

CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NEW BRUNSWICK

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Conseil de conservation du Nouveau-Brunswick



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Conservation Council of New Brunswick
Conseil de conservation du Nouveau-Brunswick



Staff and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you to our staff from 2022–2023

Executive:

Stephanie Phillips
Louise Comeau
Lois Corbett

Communications:

Corey Robichaud
Zoey McNamara
Jon MacNeill
Mariel Reyes Guevara
Asamaniwa Acquah
Olivia Bates

Climate Solutions:

Moe Qureshi
Danielle Smith
Madiha Khalid Kantroo
Elizabeth Gresh
Amanda Page
Louis-Charles Joseph Vaillancourt
Emma Cox
Cecilia Perez Placarte
Adam Mahoney

Learning Outside:

Nadine Ives

Marine Conservation:

Matt Abbott
Vincent Scully
Sarah Babaei

Waste Management:

Paige Morgan

Board of Directors

PRESIDENT Hannah Grant

VICE-PRESIDENT (POLICY) Lynaya Astephen

VICE-PRESIDENT (ADMIN) Stan Choptiany

TREASURER Allan Vallis

SECRETARY Tom McLean

EXECUTIVE MEMBER AT LARGE Frank Johnston

Directors


Kim Reeder
David MacDonald
Peggy Woolsey
Seamus Watters
Andrew Secord
Patty Hudson



A message from our PRESIDENT AND INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with pride for the unwavering loyalty and passion that defines the Conservation Council of New Brunswick.

We have embarked on a transformative journey towards brighter days. We welcomed a cohort of exceptional new staff and board members whose energy, dedication and fresh perspectives have invigorated our team and amplified our efforts. Passing the torch to these vibrant new faces marked a noteworthy transition and a unique opportunity for renewal, as new staff members have been encouraged and supported by the wisdom and experience of their predecessors.

 **Our commitment to the protection of the natural environment of New Brunswick remains as steadfast as ever.**

Our staff have tirelessly engaged with the community and school classes. We've hosted webinars and workshops while maintaining an active presence in social and traditional media and fostering one-on-one collaborations within our extensive New Brunswick environmental network.

A significant thank-you goes out to Dr. Louise Comeau for her tenacity and determination to help us with our evolution.

Our board members, old and new, have worked on several important initiatives over the past year, including updating policies and bylaws and drafting a new comprehensive three-year strategic plan.

We want to extend heartfelt gratitude to all the staff, both past and present, who have been part of this journey over the past year. Your hard work has brought us to this new beginning, setting the stage for an exciting and prosperous future.

A thank you to our members, donors and funders for being the driving force behind our mission.

With your continued support and enthusiasm, we will continue to protect New Brunswick's forests, rivers, lakes, coastlines, oceans and communities for many more years to come.

Thank you!

Stephanie Phillips,
INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hannah Grant,
PRESIDENT





Spreading the MESSAGE

In the ever-evolving world of digital communication and outreach, the Conservation Council of New Brunswick continues to make significant strides in engaging the community in environmental advocacy.



Oceans promotions and social media advertising campaign results:

Social Media Reach/Users:

891,000

Newsletter Registrations:

474

Link Clicks/Page Views:

14,600

Petition Signatures:

382

Community Engagement

Last year, our letter-writing and petition campaigns resulted in more than **750 letters** being sent to New Brunswick MLAs. That includes our **Stop Spraying, Electric School Bus** and **Clean Fuel Regulations** campaigns. Additionally, more than **500 people** registered for our **EcoNews newsletter**.

Oceans Promotions and Social Media Advertising Campaign

In 2022, we launched our multi-phase oceans promotions and social media

advertising campaign that included the publication of **28 individual ads** and **18 separate tests**.

Three campaign styles were tested, including email campaigns for newsletter sign-ups, petition campaigns focusing on salmon conservation and educational resource campaigns featuring colouring sheets.

These campaigns significantly improved our ability to manage large multi-phase campaigns and leverage Facebook's Meta Business Studio's optimization options.





Social Media Reach

Social Media Posts:

385

New YouTube Videos:

42

Social Media Reach/Users:

693,133

New YouTube Subscriptions:

39.1k

Social Media Reach

- **Social media posts:** Throughout the year, the Conservation Council shared a total of **385 posts** across various social media platforms, highlighting important environmental issues, success stories and ways to get involved in conservation efforts.
- **Social media reach:** Those **385 social media** posts collectively reached **693,133 users**.
- **Digital ad campaign:** We ran **66 digital ad campaigns** promoting our mission over the past year.

Website Content

- **Website posts:** In our commitment to keeping our online presence fresh and informative, the Conservation Council updated several sections of our webpage and added **119 new website posts**. These posts cover a wide range of topics, from environmental news and updates to actionable steps individuals can take to support conservation efforts.
- **Webpage views:** Our website received **100,675 views** during the year.

YouTube Engagement

- **New YouTube subscribers:** Over the course of the year, we welcomed **39,100 new subscribers** to our YouTube channel, bringing the total number of subscribers to nearly 114,000.
- **New videos:** In our ongoing effort to provide engaging and educational content, we created **42 new videos**, bringing our total **YouTube video** library to **180**.



Climate SOLUTIONS

The monumental effort to combat climate change underpins our work at the Conservation Council. We work to ensure governments and industry act in the best interests of New Brunswickers and Canadians and help the public understand the immediate effects of climate change in our province. We achieve this through citizen engagement, political advocacy campaigns and rigorous research to understand the challenges we face, the solutions we need and the most effective methods to rally broad public support for climate action.

12
SUBMISSIONS
TO THE PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS ON CLIMATE POLICY, REGULATIONS, BIOMASS AND OTHER TOPICS.

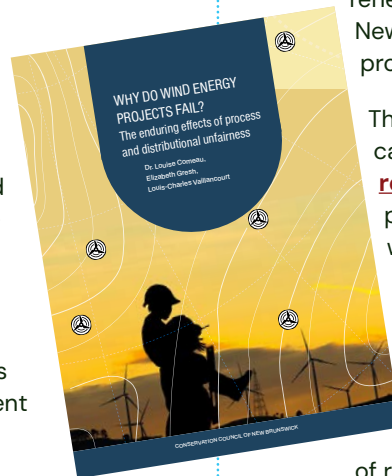


DISPELLING CLEAN ENERGY MYTHS
9
FACT SHEETS
6
VIDEOS

Electricity Vision

A fundamental part of our climate team’s work is advocating for effective public policy. We provide valuable input on government plans and regulations, serving as a bridge between complex information and the public, all while combating misinformation.

Our dedication to this work has seen the continued development of the **Atlantic Electricity Vision** section on our website. Through various case studies, comprehensive reports and analysis, we present a vision of a dependable and entirely



renewable electricity system for New Brunswick and the Atlantic provinces.

That includes a year-long case study and a subsequent **report** on why wind energy projects fail. The report shared what we learned about why two wind energy projects proposed for northern New Brunswick failed and offered recommendations to increase the chances for community acceptance of renewable energy projects in the future. A **webinar presenting the information** saw 45 attendees.

This year, we have also produced several meticulously researched fact sheets and engaging short videos to dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding the transition to renewable energy. We **addressed misinformation** from the province about transforming the Saint John LNG import facility into an export terminal (later hydrogen) and countered a misinformation campaign launched by the provincial government on the clean fuel regulations.

Additionally, we have explored the facts surrounding **small modular reactors** and the prospects surrounding the lifting of the **hydraulic fracturing moratorium** in our province.

Energy Poverty/Affordability

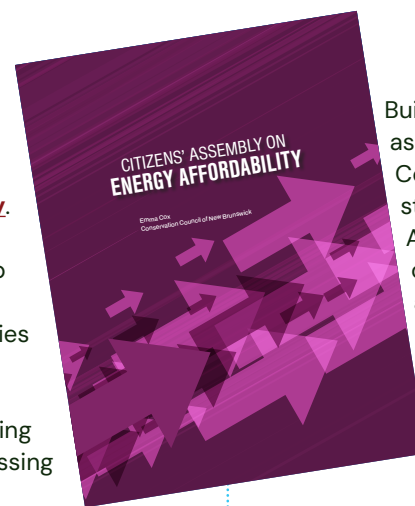
The Conservation Council of New Brunswick is dedicated to advocating for solutions that lead to a more affordable and sustainable future for residents.

Our commitment to protecting the interests of New Brunswickers led to us **appearing as an intervenor** before the New Brunswick Energy and Utilities Board during its review of NB Power’s proposed general rate increase. This ensured that the public’s voice was heard in critical energy decisions.

This year, we also **successfully influenced** the standing committee on climate change and environmental stewardship to hold hearings on a clean electricity strategy for New Brunswick to address our province’s urgent need for affordable and sustainable energy solutions.

The Conservation Council also organized a **citizens’ assembly on energy affordability**. The assembly brought together a diverse group of New Brunswickers to identify principles, policies and programs aimed at enhancing household energy efficiency, reducing energy costs and addressing energy poverty.

The resulting **statement on electricity affordability**, developed by assembly participants, offers recommendations to guide government and utilities toward a fair and sustainable future.



Building from the citizens’ assembly, the Conservation Council also organized a stakeholder assembly of Atlantic organizations working on energy affordability and energy poverty. Eight organizations attended the event, including government, social justice and advocacy groups.

Our dedication to promoting energy affordability is evident in our outreach efforts. The Conservation Council’s **energy affordability portal** has welcomed over **3,500 visitors**, providing valuable resources and information vital to the people of New Brunswick.



3 ENERGY POVERTY VIDEOS

- **Let’s make clean electricity accessible and affordable**
- **Atlantic Canadians should have a say in how we solve climate change**
- **Energy poverty in Atlantic Canada**



Dr. Louise Comeau and Dr. Moe Qureshi told the standing committee on climate change and environmental stewardship that New Brunswick doesn’t need more political interference in NB Power or unproven SMR technology— it needs a clean electricity strategy.



Our climate art posts reached **36 per cent** more people on social media than other messages.

On Facebook, our art posts outperformed traditional messaging by **115 per cent**.



CATCH WIND OF IT
14
art pieces presented to
2,500
community members

Electric Buses

The Conservation Council has worked tirelessly to engage the public in discussions about the benefits of electrifying New Brunswick's school bus fleet. Our outreach efforts have included a series of videos including a [video highlighting](#) the advantages from the perspective of school bus drivers and the creation of an [electric bus advocacy portal](#) on our website.

This year, we also began working on a targeted ad campaign promoting electric buses in New Brunswick. Our work on this file has yielded significant results, with the province of New Brunswick procuring **20 electric buses**.

Our efforts continue to gain momentum, and we will continue to push to make a fully electrified school bus fleet a reality in New Brunswick.

Climate Art

At the Conservation Council, our community-engaged artist collective, [From Harm to Harmony](#), has spearheaded efforts to engage the public in climate action through art, linking climate facts to emotions through various artistic expressions.

Last year, From Harm to Harmony's third installation, [Catch Wind of It](#), featured a [poetic pinwheel garden installation](#). Each artist created a functioning pinwheel/whirligig, using their respective mediums to animate a uniform platform and propeller. The project, part of Saint John's outdoor contemporary art festival, [Third Shift](#), allowed community members to reflect on wind as a renewable resource, emphasizing the transition to alternative energy sources in New Brunswick. *Catch Wind of It* was also installed at RB Studio and the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

We have also initiated a community-engaged artist-in-residence mentorship [pilot program](#), partnering with three artists to focus on climate solutions and alternative energy. Each artist is given 10 weeks of mentorship from program facilitators Laura Barron and Julian Bedoya, followed by six weeks to deliver their community-engaged art session and hold an event to present their work. We [welcomed](#) hip-hop artist [Stephen Hero](#), former Sackville, New Brunswick poet laureate [Shoshanna Wingate](#) and painter [Mario Doiron](#) to the program this year.

Our [climate change art portal](#) was also updated during this time period. This section of our website is now easier to navigate for mobile and tablet users and will soon include a series of new sections showcasing similarly themed artwork, more detailed artist profiles and resources section where artists can gain knowledge to help them facilitate community-engaged art projects.



Marine CONSERVATION

As ocean temperatures rise, our Marine Conservation team is even more committed to safeguarding our marine environments. Despite the increasing challenges posed by climate change, we are steadfast in our advocacy for improved oversight, regulation and enforcement of aquaculture activities within the Bay of Fundy. We are determined to continue protecting all aquatic environments and fulfilling our mission.



Restoring the Gaspereau

In partnership with the Peskotomuhkati Nation at Skutik, the Conservation Council of New Brunswick has remained committed to restoring sea-run fish and river ecosystems. Over the past decade, we've worked to restore fish passage and habitat quality along the Skutik (St. Croix River), with a focus on revitalizing the gaspereau (alewife), a vital river herring species. The gaspereau play an important role in the food chain, sustaining a variety of wildlife, including whales, seabirds, cod, porpoises and even raccoons and bears.



The project to remove the Milltown dam will improve fish habitat in the the Skutik (St. Croix River).

In 2002, we witnessed a modern low of only nine hundred gaspereau making their way to the Skutik. However, in 2023, nearly one million fish returned, marking substantial progress towards restoring their historic numbers, which once exceeded 10 million. Thanks to the Peskotomuhkati-led effort, work has started to **remove the Milltown dam**, and gaspereau will again ascend Salmon Falls in 2024.

We have helped the Peskotomuhkati Nation to secure four more years of funding to assess and repair barriers to fish passage, monitor water quality and improve habitat. Through media engagement, public events (like the **Alewife Run**) and presentations in schools, we have raised the profile of this significant restoration effort and shared some hope for struggling coastal habitats.



© Nick Hawkins
Wild Atlantic salmon swimming in a New Brunswick river.

Fighting Industrial Pollution

Climate change and consistent pollution are stressing our coastal waters. This year, we teamed up with Canadian and German environmental groups and concerned citizens to **oppose proposals** for liquified natural gas exports in Saint John.

Despite the misleading term “natural,” this fossil fuel project not only poses a threat to our climate due to increased emissions but also

puts the delicate Bay of Fundy waters at risk from elevated noise pollution and potential accidents. Concerns were exacerbated by the looming possibility of lifting the shale gas moratorium. Thanks in part to the work of our coalition, this project was scrapped.

Championing Responsible Salmon Aquaculture

Since the 1990s, we’ve fought for more stringent regulation and enforcement of the aquaculture



industry. Continuing this effort, this past year, we worked with our partners to highlight the adverse effects of escaped farmed salmon, challenged pesticides and other pollutants, including noise devices and pressured the industry to clean up marine debris.



Forest CONSERVATION

The Conservation Council has continued to push for critical changes in forest conservation in New Brunswick throughout the past year. We have placed significant pressure on the provincial government about issues such as herbicide spraying and protecting natural areas. In partnership with the University of New Brunswick, we also hired three UNB sustainability interns, and our forestry program produced various factsheets including on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and community forestry.

In the summer of 2022, our persistent advocacy bore fruit when the province **added 100,000 hectares** of new protected natural areas. By December 2022, New Brunswick had protected another **277,900 hectares of Crown land**, nearly doubling its total protected land and freshwater, totalling **552 new natural protected areas**.

Over
375,000
HECTARES OF LAND WAS
PROTECTED IN NEW BRUNSWICK
IN THE PAST YEAR.

Throughout December 2022, our community artist collective **visited schools across the province** to encourage people to write letters to the Prime Minister and Canadian delegates heading to the NatureCOP in Montreal to discuss global progress on nature protection and devise a plan to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030. These efforts culminated in an **art**



On Dec. 4, 2022, community members and our artist collective met with Nature Canada's NatureBus tour at the Conserver House on its way to NatureCOP in Montreal for an afternoon letter-writing session and an art exhibition which featured local mandalas, poetry and the results of a 28-day painting challenge for climate action.

exhibition and letter-writing event in collaboration with Nature Canada's NatureBus tour, where more than 500 physical letters and art pieces were delivered to Canadian delegates.

In May, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers held its annual **Forest Forum** in New Brunswick. Ahead of the forum, we

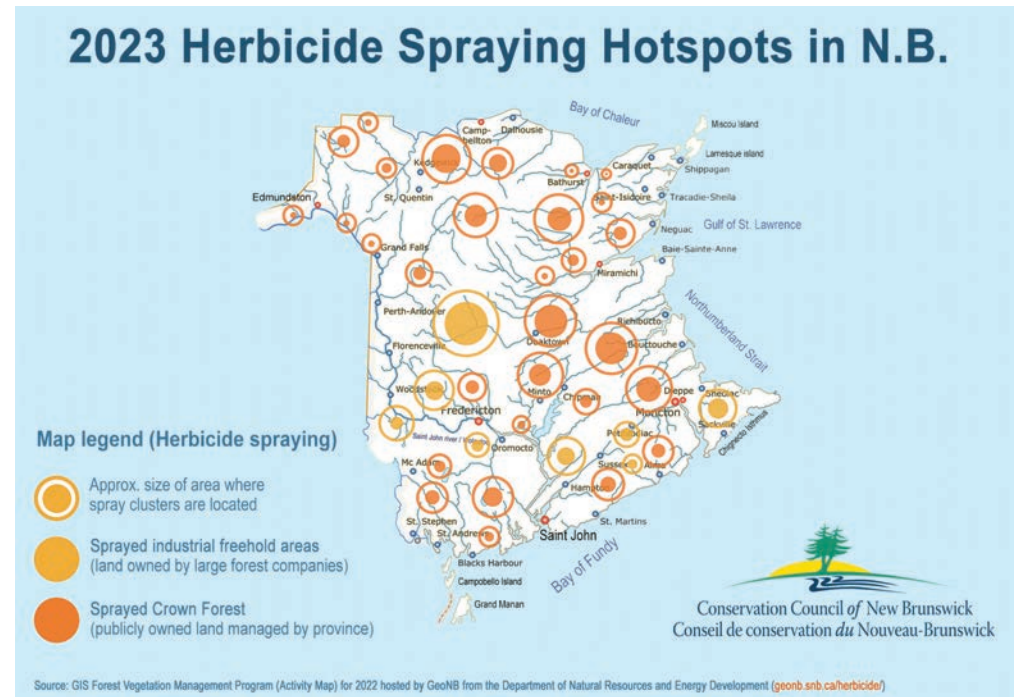
pushed the province for an integrated provincial forest management strategy that prioritizes biodiversity, conservation, Indigenous co-stewardship and ecological forestry practices. This included calling for the provincial government to deliver a long-promised state of the forest report, which was finally released in August.



230
new letters sent to
provincial government to
stop herbicide spraying

Stop Herbicide Spraying

Every year, from August through September, extensive clearcut areas are treated with glyphosate-containing products in New Brunswick. This is an outdated management approach where corporate profits and timber supply take precedence over human safety and environmental concerns.



Our map warning citizens of herbicide spraying hotspots during the 2022-23 spraying season.

The ecological variety of New Brunswick's Crown forests, including birds and mammals, beneficial insects, soil organisms and aquatic species, is being harmed by the continuous use of glyphosate-based herbicides in Crown forestry management. New Brunswick currently holds the highest rate of glyphosate use in forestry by land mass, with expectations of an increase, intensifying environmental risks.

In addition to our annual **herbicide hotspot spraying maps**, our efforts have encouraged more than 6,000 New Brunswickers, including 230 this year, to write letters to the provincial government to voice their support for a ban on herbicide spraying on Crown forests.



Learning OUTSIDE

Our Learning Outside project remains committed to inspiring educators and students to strengthen the connection between children and the natural world. This program, which encourages teachers to engage their students in outdoor experiences, is supported by a curriculum tailored to New Brunswick’s seasons, flora, fauna and the unique outdoor features of school grounds.

Engaging Students and Teachers

As the 2022 school year began, our Learning Outside team returned to schools. Our objective remained consistent — to create student lessons that inspire a lifelong passion for the natural world.



Learning Outside director Nadine Ives at the ASD-W STEAM Expo.

We also provided information and consultation to four schools actively seeking to develop outdoor learning spaces. Notably, our involvement in the ASD-W STEAM Expo on March 18 allowed us to support teachers and students while showcasing our educational activities to a wider audience.

Additionally, our involvement with the Great Minds Think Outside program has empowered teachers with professional development opportunities within their schools. To date, this program has reached out to educators in more than 120 schools throughout the province, equipping them with invaluable insights, resources and tools to create outdoor activities across various subjects and grade levels. These sessions are delivered in both English and French.

Curriculum Development

During the year, we continued developing and refining our activities to ensure they were engaging and informative across various grade levels. We developed and piloted our new Insects and Climate Change art activity, which includes a slide presentation, 10 fact sheets on the different insects, two colouring/activity pages and extension activities for middle and high school classes. We also revised descriptions and fact sheets, making them easily accessible to educators and students through our themed modules on the Learning Outside [website](#).

Elementary Grades

Total Classes

37

Number of Students

710

Topics Explored:

Signs of fall, forest exploration (animals, plants and sounds), wellness, monarch life cycle and migration, habitats, food webs, Atlantic Salmon, animal adaptations to winter, birds (nesting and competition), outdoor math, pollination and pollinators.

Middle School

Total Classes

11

Number of Students

242

Activities Included:

Atlantic Salmon art activity, insects and climate change art activity.



Funders

Many sources, including hundreds of small, individual donations, power our work. This wide range of support allows us to be fully independent as New Brunswick's leading environmental advocate. Thank you to our generous funders:

Province of New Brunswick – Environmental Trust Fund

Province of New Brunswick – NB Wildlife Trust Fund

Ivey Foundation

Environmental Funders Canada

Nature Canada

Echo Foundation

Trottier Foundation

Pembina Institute

CPAWS

McConnell Foundation

Young Canada Works

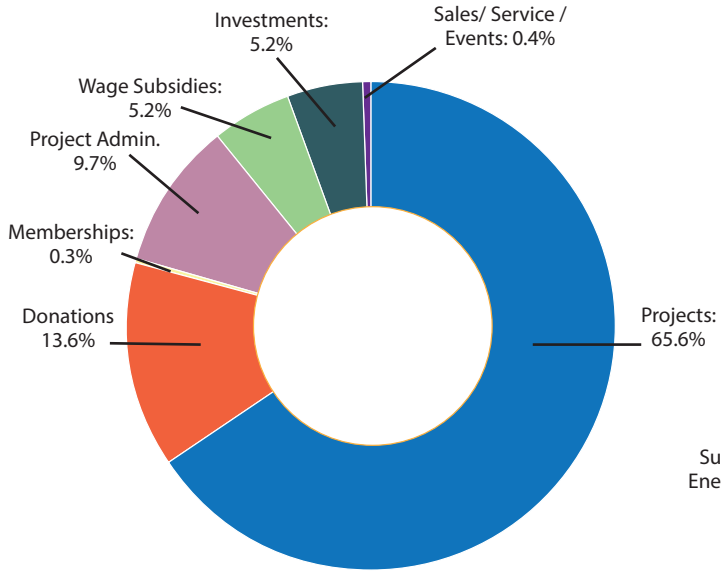
Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc.

PEW Foundation

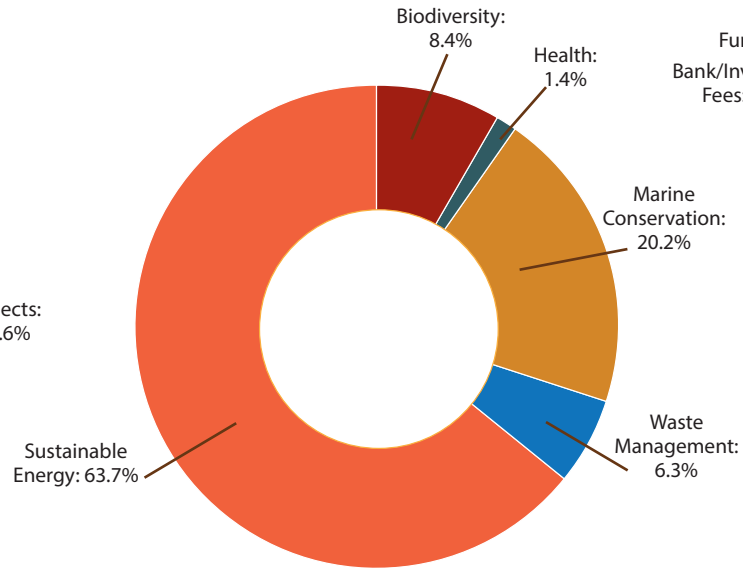


Fiscal Year 2023



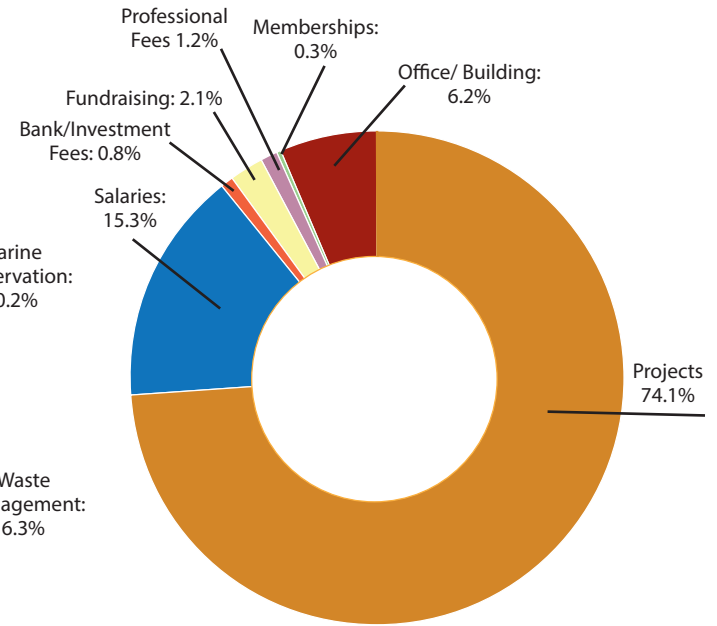
Revenue

Projects	\$747,982
Donations	\$155,689
Memberships	\$3,782
Project Admin	\$110,791
Wage Subsidies	\$59,207
Investments	\$58,750
Sales/Service	\$4,473
Total	\$1,140,674



Income by Programs

Biodiversity	\$63,446
Health	\$10,613
Marine Conservation	\$151,682
Waste Management	\$43,940
Sustainable Energy	\$478,301
Total	\$747,982



Expenses

Projects	\$749,209
Operational Salaries	\$154,129
Banking/Investments	\$7,644
Fundraising	\$21,722
Professional Fees	\$12,148
Membership Services	\$3,005
Building/Office/General	\$62,782
Total	\$1,010,639

**This statement should be read in conjunction with our audited financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2023.*





CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF NEW BRUNSWICK

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