



2025 Fall TIDINGS

Bringing You Updates from SSWA



2025 Photo Contest Grand Prize Winner Wildlife, by Ron Arvidson

2025 Season Summary

This summer, like those before, was spent working throughout the watersheds of the South Shore to restore and conserve our waterways, riparian zones (shorelines), coastal ecosystems, and wildlife habitats. However, this summer we used a slightly different approach to our work, focusing on what needed to be done most across all of our watersheds instead of dialling in closely to one watershed. This helps us to keep on top of concerns that may arise and gives us a more holistic picture of how the South Shore is doing.



Full time staff:
Manager/Coordinator
Matt Meenink
Associate Manager
Romy Munkres
Coastal Project Manager
Fletcher Gibbons



For the **DeSable** watershed we simply continued to tidy up areas of the stream as landowner permissions came in. We worked significantly in DeSable the summer following Post Tropical Storm Fiona and are trying to maintain the work we completed at that time as well as addressing some problematic beaver dams. In the **Westmoreland** watershed, we started to tackle Fiona damage there last year but only were able to deal with about half of the river system. This year we were able to address most of the rest of it, which is very exciting. For the **Tryon** watershed, we needed to do a lot of

surveys. Since this watershed was the focus during the couple of summers before Fiona, there had not been much work done since. This summer we assessed what needs to be done in the next few summers and started to remove invasive species that were clogging the river and inhibiting fish passage. In **Augustine Cove, Cape Traverse, and Seven Mile Bay** we continued to monitor water conditions, wildlife presence, and riparian health. On the coastlines, we monitored bank swallow presence, estuarine health, salt marsh presence, and green crab abundance. We also continue to experiment with best practices for salt marsh restoration in the DeSable Estuary (see [2024 Fall Tidings](#) for more information on this project).

We were able to meet our goals surrounding stream restoration and monitoring this summer, in large part due to the dedication of our field crew. SSWA would like to extend a huge thank you to Rohan Gorman, Raelyn Wood, Cameron Estabrooks, Ashton Winn, Nout Geurts, Teodora Bujenita, and Ian MacNevin. They worked hard through thick and thin, hot and cold, and the driest summer any of us youngsters have seen. We would not be able to do this work without them.

For more information on this field season, please check out our [season blog](#), updated weekly, and find more photos later in this issue. Thank you all for your continued support of SSWA and the work that we do!



Fish Passage Project

This summer we are happy to report that we completed a project to improve the natural fish passage structure put in at Stordy's Pond a few years ago. Locals may be familiar with this location and pond, which goes by several different names. This is also the site of one of our nature parks, and a nice fishing spot for trout. Each spring, Forest, Fish and Wildlife PEI has received calls about fish kills at this location as smelt struggle to make it upstream. The entrance to the fish passage structure funneled water



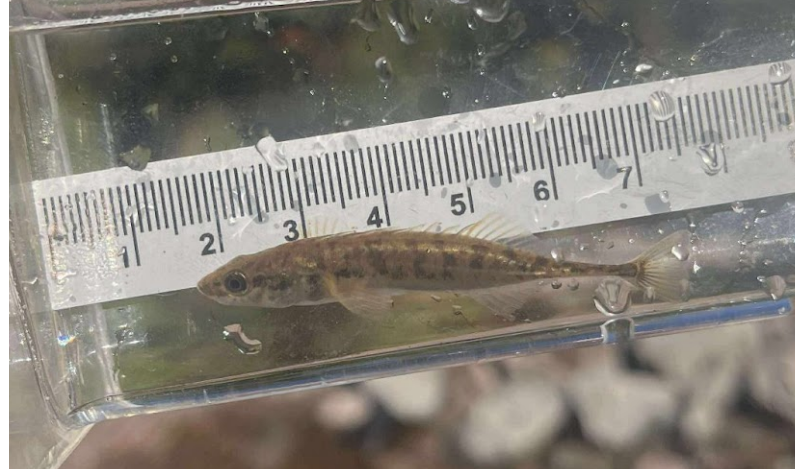
through very quickly and over a significant drop which made it unappealing for smelt to swim up and potentially too hard for their swimming strength. When we consulted Rosie MacFarlane of Forest, Fish and Wildlife, she suggested addressing this problem by constructing rock pools to serve three main functions. First, slowing the water coming out of the fish passage to a speed that smaller, weaker fish can swim up. Second, by spreading out the height difference, the jumps become smaller and more accessible to smelt and other small fish. And third, to block off the slower-moving channel at the foot of the fish passage which ultimately led to the old dam structure that prevents them from moving upstream.



Constructing these two pools required rocks larger than we would be able to move ourselves, so we hired a contractor to bring in and position different sizes of rocks, some larger to support the foundation of the pools, and some smaller to allow water to filter through without allowing fish up the alternative channel. After a few days of work in the stream, with all appropriate precautions taken to reduce sediment entering the stream, the pools were completed! Forest, Fish and Wildlife helped us to complete a fish rescue of those fish stuck in the cut-off channel and we released them back into

the main channel. We even found two nine-spine sticklebacks which are much less common than their three- and four-spine counterparts!

We are very happy with the outcome of this project, and so are the generous people from the Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund. Along with the fish passage restoration, we are hoping to spend next summer bringing more attention to fish and the Westmoreland River Nature Park. Look out for a possible fishing day at Stordy's Pond in late May, and if you are in the park and wondering why things look a bit different, now you know. We are looking forward to seeing the results of this project in the spring, hopefully increasing fish passage up into the east branch of the Westmoreland River.



Swim for the South Shore

Our annual fundraising event, the Swim for the South Shore, went very well this August! Thank you to all who made this possible, swimmers and kayakers and gracious local businesses who donated to support our work and the competitors. Our top fundraising team was the North Shore South Shore Swimmers and we would like to extend a shout out to them for raising over \$1000 for our work! We had a great turnout not only of swimmers, but also of community members and families dropping by to hang out and cheer on the swimmers. Megan Ellands added to the festive atmosphere with incredible music, and we had an informational booth where people could learn more about the watershed and what we do. All in all a very successful event for us and we hope to see you all out in the waves next year! A final large thank you to our Coastal Project Manager, Fletcher, for making this happen.



Photos from the Summer



This summer we planted around 1300 native trees and shrubs to begin establishing a vegetated coastal buffer zone around the Westmoreland Estuary. This is occurring on the north side of the causeway and will hopefully help to protect against rising sea levels and more intense storms, and will help restore the environment. In such a droughty summer this required much watering!



On our coastlines, some of the work that we completed this summer was trash removal (left) to keep our beaches and estuaries clean and safe for the wildlife that lives there. We also monitored bank swallow colonies on some of our shorelines (centre). They prefer cliffs and bluffs for habitat to keep them out of the reach of predators and so that they can dig nice deep tunnels to their nests. One of the other coastal restoration efforts we undertook was planting marram grass in a location with very small sand dunes (right). This should help to strengthen the bank and encourage the dunes to continue to grow.



This summer Matt and Romy started learning how to band tree swallows as part of a co-watershed project to monitor these birds on PEI under the national program Project NestWatch. We were very excited to handle these precious little birds and did so very carefully, under the direction of Matt Ginn from Forest, Fish and Wildlife. Hopefully next year we will graduate to doing so unsupervised!



We also work to remove and remediate invasive species throughout the watershed, as much as this is a thankless task. The photos above show a second-year Japanese Knotweed removal project where we needed to return and cover up the holes in the tarp that the Knotweed had found to grow through. We will likely return next year to continue working on this location. In the streams, we removed a lot of Bittersweet Nightshade, which grows into the waterways and obstructs fish passage, as well as Morning Glory, Watercress, and Wild Cucumber.



Our normal stream restoration work includes brush mat creation to catch sediment and reinforce stream banks (left), fish cover log installation to carve out pools and protect fish from predators (centre), and addressing blockages to ensure that fish have passage upstream without compromising the natural processes around treefall in streams (right). In addition to these tasks we also monitor stream conditions through a number of different measures throughout the year, and address any emergent concerns such as problematic beaver dams and large runoff areas.



In the estuary, we created brush mats in areas where we had laid coir logs last year (see [Fall 2024 Tidings](#) for more information) to increase sediment retention. The goal is to extend the salt marsh in the DeSable Estuary and address the ongoing concerns around anoxic events in that estuary. This summer we also transplanted salt marsh cordgrass from two locations in the estuary behind the sand spit to see how they would take to the area and hopefully pave the way for more transplantation. More information on coastal and estuary projects will come in the Winter 25-26 *Tidings*.

Thanks and Reminders

In the spirit of Reconciliation, we acknowledge that the land upon which we live and work is unceded Mi'kmaq territory. Epekwitk (Prince Edward Island), Mi'kma'ki, is covered by the historic Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We pay our respects to the Indigenous Mi'kmaq People who have occupied this Island for over 12,000 years—past, present and future.

Thanks as well to all of our members and supporters. We appreciate your participation in and support for the work that we do. Feel free to email with any questions for us about the articles in this newsletter or any local environmental concerns at sswawildlife@gmail.com.

Brief reminder of our iNaturalist [project](#) which aims to use citizen science to better understand wildlife and plants on the South Shore. The project name is South Shore Watershed Assoc. and we would love to have your contributions! Please email sswawildlife@gmail.com for more information on how to use iNaturalist.

We gratefully acknowledge the grants received from the following government and other funding agencies:

Federal:

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Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Provincial:

Watershed Management Fund
Wildlife Conservation Fund
Skills PEI: Post-Secondary Student Program
Jobs for Youth
Department of Transportation
Department of Forest, Fish & Wildlife



Other:

PEI Watershed Alliance
Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Fund
Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund

Our deep appreciation to these corporate and major donors, 2024-2025:

ADL
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Crapaud Exhibition Association
Eric C. Robinson

Harry Smith & Jane Thomas
Irene Sherren
Meadowbrook Art Studio
Municipality of Crapaud
Stacey Meenink

And for all other donations made to SSWA – so greatly appreciated.

**SSWA DIRECTORS
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Newsletter written and produced by Romy Munkres

SOUTH SHORE WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

Registered charity #81018-9407-RR0001

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(NOTE: RENEWALS ARE NOT DUE UNTIL MARCH)

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Mailing address: _____ **Email:** _____

Membership fee \$ 10.00

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TOTAL \$ _____

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👍 **SSWA issues charitable tax receipts for donations of \$20 or more**

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