

Strategic Plan

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Prepared by:

Chaleur Bay Watersheds Group (CBWG)

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Introduction

The Chaleur Bay Watersheds Group (CBWG) is a non for profit organization that was created in August of 2000 and is mainly funded by the Environmental Trust Fund of New Brunswick. The organization began its efforts in monitoring the watersheds of the Bay of Chaleur. The Chaleur Bay Watersheds group covers an area of 1400 km². The group is involved with five different municipalities regarding environmental projects: Beresford, Nigadoo, Petit-Rocher Pointe-Verte and Belledune.

The office is located in Nigadoo, New Brunswick. The CBWG quickly formed and began to work progressively to achieve its objectives through the Water Classification Program that included the rivers between Peters River and Jacquet River located north of our territory. Specifically, the group is interested in the sustainable management of the environment and protection of the Peters River, Millstream River, Nigadoo River, the small and big Elmtree River, the Belldune River and the Jacquet River in addition with the brooks Hendry, Duncan, Guitard, Fournier and Grants.

Throughout its existence, the group has been involved in many different projects to help improve the state of the environment in the Chaleur region and bring awareness the public about various environmental issues. One of the group's major projects is the monitoring of buffer zones that began in 2002. This environmental monitoring project was set up following consultations with the community members regarding environmental concerns. Based on these consultations, the group determined that the health of our buffer zones is a concern for the community.

To plan the restoration of the watersheds, we must first understand their various components. Thanks to the Environmental Trust Fund, the group is now proceeding with the environmental assessment of our watersheds. Part of the assessment is to gather many layers of information in a Geographic Information System (GIS) that can be used to improve the management of watersheds.

Vision and Mission

The existence of the Chaleur Bay Watersheds Group aims to protect the natural resources of river basins in our territory. For 10 years, the group has been working on projects focused on conservation, planning, evaluation and improvement of the environment.

The group's mission is "Working together to preserve the health of our watersheds" The group focuses on sustainable development and environmental monitoring to maintain a healthy community. The CBWG creates and manages projects involving: environmental monitoring of buffer zones, the restoration of impacted sites, the protection and conservation of endangered species, outreach to the community and especially riparian owners who interact more closely with the watershed.

Analysis of the organization

The development of the monitoring program will depend on the group's budget. Project priorities will be determined based on the results of consultations with members of the community, members of the group and the board of directors. The CCBWG regularly reviews its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The following section illustrates these points.

Strengths

- The group has established a strong relationship with the community, the private sector, volunteers and different departments of the local government (Department of Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, Natural Resources etc.) for collaboration on different projects;
- The group has been involved in many different projects to improve the state of the environment in the Chaleur region such as restoration of impacted sites, analysis of the water quality, water classification and environmental impact studies. Therefore, the BCWG has the expertise to continue other similar projects;
- The group's efforts have increased public awareness about several environmental issues;
- The group plays role of intermediary for the community when they need to express concerns to the attention of the government;

The experienced staff and consultants of the group are:

- Gilberte Boudreau: President of the group, Gilberte has extensive experience in project management and rehabilitation of watersheds. She has been involved in several projects to improve water quality and aquatic habitat in our watershed and made sure that deadlines and budgets have been met to ensure the success of our group;
- Joanie Bertin: Project coordinator, Joanie has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science, specialised in conservation and biodiversity. She worked for two non for profit organizations before she joined the CBWG; the Nepisiguit Salmon Association and the Nature Conservancy of Canada;
- Amélie Boudreault: Environmental technician, Amélie has worked in the field and in the laboratory. She received her diploma in Environmental technology from the NBCC and has also worked for a similar group; the Prokemouche River Management Committee.
- Stéphane Doucet and Réjean Roy : Biologists and former coordinators of the group, Réjean and Stéphane has been working for and with the group for several years to help develop and improve projects;
- Marc-André Gionet : General director for the Village of Nigadoo and treasurer of the group;
- Chantal Haché: Secretary of the Village of Nigadoo.

The CBWG continues collaboration with several other people including: Gilles Thériault and Marc-Antoine Guitard of the Ministry of Environment and local governments, Terry Melanson, an expert in restoration of aquatic habitat of fisheries and oceans, Susan Ferguson of the Canadian River Institute to help us map the watershed, develop and modify our strategic and action plan. Karl Branch of the Maritime College of Forest Technology and Luc Gagnon of the Department of Natural Resources. The CBWG continues the development of the board of

directors in order to help us achieve our goals and objectives.

Weaknesses

- The group has a fairly regular change of employees who do not have a full-time position due to the lack of funding;
- The group is funded on an annual basis only (not guaranteed), which makes the long-term planning of projects more difficult;
- The group finds it difficult to attract volunteers and convince stakeholders in the private sector to contribute to ongoing projects;
- Despite the group's outreach efforts, a more thorough approach would be needed to establish a general awareness of the community towards the conservation of the environment.
- Since the role of the group is not clear to some community members, we would need to ease the access of information on social media and on our website.

Opportunities

The Chaleur Bay is a region that has many attractions and activities for tourists for the whole family. Each municipality has unique sites to offer. The Belledune Park offers panoramic views of the Chaleur Bay where visitors can camp and swim. The old mill park and the Antinouri Lake offers an area where visitors can relax, canoe and enjoy nature. Protecting the beaches and the water quality in the region will allow us to maintain and ensure the return of tourists in the region. The Petit-Rocher wharf is another meeting place for visitors, fishermen and residents. Fishing trips are even organized by a local fisherman. Maintaining fish habitat is essential to the economy of the region.

The Atlas Park in Pointe-Verte is a nice place for outdoor activities where people can go diving, fishing, hiking in the summer and ski in the winter time. By committing ourselves to understand the state of our rivers and streams scientifically, we will protect our precious natural resources in our watersheds.

- The creation of various observation sites with educational panels to promote conservation of the environment, for example in the Jacquet River Gorge;
- The protection of local drinking water sources (Nigadoo River and the Jacquet River);
- Participation in conferences and seminars that have similar interests to group in order to network with them;
- Meeting the expectations of the community that seems to be more interested in protecting our environment;
- Communicate with other sectors/companies in the region to demonstrate the importance of

contributing to the conservation environment. With the contribution of other non-government sectors, the group could ensure the continuity of its projects;

- Helping to preserve the region's endangered species such as the Maritime Ringlet in the salt marshes of the Peters River in Beresford and Atlantic salmon in the Jacquet River.

Threats

- Although inflation has increased, funding has not increased significantly since the creation of the group who now performs many more activities with a budget similar to previous years;
- The government cutbacks have reduced funding to all organizations. Loss of personnel at the government level also leads to lower government collaborations with groups.
- With no financial contribution for the awareness and education of the environment, the group would not have the support of the community regarding their projects;

Goals and Objectives

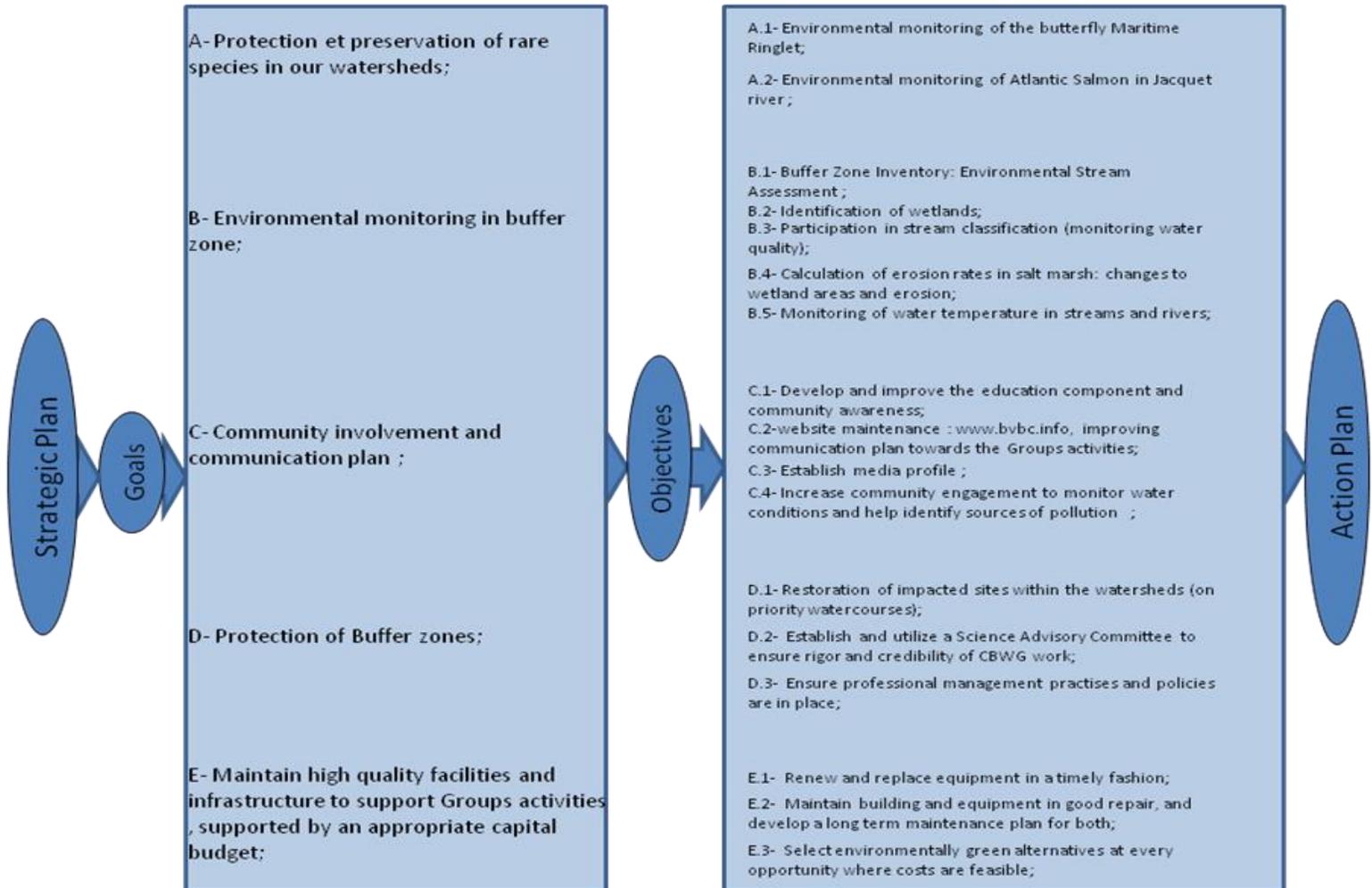
The CBWG as set its priorities by evaluating several environmental parameters. The group must then determine the steps to fix the issues that causes the most damage to the ecosystem. The group must then determine performance indicators that will measure the environmental impacts of its short and long-term work. Here are the activities that the group plans to accomplish during the next 5 years:

- Monitoring the temperature of the water of the main rivers of our watersheds in the context of climate change;
- The habitat protection and environmental monitoring of Atlantic salmon present in the Jacquet River watershed;
- Environmental monitoring of the Maritime Ringlet butterfly in the salt marshes of the Peters River;
- The acquisition of the geographic information system (GIS) ArcGIS now allows us to create new maps in order to demonstrate and share data more easily;
- Mapping the Peters River saltmarsh with a high precision GPS to assess the erosion rates and the distribution of the essential plants for the survival of the Maritime Ringlet Butterfly.
- The restoration and bioremediation of impacted sites :
 - Discourage people from crossing rivers with their ATV's to reduce bank erosion and sediments in the water (with the collaboration of the Nepisiguit Salmon Association and the Chaleur ATV Club);
 - Repair and improve certain structures such as bridges and culverts in order to facilitate fish migration;

- Stabilise river banks in order to reduce erosion and sediment accumulation in the river;
- Plant trees and shrubs in the buffer zones to increase the health of the river and the surrounding area;
- Eliminate illegal deposit sites as well as the selective cutting of branches or trees in the rivers that could prevent fish migration;
- Organise meetings to work with the community and work together for a sustainable community;
- Improve information sharing through the group's website, Facebook page, conferences and seminars with schools, colleges and community centers in the region.

The following diagram illustrates and summarizes the goals and objectives of the group over the next five years.

Diagram of the goals and objectives of the Chaleur Bay Watersheds Group



Conclusion

Referring to the strategic plan, all stakeholders will gain a better understanding of projects that have been made in the past and those to be expected for the future. The CBWG has many strengths and opportunities. The success of the group is more sure when it recognizes the challenges it faces. The strategic plan will be a useful guide to transmit information to new staff and encourage community participation.

The strategic plan continues to establish clear and specific goals and objectives aimed at improving the health of watersheds. The development of aquatic habitats and conservation of water quality is essential for the economy and sustainable development of the region. An action plan was developed in parallel with the strategic plan to identify priority activities of the group each year. It will allow us to focus our efforts in high priority areas without neglecting other affected sites.

Moreover, we will always be updating our database regarding the state of the rivers and streams of our watersheds through our website where we offer an overview of our territory in real time. This allows us to manage our work and to share the results with the public and the government agencies involved. Our ultimate goal is to encourage activities that create environmentally, socially and economically sustainable communities.