

“Lakeshore Habitat Management for Fish and Wildlife in the Northern Boreal Mountains”

FINAL REPORT for PROJECT 2017-18-10
For YUKON FISH AND WILDLIFE ENHANCEMENT TRUST

By
Don Reid, Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Whitehorse

INTRODUCTION: This document summarizes progress on a project designed to provide principles and guidelines for conservation of fish and wildlife habitats in lake shore ecosystems in the northern boreal mountains. Wildlife Conservation Society Canada gratefully thanks the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Trust for augmenting our core funding from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation to help us do this work.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES (as outlined in the Proposal):

To produce a document that:

- (i) summarizes the ecological characteristics and values of northern boreal lakeshores and associated aquatic and terrestrial habitats;
- (ii) provides recommended principles and guidelines for good stewardship of fish and wildlife habitats associated with lakeshores;
- (iii) identifies knowledge gaps to be filled to improve future stewardship (including planning and management).

PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

The main activities, as listed in the Proposal, were Information Gathering, Report Writing, Publication and Communications. The first two of these were to occur during the period of the YFWET grant, up to May 2018.

We have completed the Information Gathering activity. The Report Writing is complete to Draft stage. Publication and Communications are still to be done, and in the proposal were projected to occur beyond the end of the YFWET grant period. Work to date has been completed by Joël Potié (MSc candidate, McGill University, but based in Mayo, YT) and Don Reid (Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, Whitehorse).

Information Gathering: To write the Report we have gathered information and knowledge from:

- The scientific literature, including government and other reports that are not always published in peer-reviewed journals
- Knowledgeable individuals with direct experience in lake and fish management in Yukon, principally Don Toews and Al von Finster
- Conversations with First Nation government staff to whom we have presented the project, notably the Carcross Tagish, Kwanlin Dun and Ta’an Kwäch’än First Nations.
- Conversations with Renewable Resource Councils to whom we have presented the project, notably the DanKeyi, Carcross/Tagish, Carmacks, Selkirk, Mayo, and Dawson RRCs

All these approaches have helped a lot in scoping the content of the document, and in providing specific detail in places. For example, we have tried to build socio-cultural values (e.g., historic sites, camps, burial sites) associated with lake shores into the document after being urged to do so by various First Nation and RRC audiences.

Report Writing: The Lakeshore Management Report is completed to draft stage, and is submitted with this Project Final Report. We think we have a comprehensive and useful document in place that lays out specific principles, topics, and guidelines for land use planning processes and for project environmental impact assessments to reference and apply.

There is one step in the process of writing the Report that we have not completed – peer review by Yukon and outside experts. The process of compiling large amounts of information and turning it all into a useful report has taken longer than originally expected, and we have not managed to get review by our Yukon experts – Don Toews and Al von Finster – completed before the due date for this Project Report. In our Proposal we had expected peer

reviews by Yukon experts to have been completed by March 2018, and full completion of the Report by end of May 2018. This time line is now extended by at least a month.

Publication and Communications: In our Proposal we noted that we aimed to have the Report published by end of May 2018. This timeline seems to be too ambitious by about one month. We are now aiming for peer review by Yukon experts in April, by outside experts in May, and final layout and publication in June.

Communications were not included within the scope of the YFWET grant, although the Proposal noted the need for extensive communications to take place in 2018 and 2019.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications about the project and its purposes and outcomes have taken place with: (i) First Nation government staff, notably the Carcross Tagish, Kwanlin Dun and Ta'an Kwäch'än First Nations; (ii) Renewable Resource Councils, notably the DanKeyi, Carcross/Tagish, Carmacks, Selkirk, Mayo, and Dawson RRCs.

In all cases we have asked for time on their agendas, and we have made a presentation (digital copy of presentation submitted with this report) and received feedback and advice.

YFWET was acknowledged at each of the presentations with a verbal mention and logo on the presentation.

Communicating the actual Lakeshore Management Report in its final version has not yet happened. As identified in the Proposal, such communications will happen later in 2018 and in 2019, after the Report itself is published.

We do not have any images of our work to submit.