



## SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER



### Upcoming Events

**May 22** Our Annual General Meeting will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at Corran Ban Hall (1231 Rte 6). Our guest speaker for the evening Evan MacDonald will discuss "Sustainable Agriculture Resources - using new technology for soil conservation." Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

**June 9** Join our annual hike on the Winter River Trail. Don't forget your camera! The trail is home to some great areas of Lady's Slipper plants, which we hope to see in bloom. Meet at the trail head (145 East Suffolk Road Extension) at 10am.

**More information online at [WinterTracadie.ca](http://WinterTracadie.ca)**

**More frequent updates available from [Facebook.com/WRTBWA](https://www.facebook.com/WRTBWA)**

(Top) Lady's slipper blooms photographed during our 2017 spring hike.  
(Bottom) Board members George, Ryan, Cathy, Esther, John, and Meghan visiting our land.



### We are Landowners too!

In 2017 we became property owners to a 3 acre parcel along the Winter River in Suffolk. This was due to the generosity of Sterling and Norma Hardy, who grew up in our watershed area, but moved to the USA many years ago.

As a registered charity, we can offer tax receipts for donations — whether they are big donations like land or small donations of materials or cash, all are appreciated.



### Water Use Makeover Program

This project was for residents in Charlottetown with water meters, so that we could accurately measure household water usage before and after making a series of changes, getting a "water makeover" involving water saving devices. The project targeted lower income families, and those with mobility or transportation challenges who would most benefit from having items delivered and available at lower costs.

We had 70 participants (66 residences and 4 businesses). We provided 78 toilets, 71 rain barrels, 26 shower heads, 36 shower timers, 81 faucet aerators as of April 30, 2018.

The installation phase is almost done, then we follow up with all participants to see exactly how much water was saved.

## Land use and management in the watershed

Research shows that water quality and aquatic ecosystem health rely on maintaining a balance of land uses in the watershed, particularly a stable and healthy forest cover. WRTBWA works to protect the watershed through extensive field work, educational initiatives, and collaboration with landowners. However, WRTBWA and residents of the watershed are asking questions about recent land use changes, including hedgerow removal, land clearing, more potato production, and the construction of irrigation ponds. Much of this activity is by a large potato producer that has acquired extensive land holdings in the watershed.

Vanco Farms Ltd. now owns 947 acres, or 383 hectares, in the Winter River watershed which is 2.6% of our entire management area.

WRTBWA is concerned with Vanco Farms' land-clearing east of the Union Road and construction of a drainage ditch leading into the Brackley Branch of the Winter River. As the photo clearly shows, runoff from land-clearing and the poorly-engineered ditch resulted in extensive siltation.

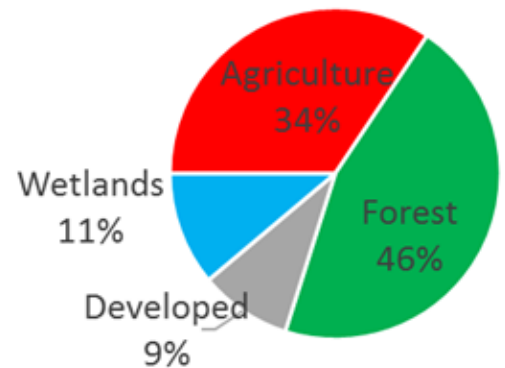
Provincial government officials visited the site and concluded that, while the project did not break any laws, it should have been engineered to avoid the severe stream siltation that occurred. No surprise there! We spoke to Vanco Farms officials about the project, letting them know that residents are concerned, that we'd be watching to ensure that laws are followed.

Vanco Farms is also building an irrigation pond on a nearby property. Their intention seems to be to capture runoff from adjacent fields and supplement it by water from low-capacity wells to irrigate nearby potato fields. While operating within current laws, WRTBWA has concerns, including the destruction of several thousand trees planted by Charlottetown school children over the years, under the supervision of our staff and volunteers.

Our purpose in presenting this account is not to criticize one landowner, but to inform residents on land use issues. Conversations with Vanco Farms officials indicated they're willing to cooperate and communicate with WRTBWA. We're encouraged by this but will remain vigilant.

**A more detailed version of this article is available from [WinterTracadie.ca/land-use-in-the-watershed](http://WinterTracadie.ca/land-use-in-the-watershed)**

WRTBWA Management Area



A newly created drainage ditch, carrying large amounts of silt into the nearby stream. Silt fencing was installed but isn't effective.

## 2017 Field Work

**Summer field crew:** Elliott Christopher, Blake DeJong, Trent Macswain, Sarah McBride, Richard Redden, Tate Saulnier

**Fall field crew:** Jennifer Whittaker, Miranda Weed

**Supervisors or Interns:** Emma Spence, Vanessa Jackson, Matt Barr

**Watershed Coordinator:** Sarah Wheatley

Accomplishments:

- Distance of stream cleared: 8.5 km
- Number of trees and shrubs planted: 2984
- Brush piles constructed for wildlife: 42
- Unused culverts removed from a stream: 1
- Problem culverts replaced: 2
- Brush mats constructed or upgraded: 33
- Garbage collected from shores & roads: 2,530kg

**A detailed account of all our field activities completed each year is available online at [WinterTracadie.ca/field-work](http://WinterTracadie.ca/field-work)**

**You can donate to support our work, more information at [WinterTracadie.ca/donate](http://WinterTracadie.ca/donate)**



Photos (from top to bottom): Before, during, and after culvert replacement at Black River. The downstream end of the culvert is no longer "hung" which required fish to jump up into the culvert, now fish can easily swim through this larger culvert. Farm equipment can also more easily use this improved crossing, and not worry about a small culvert washing out during a big storm.

**We would like to thank our funding partners for their support of our work in 2017.**

- Federal programs:**
- Canada Summer Jobs
  - Coastal Restoration Fund
  - EcoAction
  - Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program

- Provincial programs:**
- Graduate Mentorship Program
  - Greening Spaces Program
  - Jobs for Youth
  - Watershed Management Fund

- Other grants:**
- City of Charlottetown
  - Colleges and Institutes Canada: Clean Tech Internship
  - Wildlife Conservation Fund
  - Individual Donations



## New Tree Planting Project in the Watershed

For several years we have been doing tree planting near streams to improve habitat for fish and wildlife, and to improve buffer zones around agricultural fields. We will continue planting these areas, but are branching out this year and next.

We have a new project for tree planting in more locations:

- Coastal areas along Tracadie Bay to expand buffer zones, slow erosion, and add wildlife habitat
- Reforestation of retired agricultural or industrial land, to create a mixed forest rather than white spruce that would likely appear over time
- Adding trees and shrubs within existing forests for variety, wildlife habitat, or more suitable species
- New hedgerows or upgrading existing hedgerows — particularly between residential areas and agricultural areas, or to act as wildlife corridors between areas of forest.

We are focussing on smaller hedgerows and improving existing hedgerows. Larger landowners are eligible for the provincial hedgerow planting program for sites with room for at least 300 trees in a new hedgerow. See: [princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/apply-hedgerow-planting](http://princeedwardisland.ca/en/service/apply-hedgerow-planting)

All the trees and shrubs we use are native to PEI and were raised on PEI.

**If you would like to spruce up your property with some trees, contact us to discuss the location.**



(Top) Forest enhancement along Winter River Trail, Suffolk 2017, involving patch cuts of aging balsam fir stand, creating debris piles for wildlife habitat, and replanting with mix of trees.

(Bottom) Young trees growing by Tracadie Bay.



### Contact Us

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WINTER RIVER - TRACADIE BAY  
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

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