impact of the foods and drinks we consume.

Some highlights from this year included:

- During the 2018 Union of Municipalities Annual Conference, our Executive Director delivered a presentation on how municipalities can benefit from buying local, and our communications officer spoke with municipal leaders at the conference tradeshow.
- For the second year, we attended the Maritime Honey Festival where we strengthened our relationship with the New Brunswick Beekeepers Association, engaged with the public, and encouraged our local beekeepers to join our directory if they haven't already.
- Holding our Southeast Chapter's annual 100 Mile Dinner, treating New Brunswickers to a delicious, locally-sourced meal while showcasing some of the producers listed in our BuyLocalNB™ Directory.
- Conducted interviews with several local businesses which we used to create a series of promotional videos profiling businesses on social media.



Thank you to our generous funders!

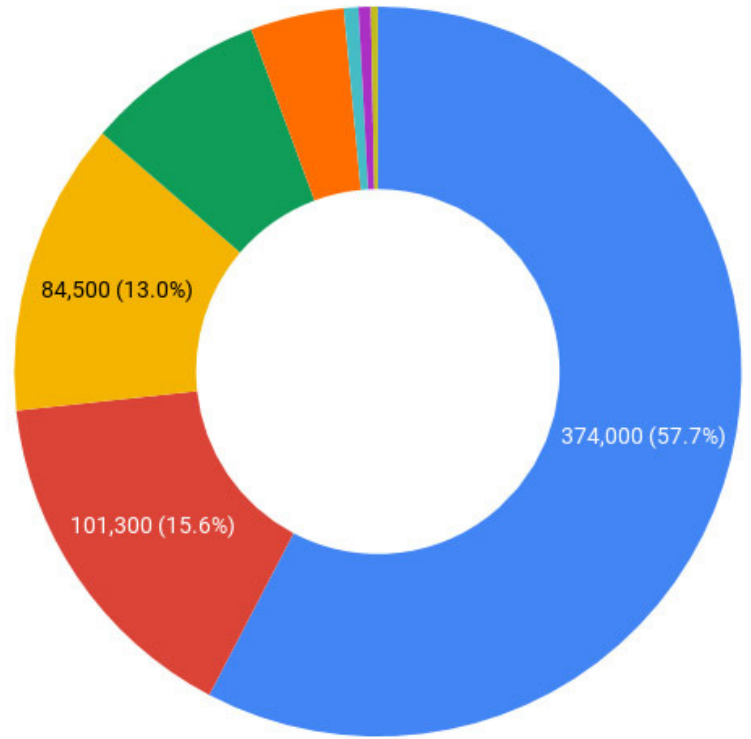
- Canadian Rivers Institute
- Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- DFO
- Echo Foundation
- Ecology Action Centre
- David Palmer
- John Palmer
- McConnell Foundation
- MEC - Mountain Equipment Co-op
- MITACS
- National energy board
- NBEN (New Brunswick Environmental Network)
- NSERC
- Oceana Canada
- Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc.
- Pembina Institute
- Province of NB Environmental Trust Fund
- The Gosling Foundation
- TD Environment Foundation
- Western Organization of Resource Councils Education
- New Brunswick Workforce Expansion Program
- Canada Summer Job Program
- NB SEED Program





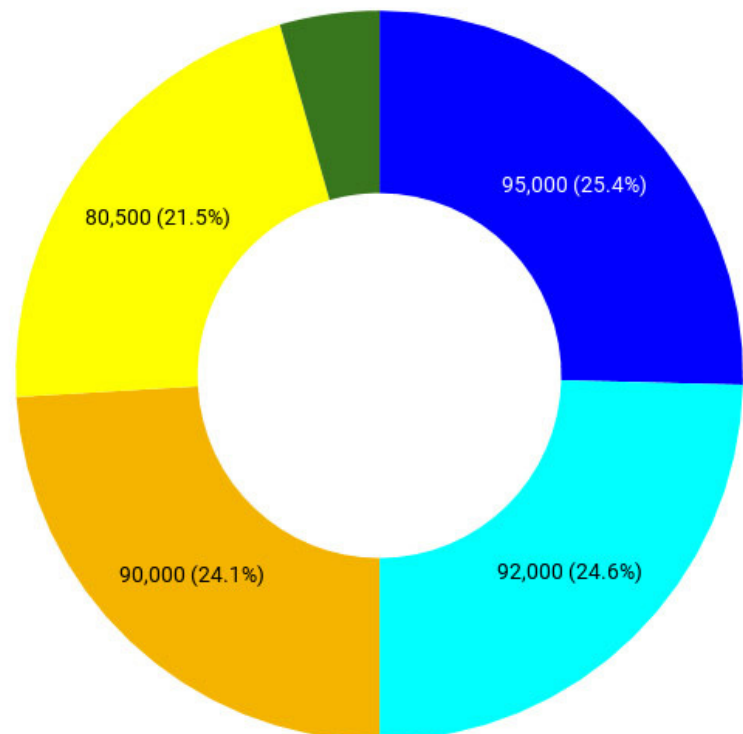
Income Received between 2017-18

- \$374,000 - Programs/Projects
 - \$101,300 - Donations
 - \$84,500 - Wage subsidies
 - \$52,000 - Investments
 - \$27,000 - Project Admin
 - \$4,200 - Memberships
 - \$3,500 - Events
 - \$2,000 - Sales
-
- \$64,8500 - Total



Income by Programs & Projects

- \$95,000 - Marine
 - \$92,000 - Freshwater
 - \$90,000 - Energy/Climate
 - 80,500 - Learning Outside/ Biodiversity
 - \$16,500 - Forest
-
- \$374,000 - Total





Expenses Incurred between 2017-2018

- \$11,200 - Fundraising/Member Services
 - \$59,000 - Administration
 - \$12,500 - Conserver House
 - \$185,800 - Core Wages
 - \$365,500 - Programs/Projects
-
- \$634,000 - Total

