

## **2008-09 RCEN Water, Fisheries and Oceans Caucus Steering Committee**

[Olga Schwartzkopf](#) (Co-Chair), Soil and Water Conservation Society, BC Chapter

[John Werring](#) (Co-Chair), David Suzuki Foundation, BC

[J. Denys Bourque](#), Club d'ornithologie du Madawaska, Itée, NB

[Lisa Fox](#), Cochrane Environmental Action Committee, AB

[Peter Karwacki](#), Les Amis de la rivière Kipawa, ON

[Kate Maddigan](#), Dog Lake Association, ON

[Bruno Marcocchio](#), Sierra Club of Canada, NS

[Allister Marshall](#), Potlotek Watershed Protection Committee, NS

[Isabel Muzichuk](#), Concerned Citizens for a Safe and Healthy Environment, SK

## **RCEN Water, Fisheries and Oceans Caucus 2008 Annual Reports**

The Water, Fisheries and Oceans Caucus engages in a broad range of water related topics, which include issues related to water quality and quantity, oceans and fisheries. The main objectives of the Water, Fisheries and Oceans Caucus are: to share information; to develop joint strategies; to help each other, and to provide advice to government.

The DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee (NFHCC) met 11 times this year via teleconference and face-to-face on two occasions at the end of October and at the end of February to address common national fish habitat management priorities. At the October face-to-face, the Committee met with the Associate and Assistant Deputy Ministers and took the opportunity to present the Committees' priority habitat management recommendations and how those recommendations get translated on the ground through the RCEN's ENGO network.

Through the NFHCC, a co-sponsored DFO-ENGO Prairie Regional Fish Habitat Management Workshop was held on February 4 and 5 in Calgary. The workshop focused on identifying key issues and potential areas for DFO-ENGO collaboration in Alberta. The workshop was attended by 22 ENGO and CNGO representatives and 12 representatives from DFO.

Martha Kostuch left the Caucus and the NFHCC early in the year and passed away shortly afterwards. Martha is sorely missed. John Werring joined Olga Schwartzkopf in the caucus co-chairing role. Cliff Wallis took on the ENGO co-chairing position with the NFHCC and at the end of this year handed that role on to John as well.

The caucus steering committee met six times this year by teleconference. Three of those teleconferences were specifically related to the proposed amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWP) and their eventual incorporation into Finance Bill C-10. The consultation process surrounding the NWP amendments and their potential environmental impact has created great concern within the ENGO community and beyond. In July, a letter voicing those concerns was sent to the Government of Canada signed by 25 member organizations of the Water, Fisheries and Oceans caucus. Members of the caucus have also joined members of the mining caucus in their involvement with consultations related to the Schedule II amendments to the Metal Mining Effluent Regulations (MMER) of the Fisheries Act.

The NFHCC will continue to be active in 2009, contributing to the organization of an Atlantic Regional Fish Habitat Management Workshop and other activities with the goal of improving communication and collaboration between DFO and ENGOs for the benefit of fish habitat. The caucus will continue to collaborate with the mining caucus on Schedule II amendments of the MMER. With the passing of Finance Bill C-10 and, along with it, the amendments to the NWP, the caucus will be keeping a watchful eye on how these changes to the NWP get expressed under the surface, within the infinite labyrinth of lakes and rivers traversing this country.

## **Water, Fisheries and Oceans Caucus 2008 Annual Report**

### **Activities from Caucus Coordinators' Monthly Reports**

#### **April 2008**

Coordinated Steering Committee teleconference held April 4. Items addressed included: national council rep, NFHCC, national water policy, SC elections, 2008 work plan.

#### **DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee (NFHCC)**

- Martha Kostuch resigned as the ENGO Co-chair. Cliff Wallis will take over as ENGO Co-chair and a Call for Delegates has gone out to select a new ENGO member.
- The Coordinating Committee approved in principle a workplan for 2008-09, pending funding approval from DFO. Proposed activities include regional DFO-ENGO workshops in AB and the Maritimes, to be funded and organized through DFO regions (possibly in collaboration with RCEN regional networks); as well as a national multi-stakeholder workshop on fish habitat management.

#### **Meeting with EC's Strategic Policy Branch re. Water Caucus**

On April 23 I met with Matt Parry and Ben Lones from Environment Canada's Strategic Policy Branch to present the RCEN Water, Fisheries and Oceans Caucus. I provided them with background information on the RCEN and specifically the Water Caucus. Their department is involved in high-level work on water policy and although they have no public consultations planned at this point, they would be interested in engaging RCEN on potential future consultations.

#### **May 2008**

#### **DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee (NFHCC)**

- Gino Lévesque of the Comité de valorization de la rivière Beauport (CVRB), Quebec was selected as the new ENGO delegate (replacing Martha Kostuch)
- An ENGO-only NFHCC teleconference was held May 12 to discuss regional DFO-ENGO workshops
- The NFHCC met by teleconference May 15 to review the 2008-09 workplan and budget. DFO confirmed that \$30,000 has been approved in principle for NFHCC activities. The committee agreed its priorities are to organize two regional DFO-ENGO meetings, and to commission a paper on public consultation (which DFO will hire a consultant to prepare).

#### **June 2008**

Coordinated Steering Committee teleconference held June 3. Items addressed included: selection of co-chairs (John Werring and Olga Schwartzkopf), adoption of staggered terms, NFHCC, national water policy, NWPA, MMER

#### **DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee (NFHCC)**

- RCEN directors and coordinator met with DFO members of the Coordinating Committee June 12 at DFO office to review first year of collaboration and identify future directions and opportunities
- Coordinating Committee teleconference held June 23
- ENGO members and myself are consulting with regional affiliates in Alberta and Nova Scotia to identify coordinators for regional meetings (who will receive \$1000 each from the RCEN-DFO contract)
- DFO Assistant Deputy Minister has expressed interest in meeting with the ENGO members of the Committee in Ottawa to review recommendations from last November's workshop (likely in July).

### **July 2008**

#### [DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)

- Contract for \$21,131.25 signed July 28 with DFO for activities under the Coordinating Committee's 2008-09 workplan
- Coordinating Committee teleconference held July 30; planning for two regional DFO-ENGO meetings in Alberta and Maritimes for November 2008
- Regional Coordinators arranged through RCEN regional affiliates for upcoming DFO-ENGO meetings (each coordinator will receive \$1000 from the RCEN-DFO contract)
- Working with DFO to set up an ENGO meeting with Deputy Minister for September

#### ENGO Response to proposed changes in the Navigable Waters Protection Act

- Steering Committee of the Water, Fisheries and Oceans caucus drafted a response to proposed changes in the NWPA
- RCEN circulated for sign-ons and will submit to Transport Canada with 23 signatures and a request for a meeting to discuss the proposed changes

### **August 2008**

#### [DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)

- Susanna Fuller of Ecology Action Center attended DFO workshop on fish habitat in conjunction with American Fisheries Society meeting in Ottawa August 17-21. John Werring was also in attendance at the AFS meeting.
- Confirmed date for an ENGO meeting with Deputy Minister of DFO for October 27 in Ottawa

#### ENGO Response to proposed changes in the Navigable Waters Protection Act

- Submitted ENGO response to proposed changes in the NWPA to Transport Minister and House of Commons Standing Committee on Transportation, with 23 signatures and a request for a meeting to discuss the proposed changes
- Will follow up with manager of NWPA at Transport Canada in September

### **September 2008**

Coordinated Water Caucus Steering Committee teleconference held September 9. Caucus will not meet at this year's AGA due to lack of funding to bring enough members to the meeting. Representatives for both caucuses will attend the cross-caucus meeting. Other items addressed include: national water policy, NWPA, NFHCC

#### [DFO-ENGO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)

- Coordinated NFHCC teleconference held September 4; ENGO-only NFHCC teleconference held September 10 to plan for upcoming meetings
- ENGO meeting with Deputy Minister of DFO rescheduled to October 31 in Ottawa 10-11 AM
- NFHCC meeting being planned to follow (12-5 PM Oct 31) at DFO offices
- RCEN Directors may want to attend either or both of these meetings, in addition to new Water Caucus Coordinator
- Proposal submitted to DFO for additional funding (\$13,800) for ENGO travel to regional DFO-ENGO meetings (planned for winter 08/09 in AB and Maritimes)
- Cliff and Susanna (ENGO delegates on NFHCC) contacting DFO regions to identify lead regional contacts at DFO and begin meeting planning
- Gino Lévesque, ENGO delegate to NFHCC, has left his RCEN member group. A new Call for Delegates has been issued and the selection will be confirmed in October

#### ENGO Response to proposed changes in the Navigable Waters Protection Act

- Followed up on the ENGO response submitted in August to Transport Canada with David Osbaldeston, Manager of the Navigable Waters Protection Program

- David said that he could provide an update on the status of the proposed changes after the October 14 election; and also that an ENGO meeting could be arranged with Transport Canada following the election
- The new Water Caucus Coordinator can follow up with him on these two items

### **October 2008**

#### **[ENGO-DFO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)**

- Coordinated delegate selection for the NFHCC replacement for Gino Levesque. Selected delegate is Anne-Marie Turgeon from Nature Québec, John Werring from the David Suzuki Foundation is the ENGO alternate.
- Coordinated preparatory teleconference held October 24 for the October 31 meetings with the Deputy Minister and face-to-face with the NFHCC
- Coordinated October 31 meetings with the Deputy Minister and face-to-face with the NFHCC
- Reviewed: revised 2008-09 Work plan and Budget, ENGO NFHCC PowerPoint presentation

### **November 2008**

#### **[ENGO-DFO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)**

- Completed follow-up to the October 31 meetings with Associate Deputy Minister Claire Dansereau and Assistant Deputy Minister Mimi Breton and face-to-face with the NFHCC including minutes and resulting action items
- NFHCC ENGO representative Olga Schwartzkopf attended CNGO / DFO meeting in Vancouver held November 25-26 in Victoria, BC

### **December 2008**

#### **[ENGO-DFO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)**

- Coordinated a Committee teleconference held Dec 9.

### **January 2009**

#### **[ENGO-DFO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)**

- Coordinated Committee teleconference held Jan 29

### **February 2009**

- Coordinated Steering Committee teleconference held February 23, 2009. Major focus of the call was the proposed amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) and the current 2 day Finance Committee hearings. Though the Steering Committee expressed a great deal of interest in the NWPA agenda item, few were on the call. The call provided the opportunity to brief and debrief with Krystyn Tully, Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, who was on her way from Toronto to Ottawa to provide testimony at the hearings
- Coordinated (Joséphine Hénault) Steering Committee teleconference held February 27, 2009 to discuss the proposed meeting with David Osbaldeston, Manager of NWP Program at Transport Canada

#### **[ENGO-DFO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)**

- Coordinated Committee teleconference held February 18, 2009.
- Produced 2008-09 Mid-term progress report submitted February 23, 2009.

#### **Navigable Waters Protection Act amendments in Finance Bill C-10**

Had several telephone conversations with David Osbaldeston, Manager, Navigable Waters Protection Program at Transport Canada, provided regular updates to the Steering Committee, and solidified a commitment from him to meet with the RCEN WFO caucus regarding the amendments and Bill C-10.

### **March 2009**

[ENGO-DFO National Fish Habitat Coordinating Committee \(NFHCC\)](#)

- Coordinated Committee teleconference held March 19, 2009.
- Coordinated Committee face-to-face meeting held in Ottawa on March 26, 2009. Major topics addressed included: assessment of the 2008-09 Work Plan and accomplishments; updates and outcomes from the Regional Workshops; updates on RCEN caucus activity on issues related to fish habitat; review of potential priorities and resulting recommendations from National and Regional Workshops for development of 2009-10 Work Plan; development of 2009-10 Work Plan including deliverables, timelines and responsibilities. Note that Cliff Wallis has stepped down as ENGO Co-chair of the Committee and John Werring will be the new ENGO Co-chair.
- Produced 2008-09 Final Report, including a final financial report and invoice submitted April 2, 2009.

[Navigable Waters Protection Act amendments in Finance Bill C-10](#)

Coordinated (Joséphine Hénault) teleconference between Water Caucus Steering Committee + other members of the caucus and David Osbaldeston, Manager, Navigable Waters Protection Program held March 5, 2009. Major topics addressed included: history of the proposed NWPA amendments; process taken to amend the NWPA; changes to the NWPA; impacts of NWPA changes and problems with old NWPA.