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## BRIEFING FORM

**SUBMITTED TO:** Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

**DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:** 

**DATE OF MEETING:** July 7, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps Project

### ORIGIN

May 5, 2011, Item 7.1.5 - Update on Lakes Banook and MicMac

### RECOMMENDATION/ DECISION REQUIRED

(NONE REQUIRED IN THIS CASE, INFORMATION ONLY)

## **BACKGROUND**

On June 2, 2011, the Sustainable Environment Management Office (SEMO) learned that the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) was successful in a submission for a Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps Partner Project titled: Lake Banook/MicMac Water Quality Stewardship Project.

The Youth Conservation Corps provides young Nova Scotians with opportunities for hands-on experience in environmental projects like watershed management and climate change. The Nova Scotia Youth Conservation Corps has three components:

1. Youth: Nova Scotia students, equity groups, and the unemployed, ages 17 – 30;
2. Community: Communities throughout Nova Scotia who are interested in putting together a summer environmental project proposal for submission to the NSYCC. This project will provide work opportunities for local youth; and
3. Environment: Work relates to the conservation and enhancement of Nova Scotia's environment, community environmental education and awareness, and public participation.

The Community Partner Project program pays three quarters of the youths' wages. SEMO will pay twenty-five percent of the salary for two youths for July and August (\$1,598).

### **Project Goals:**

Led by the Dartmouth Area Watersheds Network (DAWN) in partnership with HRM, this project will facilitate community education about water quality in Lakes Banook and Micmac, and explain how sustainable land use and development practices (as applied at the individual property owner level) can help protect against or mitigate negative impacts on water quality in the Lake Banook/Micmac sub-watershed.

The short term objectives are to educate and raise awareness in the community about:

- threats to freshwater quality;
- how to mitigate those threats; and
- what are the consequences of various land use practices and development activities on water quality.

The long term objectives are to:

- facilitate community stewardship in assessing the sources and mitigating the causes of nutrient loading in the water;
- improve the water quality of the lakes through sustainable land use and development practices; and
- decrease nutrient loading into the Lake Banook/Micmac watershed.

Project success will be measured in the short term by the number of groups/residents engaged in stewardship activities. A decrease in nuisance weed plant growth and nutrient levels in the water will measure project successes over the longer term.

### **Project Activities:**

The NSYCC Youth Corps crew will:

- develop a brochure targeted at residents and landowners that outlines threats to freshwater quality, how to mitigate those threats, and the consequences of various land use practices and development activities on water quality;
- hand deliver the brochure to Lake Banook/Micmac residents, be available to answer questions and promote stewardship opportunities;
- develop and implement one or more education programs for the Blue Flag candidate beach (concurrent application) at Birch Cove (see about the program at: <http://www.blueflag.org/>);
- develop and implement three or more education sessions in the Lake Banook/Micmac area, targeted at canoe clubs, local residence groups, and the DAWN membership; and
- assist in the development of a Lake Management Plan for the Nuisance Weed Management group.

This project complements the work staff is focusing on in the Lake Banook/MicMac area to incubate progress around protection of our urban water resources.

### **ALTERNATIVES AND ASSOCIATED RISKS**

None identified.

### **IMPACT/BENEFITS:**

Increased community environmental awareness around water quality issues.

### **COMMUNICATION ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES:**

This is a communications/education project.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

None

**KEY STAFF CONTACT:** Cameron Deacoff (490-1926) or Richard MacLellan (490-6056)