



Volunteer Success at Lundrigan's Marsh!



Fig 1. NCC Staff and Lotek Wireless Inc. Volunteers

Introduction

A great time was had by all at the Lundrigan's Marsh Interpretive Site clean up organized by NCC on September 9th, 2008. Lundrigan's Marsh is an ecologically sensitive area and NCC has been involved in its conservation since 2000. Recently the site was subject to vandalism and in need of repair. Lotek Wireless Inc., a corporate donor and supporter of NCC, came to lend a helping hand. This report reviews the biological significance and brief conservation history of Lundrigan's Marsh, the vandalism on site and the hard work of Lotek Wireless Inc. volunteers.

Biological Significance of Lundrigan's Marsh

Lundrigan's Marsh, located in the east end of St. John's, is surrounded by White Hills Industrial Park. Despite the close proximity of industrial activity this cat tail marsh is a productive ecosystem. The marsh plays a critical ecological role in the city of St. John's particularly for the Virginia River system. It acts as a large catchment area and filtering system for the Virginia River. It also regulates water levels in the river. Many waterfowl and marsh bird species use the wetland habitat for feeding, shelter and breeding. Species that depend on this important marsh include Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Mallard and Black Duck. Birds that are uncommon in eastern Newfoundland such as Great Blue Heron, Bittern, Snowy Egret and the Sora can also be seen the marsh.

History of Lundrigan's Marsh

In 2000 a group of local naturalists approached the Nature Conservancy of Canada and requested that NCC purchase the private wetland property to prevent development and degradation of the area. The Lundrigan's Marsh Conservation and Stewardship Committee then formed and worked on the conservation project for 18 months. The committee included: Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), City of St. John's, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DU), Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, Virginia River Conservation Society and Department of Works Services and Transportation. In 2001 the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and Ducks Unlimited (DU) purchased 25.5 acres of wetland in Lundrigan's

Marsh. Other acquisitions were made and, in 2004, the area was recognized by the City of St. John's as a wetland.

A Problem at Lundrigan's Marsh

In early spring of 2008 Dr. Bill Montevecchi, NCC Atlantic Board Member, found Lundrigan's Marsh interpretive site vandalized. Over 30 rails were broken on the viewing platform. Also, the trail leading to the platform was growing in with alders and other invasive species.

Helping a Significant Wetland Habitat

Mark Ploughman, Regional Manager of Lotek Wireless Inc. approached Doug Ballam (NCC's NL Program Manager) at NCC's annual Gifts to Canadian's event and offered his employees as volunteers. Mr. Ploughman was interested in helping "cleanup" a NCC property. After Dr. Montevecchi pointed out the degradation of the site, NCC decided to engage Lotek Wireless Inc. to help. Geri King at the City of St. John's contributed some funds needed to make the necessary repairs.

On September 9th six Lotek Wireless Inc. volunteers including Mr. Ploughman arrived on site. They pounded nails, pulling weeds, raking gravel and filling garbage bags. During the morning, Dr. Montevecchi arrived on site to conduct an inspection (he didn't know the project was going on that day). In a quick two and a half hours, the work was completed. NCC staff treated the volunteers to a BBQ lunch. Below are before and after photos of the Lundrigan's Marsh interpretive site clean up.



Fig 2. Trail Before Weeding



Fig 3. Trail After Weeding



Fig 4. Vandalized Viewing Platform



Fig 5. Repaired Viewing Platform

Thanks

We would like to say a big thank you to Mark Ploughman regional manager of Lotek Wireless Inc. and his five staff who came out to help us. Lotek manufactures fish and wildlife monitoring systems and is a current supporter and donor of the Nature Conservancy of Canada. We would also like to thank Gerri King, manager of environmental initiatives from the city of St. John's. Gerri promptly okayed our clean up project and provided us with the necessary funds.

On September 10th Douglas Ballam publically thanked Lotek Wireless Inc. on CBC's Radio Noon talk show. Lotek will soon be receiving a certificate of appreciation from NCC as well.



Fig 6. Lundrigan's Marsh

APPENDIX



Fig 7. Lotek Volunteers At Work



Fig 8. Eighteen Bags Of Weeds And Alders!



Fig 9. A Barbeque for our Volunteers



Fig 10. Lotek volunteers!



Fig 12. NCC staff with Dr. Bill Montevecchi (middle)