

QUEBEC HABITAT INITIATIVE
FY2013 PROGRESS REPORT
TO THE
VIRGINIA DEPT. OF GAME & INLAND FISHERIES
(April 2012 – March 2013)
(Year I of V)



Ducks Unlimited Canada and Ducks Unlimited, Inc
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Ducks Unlimited Canada
Conserving Canada's Wetlands



DUCKS UNLIMITED

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FY2013 DUC (Quebec) Annual Progress Report
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Introduction

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies established a goal for states to collectively contribute \$10 million per year to North American Waterfowl Management Plan projects on the Canadian breeding grounds. State funding provides non-federal monies that are matched by Ducks Unlimited (DU) and in turn matched by federal funds through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. In support of this effort, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) partnered with DU to provide \$25,000 per year for five years in support to the Habitat Conservation Initiative in Quebec. This annual report describes progress for the **first** year of that initiative.

Project Benefits

The program will be focused in the St. Lawrence and Boreal Forest Conservation Priority Areas (CPA) of Quebec (Figure 1). The St. Lawrence River is the dominant feature of Quebec landscape. Conservation efforts are focused on St. Lawrence lowlands because it is the most densely populated part of the province and remains subject to multiple threats. The St. Lawrence Lowlands of Quebec are a level 2a priority area within DU's International Conservation Plan (ICP). As for the Boreal Forest of

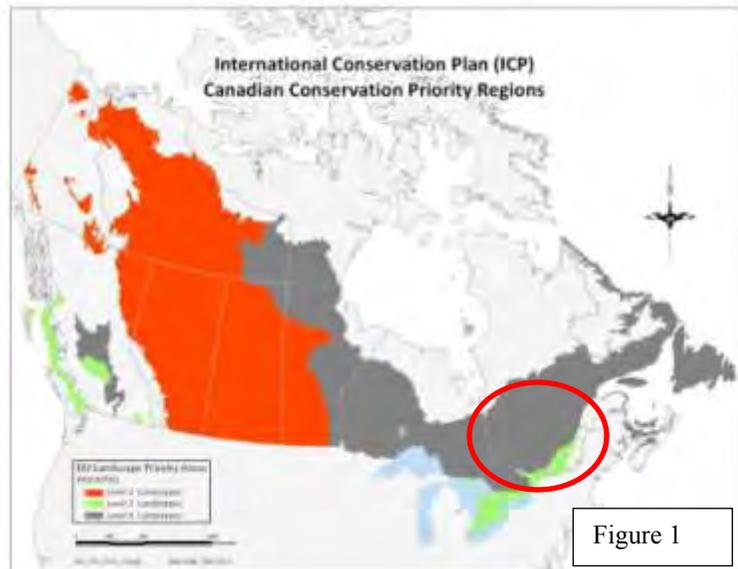


Figure 1

Quebec, it covers 463,000 square miles, and is part of the largest forested region in the world. More than three million waterfowl breed, molt or winter in this area, providing food to local communities, and offering fantastic opportunities for sport hunting and bird watching along the migration routes and wintering areas that stretch from the Arctic to the southern U.S.

Several important species of waterfowl that Virginia hunters commonly harvest such as the American black duck, mallard, wood duck, green-winged teal, Canada goose, greater snow goose, greater and lesser scaup often trace their origins to habitat in Quebec. The main species of focus is the American black duck. With 62% of the world population breeding in Quebec (558,000 of 910,000), the American black duck is highly dependent on conservation of its breeding, staging and wintering habitats in Quebec. The province of Quebec spring stages and produces 100% of the south Atlantic population of Canada geese that winters off Chesapeake Bay and a significant portion of the north Atlantic

population that winters along the New England coast. Among dabbling ducks, Quebec also produces up to 70% of the eastern green-winged teal population.

The five year initiative for the Quebec habitat conservation will include the combined work of DUC staff with private and public landowners to restore and protect larger wetlands within Conservation Priority Areas (CPAs) through conservation agreements, perpetual conservation easements and transfer of property to the Quebec government while ensuring perpetual protection. The support of scientific research, conduction of inventories to fill information gaps, and implementation of policy programs to influence government and industry will be done in order to achieve our goals within the Boreal Forest.

FY2013 Accomplishments

Retention projects

Massettes Project

The wetland complex of Massettes Marsh is located on the north shore of the Ottawa River. DUC's GIS modeling ranks the Massettes property as an important wetland for waterfowl in Quebec. The complex of Massettes Marsh is a mix of quality natural habitat and managed wetlands that sits between public land (Province of Quebec) and private land (the Labelle property; Figure 2). The site was enhanced in 1978 but since, the water-control structure and dyke have seriously degraded and need restoration. After several attempts to renew an expired conservation agreement, the option of purchasing the Labelle property has become viable. The acquisition of these 145 ha (358 acres) have furthered consolidation of riparian wildlife ecosystems along approximately 40 km of shoreline between Gatineau and Thurso. This also gives DUC access to rebuild the 84 ha (207 acres) wetland project where the infrastructure has reached the end of its functional life. Massettes Marsh was the largest remaining tract of land required to consolidate the Ottawa River habitat mosaic of more than 3,000 ha (7,413 acres). This purchase is part of our securement agreement with Quebec Ministry of Natural Resources (QMNR) and title will be transferred to QMNR to minimize carrying costs and DUC will maintain a conservation easement on the property. DUC invested \$466,000 for this project.



South River Project

The South River wetland conservation project is a long term project (over 10 years) targeting conservation and restoration of more than 2,500 acres of wetland. In recent years, the project has expanded from a focused protection program (acquisition and legal agreements) to the use of other conservation tactics to insure long term ecological integrity of the wetlands of the South River. Since the inception of the project over 50 landowners have been contacted and this outreach effort has resulted in 992 acres purchased (Figure 3).

In FY2013, DU purchased a new property (Verhaegen property; lots 38, 41 and 42) that resulted in the direct retention of an additional 30 acres of wetland and upland habitats and the ongoing management of the South River Project (Figure 4). The purchase of the Verhaegen property was completed in March 2013. DUC invested \$76,000 for this project.



Enhancement projects

Poulin Project

With a large number of wetlands that have disappeared in some regions of Quebec, it becomes a necessity to proceed, when possible, to the creation and restoration of new wetlands. In FY13, the DUC team rebuilt the dike and the water level control structure for the Poulin Marsh in the Beauce region. DUC also resigned a conservation agreement with the owner, protecting these 30 acres of wetlands for the next 21 years (Figure 5). DUC invested \$77,000 for this project.



Figure 5

Nest Box Program



Figure 6

In the last year, more than a hundred new nest boxes were set up. This brings the number to over 2,500 installed and tracked nest boxes. This program is a success because of the impressive involvement of more than 300 collaborators (Figure 6).

The DUC team ensures the coordination and information of this network. DUC invested \$25,000 for this program.

Eastern Boreal Forest

DUC sits at the Plan Nord's (North Plan) Partners Table. The DUC team has participated in several major activities on the Plan Nord including a presentation and debate on the "Appointment on Water" organized by the Quebec Association of Watershed Managers, presenting at the conference "Focused on a Sustainable North" led by Laval University, organizing a session on the Plan Nord at the Cold Regions Engineering Conference, and participating in the discussion and reflection on northern research and the Plan Nord that was organized by the Chief Scientist of Quebec. DUC has been particularly active on research and dissemination of project research through representations aiming to raise awareness and to empower local stakeholders about the importance of wetlands and ecological resources in the boreal forest. DUC invested \$150,000 in the Eastern Boreal Forest Program in FY2013.



Revenue and Expenditures

This year, VDGIF funding of \$25,000, when combined with DU leveraged funds, provided \$50,000 to support the habitat conservation efforts in Quebec. This amount, in turn, was then matched with \$50,000 from NAWCA, and leveraged with an additional \$694,000 from other sources for a total program expenditure of \$794,000. By partnering in this way, three additional U.S. partner dollars were leveraged for every dollar contributed by VDGIF. In FY2013, the State of Virginia funds were matched over 30 times within the Quebec Habitat Initiative.

FY2013 Quebec Habitat Initiative:

<i>Revenue Sources ¹</i>	<i>Revenue (\$)</i>
DU Inc.	25,000
NAWCA	50,000
VDGIF	25,000
Pew Foundation	120,000
Other Sources ²	574,000
Total Revenue	\$ 794,000
<i>Program Investments ¹</i>	<i>Expenditure (\$)</i>
Massettes	466,000
South River	76,000
Poulin	77,000
Nest Box Program	\$25,000
Eastern Boreal Forest	150,000
Total Expenditure	\$ 794,000

¹ US and Canadian funds at par

² May include DU Canada and other Canadian and U.S. sources

Ducks Unlimited extends a sincere thank you to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for their continued support of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and waterfowl habitat conservation initiatives aimed at strengthening waterfowl populations in eastern North America.