

Evaluation of the Natural Areas Conservation Program

FINAL

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements and Acronyms	i
Executive Summary	ii
1 Introduction	1
2 Background	1
2.1 PROGRAM PROFILE	1
2.1.1 Context	1
2.1.2 Key Program Activities and Allocations	3
2.2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE	4
2.2.1 Governance and Management	4
2.2.2 Stakeholders and Beneficiaries	5
2.3 EXPECTED RESULTS	5
2.4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION	7
3 Evaluation Design	8
3.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION	8
3.2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY	8
3.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION	15
4 Findings	15
4.1 RELEVANCE	15
4.1.1 Evaluation Issue 1: Continued Need for Program	15
4.1.2 Evaluation Issue 2: Alignment with NCC and Government Priorities	17
4.1.3 Evaluation Issue 3: Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities	20
4.2 PERFORMANCE	21
4.2.1 Evaluation Issue 4: Achievement of Expected Outputs and Outcomes	21
4.2.2 Evaluation Issue 5: Demonstrated Efficiency and Economy	42
4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	51
5 Conclusions	52
5.1 RELEVANCE	52
5.2 PERFORMANCE	53
6 Recommendations	54

Appendices under separate cover:

- A – Documentation Reviewed
- B – Online Survey Results
- C – Comparative Analysis
- D – Key Informant Categories
- E – Case Studies

Acknowledgements and Acronyms

BDR	Baseline Documentation Report
BI	Baseline Inventory
CA	Conservation Agreement
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CLTA	Canadian Land Trust Alliance
DUC	Ducks Unlimited Canada
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
EcoGifts	Ecological Gifts Program
GoC	Government of Canada
GGI	Goss Gilroy Inc.
Ha	Hectares
HSP	Habitat Stewardship Program
LTA	Land Trust Alliance (US)
NACP	Natural Areas Conservation Plan
NAWCA	North American Wetlands Conservation Act
NAWMP	North American Waterfowl Management Plan
NCC	Nature Conservancy of Canada
OLTA	Ontario Land Trust Alliance
OQOs	Other Qualified Organizations
PCA	Priority Conservation Action
PMP	Property Management Plan
RPP	Report on Plans and Priorities
RSPB	Royal Society for the Preservation of Birds (UK)
SARA	Species at Risk Act
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat

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Executive Summary

The Natural Areas Conservation Program

The Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP) was created through a partnership agreement between the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and the Government of Canada in 2007. The NACP aims to accelerate the rate of private land conservation and protect important natural habitat in communities across southern Canada.

The Government of Canada provided funds for the NACP over 3 agreements: \$225 M in 2007, \$20 M in 2013 (as an amendment) and \$100 M in 2014 (up until March 2019). The Program uses these funds, and obtains matching fund contributions, to: secure land for long term conservation, implement stewardship activities on secured lands, and build capacity within the land trust community. The funds are directed based on a science-based conservation planning process, and the application of related ecological criteria, that produce a list of priority natural areas for land securement and stewardship. As well, NCC works with Other Qualified Organizations (OQOs), such as Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and provincial and regional land trusts and nature conservancies, in order to implement the Program. NCC also promotes the Program through a variety of communication approaches.

Scope and Objectives of the Evaluation

In 2012, a performance evaluation was conducted on the NACP. Five years later, as the NACP nears its ten-year mark, NCC commissioned a second performance evaluation to build on the first evaluation and reflect on changes made to the program's structure and delivery approach since that time. The objectives of this second evaluation in 2017 are to:

1. Continue to measure the overall performance of the Program in achieving its intended outcomes.
2. Continue to measure the overall performance of NCC in administering the Program.
3. Prepare for future opportunities to extend the Program and its funding, including identifying lessons learned, success stories and best practices

The scope of the evaluation covers the 5 years since the last evaluation – from April 2012 to March 2017. While it focuses primarily on the degree to which NCC is meeting the requirements specified under the 2014 Funding Agreement only, it includes the achievements of the Program under all three Agreements.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation used five lines of inquiry to gather evidence, including: (1) document and performance data review; (2) interviews with 32 informants in NCC, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and partnership and other expert organizations; (3) two online surveys with OQOs and land donors; (4) two case studies; and, (5) a comparative assessment of other land conservation programs in Canada and internationally.

Conclusions

The evaluation concluded the following:

1. ***The Program continues to be relevant and provides an important mechanism for conserving ecologically sensitive areas on private lands in southern Canada.***

The evaluation confirms that the NACP is making a clear, demonstrable, and unique contribution to the securement of key ecological values on private lands, particularly in southern Canada. Environmental stresses and threats continue to rise, particularly in the southernmost parts of the country where there are high levels of both species richness and species at risk, as well as relatively low levels of protection.

- 2. The Program is directly aligned with NCC and Government of Canada priorities, roles and responsibilities, including helping Canada achieve its international obligations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity as well as its species at risk obligations. Opportunities to enhance alignment with other, evolving Government of Canada priorities exist.***

The NACP is highly consistent with NCC's overall mission, mandate and strategic objectives. The Program is also clearly aligned with both Government of Canada and ECCC-specific goals and objectives related to biodiversity and species at risk as reflected in core corporate documents and strategies. The Program is also consistent with federal/provincial/territorial strategies such as the Biodiversity Outcomes Framework. Given the role that land conservation can play in supporting landscape resiliency and both mitigation and adaptation efforts, enhanced alignment with climate change activities and other government priorities could be explored moving forward.

- 3. Virtually all expected outputs are being (or are likely to be) achieved, and progress towards expected outcomes is being made. Enhanced Program promotion could be valuable.***

There is clear evidence that activities are being delivered in accordance with the Funding Agreement and that significant progress is being made in all areas of the Program. All expected outputs and outcomes are either being achieved or are underway. However, it is not yet clear whether all outcome targets will be met (particularly the overall target of 130,000 hectares to be secured) based on progress to-date.

Many stakeholders indicated that enhancements to communications would be beneficial to further achieving Program results. For example, the OQO and landowner surveys suggested that greater program promotion could help support more effective program delivery.

- 4. Stewardship efforts on secured lands have increased since the last NACP evaluation.***

NCC has increased its activities and focus on the stewardship of acquired lands. All lines of evidence suggest that this has been a significant area of progress and success over the last five years.

- 5. While the OQO component of the Program has been strengthened and capacity has started to increase, additional modifications may be required to further support the effective participation of OQOs in the Program.***

The OQO component is a relatively small but important element of the Program. A number of modifications to the OQO program were made in response to the last evaluation, including introduction of a capacity building element to strengthen the long-term ability of OQOs to

effectively secure and manage lands over the long-term. While both the interviews and surveys found strong support for capacity building aspects of the Program, OQOs have suggested a number of additional modifications that could help support greater participation from a broader range of OQOs. At the same time, some questions have been raised regarding whether NCC continues to be the best placed organization to deliver all or part of the OQO program moving forward.

6. *Program design, resource allocation, and capacity appear appropriate to support effective and efficient achievement of Program objectives and outcomes. However, some participants believed that efficiency could be enhanced through increased flexibility in the Funding Agreement.*

Clear linkages exist between Program activities, outputs and outcomes. In addition, progress is being made across all areas of the Program and towards all of the objectives established in the Funding Agreement. As such, the program design, resource allocations and capacity all appear appropriate to achieving Program objectives effectively and efficiently.

At the same time, most internal and OQO informants raised concerns regarding certain aspects of the Funding Agreement between NCC and the Government of Canada (which governs NCC's management of the Program) which they believe limit flexibility for the Program and impact the ability to deliver efficiently and effectively (e.g., no ability to carry funds over from one year to the next; higher overall matching requirement; cap on eligible funds per project for OQOs; and, a limit of one project per OQO per year).

7. *A clear management and accountability structure is in place for the Program.*

There is strong evidence of a clear management and accountability structure for the Program. Roles and responsibilities are well understood throughout the organization, particularly as they relate to land securement and the OQO program. NCC has produced and maintains up-to-date and comprehensive guidance both internally and to OQOs. The Program Committee is providing effective and ongoing high level oversight and guidance to the Program as a whole.

8. *Comprehensive and appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting processes are in place and being used to inform decision-making.*

There is clear evidence that effective systems are in place for planning, measuring progress and reporting. Performance information is seen as credible and useful both by NCC's management team and the Program Committee to inform ongoing decision-making.

9. *Program resources are being spent efficiently and in accordance with the Funding Agreement. In particular, NCC has successfully leveraged greater matching funds than anticipated, the average cost per hectare is decreasing, and key informants believe the Program delivers value for money.*

Recommendations

Based on the findings from all lines of evidence, the evaluators recommend:

1. That NCC discuss with the Government of Canada whether enhanced flexibility could be achieved relative to key provisions of the Funding Agreement (related to land securement activities and the OQO program), in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency moving forward.
2. That NCC work closely with the Government of Canada to consider expansion of the Program to support other government priority areas, including Indigenous conservation efforts, multi-species planning, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.
3. That NCC and the Government of Canada collaborate more broadly through data sharing and/or collaborative planning in priority regions, and in regard to ongoing national efforts to meet the Aichi targets (including whether and how the contribution of private protected areas can be recognized in these efforts).
4. That NCC and participating OQOs explore possible models for ongoing collaboration and engagement, including whether an accreditation body or national land trust body could ultimately help support or potentially deliver the OQO program or its capacity building component.
5. That NCC and the Government of Canada strengthen the communications function of the Program by examining current planning and delivery mechanisms, strategies for Program promotion (including the role of OQOs), as well as possible amendments to the Communications Protocol.

1 Introduction

The Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP or the ‘Program’) was created through a partnership agreement between the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and the Government of Canada in 2007. The NACP aims to conserve ecologically sensitive lands in some of the most biodiverse and threatened areas of the country through conservation partnerships and land acquisition across the country.

In 2012, a performance evaluation was conducted on the NACP, as required by the Program’s first Funding Agreement. Five years later, as the NACP nears its ten-year mark, NCC commissioned a second performance evaluation to build on the 2012 evaluation and reflect on changes made to the program’s structure and delivery approach since that time, with a particular focus both on NCC’s leadership role, as well as outcomes generated by all partners in the Program.

As a result of a competitive bidding process, NCC contracted an independent consultant team comprised of Alison Kerry, Cathy Wilkinson and Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) to complete the evaluation.

This report presents the results of the evaluation and includes the following sections:

- Section 2 presents an overview of the Program;
- Section 3 outlines the evaluation design, including key evaluation issues examined;
- Section 4 presents the key evaluation findings;
- Section 5 presents the evaluation conclusions; and
- Section 6 presents the evaluation recommendations.

2 Background

2.1 PROGRAM PROFILE

2.1.1 Context

In 2007, the Government of Canada announced, through the federal budget, funding for NCC to conserve ecologically sensitive land in southern Canada, consistent with the Government of Canada’s “commitment to strengthen conservation of sensitive land and species, and preservation of our cultural and natural heritage”. As a result, in April 2007, NCC began delivery of the NACP, a matching (1:1) fund initiative supported by a \$225 million investment from the Government of Canada. The Program was formalized through the signing of a Funding Agreement between NCC and Canada on March 30, 2007.

In June 2012, the NACP was evaluated, in line with the requirements of the original Funding Agreement. This independent performance evaluation covered the Program from its initiation in April 2007 to March 2012 and found that virtually all expected ‘aims’ (outcomes) were being achieved and delivery was in line with the Funding Agreement.

After five years of Program delivery, in December 2013, the Funding Agreement was amended and the Government of Canada provided an additional \$20 million to the NACP. At this time, the funding matching ratio was changed to require a 2:1 minimum match of non-federal funds.

A new Funding Agreement is now in place. Effective as of September 2014, this new agreement provides Government funding of \$100 million to the NACP until March 2019 to support the continuation of the Program. The matching ratio remains at 2:1. However, a significant change from former Funding Agreements was that monies would be provided annually with no opportunity to carry forward from one year to the next. As such, there is no longer an investment component to the funding.

The 2014 Agreement defines the NACP as a “land conservation initiative supported by funds from the federal government and matching contributions, which will:

- a) accelerate and increase the volume of private land conservation, specifically the securement of lands, Conservation Agreements, development rights (e.g., mineral, timber and exploration rights) and other interests in land,
- b) implement Property Management Plan actions on lands secured under the Program and previous Program,
- c) undertake Conservation Agreement compliance monitoring on lands secured under the Program and previous Program to ensure compliance, and
- d) provide for capacity development within the land trust community to enable future involvement in securing and stewarding conservation lands”.

The funding for the NACP is to: “support the delivery of the Program by NCC and other qualified organizations (OQOs)¹ carrying out similar work in Canada in order to conserve areas of high ecological significance primarily across southern Canada”.

The aims of the amended and new Funding Agreements are stated as:

2013 Amended Agreement:

- Secure 218,000 hectares (ha) (+/- 10%) of ecologically sensitive land primarily across southern Canada.²
- Implement stewardship actions such as: a) Priority Conservation Actions (PCAs) and Management Activities on fee simple lands secured under the Program; and b) monitoring of properties for violations of Conservation Agreements.
 - PCAs on 30,000 ha (+/- 10%)
 - Conservation Agreement (CA) monitoring on 25,000 ha (+/- 10%)
 - Additionally, Ducks Unlimited may implement Management Activities and monitor Conservation Agreements on a portion of the lands it secured under the Program.

2014 Agreement:

- Secure over 130,000 ha of ecologically sensitive lands.
- Implement Property Management Plan (PMP) Actions on an estimated 120,000 ha of lands secured under the Program and previous Program.

¹ OQOs are organizations that qualify for funding under the Program such as Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) and provincial and regional land trusts and nature conservancies partnering with NCC. Organizations within the land trust community work to steward and conserve the natural and cultural heritage of Canada.

² The Program is to focus on the securement of lands identified as high priority through science-based conservation planning.

- Monitor the compliance of Conservation Agreements on an estimated 100,000 ha of lands secured under the Program and previous Program.
- Provide for capacity development within the land trust community to enable future involvement in securing and stewarding conservation lands.

The 2014 Agreement notes that, in general, lands targeted by the NACP are to primarily address Environment and Climate Change Canada's (ECCC) priorities for protecting habitat for species at risk and migratory birds, as well as lands that provide or enhance connections or corridors between protected areas and lands that have provincial or national significance based on ecological criteria. The Agreement also states that NCC will maintain a list of Priority Natural Areas (PNAs) and will prioritize securement of properties identified as Priority 1 or 2 within these PNAs.³

2.1.2 Key Program Activities and Allocations

The 2014 Agreement outlines 5 key areas of activity:

1. **Land Securement Activities** including any actions required to plan for and secure land and/or interests in land (such as Conservation Agreements and development rights). With the prior approval of ECCC, this may also include acquiring shares in corporations.
2. **Stewardship Implementation Actions** on lands secured under the Program since 2007. This could include: conducting biological inventories; preparing and implementing Property Management Plans (on fee simple lands); and compliance monitoring for Conservation Agreements.
3. **Communication Activities** including the production of relevant materials, event planning and management, media and stakeholder relations, and design and installation of property-based signage to encourage recognition of the Program.
4. **Capacity Development Activities** including support for NCC and OQOs to enable future involvement in securing and stewarding conservation lands (such as review of documents, sharing of templates, retaining professional services (legal, financial, etc.) and development of land acquisition strategy documents).
5. **Program Coordination** such as overall administration of the Program, including science activities, and supporting, tracking and reporting on the activities of both NCC and OQOs.

The overall allocation of the \$20 million in the 2013 Amended Agreement included the following conditions:

- \$2 million for OQOs; and
- \$2.725 million for stewardship implementation activities.

The overall allocation of the \$100 million in the 2014 Agreement includes the following conditions:

- \$62 million for land securement activities in priority natural areas (2.5% of which can be used to support relevant landscape level conservation planning);
- \$15 million for stewardship implementation actions on lands secured under the Program and previous Program;
- \$5 million for land securement activities and signage for Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) (of which up to 1.5% can be used for capacity development and up to 5% can be used for program coordination);

³ DUC is to prioritize, for securement, properties within North American Wildlife Management Plan (NAWMP) Priority Areas.

- \$5 million for OQOs other than DUC for land securement activities; up to 2.5% of this total can be used for capacity development to better situate OQOs to secure and steward land in the future;
- \$5 million to pursue land securement activities in areas identified as ECCC priorities⁴;
- \$3 million for communications activities; and
- \$5 million for program coordination, of which 1.5% can be used for developing capacity to help NCC and OQOs secure and steward land in the future, such as through self-assessment against the Canadian Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices.

The activities noted in the new Agreements differ in a number of ways from the previous Agreements and the original focus of the NACP. During the first five years of the program, emphasis was placed almost exclusively on land securement or conservation of ecologically sensitive lands across Canada (by both NCC and OQOs).

However, there is now additional focus on stewardship implementation. This stems in part from the results of the last program evaluation, which identified the need for the NACP to address how the ecological integrity of secured lands would be maintained through ongoing stewardship over time. Similarly, capacity building is reflected as an important component of work from 2014 forward, in recognition of the need to both clarify the relationship with OQOs and help them build capacity to participate more effectively in the Program and land stewardship in general.

The Program also now includes a specific allocation of funds for public communications activities to share the importance of land conservation and the role of private lands in preserving Canada's natural heritage, to promote Program accomplishments, and to acknowledge the Government of Canada's leadership and investment in this regard. NCC's communications program involves property-specific press conferences and media announcements, and promotions through various print and on-line media. The 2014 Agreement also includes a communications protocol between NCC and Government of Canada.

2.2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

2.2.1 Governance and Management

NCC, a Canadian charity established in 1962, works in every province in Canada through seven Regional offices⁵ supported by a National office in Toronto⁶. The Regional offices, with satellite field offices in priority program areas, deliver conservation program planning and design, project implementation and delivery, short and long term stewardship, and fundraising. The National office performs central roles such as financial management, coordination of fundraising, gift planning, supporter services, communications, strategic planning, and policy and program coordination.

The organization is governed by a **National Board** with support from seven Regional Boards. In total, more than 110 representatives of the scientific and business communities across the country are involved in ensuring the effective governance and management of NCC. This Board structure is responsible for overseeing all aspects of NCC, including the Program.

⁴ Priorities for protecting habitat for species at risk and migratory birds, as well as lands that provide or enhance connections or corridors between protected areas and lands that have provincial or national significance based on ecological criteria.

⁵ Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Atlantic. The Conservation de la Nature-Quebec (CNQ) and NCC-PEI are parties to Services Agreements with NCC to facilitate land transfers.

⁶ National office staff also work in Ottawa, Montreal, Guelph, Norfolk County, Dartmouth and Calgary.

A **Program Committee** was established to oversee the implementation of the NACP. The Program Committee can be comprised of 5-9 members including the President and CEO of NCC and such other persons as the President and the Board deem appropriate including, but not limited to, directors, officers and employees of NCC and at least one representative of the Government of Canada. The Program Committee is to meet no less than semi-annually to review and provide advice on the list of Priority Sites/Priority Natural Areas and progress achieved. Currently, the Program Committee includes 3 members from NCC and 2 from ECCC.

2.2.2 Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

The stakeholders for the Program include:

- The Government of Canada, represented by the Canadian Wildlife Service in ECCC;
- NCC and its associated regions;
- Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC);
- OQOs other than DUC - provincial and regional land trusts and nature conservancies; and
- Other provincial or municipal governments or their agencies.

The beneficiaries of the Program include:

- Present and future generations of Canadians; and
- Populations of species at risk, migratory birds and other elements of biodiversity.

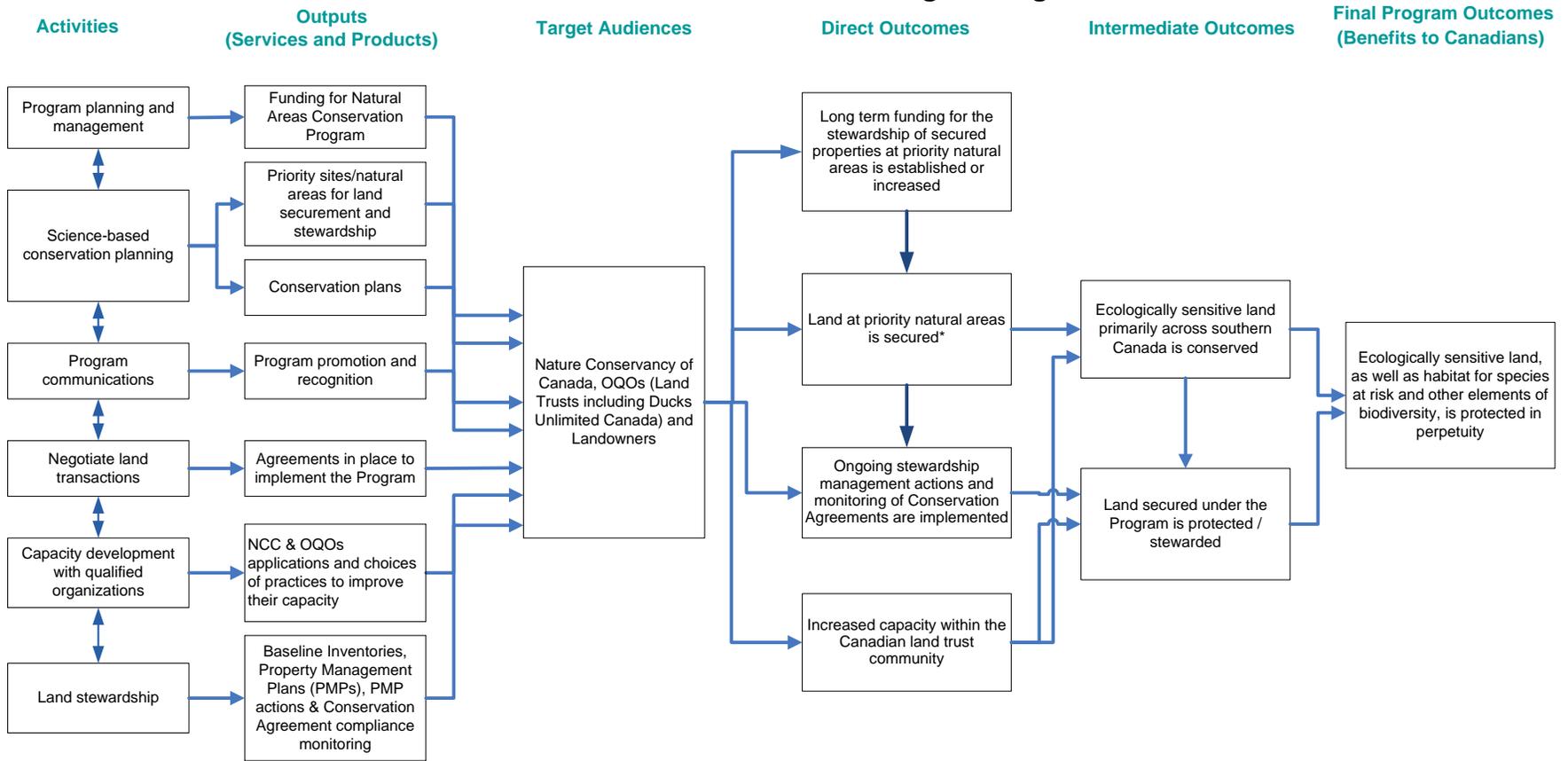
2.3 EXPECTED RESULTS

The Program uses the funds provided by the Government of Canada to secure matching fund contributions, to secure land for long term conservation, to implement stewardship activities on secured lands, and to build capacity within the land trust community. The funds are directed based on a science-based conservation planning process, and the application of related ecological criteria, that produce a list of priority natural areas for land securement and stewardship. As well, NCC works with OQOs, such as DUC and provincial and regional land trusts and nature conservancies, in order to implement the Program. NCC also promotes the Program through a variety of communication approaches.

The following logic model illustrates the Program's core activities, outputs and outcomes. The key outputs, directed at landowners and conservation organizations in priority natural areas, contribute to the direct outcomes to be achieved in the short term. These direct outcomes contribute to the intermediate and final outcomes to be achieved over the longer term.

This logic model has been updated since 2012 to reflect the new funding envelopes and activities undertaken by the Program since the last evaluation (in line with the Amended 2013 and 2014 Funding Agreements).

Natural Areas Conservation Program Logic Model



*Land securement in the Funding Agreement means the acquisition of lands, conservation easements, development rights and other interests in land.

April 4, 2017

2.4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Table 1 presents program revenues and expenditures since 2012-2013 and **Table 2** presents the summary of drawdowns to date.

Table 1: Program Revenues and Expenditures ¹

Partner	Expenses			Revenue
	Natural Areas Conservation Fund	Matching Funds	Total	
2012-2013				
NCC	\$28,857,666	\$44,309,700	\$73,167,366	\$73,167,366
DUC	\$2,000,000	\$3,527,887	\$5,527,887	\$5,527,887
OQOs	\$2,597,649	\$4,948,697	\$7,546,346	\$7,546,346
Total	\$33,455,315	\$52,786,284	\$86,241,599	\$86,241,599
2013-2014				
NCC	\$13,867,652	\$18,048,880	\$31,916,532	\$31,916,532
DUC	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
OQOs	\$14,051	\$43,764	\$57,815	\$57,815
Total	\$13,881,703	\$18,092,644	\$31,974,347	\$31,974,347
2014-2015²				
NCC	\$20,808,025.00	\$54,553,016.00	\$75,361,041	\$75,361,041
DUC	\$2,000,000.00	\$2,895,632.00	\$4,895,632	\$4,895,632
OQOs ³	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$22,808,025	\$57,448,648	\$80,256,673	\$80,256,673
2015-2016				
NCC	\$20,769,451	\$63,387,922	\$84,157,373	\$84,157,373
DUC	\$1,000,000	\$2,473,937	\$3,473,937	\$3,473,937
OQOs	\$730,549	\$6,342,421	\$7,072,970	\$7,072,970
Total	\$22,500,000	\$72,204,280	\$94,704,280	\$94,704,280
2016-2017⁴				
NCC	\$19,848,195	\$36,200,000	\$56,048,195	\$56,048,195
DUC	\$1,397,775	\$3,346,299	\$4,744,074	\$4,744,074
OQOs	\$1,254,030	\$3,468,470	\$4,722,500	\$4,722,500
Total	\$22,500,000	\$43,014,769	\$65,514,769	\$65,514,769
GRAND TOTAL	\$115,145,043	\$243,546,625	\$358,691,668	\$358,691,668

¹ Information pulled from Progress Reports

² Overlap in 2014-2015 between 2007 Agreement (and Amended Agreement) and the first year of the new 2014 Agreement

³ OQO funds were \$0 in this year because all the OQO funds were disbursed prior to this period (under the 2007 agreement)

⁴ Audited 2016-2017 information was not available at time of completion, and therefore numbers are estimates

Table 2: Drawdowns of Program resources from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017

Year	Drawdown ¹
2012-2013	\$24,029,852
2013-2014	\$11,207,512
2014-2015*	\$18,792,488
2015-2016	\$22,500,000
2016-2017	\$22,500,000

*Overlap of original 2007 Agreement (\$8,792,488) and new 2014 Agreement (\$10M)

3 Evaluation Design

3.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

While there is no specific Funding Agreement requirement for NCC to conduct an evaluation of the Program,⁷ NCC commissioned an independent performance evaluation in 2017 to:

1. Continue to measure the overall performance of the Program in achieving its intended outcomes.
2. Continue to measure the overall performance of NCC in administering the Program.
3. Prepare for future opportunities to extend the Program and its funding, including identifying lessons learned, success stories and best practices.

In order to contribute to decision-making by the Government of Canada, NCC conducted this evaluation in an independent manner by hiring an external evaluation consultant team which implemented the evaluation in line with the standards of ECCC's Evaluation Division and Treasury Board's Policy on Results.

The scope of the evaluation covers the Program since the last evaluation – from April 2012 to March 2017. While it focuses primarily on the degree to which NCC is meeting the requirements specified under the 2014 Funding Agreement only, it includes the achievements of the Program under all three Agreements:

- The last year of the initial 2007 Funding Agreement (2012-2013);
- The one year of the 2013 Amended Agreement (2013-2014); and
- The three years under the 2014 Agreement (2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17).

The evaluation scope focuses on the internal delivery/processes of NCC (not OQOs). The performance evaluation does not assess NCC's financial management practices (as independent financial audits are performed to address this requirement and have noted no issues).

3.2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This evaluation provides an evidence-based assessment of the relevance, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the Program and its ability to achieve the expected results identified in the Program Logic Model (presented in Section 2.3). It also provides an assessment of whether NCC has established the appropriate management controls for delivering the Program in accordance with the terms and conditions of the 2014 Funding Agreement.

In order to evaluate the Program, the Consultant Team designed an Evaluation Framework (Table 3) with a series of questions that were explored over the course of the evaluation. In addition to this Framework, specific indicators (Table 4) were used to assess the achievement of the Program's intended outputs and outcomes.

⁷ Note that ECCC's Evaluation Division is responsible for and has conducted an evaluation of the NACP as part of the broader evaluation of Habitat Conservation Partnerships.

The Project Team completed five lines of inquiry to gather evidence to answer the questions presented in the Evaluation Framework:

1. A broad range of documents about the Program and its context were reviewed and analyzed. The list of documents reviewed is provided in **Appendix A**.
2. Two online surveys were designed and distributed to collect qualitative and quantitative information from two audiences:
 - a. OQOs which meet the eligibility criteria to apply for Program funding (i.e., all members of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance whether they have received Program funds or not). The response rate for this survey was 38% (n=78), 46% had received no funding from the Program.
 - b. Individuals or organizations (e.g., land donors) that have completed transactions with NCC under the Program. The response rate for this survey was 36% (n=91).These are considered good response rates based on evaluator experience with other similar surveys (the target was 35%). The results from the online surveys are provided in **Appendix B**.
3. A comparative assessment was undertaken to examine other land conservation/securement programs in Canada and internationally to analyze lessons learned and illustrate potential alternative approaches to delivering the Program. This assessment included new information from the Bush Heritage Trust in Australia and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance in Canada, and also included updated information from five programs analyzed in the 2012 evaluation:
 - a. Two Canadian land conservation programs: Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) and Ecological Gifts (EcoGifts) Program
 - b. One North American program: North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)
 - c. Two international programs: US Land Trust Alliance (LTA) and the UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)The results of the comparative assessment can be found in **Appendix C**.
4. Interviews were conducted with 31 key informants - those directly involved in implementing the Program in NCC, those providing oversight in ECCC, as well as key external partners, stakeholders and experts. A list of organizations interviewed is provided in **Appendix D**.
5. Two case studies were conducted to illustrate the achievements of the Program. This included one land securement project implemented by Ducks Unlimited Canada (Dornn Land in Manitoba) and one communications project implemented by NCC (Escape into Nature in Saskatchewan). Summaries can be found in **Appendix E**.

The evidence collected was analyzed to develop findings by each evaluation question. These findings were validated by NCC.

Table 3: Draft Performance Evaluation Framework

Question	Relevant Funding Agreement Section ⁸	Indicator	Source / Method
RELEVANCE			
Evaluation Issue 1: Continued Need for Program			
1. Is there a continued need for the Program in Canada? To what extent does the Program duplicate, overlap with or complement other existing programs?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of the environmental issues the Program addresses • Specific roles/niches addressed by the Program and gaps that would exist in the absence of the initiative • Presence/absence of other programs that complement or duplicate the objectives of the initiative 	Document review Interviews Online survey Comparative Assessment
Evaluation Issue 2: Alignment with NCC and Government Priorities			
2. Is the Program and its objectives aligned with NCC's mandate?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Program is aligned with NCC's mandate, corporate goals and objectives 	Document review
3. Is the Program and its objectives aligned with federal government priorities and those of ECCC?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program's objectives correspond to recent/current federal government priorities • Program's objectives are aligned to departmental strategic outcomes (e.g., protection of species at risk, habitat conservation) 	Document review
4. Are there areas in which the Program might be expanded and/or modified in order to continue to align with the Government of Canada's priorities, roles and responsibilities?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Government priorities and strategic directions regarding habitat conservation and species at risk that align with NCC and Program goals and capabilities 	Document review Interviews
Evaluation Issue 3: Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities			
5. Is there a legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for the Government of Canada to fund the Program?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views on the ongoing need for federal funding and appropriateness of federal role to fund the types of activities undertaken as part of the Program 	Interviews
PERFORMANCE			
Evaluation Issue 4: Achievement of Expected Outputs and Outcomes			
6. To what extent have intended outputs been achieved?	3. Purpose 4A. Program Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of intended output achievement (as per Table 4 indicators) • Views on the extent to which intended outputs have been achieved • Evidence of / views on factors outside the initiative that have influenced the achievement of intended outputs 	Document review Interviews Online survey Case studies

⁸ As per the 2014 Funding Agreement between the Government of Canada and NCC.

Question	Relevant Funding Agreement Section ⁸	Indicator	Source / Method
7. To what extent have intended outcomes been achieved?	3. Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of intended outcome achievement (as per Table 4 indicators) Views on the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved Evidence of / views on factors outside the initiative that have influenced the achievement of intended outcomes Evidence of / views on unintended outcomes attributable to the Program 	Document review Interviews Online survey
8. To what extent is the Program using best practices and lessons learned to enhance the achievement of outcomes?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on lessons learned and/or best practices in use when delivering the Program Evidence of Program adapting to lessons learned Use of best practices identified in other comparable programs 	Document review Interviews Case studies Comparative Assessment
9. Have the recommendations from the last evaluation been implemented to achieve further outcomes?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the Program has implemented changes to respond to the recommendations Evidence of implementation of the Management Response 	Document review Interviews
10. Are there opportunities to adapt the Program to achieve further results?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on changes that could enhance the Program and its impact 	Interviews Case studies
Evaluation Issue 5: Demonstrated Efficiency and Economy			
11. Is the design of the Program (and its funding model) appropriate for achieving Program objectives and outcomes efficiently and effectively? Are there more economic and efficient means of achieving objectives?	4A. Program Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plausible link between initiative activities, outputs, and intended outcomes Evidence that the funding model is appropriate and optimal for delivering the Program Initiative resources/capacity commensurate with expected initiative results 	Document review Interviews Online survey Comparative Assessment
12. Is the management and accountability structure for the Program in place and functioning to achieve the expected outcomes and requirements of the Funding Agreement?	4C. Final Recipients 5D.E. Amount of Funding Appendix E & F – Communications Protocol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC has a clearly defined management and accountability structure for the Program, including an effective Program Committee The Board of Directors has implemented its roles and responsibilities related to governance and oversight of the Program as required NCC has developed documents to guide the Program and transactions with DUC and OQOs (e.g., Conservation Board Policies, Program Guidelines, Agreements with OQOs, etc.) NCC has developed controls and oversights for OQOs (including DUC) to assist in achieving the expected outcomes and requirements 	Document review Interviews Online survey

Question	Relevant Funding Agreement Section ⁸	Indicator	Source / Method
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC has identified risks that have the potential to affect the program and is managing them proactively Views on efficiency and effectiveness of NCC in managing the Program 	
13. Are Program resources being spent efficiently, economically and in accordance with allowable expenditures? How could efficiency be improved?	4B. Eligible Expenses 5.A.B.C Amount of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that program resources are managed and spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement Extent to which Program intended outcomes have been achieved at the least possible cost Views on whether good value is being obtained with respect to the use of funds Evidence of / views on whether there are alternative models that would achieve the same expected outcomes at a lower-cost Views on how the efficiency and/or economy of the Program could be improved 	Document review Interviews Online survey Comparative Assessment
14. Is appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting being conducted, and being used to inform decision-making?	7. Reporting Appendix D & G - Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of annual work plans developed in line with Funding Agreement Evidence of annual progress reports provided in line with Funding Agreement Evidence of performance data collection and reporting Evidence/views on the accuracy/validity of performance information Evidence/views on management use of performance data to inform/support decision-making processes 	Document review Interviews

The degree to which the expected outputs and outcomes were achieved by the Program was measured by the following indicators:

Table 4: Program Outputs and Outcomes and Evaluation Indicators

Expected Output or Outcome	Indicators
Outputs	
Funding for Natural Areas Conservation Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of funding in line with Agreement
Priority sites/natural areas for land securement and stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of list of priority natural areas annually (in work plans) based on science-based conservation planning and application of ecological criteria • Reporting of results in annual progress reports
Conservation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence and coverage of Conservation Blueprints that inform the choice of priority natural areas • Number and coverage of Natural Area Conservation Plans related to priority natural areas (or NAWMP Joint Ventures for DUC) • NCC biodiversity targets(e.g., critical ecosystems, and habitats; plant and animal populations and species at risk) identified in Natural Area Conservation Plans
Program promotion and recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount and reach of public communications related to importance of land conservation and role of private lands; promotion of Program; and/or GoC leadership on Program (e.g., press conferences, media announcements, print and on-line promotions) • Communications in line with Agreement conditions
Agreements in place to implement the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of funding agreements with OQOs to co-deliver Program • Amount of funding disbursed to OQOs • Disbursement and delivery in line with Agreement conditions
NCC & OQOs applications and choices of practices to improve their capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ and % of funds from capacity development funding program allocated • % of eligible participants (e.g., those listed on Ecological Gifts website) participating in capacity development funding program • # of standards/practices that organizations are pursuing as part of the capacity development funding program (not available for DUC) • # of practices for which NCC is in compliance, and # of non-compliant practices that NCC has committed to improve/complete
Baseline Inventories, Property Management Plans (PMPs), PMP actions, and Conservation Agreement compliance monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ and % of Agreement funds expended on stewardship implementation actions broken down by stewardship category (BI/PMP, PCA/PMP Actions, and CA Compliance Monitoring) • # of PCAs/PMP actions completed with funds on properties acquired under the Program or Previous Program • # and % of Conservation Agreements with compliance monitoring completed with funds on land acquired under the Program or Previous Program • # and % of Baseline Inventories (BIs) and Property Management Plans (PMPs) completed on fee simple properties acquired under the Program
Direct Outcomes	
Long term funding for the stewardship of secured properties at priority natural areas is established or increased	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of funding disbursed to priority natural areas annually and 5-year total, noting annual \$ and av. size of securement project awards (no target) • % of overall funding allocated to priority natural areas (target 100% of securement funding)

Expected Output or Outcome	Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matching non-federal funding achieved (target at least 2:1 over total program length) • \$ value and % of land value contributed to Stewardship Endowment Fund for each property secured (target minimum 15-20% for properties under \$2M plus escalating stewardship requirements for properties up to \$10M and specific stewardship budget for properties over \$10 million), as outlined in NCC's Appraisal policy), as required by Management Policy
Land at priority natural areas is secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of land securement transactions at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (conservation plans by OQOs) • % of transactions at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (conservation plans for OQOs) (target 100% for NCC) • % of priority natural areas (conservation plans for OQOs) that have land securement transactions (no target)
Ongoing stewardship management actions and monitoring of Conservation Agreements are implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of properties in priority natural areas with property-level baseline documentation reports (BDR) for Conservation Agreement properties (target 100%) • % of properties in priority natural areas, which were secured by Conservation Agreement, with annual monitoring to assess property against BDR (target 100%) • % of properties in priority natural areas with Baseline Inventories (BIs) and Property Management Plans (PMP) (no specific timeline/ target) • % of properties in priority natural areas with at least one PCAs/PMP action implemented
Increased capacity within the Canadian land trust community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of organizations that were successful under the capacity development funding program • # of standards/practices that OQOs (including DUC) have completed
Intermediate Outcome	
Ecologically sensitive land primarily across Southern Canada is conserved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hectares secured through Program (as per Funding Agreement targets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of hectares secured annually by NCC ○ Number of hectares secured by DUC and other OQOs • % of hectares secured at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (or conservation planning frameworks for OQOs) (target 100%) • % of priority natural areas with hectares secured at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (or conservation planning frameworks for OQOs) (no target)
Land secured under the Program is protected / stewarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hectares for which Priority Conservation Actions/Property Management Plan Actions were implemented on lands acquired under the Program and Previous Program • Number of hectares for which Conservation Agreement compliance monitoring was completed on lands acquired under the Program and Previous Program
Final Program Outcome	
Ecologically sensitive land, as well as habitat for species at risk (SAR) and other elements of biodiversity, is protected in perpetuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and hectares of secured properties with species at risk • Number of species at risk on secured land • Hectares of wetland and associated upland habitat for waterfowl secured by DUC • Number and type of biodiversity targets secured/achieved (as identified in Natural Area Conservation Plans)

3.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVALUATION

There are three key factors that should be noted as limitations to the evaluation process:

1. Ability to test full compliance with the Agreement's Requirements

The performance evaluation was not intended to test whether NCC was in full compliance with all sections of all Funding Agreements. Rather, the performance evaluation focussed on aspects related to the Program's performance, including NCC's ability to design and implement the Program in a way that will allow it to achieve the Program's expected outcomes (as defined in the logic model).

2. Ability to test Financial Management Practices

With respect to NCC's and DUC's Financial Management Practices, the performance evaluation examined the cost-effectiveness of program resources in terms of their utilization to deliver the Program and achieve results. It did not examine the financial controls, accuracy of reporting, and conformance with investment guidelines as these items are part of annual financial audits completed by an independent and accredited financial auditor (N.B. NCC relies on DUC's auditors for confirmation of DUC compliance).

3. Ability to examine activities and practices of partners and third parties.

The activities of OQOs and DUC are outside of the scope of the performance evaluation. However, their results within the context of the Program are included and the project team tested that the interface and adequacy of controls between NCC and its partners is appropriate.

4 Findings

4.1 RELEVANCE

4.1.1 Evaluation Issue 1: Continued Need for Program

Evaluation Question	Indicators
1. Is there a continued need for the Program in Canada? To what extent does the Program duplicate, overlap with or complement other existing programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstration of the environmental issues the Program addresses• Specific roles/niches addressed by the Program and gaps that would exist in the absence of the initiative• Presence/absence of other programs that complement or duplicate the objectives of the initiative
Summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Clear challenges to biodiversity persist, particularly in southern Canada, where there are high levels of species richness, species at risk, and threats due to habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation.▪ As such, there is a clear demonstrated environmental need for the Program, particularly on private lands with high biodiversity values in southern Canada.▪ Other federal and provincial programs exist but are complementary in nature; with its targeted focus on funding private land acquisition in southern Canada, the NACP has a unique niche.	

While Canada is home to a significant portion of key global ecosystems such as wetlands and forests, ecological stressors continue to rise. Canada's most recent report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) highlighted a number of significant trends, including the reduction of native grasslands to a fraction of their original extent, high loss and degradation of wetlands, the rise

of invasive non-native species, and declines in many key species including amphibians, birds, and fish.

Many of these trends are particularly pronounced in southern Canada. For example, wetland loss and degradation is concentrated in the south, and the presence of invasive species is highest in southern Canada. Federal, provincial and territorial reports, such as the 2010 Ecosystem Status and Trends report, have also noted declines in the capacity of agricultural landscapes to support wildlife over the past twenty years, and croplands and forests continue to be converted into built-up areas in and around southern urban centres.

A draft Conservation Opportunities Assessment by NCC also notes that the overall state of biodiversity in Canada is declining, particularly in the southernmost parts of the country. This report identifies potential priority areas for action, based on identifying areas with very high species richness, areas with the greatest concentrations of species at risk, as well as levels of both ecological threat and conservation responses (i.e., existing levels of protection). Priority areas based on this assessment are largely located in regions of southern Canada with large human populations and where much of the natural habitat has been converted. Most of these ecoregions have a high proportion of private lands and few protected areas.

As such, the document review concluded that clear challenges to biodiversity persist, particularly in southern Canada, where there are high levels of species richness, species at risk, and threats due to habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. Much of these lands in southern Canada are privately owned without current mechanisms for protection. As such, there is a clear demonstrated environmental need for the Program, particularly on private lands with high biodiversity values in southern Canada. Private lands conservation not only protects these biodiversity values but also leverages the increasing interest of the private sector to take part in conservation.

Beyond the documentary evidence, stakeholders also underscored the need and importance of the program. The vast majority of key informants and stakeholders confirmed that there is a strong environmental need for the NACP and that the Program is an important mechanism for conserving ecologically sensitive areas on private lands in southern Canada, creating connections/corridors for wildlife, and helping Canada meet its biodiversity goals.

There is also evidence that stakeholders continue to participate and invest in the program, particularly within the land trust community. Key informants within the land trust community indicated that it would be impossible to do their work without the NACP. Those interviewed noted that there is a demonstrable need for accelerated action to address biodiversity challenges and promote habitat connectivity.

In addition, the comparative assessment found the NACP continues to be highly supportive of and complementary to existing programs in Canada and North America. While several similar programs (such as the Habitat Stewardship and Ecological Gifts Programs) exist, the NACP remains the only national funding mechanism that focuses on providing funds specifically for permanent land securement of private lands. As such, other programs (including federal initiatives such as the Habitat Stewardship Program and Ecological Gifts Program, as well as provincial programs) are complementary in nature but not duplicative.

This finding is consistent with interviews conducted with OQOs, in particular, who see the NACP as complementary and an important backstop especially in the absence of or reduction in provincial funds to support stewardship efforts.

4.1.2 Evaluation Issue 2: Alignment with NCC and Government Priorities

Evaluation Question	Indicators
2. Is the Program and its objectives aligned with NCC's mandate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program is aligned with NCC's mandate, corporate goals and objectives
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program is highly consistent and aligned with NCC's mandate, objectives, policies, and internal goals. As a national, science-based organization with strong experience in identifying, securing, and leveraging funds to secure private lands for conservation, NCC is uniquely placed to deliver the NACP. 	

The document review confirms that NCC's mandate is clearly and directly aligned with the goals and objectives of the NACP. For example, NCC's stated mission is: "to lead, innovate and use creativity in the conservation of Canada's natural heritage. We will secure important natural areas through their purchase, donation or other mechanisms, then manage these properties for the long term."

In addition, the organization establishes annual goals related to securing lands, investing in stewardship and aligning acquisitions within priority natural areas that are also highly consistent with the Program. The review of additional policies and corporate documents confirms that NCC is a national, science-based organization with strong experience in identifying, securing, and leveraging funds to secure private lands for conservation. As such, NCC is uniquely placed to deliver the NACP.

The survey data also suggests that OQOs and landowners believe that NCC is well placed to deliver the NACP. Almost 70% of landowners surveyed chose to work with NCC because of its strong reputation for protecting natural resources through property securement and stewardship (see survey result below). Many respondents also noted that they chose to work with NCC because they consider it to be the organization best able to help them establish a protected area.

Results of Landowner Survey		
Why did you choose to work with NCC on this transaction?		
NCC has a strong reputation for protecting natural resources through property securement and stewardship	63	69.2%
NCC is the organization best able to help me establish a protected area	32	35.2%
I was encouraged to participate in the Program by a representative of the NCC/colleague/friend	28	30.8%
I wanted the benefits from other related programs (e.g., Ecological Gifts Program)	11	12.1%
I read an announcement or publication about the Program	9	9.9%
Other	11	12.1%
Total	91	
<p><i>The percentages here amount to more than 100% because respondents could select more than one reason for choosing to collaborate with NCC</i></p>		

The OQO survey shows similar results. Over half of the organizations who confirmed they had received funding under the land securement component of the program said they had chosen to work

with NCC because of the organization's strong reputation for protecting natural resources through property securement and stewardship. Over one third of participants felt NCC was the organization best able to help them establish a protected area.

Overall, the majority of OQOs responded that NCC's management of the program is appropriate. Similarly, the majority of key informant interviews suggested that NCC has the structure, the resources, and the expertise to manage the NACP. However, some OQO informants expressed reservation with the fact that NCC operates as both the NACP administrator and a conservation organization with its own securement priorities and activities.

Evaluation Question	Indicators
3. Is the Program and its objectives aligned with federal government priorities and those of ECCC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program's objectives correspond to recent/current federal government priorities • Program's objectives are aligned to departmental strategic outcomes (e.g., protection of species at risk, habitat conservation)
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Program and its objectives are clearly aligned with ECCC priorities as expressed in core strategies, documents and reports. ▪ The Program and its objectives are clearly aligned with Government of Canada priorities related to species at risk and nature conservation. 	

The document review confirms that the Program directly contributes to Canada's efforts to meet its international commitments under the CBD and the Aichi Convention on Biological Diversity. Relevant international targets to which the Program contributes include:

- **Target 5:** By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.
- **Target 11:** By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
- **Target 12:** By 2020, the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.

In addition, the Program contributes to the 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada (developed by federal, provincial and territorial governments) and the 2016 Biodiversity Outcomes Framework, both of which reflect the Aichi targets related to protected areas and species at risk outlined above.

The NACP is also aligned with key Government of Canada priorities related to conserving Canada's natural landscapes and protecting species at risk. For example, the 2016-19 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy includes Canada's commitments to conserve at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures by 2020. The strategy references not only establishing and managing protected areas such as national parks, national wildlife areas and migratory bird sanctuaries, but also programs that fund habitat conservation on private land and encourage landowners to donate ecologically sensitive land for conservation.

The document review also confirmed that the Program is aligned with ECCC priorities related to nature conservation. For example, ECCC’s 2016-2017 Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) includes as Strategic Outcome 1: Canada’s natural environment is conserved and restored for present and future generations. Relevant programs contributing to the achievement of this goal include:

- Program 1.1: Biodiversity – Wildlife and Habitat: which aims to prevent biodiversity loss while enabling sustainable use by: protecting and recovering species at risk and their critical habitat; conserving and protecting healthy populations of migratory birds; and monitoring, conserving and restoring significant habitats by establishing and maintaining a network of protected areas, and developing and implementing stewardship program; and
- Sub-Program 1.1.4: Habitat Conservation Partnerships: This program supports the delivery of Environment and Climate Change Canada’s obligations under the *Species at Risk Act*, *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, 1994, and *Canada Wildlife Act*. It does this by funding projects and encouraging partnership and habitat conservation activities that secure, protect, improve and/or restore important and ecologically sensitive habitat to enhance the survival of wildlife—in particular, species at risk and migratory birds. The program provides mechanisms (e.g., tax incentives, funding initiatives) to engage a variety of organizations and individuals, including private land owners, environmental non-governmental organizations (e.g., land trusts) and other levels of government.

The document review did note that while there were more specific references to nature conservation and to the NACP specifically in key Government of Canada-wide priority documents such as the Budget and Speeches from the Throne in the earlier part of the period covered by the evaluation (such as Budgets 2012 and 2013), these references are less pronounced in the later portion of the period covered (such as the 2015 Speech from the Throne). In part, this may reflect the growing prominence of climate change as a key policy driver federally in recent years (see Question 4, below).

Evaluation Question	Indicators
4. Are there areas in which the Program might be expanded and/or modified in order to continue to align with the Government of Canada’s priorities, roles and responsibilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Government priorities and strategic directions regarding habitat conservation and species at risk that align with NCC and Program goals and capabilities
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate change has become a more significant policy driver since the Program was first created; there may be opportunities to align the NACP more clearly with mitigation and adaptation efforts. ▪ Key informants also suggested exploring how NACP could be used to advance multi-species approaches to species at risk recovery, especially in high priority areas. ▪ Informants also suggested the Program explore how to build stronger partnerships with Indigenous communities and emerging forms of Indigenous land protection. 	

The 2015 negotiation of the Paris Agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the subsequent development of the 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (endorsed by all provinces and territories with the exception of Saskatchewan) have moved climate change into the forefront of Canadian government policy efforts in recent years.

At the same time, NCC’s 2015-16 Annual Report notes that land conservation is an integral part of any climate change strategy. Recognizing the role conservation can play in enhancing landscape

resiliency in the face of climate change, interviews with key informants within NCC suggested that there may be opportunities to align the NACP more clearly with federal and provincial climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts moving forward.

Interviews with key informants (particularly those within NCC) also suggested that there may be ways to enhance or accelerate the contribution the program makes to recovery of species at risk. Specific examples provided included participation in efforts to plan for and manage lands for multiple species at risk (rather than the current emphasis on species by species approaches), especially in high priority regions. Similarly, others suggested enhanced potential collaborative efforts with ECCC related to data sharing and conservation planning for multi-species approaches.

Other suggestions included applying the conservation planning approaches employed by the Program to other regions of Canada, including the Boreal, the Arctic and/or marine and freshwater ecosystems, as well as exploring how the Program might enhance partnerships with and participation by Indigenous Peoples in its work. This could include exploration of how the NACP could support emerging forms of Indigenous land protection, such as Indigenous Protected Areas or Indigenous land conservancy models.

Finally, some interviewees within NCC suggested clearer integration of program efforts with the Government of Canada’s efforts to meet its international commitments under the Aichi Convention on Biological Diversity. Others suggested that NCC and the Government of Canada explore moving beyond private land securement within the NACP to explicitly supporting the use of other conservation tools such as best management practices. NCC is already piloting a range of other stewardship tools (such as cooperative grazing leases and payments for ecological goods and services) which could inform these discussions.

4.1.3 Evaluation Issue 3: Alignment with Federal Roles and Responsibilities

Evaluation Question	Indicators
5. Is there a legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for the Government of Canada to fund the Program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on the ongoing need for federal funding and appropriateness of federal role to fund the types of activities undertaken as part of the Program
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a clear and legitimate role for the Government of Canada in funding the Program, as part of its efforts to meet international and national biodiversity goals and objectives, and consistent with its role in ongoing efforts to achieve shared national biodiversity objectives. There is a relative paucity of public funds available at the provincial and municipal levels for this work. 	

Both the document review and interviews with key informants confirmed that there is a clear and continuing role for the Government of Canada to support programs such as the NACP, as part of its efforts to ensure that national and international commitments related to nature conservation and the recovery of species at risk are achieved, particularly as it relates to voluntary efforts to conserve ecologically significant private lands.

While key informants noted many initiatives and approaches are required for habitat conservation, at all levels, both internal and external interviews confirmed that federal investments are appropriate and necessary for ensuring the conservation of private lands in southern Canada. OQOs also stressed

that there is a continued need for the federal government to provide funding through this program, given the relative paucity of public funds available at the provincial and municipal levels for this work.

4.2 PERFORMANCE

4.2.1 Evaluation Issue 4: Achievement of Expected Outputs and Outcomes

Evaluation Question	Indicators
6. To what extent have intended outputs been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of intended output achievement (as per Table 4 indicators) Views on the extent to which intended outputs have been achieved Evidence of / views on factors outside the initiative that have influenced the achievement of intended outputs
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most intended outputs have been or are likely to be achieved. Significant progress is being made in all areas. Activities are being implemented in line with ECCC Funding Agreement. Conservation Blueprints, Plans, and priority sites are being consistently identified and updated. Communications activities are being delivered to support Program promotion. There are a growing number of funding agreements in place to support land securement by OQOs, including DUC. OQO capacity development efforts are being supported. NCC is compliant with 92% of the elements that make up each of the practices recorded within the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices. Significant progress has been made in stewardship of lands secured, including Baseline Inventories, Property Management Plans and Conservation Agreement compliance monitoring. 	

Table 5 below presents the expected outputs (as noted in Table 4 previously) and their degree of achievement based on the findings of this evaluation. Note that 2016-2017 information is an estimate, as the audit of 2016-2017 information was not available at the time of completion.

Table 5: Degree of Achievement of Expected Outputs

Expected Output	Indicator/ Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
Funding for NACP	Management of funding in line with Agreement	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities being implemented are in line with requirements of Section 4A Program Activities in 2014 Funding Agreement The Program is meeting requirements of Section 4B Eligible Expenses in 2014 Funding Agreement, with funds spent only in eligible areas The Program is meeting the requirements of Section 5D.E.F Amount of Funding in 2014 Funding Agreement, with Annual Work Plans provided as per required The Program is meeting requirements of Section 7 Reporting & Appendix D & G in 2014 Funding Agreement by providing cash flows in annual work plans, providing annual progress reports, and completing both according to the required templates
Priority Sites/ Natural Areas for land	Presence of list of priority natural areas	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of Priority Sites in annual work plans and progress reports

Expected Output	Indicator/ Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
securement and stewardship	annually (in work plans) based on science-based conservation planning and application of ecological criteria		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies: Application of Science and Approval Process
	Reporting of results in annual progress reports	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting of land securement activity results by priority site, province and land transaction type in annual progress reports (Appendix 4A, 4B, 4C 2014-2015 and 2016-2017)
Conservation Plans	Presence and coverage of Conservation Blueprints that inform the choice of priority natural areas	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Conservation Blueprints that indicate the conservation status and opportunities in southern eco-regions across Canada (same as noted in the 2012 Evaluation)
	Number and coverage of Natural Area Conservation Plans related to priority natural areas (not available for DUC NAWMP)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of March 31 2017, NCC has completed 84 NACPS (an increase of 7 since 2012) and renewed 19 Plans
	NCC biodiversity targets (e.g., critical ecosystems, and habitats; plant and animal populations and species at risk) identified in Natural Area Conservation Plans	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity targets identified in sample of 2015 Plans examined
Program promotion and recognition	Amount and reach of public communications related to importance of land conservation and role of private lands; promotion of Program; and/or GoC leadership on	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative media hits - increasing: 4823 total = 827 (to 2011), 1437 (from 2011 to 2015), 2559 (under 2014 agreement) • Cumulative communication activities: 432 total (382 NCC) = 137 (to 2011), 132 (from 2011 to 2014), 163 (under 2014 agreement with DUC and OQOs; 113 for NCC) • Eight Annual Progress Report 2007-2015 reported 2,264 media hits • Reported communication activities in 2015-16 included NCC = 42, DUC = 8 OQO = 14

Expected Output	Indicator/ Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
	Program (e.g., press conferences, media announcements, print and on-line promotions)		
	Communications in line with Agreement conditions	Achieved (with conditions noted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program is meeting requirements of Appendix E Communication in 2014 Funding Agreement by producing and making publicly available a visual, story-based “Impact Report” that highlights the cumulative impact of the program in each region. One done to date (2014-2016) Communication products meet most but not all requirements of Appendix E & F Communications Protocol in 2014 Funding Agreement. The Government of Canada directed NCC to change procedures in a few areas - See Question 12 for additional context
Agreements in place to implement the Program	Number of funding agreements with OQOs to co-deliver Program	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding agreements are in place and increasing to support land securement by OQOs, including DUC 56 projects under OQO program since inception (46 orgs); Most agreements (43 projects; 38 orgs) since 2012
	Amount of funding disbursed to OQOs	Likely to be Achieved	<p>OQO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$11,171,023 disbursed for the OQO program (74% of the 15M allocated under the 2007 agreement; remaining \$2M was allocated to DUC and \$1M to NCC) \$1,910,348 disbursed for the OQO program (38% of the 5M allocated) under the 2014 agreement As of March 2017, \$2,675,351 increase from 2012 Evaluation <p>DUC :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2007 Agreement (\$25M + \$2M allocation): 27,000,000 (100% of funds disbursed) Amended agreement (\$2M allocated – 100% disbursed) 2014 Agreement (\$5M allocated): \$2,397,775 disbursed (48%) DUC funds disbursed in last 5 years, 2012-2017: \$6,397,775
	Disbursement and delivery in line with Agreement conditions	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Program is meeting requirements of Section 4C Final Recipients in 2014 Funding Agreement, with Funding Agreements developed for both DUC and other OQOs by distributing funds to DUC and OQOs The Program is meeting requirements of Section 5 A.B.C Amount of Funding in 2014 Funding Agreement, with allocations in line with Agreement

Expected Output	Indicator/ Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
NCC & OQOs applications and choices of practices to improve their capacity	\$ and % of funds from capacity development funding program allocated	Likely to be Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$74,132 disbursed for the first round of the Capacity Development Funding Program (April 2016-March 2017; 59% of 125K allocated) • \$50,769 remaining for round 2 (2017-2018; 41% of the 125K allocated)
	% of eligible participants (e.g., those listed on Ecological Gifts website) participating in capacity development funding program	Partially Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 of 143 = 12.5% of eligible participants are participating in capacity development funding program; however, standards are not applicable to all OQOs
	# of standards/practices that organizations are pursuing as part of the capacity development funding program (not available for DUC)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A combined total of 66 practices were completed by participating organizations
	# of practices for which NCC is in compliance, and # of non-compliant practices that NCC has committed to improve/complete	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC is compliant with 92% of the elements that make up each of the practices recorded within the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices
Baseline Inventories, Property Management Plans (PMPs), PMP actions, and Conservation Agreement compliance monitoring	\$ and % of Agreement funds expended on stewardship implementation actions broken down by stewardship category (BI/PMP, PCA/PMP Actions, and CA Compliance Monitoring)	Likely to be Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 2013 Amended Agreement (2013-2015) Priority Conservation Actions, management and monitoring for DUC/NCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocation : \$2,725,000 ○ Expended : \$2,520,990 ○ 93% of allocation expensed • Under 2014 Agreement (2014-2017) – for NCC, including all stewardship actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocation: \$15,000,000 ○ Expended: \$7,753,233 ○ 52% of allocation expensed with 60% of timeframe completed (2 years to go)
	# of PCAs/PMP actions completed with funds on properties	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 521 PCAs completed under the 2013 amended agreement • 2009 PMP Actions completed under the 2014 Agreement (978 in 2015-2016; 1031 in 2016-2017)

Expected Output	Indicator/ Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
	acquired under the Program or Previous Program		
	# and % of Conservation Agreements with compliance monitoring completed with funds on land acquired under the Program or Previous Program	Likely to be Achieved	<p>GRAND TOTAL: 467 (96%) conservation agreements with compliance monitoring completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 (100%) of conservation agreements with compliance monitoring completed under the 2007 agreement (2007 to 2011) • 86 (91%) of conservation agreements with compliance monitoring completed under the 2007 and amended agreements (2011 to 2015) • 326 (96%) of conservation agreements with compliance monitoring completed under the 2014 agreement (2014-2017)
	# and % of Baseline Inventories (BIs) and Property Management Plans (PMPs) completed on fee simple properties acquired under the Program	Likely to be Achieved	<p>GRAND TOTAL BIs for evaluation period: 338 (89% of fee simple properties acquired by the Program)</p> <p>GRAND TOTAL PMPs for evaluation period: 332 (87%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the 2007 and amended agreements (2011-2015): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 246 (100%) BIs completed ○ 245 (100%) PMPs completed • Under the 2014 agreement (2014-2017)⁹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 92 (83%) BIs completed ○ 87 (78%) PMPs completed

Key external and internal informants were asked to provide comments on the degree to which expected outputs are being achieved. Both internal and external informants indicated that there is strong progress overall. In addition, they noted that:

- Work on Conservation Plans and Blueprints is critical to driving the overall work of the NACP, although it was noted that much of this work predates the Program and that DUC priority areas are different than those of NCC.
- Significant progress has been made related to the stewardship indicators in recent years, partly in response to the last Program Evaluation. At the same time, under the current terms of the Funding Agreement that governs NCC's management of the Program, OQOs cannot currently access funds for stewardship activities, although many would apply for such funds should they become available.
- Capacity among OQOs to effectively acquire and manage lands over the long term has improved, although this is an area that multiple informants (internal and external) believe will require long-term sustained support. Capacity building in this context relates to the ability or organizations to meet Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices which are guidelines for the responsible operation of a land trust that can be run legally, ethically, and in the public interest including the conduct of a sound program of land transactions and stewardship.

⁹ These % are lower than previous agreements because the results include projects for which BI and PMPs are not due until next year (Jan 2018); if we exclude these projects, the results would be 99.9% for both BI/PMP in the 2016/2017 Year.

Both internal and external informants commented specifically on communications and suggested that this may be an area for enhancement moving forward. Recognizing that there are a wide range of communications activities employed by the Program, with increasing media activity, and that there was a communications blackout period prior to and during the last election, points raised include:

- Several internal interviewees flagged the importance of ensuring accuracy in communications materials.
- Several external informants suggested that the communications process (and associated processes such as signage) is burdensome given the levels of approval required both within NCC and ECCC.
- Several external informants suggested that there is little knowledge of overall performance impact of the Program.
- Several OQO interviews suggested that OQOs are not adequately represented in promotional materials and questioned whether promotional activities were having the desired impact of raising awareness of the Program.
- Several of the francophone interviewees noted an improvement in the provision of bilingual content, but indicated that NCC would benefit from having dedicated French-speaking staff to support the program (e.g., translating transaction documentation or discussing complex legal parameters for acquisitions).

Responses from the surveys provide the following information regarding the way the program communicates with OQOs and landowners or organizations:

- The OQO survey data shows that 56% of respondents felt the NCC is successful in communicating the program to organizations. However, some respondents felt that information was perhaps not circulated widely enough to reach all organizations that could potentially be interested in the program.
- Over 75% of landowners felt that NCC was successful in communicating the Program to individuals and organizations interested in donating or selling land as an ecologically sensitive area.

Evaluation Question	Indicators
7. To what extent have intended outcomes been achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of intended outcome achievement (as per Table 4 indicators) • Views on the extent to which intended outcomes have been achieved • Evidence of / views on factors outside the initiative that have influenced the achievement of intended outcomes • Evidence of / views on unintended outcomes attributable to the Program
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most intended outcomes have been achieved or are likely to be achieved. ▪ Ecologically sensitive land is being secured by NCC, DUC, and OQOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 37,029 ha has been secured to date under the 2014 Agreement (target of 130,000, with two years remaining); 430,254 since Program inception (it is not yet clear if the Program will achieve its target for overall hectares secured under the 2014 Agreement) – 85% of the lands secured have COSEWIC-Assessed species at risk ▪ 100% of land secured by NCC is within priority sites/priority natural areas ▪ Ongoing stewardship outcomes are being achieved. ▪ Match requirements are being exceeded. ▪ Capacity within the Canadian land trust community is increasing. 	

Table 6 below presents the expected outcomes (as noted in Table 4 previously) and their degree of achievement based on the findings of this evaluation.

Table 6: Degree of Achievement of Expected Outcomes

Expected Outcome	Indicator/Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
Direct Outcomes			
Long term funding for the stewardship of secured properties at priority natural areas is established or increased	Amount of funding disbursed to priority natural areas annually and 5-year total, noting annual \$ and av. size of securement project awards (no target)	Achieved	2007 Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 6 (2012-2013) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$33,000,000 // 30,993 ha 2007 Agreement + Amended Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 7 (2013-2014) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$13,500,000 // 18,727 ha • Year 8 (2014-2015) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$12,000,000 // 5,237 ha 2014 Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1 (2014-2015) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$10,000,000 // 4,649 ha • Year 2 (2015-2016) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$18,500,000 // 20,653 ha • Year 3 (2016-2017) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$18,500,000 // 11,727 ha 5-year total : \$105,500,000 // 91,986 ha
	% of overall funding allocated to priority natural areas (target 100% of securement funding)	Achieved	Target met : 100% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 4A,4B,4C in the Progress Report (Year 8 - 2007 Agreement) • Appendix 2A, 2B, and 2C in the Annual Progress Report (2014/2015 and 2015/2016), the 2014 Agreement • Appendix 2A, 2B, and 2C are not yet available for 2016/2017; however, all securement projects are vetted prior to acquisition to ensure they were acquired in a PNA or, for OQOs, a PNA or adopted Conservation framework
	Matching non-federal funding achieved (target at least 2:1 over total program length)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting matching requirements, which increased to 2:1 under the new agreement • Overall matching rate over all 10 years at 1.93 (higher than required) and under new agreement, 2 year total of 2.76 • Under 2007 and amended agreement : 1.82:1

Expected Outcome	Indicator/Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
	<p>\$ value and % of land value contributed to Stewardship Endowment Fund (SEF) for each property secured (target minimum 15-20% for properties under \$2M plus escalating stewardship requirements for properties up to \$10M and specific stewardship budget for properties over \$10 million), as outlined in NCC's Appraisal policy), as required by Management Policy</p> <p>*DUC adheres to their own SEF policy, and are not required to submit 15% to their land value as endowment funds.</p>	Almost Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 2014 agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2014-2015 : 1.76:1 ○ 2015-2016 : 3.21:1 ○ 2016-2017 (estimated): 1.91:1 <p>2011 –2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC : SEF = \$33,898,161 (value of land = \$261,370,349) [SEF% = 13%] • DUC : SEF = \$500,330 (value of land = \$15,660,320) [SEF% = 3%]* • OQO : SEF \$3,500,824 (value of land = \$26,268,936) [SEF% = 13%] <p>GRAND TOTAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC : SEF = \$59,882,014 (value of land = \$537,062,183) [SEF% = 11%] • DUC : SEF = \$500,330 (value of land = \$15,660,320) [SEF% = 3%] (<i>Info not available before 2011</i>)* • OQO : SEF \$4,600,633 (value of land = \$33,683,186) [SEF% = 14%] <p>For NCC properties over \$2M, the SEF = 8% (2007 to 2017) For NCC properties under \$2M, the SEF = 17% (2007 to 2017)</p>
Land at priority natural areas is secured	Number of land securement transactions at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (conservation plans by OQOs)	Achieved	<p>2007 Agreement + 2013 Amended Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC = 698 transactions • DUC = 503 transactions • OQOs = 34 conservation plans <p>2014 Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC = 172 transactions • DUC = 67 transactions • OQO = 22 conservation plans
	% of transactions at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (conservation plans for OQOs) (target 100% for NCC)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of Transactions/Projects secured at Priority Sites under 2007 Agreement (and 2013 Amended Agreement)(NCC/ DUC/ OQOs all included) • 100 % of Hectares secured at Priority Natural Areas (PNAs) under the 2014 Agreement (Note that OQOs are not included because it was no

Expected Outcome	Indicator/Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
			longer a requirement that OQO projects reside in PNAs)
	% of priority natural areas (conservation plans for OQOs) that have land securement transactions (no target)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of Priority Sites or PNAs that have land securement projects under the 2007 agreement + 2013 Amended Agreement : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCC : 76% ○ DUC : 62% ○ OQO : 18% • % of Priority Sites or PNAs that have land securement projects under the 2014 Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCC : 60% ○ DUC : 20% ○ OQO : Not applicable
Ongoing stewardship management actions and monitoring of Conservation Agreements are implemented	% of properties in priority natural areas with property-level baseline documentation reports (BDR) for Conservation Agreement properties (target 100%)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 2007 agreement = 100% • Under 2007 & Amended Agreement = 100% • Under 2014 Agreement = 100% Grand total = 100%
	% of properties in priority natural areas, which were secured by Conservation Agreement (CA), with annual monitoring to assess property against BDR (target 100%)	Almost Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 2007 agreement = 100% • Under 2007 and Amended Agreement = 91% • Under 2014 Agreement = 96% Grand total : 96%
	% of properties in priority natural areas with Baseline Inventories (BIs) and Property Management Plans (PMP) (no specific timeline/ target)	Achieved	<p>2007 Agreement (2007 - 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of BIs completed = 185 (100%) • # of PMPs completed =185 (100%) <p>2007 Agreement + Amended Agreement (2011 - 2015)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of BIs completed = 246 (100%) • # of PMPs completed = 245 (100%) <p>2014 Agreement (2014 - 2017)¹⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of BIs completed = 92 (83%) • # of PMPs completed = 87 (78%) <p>GRAND TOTAL (2007-2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of BIs completed 523 (96%) • # of PMPs completed 517 (96%)
	% of properties in priority natural areas with at least one PCAs/PMP action implemented	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2007 Agreement + Amended Agreement (2011 - 2015) = 85% • 2014 Agreement (2014 - 2017) = 94% GRAND TOTAL (2007-2017) = 92%
Increased capacity within the Canadian	# of organizations that were successful under the capacity development funding program	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 organizations + DUC

¹⁰ Not yet due for completion until Jan 2018.

Expected Outcome	Indicator/Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
land trust community	# of standards/practices that OQOs (including DUC) have completed	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 66 standards and practices + 2 by DUC (average of 3.6 practices per organization)
Intermediate Outcomes			
Ecologically sensitive land primarily across Southern Canada is conserved	Number of hectares secured through Program (as per Funding Agreement targets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of hectares secured annually by NCC Number of hectares secured by DUC and other OQOs 	Partially achieved	Cumulative total: 430,254 ha NCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under 2007 Agreement + 2013 amended agreement = 333,186 ha secured Under 2014 agreement = 28,390 ha secured DUC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under 2007 Agreement + 2013 amended agreement = 56,755 ha secured Under 2014 agreement = 7,461 ha secured OQOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under 2007 Agreement + 2013 amended agreement = 3,284 ha secured Under 2014 agreement = 1,178 ha secured
	% of hectares secured at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (or conservation planning frameworks for OQOs) (target 100%)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of Hectares secured at Priority Sites under 2007 Agreement (and 2013 Amended Agreement) (Note that NCC/DUC/OQOs are all included) 100 % of Hectares secured at Priority Natural Areas (PNAs) under the 2014 Agreement (Note that OQOs are not included because it was no longer a requirement that OQO projects reside in PNAs)
	% of priority natural areas with hectares secured at priority natural areas for NCC/DUC (or conservation planning frameworks for OQOs) (no target)	Achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of Priority Sites or PNAs that have land securement projects under the 2007 agreement + 2013 Amended Agreement : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC : 76% DUC : 62% OQO : 18% % of Priority Sites or PNAs that have land securement projects under the 2014 Agreement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC : 60% DUC : 20% OQO : Not applicable

Expected Outcome	Indicator/Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
Land secured under the Program is protected / stewarded	Number of hectares for which Priority Conservation Actions/Property Management Plan Actions were implemented on lands acquired under the Program and Previous Program	Achieved (NCC)¹¹	<p>2013 Amended Agreement (2013-2015) - PCA target = 300 000 ha (NCC + DUC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCA implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCC = 144 023 ha (48%) / ○ DUC = 12 539 ha (42%) <p>2014 Agreement (2015-2017) - PMP action target = 120 000 ha (NCC + DUC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-2016 PMP actions implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCC = 120 351 ha (100%) ○ DUC = 12 881 ha (11%) • 2016-2017 PMP actions implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCC = 139 873 ha (117%) ○ DUC = 12 985 (11%)
	Number of hectares for which Conservation Agreement compliance monitoring was completed on lands acquired under the Program and Previous Program	<p>Achieved (Previous Program)</p> <p>Partially Achieved (Program)</p>	<p>2013 Amended Agreement (2013-2015) - Target/Aim of hectares = 25,000 ha (NCC + DUC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance Monitoring hectares implemented on Conservation Agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NCC = 36,437 (146%) <p>2014 Agreement (2015-2017) - Target/Aim of hectares = 100,000 ha (NCC + DUC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of project hectares impacted by compliance monitoring in one year may or may not be the same project (hectares) impacted by compliance monitoring in a previous year. However, under the 2014 Agreement, it's estimated that almost 59,000 ha are unique hectares for which NCC completed compliance monitoring.
Final Outcomes			
Ecologically sensitive land, as well as	Number and hectares of secured properties with species at risk	Achieved	In 2012, COSEWIC-assessed species at risk: 114 species on 168 properties totalling 93,823 ha

¹¹ The amount of stewardship project hectares impacted in one year may or may not be the same project (hectares) impacted in a previous year. However, under the 2014 Agreement, it's estimated that 140,000 ha are unique hectares for which NCC completed stewardship activities.

Expected Outcome	Indicator/Performance	Degree of Achievement	Notes
habitat for species at risk (SAR) and other elements of biodiversity, is protected in perpetuity			(representing 84% of all hectares secured) In 2017, COSEWIC-assessed species at risk: 188 species on 492 properties totalling 308,899 ha (representing 85% of all hectares secured)
	Number of species at risk on secured land	Achieved	# of species at risk observed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSEWIC - Assessed Species = 188 • SARA - Listed Species (Schedule 1) = 156 The number of observations has increased from 725 in 2012, to 2,701 in 2017 ¹² .
	Number and type of biodiversity targets secured/achieved (as identified in Natural Area Conservation Plans)	Partially Achieved¹³	As of 2017 , Ecosystem/Community/Guild <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Biodiversity Targets in approved NACPs = 460 • # of Biodiversity Targets Achieved =302 • % of Biodiversity Targets Achieved = 66% Species <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Biodiversity Targets in approved NACPs = 35 • # of Biodiversity Targets Achieved =21 • % of Biodiversity Targets Achieved = 60% Grand Total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Biodiversity Targets in approved NACPs = 495 • # of Biodiversity Targets Achieved =323 • % of Biodiversity Targets Achieved = 65%

The document review, primarily the performance data provided by NCC, confirms that the Program's intended outcomes are largely being achieved. However, it is not yet clear if the Program will succeed in securing 130,000 ha within the two remaining years of the current Funding Agreement. Preliminary work planning for 2017-18 suggests the pace of securing hectares may increase significantly over the next year as NCC and DUC forecast securing 28,221 ha. However, this will still mean that the Program will need to secure an additional 64,750 ha in its last year.

¹² This increase is attributable to a number of factors, including the increased number of hectares acquired under the Program, the gradual increase in the number of designated at-risk species, and ongoing refinements to NCC's internal species-at-risk reporting processes..

¹³ This does not include targets that were replaced or updated as part of Plan renewals.

Other additional points raised through the interviews on outcomes included:

- Both internal and external interviewees noted that the Program reflects a powerful and effective public-private partnership between the Government of Canada and the NCC, with many critical areas protected and a host of related benefits for biodiversity and species at risk.
- Some internal and external informants raised the question of long-term capacity of OQOs. While the capacity building program is making significant progress in helping smaller organizations build their capacity and ultimately secure more and long-lasting conservation outcomes, there is likely an ongoing need to support these efforts. One interviewee suggested some sort of accreditation model be explored. This could potentially be modelled on the U.S. Land Trust Alliance (USLTA) model outlined in the comparative assessment (see Appendix).
- Similarly, stewardship on NACP-acquired lands will continue to be an important need in the long-term. Several internal and external interviewees suggested longer-term solutions, such as endowment models or broadening the use of NACP funds to include stewardship efforts.
- Several internal and external interviewees noted that there is a continued need to express the impact of the Program in ways that resonate with donors, partners and Canadians more broadly. Several of these interviews suggested that the overall communications approach be revisited in light of the new Government of Canada and its emerging priorities.

The landowner/organizations survey provides additional evidence that program outcomes are being achieved. When asked what substantive results NCC helped achieve through the program, landowners reported a variety of positive outcomes: over 75% indicated that NCC helped in conserving and protecting biodiversity, 60% stated that it helped protect ecologically sensitive land in southern Canada and a little over half (53%) said it advanced the protection of habitat for species at risk and helped protect habitat for waterfowl.

Results of Landowner Survey		
What do you feel are the substantive results that NCC has helped you achieve progress towards?		
Conservation and protection of biodiversity (not related to species at risk)	69	75.8%
Protection of ecologically sensitive lands in southern Canada	55	60.4%
Protection of habitat for species at risk	48	52.7%
Protection of wetland and associated upland habitat for waterfowl	48	52.7%
None	3	3.3%
Other	9	9.9%
Total	91	

The OQO survey provided a somewhat similar set of results. Most OQO respondents agreed that the program contributes to the conservation and protection of biodiversity (62%) and that it helps protect ecologically sensitive lands in southern Canada (58%). Half of respondents indicated the program protects species at risk and 40% consider it enhances the protection of waterfowl habitat. Over 40% of respondents confirmed that the program had helped them achieve progress towards increased capacity. On the other hand, over half of the 17 respondents who selected “other” indicated they were unsure of the substantive results achieved, either because they did not benefit from it or did not have sufficient information about the success of the program in general.

Results of OQO Survey

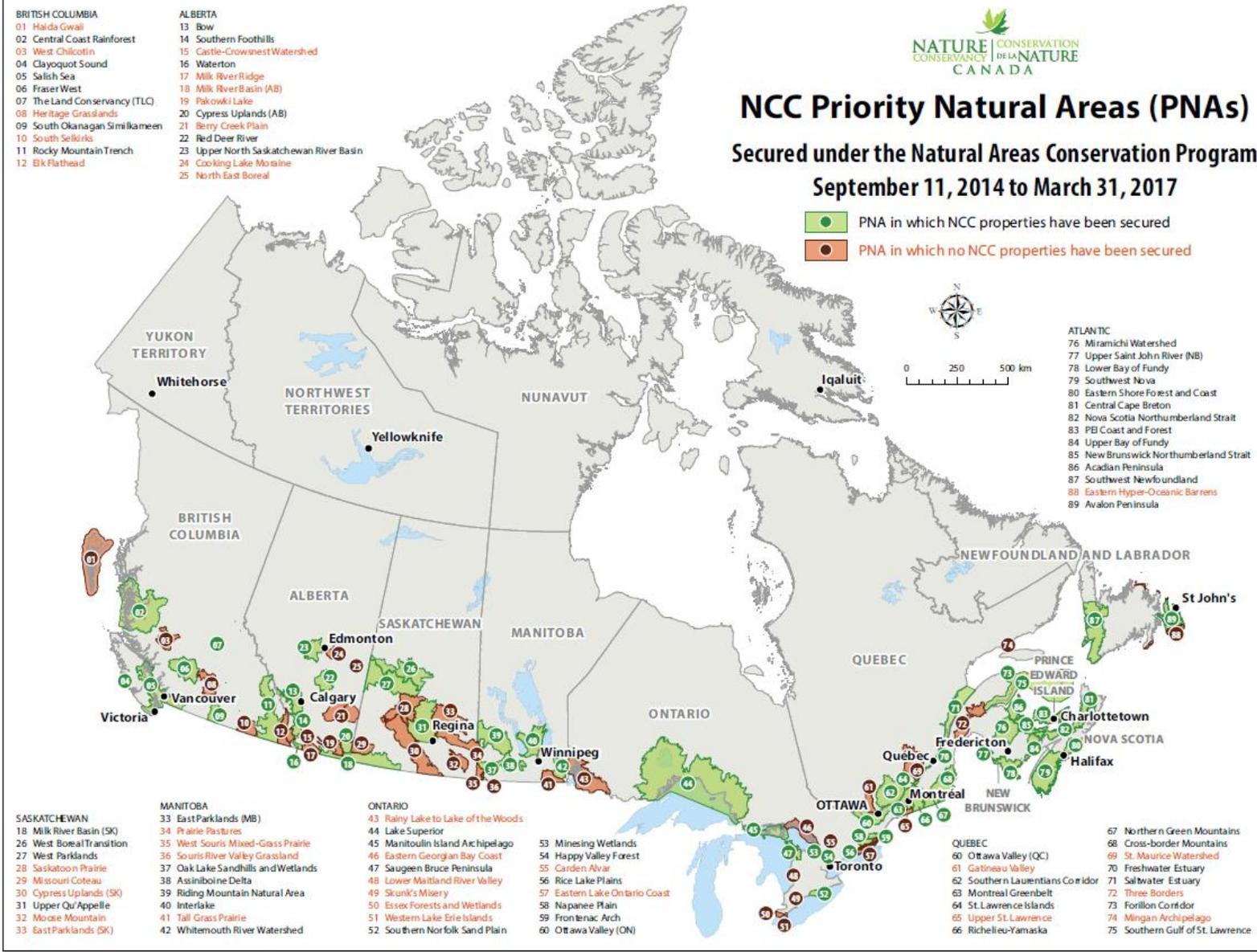
What do you feel are the substantive results that the Program funding has helped achieve progress towards?		
Conservation and protection of biodiversity (not related to species at risk)	48	61.5%
Protection of ecologically sensitive lands in southern Canada	45	57.7%
Protection of habitat for COSEWIC-assessed species at risk	39	50.0%
Built capacity to enable future involvement in securing or stewarding conservation lands	33	42.3%
Protection of wetland and associated upland habitat for waterfowl	31	39.7%
None	8	10.3%
Other	17	21.8%
Total	78	

The following three maps illustrate the location of Program projects (where property has been secured) relative to priority areas and demonstrate the national reach of the NACP as a whole. The first map shows Priority Natural Areas where NCC properties have been secured. The second map shows all NCC and OQO program projects, with the exception of DUC. The final map outlines DUC projects secured under the Program, as they relate to NAWMP priority areas. Together, these maps illustrate that the Program is actively working across southern Canada to secure lands in priority natural areas.

NCC Priority Natural Areas (PNAs)

Secured under the Natural Areas Conservation Program September 11, 2014 to March 31, 2017

- PNA in which NCC properties have been secured
- PNA in which no NCC properties have been secured



- BRITISH COLUMBIA**
- 01 Haida Gwaii
 - 02 Central Coast Rainforest
 - 03 West Chilcotin
 - 04 Clayoquot Sound
 - 05 Salish Sea
 - 06 Fraser West
 - 07 The Land Conservancy (TLC)
 - 08 Heritage Grasslands
 - 09 South Okanagan Similkameen
 - 10 South Selkirk
 - 11 Rocky Mountain Trench
 - 12 Elk Flathead

- ALBERTA**
- 13 Bow
 - 14 Southern Foothills
 - 15 Castle-Crowneast Watershed
 - 16 Waterton
 - 17 Milk River Ridge
 - 18 Milk River Basin (AB)
 - 19 Pakowki Lake
 - 20 Cypress Uplands (AB)
 - 21 Berry Creek Plain
 - 22 Red Deer River
 - 23 Upper North Saskatchewan River Basin
 - 24 Cooking Lake Mosaic
 - 25 North East Boreal

- SASKATCHEWAN**
- 18 Milk River Basin (SK)
 - 26 West Boreal Transition
 - 27 West Parklands
 - 28 Saskatoon Prairie
 - 29 Missouri Coteau
 - 30 Cypress Uplands (SK)
 - 31 Upper Qu'Appelle
 - 32 Moose Mountain
 - 33 East Parklands (SK)

- MANITOBA**
- 33 East Parklands (MB)
 - 34 Prairie Pastures
 - 35 West Souris Mixed-Grass Prairie
 - 36 Souris River Valley Grassland
 - 37 Oak Lake Sandhills and Wetlands
 - 38 Assiniboine Delta
 - 39 Riding Mountain Natural Area
 - 40 Interlake
 - 41 Tall Grass Prairie
 - 42 Whitemouth River Watershed

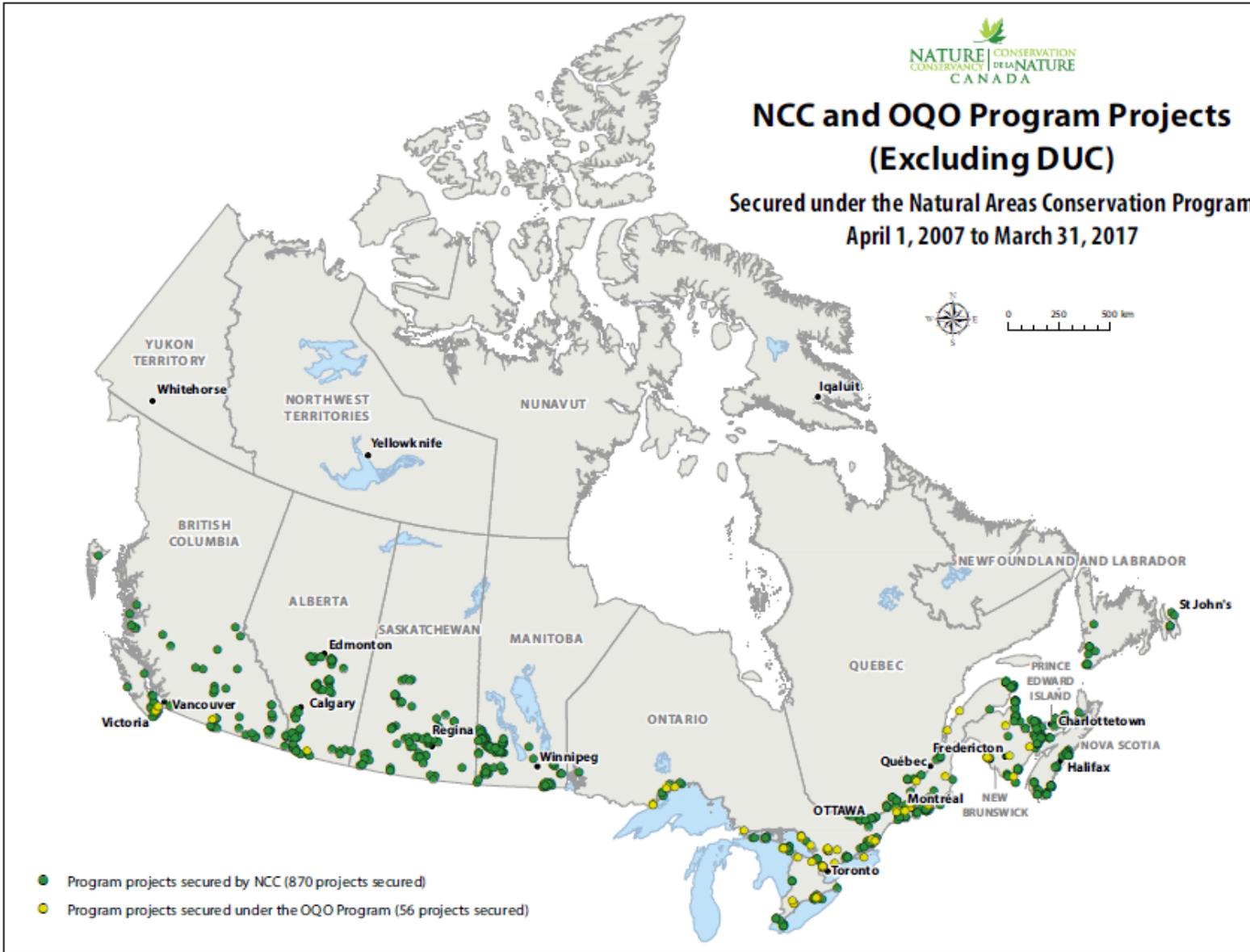
- ONTARIO**
- 43 Rainy Lake to Lake of the Woods
 - 44 Lake Superior
 - 45 Manitoulin Island Archipelago
 - 46 Eastern Georgian Bay Coast
 - 47 Saugenee Bruce Peninsula
 - 48 Lower Maitland River Valley
 - 49 Skunk's Misery
 - 50 Essex Forests and Wetlands
 - 51 Western Lake Erie Islands
 - 52 Southern Norfolk Sand Plain
 - 53 Mining Wetlands
 - 54 Happy Valley Forest
 - 55 Carden Alvar
 - 56 Rice Lake Plains
 - 57 Eastern Lake Ontario Coast
 - 58 Napanee Plain
 - 59 Frontenac Arch
 - 60 Ottawa Valley (ON)

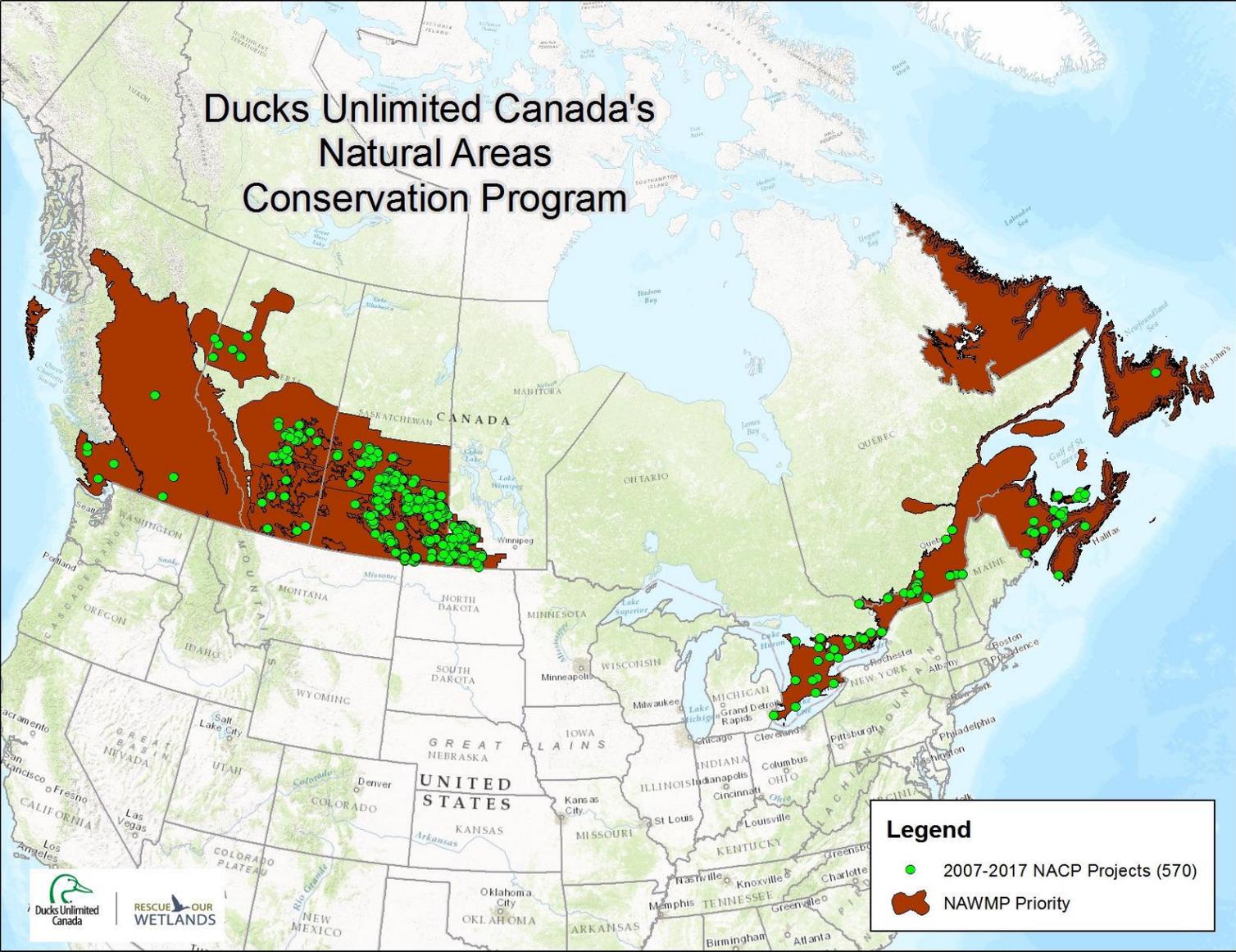
- ATLANTIC**
- 76 Miramichi Watershed
 - 77 Upper Saint John River (NB)
 - 78 Lower Bay of Fundy
 - 79 Southwest Nova
 - 80 Eastern Shore Forest and Coast
 - 81 Central Cape Breton
 - 82 Nova Scotia Northumberland Strait
 - 83 PEI Coast and Forest
 - 84 Upper Bay of Fundy
 - 85 New Brunswick Northumberland Strait
 - 86 Acadian Peninsula
 - 87 Southwest Newfoundland
 - 88 Eastern Hyper-Oceanic Barrens
 - 89 Avalon Peninsula

- QUEBEC**
- 60 Ottawa Valley (QC)
 - 61 Gatineau Valley
 - 62 Southern Laurentians Corridor
 - 63 Montreal Greenbelt
 - 64 St. Lawrence Islands
 - 65 Upper St. Lawrence
 - 66 Richelieu-Yamaska
 - 67 Northern Green Mountains
 - 68 Cross-border Mountains
 - 69 St. Maurice Watershed
 - 70 Freshwater Estuary
 - 71 Saltwater Estuary
 - 72 Three Borders
 - 73 Forillon Corridor
 - 74 Mingan Archipelago
 - 75 Southern Gulf of St. Lawrence

NCC and OQO Program Projects (Excluding DUC)

Secured under the Natural Areas Conservation Program
April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2017





Evaluation Question	Indicators
8. To what extent is the Program using best practices and lessons learned to enhance the achievement of outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views on lessons learned and/or best practices in use when delivering the Program • Evidence of Program adapting to lessons learned • Use of best practices identified in other comparable programs
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Document review suggests there is a clear commitment to adaptive management and continuous improvement. ▪ There is clear evidence that best practices have been adopted and that the Program has evolved in response to lessons learned and feedback received. 	

The document review – including a review of board policies and program reports - suggests that the Program is committed to and using best practices and lessons learned to enhance the achievement of outcomes. For example, NCC’s board policy on adaptive management aims for “continually improving conservation planning, land securement and stewardship practices by learning from the outcomes of operational programs and projects”.

In addition, NACP activities related to stewardship reflect evidence of the Program continuously evolving to meet new needs and adopt best practices. For example, NCC completed an international scan of best practices relating to stewardship activities that promote the conservation of lands outside and adjacent to secured properties. In addition, NCC’s establishment of an endowment fund for long-term stewardship and conservation activities is a best business practice that reflects an adaptive approach.

Interviews with key informants also support this finding. For example, OQOs interviewed indicated a high degree of trust that NCC is using best practices in managing the program. Expert interviewees noted that NCC’s science-driven process is a best practice as it ensures that comprehensive planning helps target efforts on the most ecologically sensitive private lands in the country.

Several OQO interviewees noted that NCC has worked to improve access to French documentation, and has also made efforts to simplify OQO-

Best Practices illustrated in Case Studies

The “Escape into Nature” case study highlights one example of integrated communications efforts employed by the Program. This exhibit, hosted by the Art Gallery of Regina, emerged following a major securement project completed under the NACP: the creation of the Wideview Complex conservation area, close to Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan. The exhibit featured an interactive map of species at risk in the region as well as a virtual reality tour of both the Wideview site and other NCC properties in the region. This initiative, which included a joint news conference to announce the Wideview securement, attracted 443 visitors over three days, garnered considerable media coverage, and successfully promoted both the NACP and the Government of Canada’s role within the Program. Partners included the Art Gallery of Regina, the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, Jump.ca and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

The “Dornn Property Land Purchase” case study highlights one example of a land securement project by DUC. This purchase in Manitoba led to the preservation of intact wetlands and the restoration of grasslands in an area with rich waterfowl diversity. The interaction between DUC and the landowner already dedicated to land conservation led to a smooth transaction and significant ecological benefits, as well as other indirect positive impacts furthering broader conservation objectives in the area.

related agreements, reporting requirements and the online application process. However, OQOs interviewed suggested that further action would help advance Program implementation, particularly in Quebec.

Another key area of best practice – identified both in internal and external interviews as well as through the comparative assessment – is the matching requirement. With matching dollar requirements, the NACP leverages greater financial resources than any of the other programs examined in the comparative assessment. Expert and internal interviewees noted that this is a best practice that can help ensure the engagement and support of other sectors, such as the corporate sector and charitable foundations (however, it can be challenging to meet for smaller land trusts to meet matching requirements).

Evaluation Question	Indicators
9. Have the recommendations from the last evaluation been implemented to achieve further outcomes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that the Program has implemented changes to respond to the recommendations • Evidence of implementation of the Management Response to the evaluation
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation evidence confirms that recommendations and lessons learned from the last evaluation are being implemented. ▪ In particular, significant progress has been made in enhancing stewardship support for lands acquired by NCC under the Program. ▪ In addition, enhanced support for OQOs consistent with the last evaluation has improved OQO capacity. ▪ Some progress has been made in enhancing consistency and integration with DUC although some inconsistencies remain. 	

The document review confirms that the recommendations from the last evaluation have been implemented.¹⁴ In particular, Program management agreed with the evaluation’s conclusions and the Eighth Annual Report on the NACP lists the following actions implemented as a result:

- Enhanced stewardship support for lands acquired under the Program;
- International scan of best practices relating to stewardship activities that promote the conservation of lands outside and adjacent to secured properties;
- Enhanced support for OQOs; and
- Improved integration and consistency between NCC’s and DUC’s Program delivery.

Interviews conducted pursuant to the evaluation support this conclusion. For example, internal and external interviewees have noted that the OQO program continues to evolve and improve, and the evolution of the stewardship work under the Program (both in terms of policy guidance, actions undertaken, and creation of stewardship endowment funds) is seen as a highly successful area of growth.

Internal and DUC interviews also suggest that progress has been made in terms of consistency between the NACP and DUC through updated templates and processes. At the same time, both internal and external interviewees suggested that some inconsistencies remain, such as those related to reporting of performance data, such as information related to species at risk.

¹⁴ Recommendations from the 2012 Evaluation include: (1) It is recommended that NCC work to ensure that any future Program includes a stronger stewardship component; (2) It is recommended that NCC clarify the expectations of the OQO component of the Program and explore options for the delivery and reporting mechanisms for OQOs in any future Program.

Evaluation Question	Indicators
10. Are there opportunities to adapt the Program to achieve further results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views on changes that could enhance the Program and its impact
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key informants expressed a desire for greater certainty and restored flexibility in government funding in order to engage a broader number of organizations and secure land on an accelerated basis. Similarly, the OQO survey and interviews OQOs would welcome greater flexibility to accommodate the needs of smaller organizations. Landowner survey results indicate a low level of awareness of the Program, suggesting a possible need for enhanced promotion and impact reporting. Interviews suggest there is interest in potentially expanding the Program to a broader range of regions and/or conservation tools. 	

A number of key informants, both internal to NCC as well as within the OQOs, identified a desire for restored flexibility within the structure of the Funding Agreement for the Program, in order to both include a broader range of organizations in the Program and to enable the program to achieve further and accelerated results. Specific suggestions included:

- Reverting to the previous matching requirement of 1:1;
- Enabling funds to be carried over to the following year, or alternately introducing a 'grace period' in the event that anticipated transactions experience unanticipated delays in March;
- Increasing the \$250,000 cap on project funds from the OQO program; and
- Revising or enhancing flexibility within the stewardship endowment requirements.

Several internal and expert informants also suggested that the Program be made a permanent component of the Government of Canada's stewardship funding portfolio (e.g., through a permanent annual allocation), to provide greater certainty for the Program and Program participants and to enhance the Program's ability to engage in projects that require longer lead times in priority ecosystems.

OQOs interviewed also had a number of recommendations to improve the program, including:

- Allowing for more than one application/project per OQO each year;
- Raising the cap both for individual projects and overall for OQOs;
- Restoring the previous match requirement (and possibly recognizing in-kind contributions);
- Revising conditions related to stewardship endowment funds; and
- Revising the eligibility requirements to allow municipalities to apply.

OQOs also suggested that NCC explore additional proactive approaches to collaborating with OQOs, such as an Advisory Group or enhanced opportunities for networking among the land trust community. Some OQOs also suggested that NCC explore an enhanced role for land trust alliances (such as the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA)) in managing the Program.

As noted previously, several internal interviewees suggested that communications processes (both with government and with the OQOs) as well as the Communications Protocol be reviewed, both to update it in light of new Government of Canada interests and approaches, and to streamline delivery of communications efforts. Some suggested the Program explore opportunities to report on and communicate progress at a more ecosystem level in order to showcase the overall contribution of the program.

A number of internal and external interviewees suggested that NCC and the Government of Canada explore employing a greater range of conservation tools within the Program. This could include other mechanisms for securing, stewarding and financing land acquisition and management, such as carbon credits, Indigenous land conservancies, payment for ecological services (e.g. grazing lands) and revolving land programs.

A number of potential opportunities were also identified by key internal and external informants to expand the Program. This included:

- Exploration of multi-species approaches;
- Enhanced focus on climate change adaptation and landscape resiliency; and
- Expansion into new geographies such as the boreal, Northern Canada, freshwater ecosystems or Marine Protected Areas.

Several internal interviewees also suggested that the Program be more formally integrated into the federal, provincial and territorial strategy for achieving Canada's international and national biodiversity targets, potentially through both reporting of progress and in conservation planning to accelerate action at the national level.

The landowner survey identified a number of possible opportunities to adapt the Program. For example, 23% of landowners/organizations either did not believe or were not sure NCC was communicating the program to parties interested in donating or selling ecologically sensitive land. In addition, 57% had suggestions to improve communications about the program. The most frequent recommendations included:

- Promoting the Program more broadly to make sure the general public and partners not yet involved with NCC are aware of the program and its successes;
- Making greater use of the media, whether traditional (e.g., television, print media) or online (social media);
- Targeting specific populations (e.g., landowners, municipalities, lawyers, realtors, etc.) to provide these audiences with relevant and practical information about the program: for instance, providing detailed information to landowners about their options for selling or donating a property for conservation purposes; and
- Holding presentations (e.g., in schools, at trade and retail expos, etc.) and participating in meetings to directly inform people about the program.

Other recommendations for improvement had to do with reducing the complexity and significant delays associated with transactions. A few respondents also remarked that having more frequent and consistent communication with NCC during the process would have made it easier.

Overall, most landowner/organization respondents seem to feel that the program functions well in its current form. General recommendations to improve the program include: clear and frequent communication with landowners interested in or moving forward with a transaction; more outreach to increase visibility of the program; and increased funding.

The OQO survey also identified a number of recommendations regarding the Program. For instance, 32% of OQO respondents provided additional comments regarding program communications. Respondents who indicated they were already on NCC's contact list said they were satisfied with those communications. Several respondents encouraged increasing the program's overall visibility through promotion, namely by providing short, clear and regular updates and information on the

program’s projects, performance and successes. In addition, OQOs suggested that NCC ensure organizations not yet involved with the program receive information about opportunities and processes related to the NACP. Some respondents recommended providing more detailed and clear information to applicants and potential applicants (e.g., deadlines, requirements, etc.).

Other suggestions from the OQO survey included: allowing for more customizable agreements, engaging smaller organizations, increasing collaboration with organizations on the ground, and ensuring program materials are properly translated.

4.2.2 Evaluation Issue 5: Demonstrated Efficiency and Economy

Evaluation Question	Indicators
11. Is the design of the Program (and its funding model) appropriate for achieving Program objectives and outcomes efficiently and effectively? Are there more economic and efficient means of achieving objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plausible link between initiative activities, outputs, and intended outcomes • Evidence that the funding model is appropriate and optimal for delivering the Program • Initiative resources/capacity commensurate with expected initiative results
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a clear link between activities, outputs and outcomes. ▪ Expected results are being achieved; as such, program design, resources, and capacity appear appropriate. ▪ Interviews and the comparative assessment suggest that delivering the Program through a highly respected, science-based third party organization is appropriate and efficient. ▪ Some interviewees raised concerns that changes to the Funding Agreement may have negatively impacted efficiency/effectiveness. 	

As illustrated in the Program logic model, there is a clear link between the Program’s activities, outputs and outcomes, with achievements being made across all indicators. Furthermore, the document review indicates that activities being implemented are in line with requirements of the 2014 Funding Agreement and that expected results are being achieved pursuant to the Agreement. This suggests that program design, resources and capacity are all appropriate to achieve the expected results.

Both the interviews and the updated comparative assessment confirms that the Program model, including its highly targeted, science-based approach as well as its third party delivery model that can leverage support from a broad range of sectors, remains an effective model for conservation, particularly for securement of ecologically sensitive private lands.

Internal and external expert interviewees confirmed that NCC continues to be the right delivery agent for the Program, with one interviewee referring to NCC as the ‘real estate arm of the conservation movement’. At the same time, there is a diversity of organizations across the country with local expertise that play a key role in creating the conditions for success of the Program. As such, continued efforts to engage OQOs in the Program will be critical to the long-term success of both acquisition and stewardship efforts.

However, some OQOs suggested that the OQO component of the Program could either be delivered directly by the Government of Canada (e.g. subsumed into the Habitat Stewardship Program) or

through an independent third party. Roughly 10% of OQO representatives suggested the program should be managed by another entity (e.g., through Land Trust Canada, provincial alliances or a government body). While this would avoid the perceived conflict of interest of NCC as both funder and recipient, no clear alternative was identified that currently has sufficient capacity and systems in place to deliver the OQO program at a national level (other than the DUC component, which could potentially be delivered through a direct agreement with the Government of Canada). Significant efforts would likely be required to pursue this approach, and it is unclear whether this approach would increase efficiency or have the ability to leverage private funds as effectively as the current model.

Alternately, NCC and the Government of Canada could pursue housing the capacity building component of the Program externally, potentially building on the approaches in place through the USLTA or the OLTA. A third-party accreditation model was also suggested for the standards and practices work, although not necessarily for the administration of funds.

OQO respondents were also asked whether they felt the Program was designed so that resources were accessible to organizations. Most respondents (72%) felt the resources were accessible or somewhat accessible. However, a number of internal and OQO informants noted that there are limitations to the funding inherent in the current structure of the funding model and Agreement that impede the Program's ability to achieve outcomes efficiently and effectively. These relate both to the conservation priorities established by the Program (which do not reflect priorities as identified by some participating OQOs), timelines involved with the Program (i.e., the need to have projects ready to go in order to access funding), and issues identified above such as the match requirement and inability to roll funds to the following year, which some internal informants believe can drive acquisition decisions towards lower hanging fruit, largely in areas with larger population bases that can meet the match more easily.

Roughly 40% of OQO respondents raised concerns related to the program's eligibility/selection criteria (e.g., only one project a year, no municipalities, project size, etc.) and requirements (e.g., stewardship fund, reporting, etc.), noting that these are significant barriers, especially for smaller or newer organizations. A further 15% made specific comments about what they deemed to be a complex bureaucratic process that is challenging for organizations with less capacity. 12% of OQO respondents said the timing of program calls and its short timelines were challenging to deal with.

OQOs that received funds for land securement provided the following views related to Program design and/or efficiency:

- With regards to the documentation that supports the application and transaction processes, roughly 68% of respondents felt the documentation was appropriate and helpful. None felt the documentation was altogether insufficient.
- Regarding the negotiation and signing of the Funding and Landholding Agreements, just over half said the process was smooth while 38% felt it was not.
- 61% of respondents felt there was adequate time to complete requirements and meet deadlines under the OQO program, while about a third (32%) disagreed.
- When asked whether NCC had released the funds to their organization in an efficient way, the vast majority reported it had (87%).
- Regarding the amount of money awarded under the program, about a third of respondents who received funds found the amount appropriate to their needs, while 10% did not.
- Respondents indicated it was somewhat difficult to obtain matching funds. Only 13% said it was "relatively easy", 34% found it "challenging" and 29% found it "very difficult".

Regarding the negotiation of the agreements, 12 OQO respondents made additional comments, either to recommend a simplified and streamlined process to increase efficiency (e.g., reduce the length of the agreements) or enhance flexibility (e.g., ability to amend agreements based on the situation). Comments suggested that negotiating the agreements requires significant capacity and expertise, which not all organizations possess. Two francophone respondents emphasized the need to properly and efficiently translate documentation.

OQO respondents who commented specifically on the Capacity Development Funding Program found it relevant, efficient and helpful overall; most respondents recommended it should be continued and improved. Additional suggestions included: improving translation of materials, identifying a dedicated contact person for the capacity building program, and revising the current \$5,000 cap on capacity building projects.

OQOs who received funding under the Capacity Development Program provided very positive feedback on the Program design/efficiency:

- 85% of those OQOs had found the approval and funding process smooth and appropriate.
- 90% felt the time allocated to complete the requirements and meet the deadline was adequate.

Some OQOs have suggested that the Program would benefit from greater opportunities for networking and/or sharing of templates and best practices among participants. Several OQO informants suggested that the Program would benefit from greater transparency related to funding decisions (i.e. more accessible information on which projects were funded under the Program and why).

Evaluation Question	Indicators
12. Is the management and accountability structure for the Program in place and functioning to achieve the expected outcomes and requirements of the Funding Agreement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCC has a clearly defined management and accountability structure for the Program, including an effective Program Committee • The Board of Directors has implemented its roles and responsibilities related to governance and oversight of the Program as required • NCC has developed documents to guide the Program and transactions with DUC and OQOs (e.g., Conservation Board Policies, Program Guidelines, Agreements with OQOs, etc.) • NCC has developed controls and oversights for OQOs (including DUC) to assist in achieving the expected outcomes and requirements • NCC has identified risks that have the potential to affect the program and is managing them proactively • Views on efficiency and effectiveness of NCC in managing the Program
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence suggests a clear management and accountability structure is in place through NCC Board of Directors and Program Committee. ▪ There is clear evidence of guidance documents and other materials to support Program implementation. ▪ Enhanced capacity through national NACP staff has strengthened management capacity across the organization and with OQOs. 	

The document review confirms that there is a clearly defined management and accountability structure in place for the Program, through both the Program Committee and the requirements of the Funding Agreement(s). There is also clear evidence of strong overall accountability and oversight through the NCC Board of Directors, with strong policies and procedures in place.

The Program Committee has evolved since the first phase of the NACP and now provides a key high level strategic oversight mechanism for both the Program and the relationship between NCC and the Government of Canada. Regular meetings are held of the Program Committee, with consistent participation by a majority of the committee membership.

There is clear evidence that NCC has developed support materials to guide both overall Program delivery as well as its transactions with DUC and OQOs. For example, in addition to internal NCC guidance documents, up-to-date and comprehensive guidance for OQOs is on the NCC NACP website including an online application process for both the OQO Program (Land Securement) and the OQO Capacity Development Funding Program. OQO informant interviews confirmed that the application processes and guidance from NCC for both the Land Securement and Capacity Development Funding Programs are clear.

Within NCC, key informants confirmed that overall Program roles and responsibilities are clearly understood within the organization, particularly as it relates to the land securement elements of the program. Staff indicated that there has been a significant investment in providing clear and constantly updated guidance and that there is a clear management structure in place throughout the organization, although several internal informants suggested that there is room for improvement both within the communications function and potentially in terms of the linkages between conservation and financial staff.

In addition, both internal and external informants indicated that the small increases in dedicated national NACP staff have helped significantly in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Program delivery, although external interviewees suggested that care will be required to ensure that consistency is maintained if the NACP-related staff complement continues to grow. Internal and external interviewees suggested that consistency has improved overall across the Program, although there continue to be differences in provincial cultures, landscapes and ownership structures that affect regional program delivery.

Overall, OQOs and landowners were very satisfied with their interactions with NCC staff in the context of the program:

- 90% of OQOs who received funding through the program for land securement confirmed that NCC staff was available when they needed assistance (others simply reported they did not require assistance). 87% confirmed that NCC staff was helpful and provided clear guidance and support when needed.
- Responses were even more positive for landowners and organizations that completed land transactions: 95% confirmed NCC staff was available to provide assistance, and 94% said NCC staff provided clear guidance and support.

Similarly, with regards to the OQO Capacity Development Funding Program:

- 70% of the organizations who received funds through the program found the documentation supporting the application and the transaction processes appropriate and helpful.
- 90% of OQOs reported that NCC staff was available and helpful.

Interviews with DUC suggested that the annual planning and associated invoicing processes have improved and been streamlined, although they suggested that the administrative burden associated with funds received remains high. DUC also expressed that they find the conservation priority requirements rigid and suggested that this limits opportunities for use of Program funds. Several

internal and external informants flagged the lack of consistency in performance reporting approaches by DUC (for example, the lack of species at risk reporting) as an ongoing area of inconsistency.

Evaluation Question	Indicators
<p>13. Are Program resources being spent efficiently, economically and in accordance with allowable expenditures? How could efficiency be improved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that program resources are managed and spent in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement • Extent to which Program intended outcomes have been achieved at the least possible cost • Views on whether good value is being obtained with respect to the use of funds • Evidence of / views on whether there are alternative models that would achieve the same expected outcomes at a lower-cost • Views on how the efficiency and/or economy of the Program could be improved
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program resources are being spent efficiently and in accordance with the Funding Agreement. In particular, NCC has successfully leveraged greater matching funds than anticipated, the average cost per hectare is decreasing, and key informants believe the Program delivers value for money. 	

The document review, financial analysis and interviews indicated that program resources have been managed and spent consistent with Funding Agreement requirements (e.g., eligible expenses and allocations). Audited financial statements from 2012 to 2017 indicated that NCC consistently applies Canadian generally accepted accounting principles and no issues were noted.

Communication products meet most but not all requirements of Appendix E & F Communications Protocol in 2014 Funding Agreement. For example, the National Conservation Plan logo is not used, as the Program was directed by ECCO to use its watermark instead. This stems largely due to the fact that the Communications Protocol was developed by and reflects the priorities of the previous federal government (for example, the National Conservation Plan is not a brand promoted by the current Government) and as such, portions of it became obsolete following the 2015 election.

Table 7 below summarizes Program spending by category and timeframe, and the following Table 8 compares spending to budget under the 2014 Agreement.

Table 7: Program Spending by Category and Agreement (as noted in NACP progress reports)

Expense Category	First Agreement and Amendment		Second Agreement				Cumulative	
	2007-15	% of Total	2014-15	2015-16	2 year Total	% of Total	Total To-Date	% of Total
Land and Easement Acquisition	\$ 344.9 M		\$ 11.4 M	\$ 27.8 M				
Land and Easement Donation	\$ 188.8 M		\$ 4.7 M	\$ 34.0 M				
Acquisition and Support Expenses	\$ 35.1 M		\$ 1.2 M	\$ 4.0 M				
Land Securement Total	\$ 568.8	81.37%	\$ 17.4 M	\$ 65.8 M	\$ 83.2 M	68.00%	\$ 651.9 M	79.38%
Stewardship Planning (including science)	\$ 24.7 M			\$ 0.3 M				
Implementation of PMPs and compliance monitoring	\$ 2.5 M			\$ 6.7 M				
Stewardship Total	\$ 27.2 M	3.89%		\$ 7.0M	\$ 7.0M	5.71%	\$ 34.2 M	4.16%
Communications				\$ 0.3 M	\$ 0.3 M	0.27%	\$ 0.3 M	0.04%
Capacity Development				\$ 0.05M	\$ 0.05M	0.04%	\$ 0.05M	0.01%
Program support from NACP Fund*	\$ 11.8 M		\$ 0.5 M	\$ 1.1 M	\$ 1.6 M			
Program support from non-federal sources			\$ 7.2 M	\$ 14.8 M	\$ 22.0 M			
Program Coordination/ Operations Total	\$ 74.5 M	10.66%	\$ 7.8 M	\$ 15.9 M	\$ 23.7 M	19.34%	\$ 98.1 M	11.95%
Stewardship Endowment Contributions	\$ 47.4 M	6.78%	\$ 2.5 M	\$ 5.6 M	\$8.1 M	6.64%	\$ 55.5 M	6.76%
Less: Other federal sources	\$ 18.8 M	2.69%						
Grand Total Program	\$ 699.0 M		\$ 27.6 M	\$ 94.7 M	\$122.3 M		\$ 821.3 M	
NACP Funds	\$ 248.0 M		\$ 10.0 M	\$ 22.5 M	\$ 32.5 M		\$ 280.5 M	
Matching Funds	\$ 451.0 M		\$ 17.6 M	\$ 72.2 M	\$ 89.8 M		\$ 540.8 M	
Ratio of Matching to NACP Funds	1.82		1.76	3.21	2.76		1.93	

Table 8: Work Plan Budgets vs Annual Progress Report Spending under 2014 Funding Agreement

Expense Category	Second Agreement						
	2014-15 Budget	2014-15 Spent	% Variation Spent vs Budget	2015-16 Budget	2015-16 Spent	% Variation Spent vs Budget	2016-17 Budget ¹⁵
Land and Easement Acquisition	\$ 12.1 M	\$ 11.4 M	95%	\$ 28.8 M	\$ 27.8 M	97%	\$ 35.0 M
Land and Easement Donation	\$ 8.3 M	\$ 4.7 M	57%	\$ 26.0 M	\$ 34.0 M	131%	\$ 11.1 M
Acquisition and Support Expenses	\$ 1.2 M	\$ 1.2 M	104%	\$ 2.9 M	\$ 4.0 M	135%	\$ 4.8 M
Securement Total	\$ 21.5 M	\$ 17.4 M	81%	\$ 57.7 M	\$ 65.8 M	114%	\$ 50.9 M
Stewardship				\$ 5.1 M	\$ 7.0 M	137%	\$ 4.1 M
Communications				\$ 0.8 M	\$ 0.3 M	44%	\$ 0.6 M
Capacity Development				\$ 0.06	\$ 0.05 M	85%	\$ 0.1 M
Program Coordination	\$ 0.5 M	\$ 7.8 M	*	\$ 1.3 M	\$ 15.9 M	*	\$ 3.7 M
Stewardship Endowment Funds	\$ 2.7 M	\$ 2.5 M	92%	\$ 8.0 M	\$ 5.6 M	70%	\$ 8.6 M
Grand Total Program	\$ 24.8 M	\$ 27.6 M	112%	\$ 72.9 M	\$ 94.7 M	130%	\$ 68.0 M
NACP Funds	\$ 10.0 M	\$ 10.0 M	100%	\$ 22.5 M	\$ 22.5 M	100%	\$ 22.5 M
Matching Funds	\$ 14.8 M	\$ 17.6 M	119%	\$ 50.4 M	\$ 72.2 M	143%	\$ 45.5 M
Ratio of Matching to NACP Funds	1.47	1.76		2.24	3.21		2.02

*Does not include program support from non-federal funds in budgets

¹⁵ Based on work plans, not actuals.

Over the whole length of the Program (2007 to 2016), the Program has spent \$821.3 M cumulatively, with \$280.5 M contributed from the Government of Canada (34%). Over the last 5 years, cumulative spending has totaled \$359 M, with \$115 M from the Government of Canada (32%). Spending has varied by participating organization (as planned in the Agreements). Over the last 5 years:

- NCC has spent 90% of the resources (slightly higher than under the previous 5 years);
- DUC has spent 6% of the resources (slightly lower than under the previous 5 years); and
- Other OQOs have spent 4% of the resources (slightly higher than under the previous 5 years).

While there has only been 3 of 5 years of spending completed under the 2014 Funding Agreement (60% complete), DU and other OQOs are currently underspending (48% and 38%, respectively).

Most funds continue to be spent on land securement activities but this percentage is decreasing as spending on stewardship increases. Securement has accounted for 79% of all spending (81% to 2012; 68% up to 2015-16) and securement has accounted for 4.2% overall (3.9% under first Agreement; 5.7% up to 2015-16). This is in line with the recommendations made under the previous evaluation.

There has been little spending (less than 1%) on communications and capacity building to-date under the new Agreement. Spending on communications has been constrained by Government of Canada blackout periods around elections (i.e., NCC is not able to announce and promote the Program during these times). As well, communications efforts are in part dependent on the frequency of conservation acquisitions (e.g., announcements of new securement activities). In terms of the capacity building component, this initiative only started in 2015-16 and only represents a small overall percentage of Program allocations (see Section 2.1.2).

Program coordination (including the in-kind contributions) has accounted for 12% of overall expenditures (only 5% of Government of Canada funds are used for this). This percentage has increased under new Agreement, perhaps related to the new role in administering the capacity building component. In terms of stewardship endowment contributions, they have remained steady at just under 7% of all Program expenditures.

The NACP has exceeded its matching requirements. The overall matching rate for all 10 years is 1.93 (higher than required) and under the new 2014 Agreement there is a 2 year total of 2.76 (higher than the required 2).

When comparing spending to budgets under the 2014 Agreement, some variation is evident. Table 8 shows that total spending has exceeded what was expected due to the acquisition of more matching funds than expected (19% over budget estimates in 2014-15 and 43% over budget estimates in 2015-16). In 2014-15, a key variation was underspending on land and easement donation (43%). In 2015-16, the key variations were overspending (31%) on land and easement donation, acquisition and support expenses, and stewardship. As well, there was underspending by 56% on communications (see notes above).

While spending has been distributed across the country, BC has accounted for 31% of overall spending. The focus of spending across the country has also varied by

Overall program spending on securement and stewardship (from 2007 to present by NCC and DUC) by Region:

- BC 31%
- AB 17%
- SK 8%
- MB 5%
- ON 19%
- QC 14%
- ATL 6%

participating organization with NCC spending the most in BC, DUC in Saskatchewan, and other OQOs in Ontario.

There was strong concurrence among those interviewed that the Program provides value for money. This was based on the leverage rates achieved for the Government of Canada’s contribution and the clear demonstration that tangible and long-term results are being achieved.

As well, the Program has been able to acquire more land per dollar invested. According to NCC’s performance data, the average cost per hectare has been decreasing:

Average cost in Years 1 to 4 (2007 to 2011)	\$930/ha
Average cost in Year 5 (2012) to 2017	\$529/ha
Average overall cost (2007 to 2017).	\$682/ha

Survey results and some interviews have suggested that resources may be inadequate in some cases to facilitate OQO land securement¹⁶, especially in the more expensive parts of Canada and for smaller or lower capacity OQOs. OQOs (other than DU) have suggested adjusting some Program requirements to facilitate broader OQO involvement in the program that have been noted previously, including:

- Changing the match requirement back to 1:1;
- Reducing the percentage of funds required for stewardship endowment or providing greater flexibility in how to meet endowment requirements;
- Eliminating the overall cap of \$250,000 per property [especially in expensive areas like BC]; and/or
- Allowing for more eligible expenses (i.e., the same ‘rules’ should be in place for NCC, DUC and OQOs).

The only area of inefficiency noted was the perception that some of the requirements in the Funding Agreement for land securement by OQOs, are onerous and add a heavy administrative process component for OQOs.

Evaluation Question	Indicators
14. Is appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting being conducted, and being used to inform decision-making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of annual work plans developed in line with Funding Agreement • Evidence of annual progress reports provided in line with Funding Agreement • Evidence of performance data collection and reporting • Evidence/views on the accuracy/validity of performance information • Evidence/views on management use of performance data to inform/support decision-making processes
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence confirms that comprehensive and appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting are being conducted and being used to inform decision-making, using accurate and credible performance information. ▪ All Agreement requirements related to annual work plans and reporting are being met. 	

¹⁶ For the Capacity Development Program, virtually all OQOs believed that the resources were fair.

The document review confirms that comprehensive and appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting is being conducted, and being used to inform decision-making. Performance data collection and reporting is being reported in the Annual Progress Reports.

The Program is meeting the requirements of Section 7 Reporting, and Appendices D & G in 2014 Funding Agreement by providing cash flows in annual work plans, providing annual progress reports, and completing both according to the required templates. Annual progress reports have been reviewed by the Program Committee meetings with very positive results.

The Program is also meeting requirements of Appendix E of the 2014 Funding Agreement by producing and making publicly available, via the NCC website, a visual, story-based “Impact Report” that highlights the cumulative impact of the program in each region. One Impact Report has been completed to date for the 2014 to 2016 period:

<http://www.natureconservancy.ca/assets/documents/nat/NACP-Impact-Report-2016-EN-web.pdf>.

Expert informant interviews noted that in addition to the Impact Report, there would be value in better communicating overall Program impact, including who is doing what across the country, as well as broader Program successes at the ecosystem level (e.g. carbon sequestration benefits).

Several challenges were flagged by internal informants related to communications planning and reporting. These include issues that have arisen in the last year related to accuracy of materials (although NCC has confirmed that these issues were resolved prior to publication), as well as the fact that communications tracking does not currently provide a sense of scale. In other words, all communications activities are treated equally in the performance information tracking, regardless of whether they are Member of Parliament letters or events requiring six months of planning.

Interviews with OQOs and Program Committee members suggest that there is a strong sense that information reported by NCC is accurate and credible. At the same time, some OQOs would like to receive more detailed performance information related to the OQO land securement and capacity development funding programs (e.g. who is doing what, success rates, best practices, etc.). Several OQOs also indicated that they would like to see stronger acknowledgement of OQOs in reporting, in order to help raise the profile of local issues and activities. Internal interviews also suggest that some reporting inconsistencies persist within the OQO program given the differences in context and approach among OQOs and between OQOs and NCC as a large, national organization.

4.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following chart provides a summary of the degree to which each evaluation issue and question has been achieved:

Table 9: Summary of Findings

Evaluation Issue	Summary
Relevance:	
Issue 1: Continued need for the program	
1. Is there a continued need for the Program in Canada? To what extent does the Program duplicate, overlap with or complement other existing programs?	Yes Complementary
Issue 2: Alignment with NCC and government priorities	
2. Is the Program and its objectives aligned with NCC’s mandate?	Yes

Evaluation Issue	Summary
3. Is the Program and its objectives aligned with federal government priorities and those of ECCC?	Yes
4. Are there areas in which the Program might be expanded and/or modified in order to continue to align with the Government of Canada's priorities, roles and responsibilities?	Yes
Issue 3: Alignment with federal roles and responsibilities	
5. Is there a legitimate, appropriate and necessary role for the Government of Canada to fund the Program?	Yes
Performance:	
Issue 4: Achievement of expected outputs and outcomes	
6. To what extent have intended outputs been achieved?	Achieved or Likely to be Achieved
7. To what extent have intended outcomes been achieved?	Partially Achieved - Unclear if target for overall hectares secured will be reached
8. To what extent is the Program using best practices and lessons learned to enhance the achievement of outcomes?	Achieved
9. Have the recommendations from the last evaluation been implemented to achieve further outcomes?	Achieved
10. Are there opportunities to adapt the Program to achieve further results?	Yes – Range of suggestions provided
Issue 5: Demonstrated efficiency and economy	
11. Is the design of the Program (and its funding model) appropriate for achieving Program objectives and outcomes efficiently and effectively? Are there more economic and efficient means of achieving objectives?	Yes – Funding Agreement flexibilities may enhance efficiencies
12. Is the management and accountability structure for the Program in place and functioning to achieve the expected outcomes and requirements of the Funding Agreement?	Yes
13. Are Program resources being spent efficiently, economically and in accordance with allowable expenditures? How could efficiency be improved?	Yes
14. Is appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting being conducted, and being used to inform decision-making?	Yes

5 Conclusions

5.1 RELEVANCE

Issue 1: Continued need for the program

1. *The Program continues to be relevant and provides an important mechanism for conserving ecologically sensitive areas on private lands in southern Canada.*

The evaluation confirms that the NACP is making a clear, demonstrable, and unique contribution to the securement of key ecological values on private lands, particularly in southern Canada. Environmental stresses and threats continue to rise, particularly in the southernmost parts of the

country where there are high levels of both species richness and species at risk, as well as relatively low levels of protection.

Issue 2: Alignment with NCC and Government priorities; and Issue 3: Alignment with federal roles and responsibilities

- 2. The Program is directly aligned with NCC and Government of Canada priorities, roles and responsibilities, including helping Canada achieve its international obligations under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity as well as its species at risk obligations. Opportunities to enhance alignment with other, evolving Government of Canada priorities exist.*

The NACP is highly consistent with NCC's overall mission, mandate and strategic objectives. The Program is also clearly aligned with both Government of Canada and ECCC-specific goals and objectives related to biodiversity and species at risk as reflected in core corporate documents and strategies. The Program is also consistent with federal/provincial/territorial strategies such as the Biodiversity Outcomes Framework. Given the role that land conservation can play in supporting landscape resiliency and both mitigation and adaptation efforts, enhanced alignment with climate change activities and other government priorities could be explored moving forward.

5.2 PERFORMANCE

Issue 4: Achievement of expected outputs and outcomes

- 3. Virtually all expected outputs are being (or are likely to be) achieved, and progress towards expected outcomes is being made. Enhanced Program promotion could be valuable.*

There is clear evidence that activities are being delivered in accordance with the Funding Agreement and that significant progress is being made in all areas of the Program. All expected outputs and outcomes are either being achieved or are underway. However, it is not yet clear whether all outcome targets will be met (particularly the overall target of 130,000 hectares to be secured) based on progress to-date.

Many stakeholders indicated that enhancements to communications would be beneficial to further achieving Program results. For example, the OQO and landowner surveys suggested that greater program promotion could help support more effective program delivery.

- 4. Stewardship efforts on secured lands have increased since the last NACP evaluation.*

NCC has increased its activities and focus on the stewardship of acquired lands. All lines of evidence suggest that this has been a significant area of progress and success over the last five years.

- 5. While the OQO component of the Program has been strengthened and capacity has started to increase, additional modifications may be required to further support the effective participation of OQOs in the Program.*

The OQO component is a relatively small but important element of the Program. A number of modifications to the OQO program were made in response to the last evaluation, including introduction of a capacity building element to strengthen the long-term ability of OQOs to effectively secure and manage lands over the long-term. While both the interviews and surveys found strong

support for capacity building aspects of the Program, OQOs have suggested a number of additional modifications that could help support greater participation from a broader range of OQOs. At the same time, some questions have been raised regarding whether NCC continues to be the best placed organization to deliver all or part of the OQO program moving forward.

Issue 5: Demonstrated efficiency and economy

6. *Program design, resource allocation, and capacity appear appropriate to support effective and efficient achievement of Program objectives and outcomes. However, some participants believed that efficiency could be enhanced through increased flexibility in the Funding Agreement.*

Clear linkages exist between Program activities, outputs and outcomes. In addition, progress is being made across all areas of the Program and towards all of the objectives established in the Funding Agreement. As such, the program design, resource allocations and capacity all appear appropriate to achieving Program objectives effectively and efficiently.

At the same time, most internal and OQO informants raised concerns regarding certain aspects of the Funding Agreement between NCC and the Government of Canada (which governs NCC's management of the Program) which they believe limit flexibility for the Program and impact the ability to deliver efficiently and effectively (e.g., no ability to carry funds over from one year to the next; higher overall matching requirement; cap on eligible funds per project for OQOs; and, a limit of one project per OQO per year).

7. *A clear management and accountability structure is in place for the Program.*

There is strong evidence of a clear management and accountability structure for the Program. Roles and responsibilities are well understood throughout the organization, particularly as they relate to land securement and the OQO program. NCC has produced and maintains up-to-date and comprehensive guidance both internally and to OQOs. The Program Committee is providing effective and ongoing high level oversight and guidance to the Program as a whole.

8. *Comprehensive and appropriate planning, performance measurement and reporting processes are in place and being used to inform decision-making.*

There is clear evidence that effective systems are in place for planning, measuring progress and reporting. Performance information is seen as credible and useful both by NCC's management team and the Program Committee to inform ongoing decision-making.

9. *Program resources are being spent efficiently and in accordance with the Funding Agreement. In particular, NCC has successfully leveraged greater matching funds than anticipated, the average cost per hectare is decreasing, and key informants believe the Program delivers value for money.*

6 Recommendations

This evaluation finds that the NACP remains highly relevant and is making an important contribution to overall nature conservation efforts in Canada, particularly on private lands in southern Canada. The federal investment in the Program is providing good value for money; particularly as a result of

the strong leverage NCC is able to provide as a third party delivery agent in support of scientifically-driven priority acquisitions and stewardship activities.

Based on the findings from all lines of evidence, the evaluators recommend:

- 1) That NCC discuss with the Government of Canada whether enhanced flexibility could be achieved relative to key provisions of the Funding Agreement (related to land securement activities and the OQO program), in order to enhance effectiveness and efficiency moving forward.
- 2) That NCC work closely with the Government of Canada to consider expansion of the Program to support other government priority areas, including Indigenous conservation efforts, multi-species planning, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.
- 3) That NCC and the Government of Canada collaborate more broadly through data sharing and/or collaborative planning in priority regions, and in regard to ongoing national efforts to meet the Aichi targets (including whether and how the contribution of private protected areas can be recognized in these efforts).
- 4) That NCC and participating OQOs explore possible models for ongoing collaboration and engagement, including whether an accreditation body or national land trust body could ultimately help support or potentially deliver the OQO program or its capacity building component.
- 5) That NCC and the Government of Canada strengthen the communications function of the Program by examining current planning and delivery mechanisms, strategies for Program promotion (including the role of OQOs), as well as possible amendments to the Communications Protocol.

Evaluation of the Natural Areas Conservation Program

Evaluation Report Appendices

August 2017

Contents

A.	Documentation Reviewed	2
B.	Online Survey Results	5
C.	Comparative Analysis	18
D.	Key Informants Categories	48
E.	Case Studies.....	49

A. Documentation Reviewed

Funding Agreements

- Federal Funding Agreement 2013 \$20M
- Federal Funding Agreement 2014 \$100M
- Federal Funding Agreement 2014 \$100M Communications Protocol
- Federal Funding Agreement March 30 2007 \$225M
- OQO NCC Funding Agreement 2017
- DUC NCC Funding Agreement 2015

Annual Reports

- Natural Areas Conservation Program First Annual Report - Final
- Natural Areas Conservation Program Second Annual Report 1 April 2007 to 30 June 2009 – FINAL Complete 12-22-09
- Annual Progress Report – Feb 14 2011
- Natural Areas Conservation Program – Fourth Annual Report 1 April 2007 to 30 June 2011 – FINAL REPORT and APPENDICES – 02-16-12
- Natural Areas Conservation Program – Fifth Annual Report 1 April 2007 to 30 June 2012 – FINAL REPORT
- NACP Annual Progress Report_Year 6_2013-12-16 Sent to Minister
- Natural Areas Conservation Program – Seventh Annual Progress Report
- Natural Areas Conservation Program – Annual Progress Report – 2014-15 (Text and Appendices)
- Natural Areas Conservation Program – Annual Progress Report – 2007-2015

Financial Statements

- Financial Statements. The Nature Conservancy of Canada - Natural Areas Conservation Fund. March 31, 2017
- Revised Appendices 1-10 (Financial Statements. The Nature Conservancy of Canada - Natural Areas Conservation Fund. June 30, 2013)

Evaluations

- Evaluation of the Natural Areas Conservation Program Final Report – June 2012
- NCC Management Response to the Natural Areas Conservation Program Evaluation – March 2013

Self-Assessment (Standards and Practices)

- AYO – Update to the Board Feb 2017
- AYO Results – Final Report

Committee

- NACP Program Committee Minutes (March 2013 to March 2016)
- Terms of Reference (TOR) – Program Committee 2016

Workplans

- Workplan – FFA Year 1 – September 11 2014 – March 31 2015
- Workplan - FFA Year 2 - April 1 2015 - March 31 2016
- Workplan - FFA Year 3 - April 1 2016 - March 31 2017
- Workplan - FPP - July 1 2012 - October 31 2013

Policy

- Acquisition of Land for Conservation Resources
- Appraisals
- Approval Process Related to NACPs
- Conservation Activities and Long-Term Stewardship Responsibilities
- Endowment Fund Benefits, Contributions, and Allocations
- Natural Area Conservation Plans
- The Role of Conservation Science at NCC

Performance Documentation (internal)

- 3_Output - Conservations Plans (and maps)
- 5_Output - Agreements in place to implement Program
- 6_Output - NCC_OQOs applications and choices of practices
- 7_Output - BI_PMP_PMPActions_CACM
- 8_Direct Outcome - Long Term Funding for Stewardship
- 9_Direct Outcome - Land at PNAs secured
- 10_Direct Outcome - Ongoing Stewardship and Management
- 11_Direct Outcome - Increased Capacity Development
- 11_Intrmdte Outcome - Ecologically Sensitive Land Southern Can
- 12_Intrmdte Outcome - Land secured is Stewarded
- 13_Final Program Outcomes - SAR and Biodiversity Targets
- NACPs and Corresponding Biodiversity Targets as of 31 Mar 2017
- OQO CD Program – Tracking Sheet

Samples

- NCC also provided sampled documentation on NACPs (3), Baseline Inventories (3) and Property Management Plans (3)

External Sources

- Nature at work: Why biodiversity is important to you! Environment Canada – 2010
- Canadian Biodiversity Ecosystem Status and Trends 2010, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments of Canada – 2010
- Canada’s 5th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity – 2014
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2010
- Speech from the Throne, Government of Canada – 2015
- Speech from the Throne, Government of Canada - 2013
- Speech from the Throne, Government of Canada – 2011
- Budget 2013, Government of Canada – 2013
- Budget 2012, Government of Canada – 2012

- Biodiversity Outcomes Framework, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments – 2016
- 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments – 2106
- Planning for a Sustainable Future: A Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada 2013–2016, Environment Canada, Sustainable Development Office – 2013
- Achieving a Sustainable Future: A Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada, 2016-2019, Government of Canada – 2017
- Report on Plans and Priorities 2016-2017, Environment and Climate Change Canada – 2016
- Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, 1995

Websites

- Environment and Climate Change Canada: <http://www.ec.gc.ca>
- Federal, Provincial and Territorial Working Group on Biodiversity; <http://www.biodivcanada.ca>
- Government of Canada: <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca> and <https://www.canada.ca>
- Nature Conservancy of Canada: <http://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/>
- UN Convention on Biological Diversity: <https://www.cbd.int>

B. Online Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

One of the evidence collection instruments outlined in the evaluation plan for the Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP) was the use of two online surveys, aimed at collecting qualitative and quantitative information from two distinct external stakeholder audiences:

1. OQOs which meet the eligibility criteria to apply for Program funding (i.e., all members of the Canadian Land Trust Alliance whether they have received program funds or not); and
2. Individuals or organizations (e.g., land donors) that have completed transactions with NCC under the Program.

The purpose of the surveys was to:

- Identify why stakeholders have chosen to (or not to) work with NCC under the Program;
- Assess whether there is a demonstrable need for the Program;
- Collect additional information on NCC's performance with respect to facilitating the transaction process and providing appropriate guidance;
- Identify the outcomes to which stakeholders feel they are contributing by protecting land under the Program; and
- Collect suggestions for improving the Program.

The evaluation plan indicated that a survey summary report would be provided to NCC to present a non-attributable and aggregated summary of survey results, and that these findings would inform both preliminary findings and, ultimately, the evaluation report.

This document represents the summary report for both online surveys.

METHODOLOGY

Each survey was designed to take the respondent about 15 minutes to complete and was available in English and in French. The surveys were mostly conducted online, although landowner respondents were given the option of answering the questionnaire over the phone.

Once approved by the NCC, both surveys were programmed into CallWeb, tested, approved and translated prior the official launch dates. The distribution list for the landowners and OQO surveys was developed and provided by NCC.

The individual/organization survey was launched on April 21st and remained open until May 19th. The OQO survey was launched on April 19th and closed on May 19th. Regular reminders were sent to encourage potential respondents to take the surveys.

CONSIDERATIONS

Below are the response rates and detailed breakdown for each survey (as of May 25 2017):

Survey Group	Distribution #	# Complete responses to-date	# Away/Bounce back/ etc.	% Completed
OQOs	207	78	11	38%
Landowners/ Individuals	256*	91	13	36%
Total	363	169	24	46 %

*137 had email contact details and 119 had only phone contact details; 50 contacts had no email or phone information.

The goal stated in the evaluation plan was to secure at least a 35% response rate for each survey. The actual response rates (38% and 36%) are consistent with that goal.

Not all respondents answered all possible survey questions. Some questions were conditional to the answers provided by the respondent. For instance, survey respondents were often prompted to provide more information if their response was negative. Distinct series of questions were submitted to OQO respondents depending on whether they indicated that their organization had received funding for the OQO program, the Capacity-Development Funding program, or both.

It should be noted that, in some cases, survey emails were sent to several potential respondents within the same organization. As such, while 78 surveys were completed, the respondents as a group represent 70 distinct organizations.

The wording in this report follows the structure below:

- Few: 0 to 25% respondents selected the response;
- Some: 26 to 50% respondents selected the response;
- Majority/Most: 51 to 75% respondents selected the response; and
- Vast Majority: 76 to 100% respondents selected the response.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

OQO Survey

What type of organization you represent? (n=78)

Out of the 78 OQO respondents who answered the survey, 56% (n=44) indicated their organization was a land trust and 13% (n=10) selected “Conservation authority”.

Otherwise:

- 10 respondents (13%) selected “other”:
 - 8 indicated they belonged to an environmental non-for-profit organization
 - 2 indicated they belonged to an alliance
- 8 respondents (10%) said they belonged to a Conservation Association
- 2 respondents were from a Nature Trust (3%)
- 1 respondent from a Heritage Trust (1%)
- 1 respondent said they belonged to a Fish and Game Association (1%)
- 2 respondents selected “Conservancy” (3%)

Did you receive funding from the Program? (n=78)

Some survey questions were asked to respondents depending on whether or not their organization had received funding under the OQO Program or the Capacity-Development program. The breakdown is as follows:

- 46% (n=36) had received no funding
- 28% (n=22) had received funding for the OQO Program only
- 14% (n=11) had received funding for the OQO Capacity Development Funding Program only
- 12% (n=9) had received funding for both Programs.

As a result, 31 OQO respondents answered additional questions about their experience with the OQO Program and 20 respondents answered further questions about their experience with the Capacity Development Funding Program.

Is there Continued Need for Program?

Do you feel that the OQO Program and OQO Capacity Development Funding Program (Programs) are an important mechanism for conserving ecologically sensitive areas in Canada? (n=78)

The vast majority (87%; n=68) of OQO respondents feel that the Programs are important mechanisms to protect ecologically sensitive areas in Canada. 3 respondents (4%) answered “no” and the remaining 7 respondents (9%) indicated they did not know.

68 respondents provided additional comments related to this question:

- Half of those respondents (n=34) indicated that the funding provided through the Program is essential; a few indicated this funding is particularly vital in the near absence of other sources of funding.
- A few respondents (n=9) emphasized the importance of the Program to protect land and ecosystems considering increasing pressures on ecologically sensitive land.
- A few respondents (n=9) wrote about the Program supporting conservation organizations more generally and increasing their capacity.
- A few respondents (n=9) indicated that the Program may be important, but that it presents significant barriers or problems which constrain its positive impacts (e.g., restrictive criteria, appearance of unfair process, etc.).

Are the Program and its objectives aligned with NCC’s mandate?

Why did you choose to work with NCC on this transaction? (n=31)

Respondents were asked to select all reasons that applied to their case, which is why the results in percentage amount to more than 100%. The results for these questions are as follows:

- 17 respondents surveyed (55%) said they had chosen to work with NCC because of the organization’s strong reputation for protecting natural resources through property securement and stewardship.
- 13 respondents (42%) stated that NCC is the only organization offering funding to acquire ecologically sensitive land.
- 11 respondents said (36%) felt NCC was the organization best able to help them establish a protected area.
- 9 OQO respondents selected “other” (29%):
 - 6 respondents indicated they needed NCC funds to complement or match other sources.

- 1 respondent said they did not have a choice to deal with NCC, since the organization manages the federal portfolio.
- 1 respondent said they did not know for sure, since the transaction had taken place before their time in the organization.
- 1 respondent indicated they were notified about the Program through conferences and workshops.

Why did you choose to apply to the OQO Capacity Development Program? (n=20)

The vast majority (95% or 19 out of 20) of OQO respondents applied to it in order to increase their organization's capacity. Also:

- Almost half (45% or 9 out of 20 respondents) chose to apply in order to enable future involvement in securing and stewarding conservation lands.
- A quarter of respondents (25% or 5 out of 20) reported using the program to be in a position to apply for funding under the Natural Areas Conservation Program.
- 3 respondents selected "other":
 - 1 respondent indicated the Program was a "great fit" in the context of already ongoing efforts to increase their organization's capacity.
 - 1 respondent it was "a good incentive to get the work done".
 - 1 respondent said the Program allowed them to develop tools needed by their team.

To what extent have intended outputs been achieved?

Do you feel that the NCC is successful in its efforts to communicate the Program to organizations interested in conserving ecologically sensitive areas in Canada? (n=78)

The OQO survey data shows that 56% (n=44) of respondents felt the NCC is successful in communicating the program to organizations. 13 respondents (17%) felt the NCC was not so successful and 21 (27%) answered they did not know.

25 respondents provided suggestions on how to improve communications about the Program:

- Some respondents indicated they were already on NCC's contact list and that they were satisfied with those communications.
- Some respondents encouraged increasing the program's overall visibility through promotion, namely by providing short, clear and regular updates and information on the program's projects, performance and successes.
- Some respondents insisted on ensuring organizations not yet involved with NCC or the program would receive information about opportunities related to the NACP. A few respondents were under the impression that communications were effective mostly between NCC and organizations already active under the program.
- A few respondents recommended providing more detailed and clear information to applicants and potential applicants (e.g., on deadlines, requirements, etc.).

To what extent have intended outcomes been achieved?

To what extent do you feel that Program resources are accessible to organizations interested in securing lands for conservation? (n=78)

Answers regarding the accessibility of the Program to organization interested in securing lands for conservation were varied. 37 respondents (47%) characterized the Program as "somewhat

accessible". 19 respondents (24%) considered it "accessible" and 11 (14%) rather found it "not accessible". The 11 remaining respondents (14%) indicated they did not know.

68 respondents elaborated on this particular question:

- About a fifth made essentially positive comments, saying that the program was accessible and NCC supportive in its processes.
- Roughly 40% (n=26) made remarks pertaining to the program's eligibility/selection criteria (e.g., one only one project a year, no municipalities, project size, etc.) and/or requirements (e.g., stewardship fund, reporting, etc.) as significant barriers, especially for small or young organizations.
- A further 15% (10 out of 68) made specific comments about what they deemed to be a complex bureaucratic process challenging for organizations with less capacity (e.g., volunteered based organizations).
- 8 OQO respondents (12%) said the timing of program calls and its short timelines were challenging to deal with.
- 8 OQO respondents (12%) felt the program was perhaps insufficiently promoted, or mentioned other communication-related issues.
- A few respondents felt the matching criteria and fundraising challenges also reduced the program's accessibility.

What do you feel are the substantive results that the Program funding has helped achieve progress towards? (n=78)

OQO responses regarding the results of the program are varied and positive. 48 respondents (62%) felt the program contributes to the conservation and protection of biodiversity, 45 respondents (58%) felt the program helps protect ecologically sensitive lands in southern Canada. 39 respondents (50%) indicated the program protects habitats for COSEWIC-assessed species at risk. 31 respondents (40%) indicated the program enhances the protection of wetland and associated upland waterfowl habitat.

In addition:

- 33 respondents (42%) indicated the program helps build capacity to enable future involvement in securing or stewarding conservation lands:
 - It is worth noting that 20 respondents (25%) confirmed their organizations had received funding directly through the capacity development program. The fact that 33 respondents felt the Program enhanced organizational capacity confirms that benefiting from land transaction funding under the NACP or interacting with NCC in general can also increase the capacity of organizations.

On the other hand, most of the 17 respondents (22%) who selected "other" indicated they were unsure of the substantive results achieved, either because they did not benefit from the Program or did not have sufficient information about the success of the program in general.

Other comments on substantive results included:

- Encouraging altruistic land donation
- Preservation of land for public access
- Increase professionalism and expertise

Do you have any additional suggestions for improving the OQO Program and/or the OQO Capacity-Development Funding Program? (n=78)

47 respondents (60%) formulated suggestions about the program overall. Several OQOs respondents simply wrote they were satisfied with the Programs and that those should continue and be expanded. Other suggestions and concerns expressed by respondents are summarized below:

- Roughly 10% of these OQO respondents felt the program should be managed by another entity (e.g., through Land Trust Canada, provincial alliances or a government body). One respondent from Quebec reported their organization was concerned that NCC will also be managing the former provincial program “Partenaires pour la Nature”.
- A few respondents (n=5; roughly 11%) recommended reverting to a 1:1 matching policy.
- A few respondents recommended allowing for more than one application/project per organization. One respondent suggested that if the program had money left-over after a call, organizations should be able to apply to receive extra funding for their project.
- A few respondents recommended revising the 15% stewardship endowment fund rule for properties valued at less than 2M. Respondents mostly indicated that this requirement is difficult to comply with. One respondent explained that the stewardship fund should not be based on a property’s value, but rather on criteria such as ecological value, threat and conservation needs.
- A few respondents recommended having longer funding windows, customizable agreements and more flexible terms to adapt to special circumstances and unforeseen developments in transactions
- A few respondents indicated a need to revise some terms of the Programs to accommodate Conservation Authorities.
- Some respondents recommending engaging smaller organizations. Several respondents felt that the current application and transaction processes are onerous and present significant obstacles for organizations with less capacity.
- In a similar vein, some respondents recommended increasing collaboration, consultation, engagement with and outreach to organizations on the ground. One respondent suggested that organizations should be represented within the program by an advisory board.
- Francophone respondents emphasized the need to have program material properly translated in French.
- A few respondents indicated that OQOs should be informed about the results and the expenses of the program, which can impact on an organization’s decision-making
- Two respondents recommended that in-kind contributions and donations be recognized as matching funds.
- One respondent suggested that municipalities should be made eligible to the Program.
- One respondent insisted NCC should ensure that the land securement Program’s terms are compatible with other similar programs.
- One respondent recommended having one NCC contact person in charge on liaising with OQOs about the Capacity Development Funding Program.

Is the design of the Program appropriate?

Do you feel that the criteria are appropriate for determining whether an organization can qualify for Program funding? (n=78)

OQO respondents were asked about the two core eligibility criteria set for organizations to participate in the program (eligibility to ECCC’s Ecological Gifts Program and being at least substantially in compliance with the CLTA’s Standards and Practices). Most respondents felt the criteria were adequate (77%; n=60) with 4 respondents stating they found them inadequate (5%).

18 respondents made further comments on this question (14 by selecting “other comment”, plus the 4 respondents who had answered “no”):

- A few deemed the Ecological Gift criteria restrictive for smaller organizations and/or unnecessary.
- A few considered the Standards and Practices outdated or insufficiently circulated to serve as reliable criteria. One respondent indicated that compliance is difficult to assess.
- Two respondents remarked that these criteria may not be adequate for Conservation Authorities.

Was there adequate time to complete the requirements and meet deadlines under the OQO Program? (n=31)

Most respondents felt the time allocated was adequate:

- Yes: 19 respondents (61%)
- No: 10 respondents (32%)
- Don't know: 2 respondents (7%)

Was the negotiation and signing of the Funding Agreement and Landholding Agreement (also known as the OQO Agreement) a smooth process? (n=31)

A small majority of respondents felt the negotiation process was smooth:

- Yes: 16 respondents (52%)
- No: 12 respondents (30%)
- Don't know: 3 respondents (10%)

Regarding the negotiation of the agreements, the 12 OQO respondents who responded “no” to this question recommended the following improvements:

- Some recommended amending the process to increase efficiency and make it less complicated and cumbersome for organizations (e.g., reduce the length of the agreements).
- A few respondents recommended more flexibility (e.g., possibility to amend agreements based on the situation).
- One respondent reported that their organization had to expense legal fees in relation with the agreements, and recommended removing the agreements from the process altogether.
- One respondent felt the process should be more collaborative and “less adversarial”.
- Two francophone respondents insisted on the need to properly and efficiently translate documentation.

Was the amount of money awarded to you under the Program appropriate for your needs? (n=31)

Most respondents did not feel that the awarded amount was appropriate:

- Yes: 10 respondents (32%)
- No: 3 respondents (10%)
- Other comments: 18 respondents (58%)

Several of those 18 respondents made the following remarks:

- The 2:1 matching requirement makes things more challenging (as opposed to the former 1:1 target).
- The 250,000 cap is too low and being able to receive funding for only one project a year is too restrictive.

- Other requirements (e.g., 15% stewardship fund, audits, appraisals, etc.) put increased financial pressure on organizations.

In terms of obtaining matching funds (n=31):

Most organizations found it either challenging or very difficult to obtain matching funds:

- It was relatively easy to obtain matching funds: 4 respondents (13%)
- It was challenging to obtain matching funds: 11 respondents (36%)
- It was very difficult to obtain matching funds: 9 respondents (29%)
- 7 respondents selected “other” (23%):
 - Some respondents indicated that finding matching funds was very difficult and took a lot of time and resources.
 - Some respondents explained that Program funds were used in matching or complementing other sources of funding.
 - A few respondents stated that the Program’s funding is essential, even if securing matching funds can prove a challenge.

OQO Capacity-Development program:

Was the approval and funding process smooth and appropriate? (n=20)

The vast majority of respondents from participating organizations were satisfied with the approval and funding process:

- Yes: 17 respondents (85%)
- No: 2 respondents (10%)
- Don’t know: 1 respondent (5%)
 - One respondent recommended “being pragmatic” and reviewing the French translation.

Was there adequate time to complete the requirements and meet deadlines under the OQO Capacity Development Program? (n=20)

The vast majority of respondents from participating organizations were also satisfied with the time allocated to complete requirements and meet deadlines.

- Yes: 18 respondents (90%)
- No: 2 respondents (10%)

Are the funds available for capacity development adequate? (n=20)

Most respondents felt the funds were adequate, but some respondents recommended the funding be increased:

- Yes: 13 respondents (65%)
- No: 6 respondents (30%)
- Don’t know: 1 respondent (5%)
- 6 respondents (30%) commented on the level of funding required, mostly to say that the amount should be increased (one respondent said \$10 000, another said \$40 000 to \$50 000) and should be allocated based on the type of capacity-development project an organization proposes to undertake

Evaluation Question 11: Is the management and accountability structure for the Program in place and functioning?

How would you characterize the documentation that supports the Program application and transaction processes (e.g., guidelines, application forms, etc.)? (n=31)

- Most respondents (68%; 21 out of 31) felt the documentation was appropriate and helpful.
- Two respondents (6.5%) indicated the documentation was limited but still helpful.
- None felt the documentation was altogether insufficient.
- 8 respondents (26%) selected “other”: roughly half felt the documentation offered by NCC, or requested from the participating organization, was somewhat complex and cumbersome.

25 OQOs formulated suggestions for improving the Program application and transaction processes:

- Several respondents recommended simplifying and streamlining the processes to reduce the associated time and financial burden, especially on small organizations.
- A few respondents recommended allowing organizations to apply for more than one project
- A few respondents recommended reverting to a 1:1 matching.
- A few francophone respondents commented on the fact that communication in French with NCC would make things easier

Other suggestions included:

- Ensure the timing of the funding rounds is appropriate
- Ensure each round presents clear, reasonable and reliable criteria and deadlines (make sure that no major changes are made to the application process during ongoing rounds)
- Ensure compatibility with other conservation programs
- Make municipalities eligible to the program in partnership with a conservation organization
- Provide stewardship funding and revise the 15% endowment fund requirement

How would you characterize the documentation that supports the OQO Capacity Development Funding Program application and transaction processes (e.g. guidelines, application form, etc.)? (n=20)

Most respondents found the documentation appropriate and helpful (n=14, 70%). One respondent (5%) felt the documentation was limited but helpful, none found it insufficient.

5 respondents (25%) selected “other” and specified:

- Some respondents recommended simplifying the process, making it “less bureaucratic”.
- Two respondents commented on the need to improve the translation of documents in French: namely because the translated guidelines do not match that of the Standards and Practices.
- One respondent proposed creating a shared portal to put policies, procedures and standards in common.

Similarly, 13 OQO respondents formulated suggestions with regards to the program’s processes.

Some of those answers were simply positive comments indicating that the program works well. The main recommendations included:

- Two respondents indicated the need to improve the translation of material, especially in making sure the program’s language matches the Standards and Practices’ translation.
- A few respondents recommended having a contact person to provide advice specifically about this program.
- One respondent recommended having evaluation frameworks and templates available to help organization assess their capacity needs and formulate or improve their policies.

Are Program resources being spent efficiently, economically and in accordance with allowable expenditures?

OQO Program (land securement)

Was NCC staff available when you needed them? (n=31)

- Yes: 28 respondents (90%)
- No: 0
- Staff not needed: 3 respondents (10%)

Was NCC staff helpful and did they provide clear guidance and support to you when you needed it? (n=31)

- Yes: 27 respondents (87%)
- No: 2 respondents (6.5%)
 - One respondent indicated that NCC staff was helpful, but that it would be ideal to discuss with someone who speaks French
 - One respondent felt that NCC staff was not sufficiently knowledgeable about the legal documents they were requesting from organizations.
- Staff not needed: 2 respondents (6.5%)

Did the NCC release funds to your organization in an efficient way? (n=31)

- Yes: 27 respondents (87%)
- No: 2 respondents (6.5%)
 - One respondent said the closing date of the transaction had to be postponed because of NCC delays.
 - One respondent indicated that NCC insisted on “sending the funds directly to the closing lawyers” which complicated the transaction.
- Don’t know: 2 respondents (6.5%)

OQO Capacity-Development Program

Was NCC staff available when you needed them? (n=20)

- Yes: 18 respondents (90%)
- No: 1 respondent (5%)
 - The respondent recommended having one contact person who could answer specific questions regarding the documents required for the program.
- Staff not needed: 1 respondent (5%)

Was NCC staff helpful and did they provide clear guidance and support to you when you needed it? (n=20)

- Yes: 18 respondents (90%)
- No: 1 respondent (5%)
 - The respondent wrote that their organization received feedback only after the selection process although they had asked for specifications beforehand.
- Staff not needed: 1 respondent (5%)

Landowner survey:

A total of 91 respondents took part in the survey addressed to individuals or organizations that have completed transactions with NCC under the Program. The vast majority of respondents (89%, 81 out of 91) identified themselves as private land owners. 5 respondents (6%) indicated they belonged to an organization or corporation. 5 respondents selected “other”:

- 2 real estate sales representatives
- 1 trustee of an estate

- 1 consultant
- 1 respondent specified “former landowner”

Is there a continued need for the Program in Canada?

Do you feel that the Program is an important mechanism for conserving ecologically sensitive areas in Canada? (n=91)

The vast majority of respondents felt the program is indeed an important mechanism:

- Yes: 87 respondents (96%)
- No: 0
- Don't know: 4 respondents (4%)

67 respondents provided additional information:

- Most felt that the Program allows for the conservation of land and the protection of important habitats threatened by development; a few respondents mentioned the need to protect land in perpetuity for the future.
- Some respondents explained that the Program offers landowners a viable and sensible option for conservation of private lands.
- A few respondents indicated that NCC is the most competent/the only organization for this type of transaction.

Are the Program and its objectives aligned with NCC's mandate?

Why did you choose to work with NCC on this transaction? (n=91)

Most landowners (69% or 63 of 91 respondents) reported they had chosen to work with NCC because of its strong reputation for protecting natural resources through property securement and stewardship. Over a third of respondents (35% or 32 out of 91) felt the organization was best able to help them establish a protected area. 28 respondents (31%) said they were encouraged to participate in the program by a representative of the NCC/a colleague/a friend. 11 respondents (12%) said they wanted the benefits from other related programs (e.g., Ecological Gifts Program).

The answers of respondents who had other motivations (12% or 11 respondents) included:

- A desire to protect land in perpetuity for environmental reasons; two respondents explained the transaction was in line a family member's wishes.
- The professionalism of NCC staff.
- Having been contacted by NCC / invited to a meeting where the program was promoted.
- A need for money, and the respondent added that NCC “makes for a great neighbour”.

To what extent have intended outputs been achieved?

Do you feel that NCC is successful in its efforts to communicate the Program to individuals and/or organizations interested in donating/selling their land as an ecologically sensitive area? (n=91)

Overall, the majority of respondents feel NCC is successful in its communication efforts. Respondents also made various recommendations in this regard.

- Yes: 70 respondents (77%)
- No: 7 respondents (8%)
- Don't know: 14 respondents (15%)

52 out of 91 respondents had suggestions to improve communications about the program.

- Some of these comments (roughly 1 in 5) were positive and reported that communication within and about the program is already quite successful.
- Roughly 25% recommended having broader promotion to make sure the general public and partners not yet involved with NCC are aware of the program and its successes
- A few recommended making use of the media, whether traditional (e.g., television, print media) or online (social media)
- A few recommended targeting specific populations (e.g., landowners, municipalities, lawyers, realtors, etc.) to provide relevant and practical information about the program: for instance, providing detailed information to landowners about their options for selling or donating a property for conservation purposes
- A few recommended holding presentations (e.g., in schools, at trade and retail expos, etc.) and participating in meetings to directly inform people about the program

To what extent have intended outcomes being achieved?

What type of transaction did you participate in? (n=91)

Regarding the type of transactions respondents had partaken in:

- 40 respondents participated in an outright sale (44%)
- 22 respondents participated in a land donation (24%)
- 19 respondents participated in a split receipt (21%)
- 11 respondents participated in a conservation agreement sale (12%)
- 7 respondents participated in a conservation agreement donation (8%)
- 2 respondents participated in a conservation agreement split receipt (2%)
- 4 selected “other”:
 - One respondent was a real estate broker involved in a transaction
 - One respondent was not certain of the exact circumstances
 - One respondent said the transaction occurred in the context of an inheritance
 - One respondent indicated they were a contractor who assisted in a transaction

What do you feel are the substantive results that NCC has helped you achieve progress towards? (n=91)

Landowners/organization representatives reported a variety of positive outcomes (the respondents could select more than one category of result):

- Over 75% (69 out of 91) felt NCC helped in conserving and protecting biodiversity
- 60% (55 out of 91) felt it helped protect ecologically sensitive land in southern Canada
- 53% (48 out of 91) felt it advanced the protection of habitat for species at risk
- 53% (48 out of 91) felt it helped protect habitat for waterfowl
- 3 respondents (3%) said it had no substantive result
- 9 respondents selected “other” (10%) and those responses included the following results:
 - Successful protection of land against development
 - Ongoing monitoring
 - Direct benefits to wildlife and people
 - Benefits in the long-term, such as mitigating the effects of climate change and protecting biodiversity

Do you have any additional suggestions for improving the Program? (n=48)

The majority of landowner/organizations (n=25; 52%) who answered this question indicated the program functions well in its current form. General recommendations to improve the program included:

- Increasing engagement, conducting more direct work, and ensuring clear and frequent communication with landowners interested in or moving forward with a transaction
- Simplifying the overall process
- Providing more funds to the program
- Increasing promotion and publicity about the program

Is the management and accountability structure for the Program in place and functioning?

On an overall basis, how would you characterize the NCC process for completing your property transaction (i.e. land sale, land donation)? (n=91)

Most respondents characterized the overall property transaction process as appropriate (69%; 63 respondents) or adequate (18%; 16 respondents). No respondents felt the process had been inadequate.

Among the 12 respondents who selected “other”:

- Most (n=7) had had a positive experience.
- Two said the process was too slow.
- Two indicated they had run into technical problems.
- Two felt they could not comment.

54 out of 91 respondents provided further comments regarding the transaction process.

- Most respondents (n=30) indicated the process was adequate and did not have anything to recommend.
- A few recommended finding ways to simplify the process and reduce the delays associated with transactions.
- A few respondents remarked that having more frequent and consistent communication with NCC during the process would have made it easier.
- One respondent wrote they were concerned about post-transaction management practices on secured properties and recommended consulting experienced landowners on ways to preserve land effectively.

Are Program resources being spent efficiently, economically and in accordance with allowable expenditures?

Was NCC staff available when you needed them? (n=91)

The vast majority of respondents were satisfied.

- Yes: 86 respondents (95%)
- No: 1 respondent (1%) - Recommendation: Give an advisory role to farmers and rangers informed about good farming practices, to ensure proper land management and leasing
- Staff was not needed: 4 respondents (4%)

Was NCC staff helpful and did staff provide clear guidance and support to you when you needed it? (n=91)

The vast majority of respondents felt that support staff was helpful and provided clear guidance.

- Yes: 85 respondents (93%)
- No: 1 respondent (1%) - Consult with landowners to determine proper land management practices
- Staff was not needed: 5 respondents (6%)

C. Comparative Analysis

INTRODUCTION

As part of the program evaluation of the Natural Areas Conservation Program (the Program), a brief comparative assessment has been undertaken to examine other land conservation programs both in Canada and internationally. This is intended to serve as an update to the comparative assessment conducted in 2012 for the previous program evaluation, rather than a new or full scale examination of the programs identified.

The intent of this assessment is to help to inform evaluation findings related to relevance (e.g., overlap with other similar programs) and efficiency (e.g., identification of alternative design and delivery arrangements for the NCC to consider).

Programs for which updated information is provided include:

1. Ecological Gifts Program (Canada);
2. Habitat Stewardship Program (Canada);
3. North American Wetlands Conservation Act (United States, North America);
4. Land Trust Alliance (United States); and
5. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (United Kingdom).

In addition, several new programs were identified that may help identify trends that could be informative to the NACP. These include the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) and Bush Heritage Australia.

The methodology employed relied largely on online data collection (i.e. reviewing online reports and plans from these programs). In some cases, interviews were conducted with relevant program officials.

Section 2 provides an overview for each of the programs examined. Section 3 provides updated findings, including a brief comparative table, as well as findings by relevant evaluation question.

Several limitations were encountered, including differing definitions of protection used by the various programs examined, as well as lack of readily available information related to leveraging.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS

This section provides an overview of each of the programs examined, including: their purpose and context, scope (both jurisdictional and geographic), delivery approach, tools to support land securement, focus, outcomes, partnerships, program costs and leveraging. This information provides the basis for the analysis outlined in Section 3.

Table 1: Ecological Gifts Program

<p>Purpose and Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The purpose of the Ecological Gifts Program (EGP), established in 1995, is to enable individual and corporate landowners to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity through the donation of ecologically sensitive lands to qualified environmental charities or government bodies. ▪ An ecological gift can be a donation of land or an eligible interest or right in land, such as a conservation easement, covenant or real servitude¹. Under the terms of the program, donations of land or an eligible interest or right in land to a qualified recipient (such as an environmental charity, government agency or municipality) are eligible to receive a significant tax benefit. ▪ Ecological gift recipients then ensure that the land's biodiversity and environmental heritage are conserved in perpetuity. ▪ The program is a component of the Government of Canada's strategy for conservation and stewardship. It supports the government's mission to conserve biodiversity (particularly migratory birds and species at risk) in cooperation with other government agencies, conservation organizations and individual landowners.
<p>Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This federal program, administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), is national in scale. ▪ There are eligible recipients who have received donations under the program in all provinces; however, the program has very little presence in the territories (in part due to differing land ownership patterns in the North). ▪ From 1995 to 2012, the largest number of ecological gifts under the Program were made in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia; a similar trend exists for the past five years.
<p>Delivery Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The EGP is not a funding program. The EGP is administered by ECCC and delivered in cooperation with dozens of partners, including other federal departments, provincial and municipal governments, and NGOs. ▪ Completion of an ecological gift requires the Minister of the Environment to certify that a) the property is ecologically sensitive, b) that the recipient is qualified to receive the gift, and c) the fair market value of the donation. ▪ The program is coordinated and administered by a National Secretariat at ECCC which is responsible for certifying the eligibility of environmental charities to receive ecological gifts, developing communication and promotional materials, and organizing conferences, meetings, and workshops to increase awareness of the ecological gifts process. ▪ The Secretariat also manages a rigorous and comprehensive appraisal review and determination process and supports the Appraisal Review Panel (ARP), an independent body that reviews appraisal reports submitted by ecological gift donors. These reviews are the basis for the Panel's recommendations to the Minister on the fair market value of ecological gifts. Regional EGP Coordinators serve as a "single window" through which donors apply to the EGP.

**Land Securement tools/
mechanisms
(Permanent and Non-
permanent)**

**Focus (e.g. are science-
based priorities
established?)**

Outcomes:

- **Scope, type of values covered**
- **Acres conserved**
- **Management plans**
- **Other?**

Partnerships (number, type)

- Any individual or corporate landowner may donate land or an eligible interest or right in land through the EGP. Ecological gifts must be made in perpetuity (i.e. are permanent).
- In order for an official donation receipt to be issued, the donation must fully qualify as a gift under Canadian tax law. For a donation to be considered a gift, (a) the donor transfers ownership of property to a qualified recipient;
- b) the transfer is voluntary; and c) no benefit is provided to the donor or a person selected by the donor.
- The recipient is responsible for:
 - issuing an official donation receipt when the ecological gift has been completed; and
 - ensuring that the biodiversity and environmental heritage features of the donated property or eligible interest or right in the property are maintained and managed according to the terms of the transfer of land, conservation easement, covenant or real servitude in perpetuity.
- Permanent
 - Each donation of land or partial interest in land under the program must be certified as ecologically sensitive according to specific national and provincial criteria.
 - This certification is carried out by the federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change or a delegated authority. Delegated authorities range from provincial governments to environmental charities.
 - Ecologically sensitive lands are areas or sites that currently or could, at some point in the future, contribute significantly to the conservation of Canada's biodiversity and environmental heritage. Some provinces, including Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, have more precise definitions of ecologically sensitive lands.
 - Proposed gifts must be accompanied by a brief assessment of their ecological sensitivity and should demonstrate that national and any applicable provincial criteria have been met.
- Between 1995 and October 2016, 1260 ecological gifts valued at over \$807 million have been donated across Canada, protecting over 180,000 hectares of wildlife habitat. Many of these ecological gifts contain habitats designated as having national, provincial or regional importance, and many include rare or threatened habitats that are home to species at risk.
- Fee simple donations (i.e. full title) continue to constitute approximately 60% of all ecological gifts. Eligible interests or rights in land (i.e. conservation easements, covenants and real servitudes) constitute approximately 40% of all ecological gifts.
- Recipients are responsible for the long-term management and conservation of the ecological gift and its ecologically sensitive features; however, recipients are not required to develop formal management plans.
- There are currently approximately than 150 eligible recipients (including NCC) across the country.

Program Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The program was established in 1995 and first received a dedicated budget in 2000. ▪ Average program costs are \$525,000/year, plus approximately \$100,000 in grants and contributions. These costs include administering the Appraisal Review Panel (\$371,000 in 2016-17). The program costs do not include the salaries of Federal employees that administer the EGP.
Funds Levered/ matched	<p>Not Applicable (not a funding mechanism)</p>
Timeframe	
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1995 to present. <p>Environment and Climate Change Canada web-site: http://www.ec.gc.ca/pde-egp Ecological Gifts Program Progress Report 1995-2003 (no updated report available) Interview with Scott Nurse, ECCC.</p>
Updates	<p>Minor technical amendments in Budget 2017 but no significant changes since 2012 assessment.</p>

Table 2: Habitat Stewardship Program

Purpose and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) for Species at Risk was established by the federal government in 2000 as one element of Canada's national strategy for the protection of species at risk (other elements include the 2002 federal Species at Risk Act and the national Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk). ▪ The overall goal of the HSP is to contribute to the recovery of endangered, threatened, and other species at risk, and to prevent other species from becoming a conservation concern, by engaging Canadians from all walks of life in conservation actions to benefit wildlife. This includes fostering land and resource use practices that maintain the habitat necessary for the survival and recovery of species at risk, as well as enhancing existing conservation activities and encouraging new ones.
Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HSP is a federal program that is active in all regions. Activities must take place on private lands, provincial Crown lands, Indigenous lands or in aquatic and marine areas across Canada.
Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HSP allocates funds to projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats, and to those that prevent other species from becoming a conservation concern. ▪ The HSP is co-managed by Environment and Climate Change Canada, and managed cooperatively with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Parks Canada Agency. ▪ Funding under the HSP is separated into two distinct streams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1.The HSP Species at Risk Stream focuses on projects addressing the recovery of species at risk listed on Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act (SARA); and ○ 2.The HSP Prevention Stream focuses on projects addressing other species, beyond those listed on SARA to prevent them from becoming a conservation concern ▪ The HSP helps implement SARA and also works to keep healthy species healthy. While the Species at Risk Stream supports the recovery of species at risk and their habitats, the Prevention Stream fosters stewardship projects aimed at preventing other species from becoming a conservation concern. Under this latter stream, all species not listed under SARA are eligible and national/regional priorities are identified annually.
Land Securement tools/ mechanisms (Permanent and Non-permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanent and non-permanent
Focus (e.g. are science-based priorities established?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes - national and regional planning partners establish the overall priorities annually and then specific projects are developed. • Priority landscapes that have been targeted by the Species at Risk Stream include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the Garry oak (<i>Quercus garryana</i>) ecosystem of southern Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands, and Fraser Valley of British Columbia, which is home to more than 20 species at risk nationally; ○ the tallgrass prairie and aspen parkland region of Manitoba, where habitat protection efforts benefit plant and bird species at risk, such as the Small White Lady's-slipper (<i>Cypripedium candidum</i>) and Sprague's Pipit (<i>Anthus spragueii</i>); ○ the Upper Thames watershed of southern Ontario, where 37 species at risk are under threat from development and aggregate land use;

<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope, type of values covered - Acres conserved - Management plans - Other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the St. Lawrence Lowlands of southern Quebec, where the Missisquoi Bay wetlands provide the last large sanctuary for the Spiny Softshell (<i>Apalone spinifera</i>); and ○ the coastal limestone barrens of Newfoundland's Great Northern Peninsula, which house dozens of plant species at risk, including at-risk <i>Salix</i> and <i>Braya</i> species.
<p>Partnerships (number, type)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Between inception in 2000 to the end of March 2015, the Species at Risk Stream has invested over \$151.5 million to support more than 2400 local species at risk conservation projects, benefitting the habitat of more than 420 species at risk. These projects have in turn leveraged an additional \$397 million for a total investment of over \$548 million in stewardship projects to support the recovery of species at risk. ▪ Every year, on average, 200 000 ha are protected through direct actions taken by landowners, land managers, or conservation agencies. ▪ The program reaches more than a million people every year through outreach and education activities. ▪ Additionally, during its first year of operation, the Prevention Stream invested more than \$2.5 million in 81 aquatic and terrestrial stewardship projects.
<p>Program Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The program has established over 460 partnerships with Indigenous organizations, landowners, resource users, nature trusts, provinces, the natural resource sector, community-based wildlife societies, educational institutions and conservation organizations. ▪ The HSP allocates between \$8 and \$13 million a year to projects.
<p>Funds Levered/ matched</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The program requires a minimum of 1:1 leveraging on funds that it invests so that, for every \$1 provided by the HSP, at least \$1 is raised by project recipients. Leveraging can take the form of either financial or in-kind resources (equipment loans, donations of building materials, volunteered labour, etc). ▪ Species at Risk projects have leveraged an additional \$397 million for a total investment of over \$548 million in stewardship projects to support the recovery of species at risk.
<p>Timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2000 to present
<p>Sources</p>	<p>ECCC: http://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih and https://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En&n=59BF488F-1 Application Guidelines, Prevention Stream: https://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En&n=9723BBFD-1 Application Guidelines, Species at Risk: https://www.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En&n=2E4F3860-1</p>
<p>Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New distinct stream of funding established: The HSP Prevention Stream focuses on projects addressing other species, beyond those listed on SARA to prevent them from becoming a conservation concern • The leverage ratio was identified as 2:1 in the first assessment; it is now listed as 1:1. • Multi-year project proposals are accepted and encouraged

Table 3: North American Wetlands Conservation Act

Purpose and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The <i>North American Wetlands Conservation Act</i> (NAWCA) was passed by the United States Congress in 1989 to conserve North American wetland ecosystems and waterfowl and the other migratory birds and fish and wildlife that depend upon such habitats. ▪ In part, NAWCA was passed to support activities under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP), an international action strategy for the long-term protection of wetlands and associated upland habitat needed by waterfowl and other migratory birds in North America. ▪ NAWCA provides a mechanism to support NAWMP objectives and those of other migratory bird recovery programs by encouraging public-private partnerships to develop and implement wetland conservation projects
Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Act supports conservation at a North American scale as the NAWCA program provides matching grants to wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.
Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The NAWCA program operates in two cycles per year. NAWCA includes both a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs. ▪ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Division of Bird Habitat Conservation (Division) is responsible for facilitating and administering the Act’s Standard Grants Program. The process for receiving and preliminarily reviewing project proposals is handled slightly differently for each country and enjoys the active participation of each federal government. ▪ The Canada Standard Grants Program is a matching grant program that supports public-private partnerships carrying out wetlands conservation projects in Canada. Project activities involve the long-term conservation of wetlands and associated upland habitats for the benefit of waterfowl and all wetland-associated migratory birds. ▪ Applicants submit project proposals through NAWMP Provincial Steering Committees. After a preliminary review by the Provincial committees, eligible proposals are then forwarded to the appropriate Joint Venture Management Board, Environment Canada Wetlands Office, and finally the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada) for review and endorsement. Projects are then presented to the North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Council) in the United States for funding consideration. After reviewing the projects, the Council recommends them to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, a seven-member commission authorized by the Act to give final funding approval. The Council may directly approve Small Grants. ▪ NAWMP implementation across the continent is supported by ‘joint ventures’ or regional partnerships that include individuals, corporations, conservation organizations and government agencies. These joint ventures develop implementation plans that focus on areas of concern identified in NAWMP. Canada is currently home to four habitat - Pacific Birds, Canadian Intermountain, Prairie (including the Western Boreal Forest), and Eastern - and three species (black duck, sea duck and Arctic goose) joint ventures.
Land Securement tools/ mechanisms (Permanent and Non-permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A wide range of conservation activities are supported through this mechanism, including projects aiming to: protect, restore or enhance wetlands and other migratory bird habitats; permanently secure habitat for birds and

<p>Focus (e.g. are science-based priorities established?)</p>	<p>other wetland-dependent species; manage wetland ecosystems and conduct complementary conservation activities; encourage partnerships; and promote sustainable use. https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/grants/nawca-canada.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conservation designations used include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Securement</i>: protection through land title transfer or legally binding long-term agreement (10 yr min)². ○ <i>Enhancement</i>: actions on secured wetlands or upland habitats to increase their carrying capacity for wetland associated migratory birds, other wildlife ○ <i>Management</i>: activities on secured wetlands or upland habitats to manage and maintain their carrying capacity ○ <i>Stewardship (extension or influenced)</i>: direct actions (less than 10 year terms) taken by landowners, land managers or conservation agencies that protect or enhance wetland or associated upland habitats without legal or binding agreements. These direct actions result in applied land use changes.
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope, type of values covered - Acres conserved - Management plans - Other? <p>Partnerships (number, type)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funds appropriated under NAWCA must be used for wetlands conservation projects, including the securement, restoration, enhancement and/or management of wetland ecosystems. Other related activities, such as stewardship, evaluation and communications can also be funded by NAWCA funds under more restrictive conditions. http://nawcc.wetlandnetwork.ca/nawca.html ▪ NAWCA-funded projects specifically target the wetlands and associated upland habitat of waterfowl and other migratory birds in North America. Landscape-level priorities established and documented through the JV implementation plans, where developed, and informed by landscape and conservation science coupled with modeling techniques, all undertaken by joint venture partners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall, in the past two decades, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act has funded 2,644 projects totaling \$1.4 billion in grants. More than 5,600 partners have contributed another \$3 billion in matching funds to affect 33.4 million acres of habitat. https://www.fws.gov/birds/grants/north-american-wetland-conservation-act.php ▪ According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, since 1991, the Program has provided \$504.7M in grant funding to Canadian grantees (with matching funds of the same amount) to 547 projects in all 13 provinces and territories covering 19.3 million acres (7.8 million ha). https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/grants/nawca-canada.pdf ▪ Canadian Habitat Matters Annual Report 2016 indicated that from 1986-2016, Habitat Joint Ventures (which include but are not limited to NAWCA funds) have secured 20 million acres (8.1 million acres) through land title transfer or binding legal agreements with landowners (10 year minimum); influenced 139.4 million acres (56.4 million ha) through direct actions resulting in applied land-use change that protect or enhance habitat without legal or binding agreements; enhanced 3.6 million acres (1.5 million ha) through actions that increase habitat carrying capacity for waterfowl and other wildlife; and managed 11.7 million acres (4.7 million ha) through activities that manage and maintain habitat carrying capacity for waterfowl and other wildlife. http://nawmp.wetlandnetwork.ca/Media/Content/files/Hab%20Mat2016EN.pdf

² This definition includes public lands.

<p>Program Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships are a major feature of work under NAWCA, through the NAWMP, it's associated Joint Ventures, and the funds drive specific projects advanced by Grantees under the program. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, since 1991, 163 partners have been involved in 547 NAWCA projects in Canada. https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/grants/nawca-canada.pdf
<p>Funds Levered/ matched</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program funding comes from appropriations, fines, penalties, and forfeitures; and from interest accrued on the fund. The Canada Standard Grants Program began supporting projects in Canada in 1990, shortly after the North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 was passed. The Canada standard grants program has been receiving 45 percent of the total available funding for Act-supported projects each fiscal year. In recent years, this amount has been approximately USD\$20-25 million annually.https://www.fws.gov/birds/grants/north-american-wetland-conservation-act/standard-grants/canada.php
<p>Timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canadian NAWCA proposals must have at least a 1:1 match of U.S. non-federal funds to the NAWCA funds requested through the Act. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project, but are not eligible as match. NAWMP projects funded under NAWCA often include other contributions; a leveraging ratio closer to 3:1, including in-kind is typically reported.
<p>Sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAWMP came into force in 1986; NAWCA passed in 1989
<p>Updates:</p>	<p>NAWMP website: http://nawmp.wetlandnetwork.ca/ Wetlands Canada web-site : www.wetlandscanada.org/nawca.html US Fish and Wildlife Service web-site : https://www.fws.gov/birds/grants/north-american-wetland-conservation-act.php and https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/grants/nawca-canada.pdf Canadian Habitat Matters Annual Report 2016: http://nawmp.wetlandnetwork.ca/Media/Content/files/Hab%20Mat2016EN.pdf North American Wetlands Conservation Council (Canada): http://nawcc.wetlandnetwork.ca/nawca.html</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NAWMP was revised in 2012; NAWMP objectives and goals were subsequently revised for waterfowl, populations, supporters and habitats to guide waterfowl management as the Plan continues to evolve. Overall appropriations appear to have decreased slightly (from @25 million to @20-25 million each year).

Table 4: US Land Trust Alliance

Purpose and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Land Trust Alliance is a national umbrella organization of 1,000 member land trusts supported by 200,000 volunteers and 4.6 million members nationwide (press release Dec 1 2016).
Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)	<p>National membership-based organization of community-based land trusts.</p>
Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alliance advocates for public policies that support the conservation goals of its membership, including increased funding and improved tax incentives to accelerate the acquisition of land and conservation easements through land trusts. The Alliance also works to strengthen the land trust community through access to training, capacity-building, and accreditation services. In 2011, the Alliance created Terrafirma Risk Retention Group LLC, the first environmental insurance program created by and for land trusts. Terrafirma acts as a charitable risk pool owned by participating land trusts that insures its members against the legal costs of defending conservation. As of March 2015, Terrafirma was insuring 7.2 million acres from 476 land trusts across the country. The Alliance plays the role of a “convenor” in regional efforts and supports organizations in building their capacity (e.g. through training, mentoring programs, support for assessments and follow-up technical assistance, etc.).
Land Securement tools/ mechanisms (Permanent and Non-permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alliance and its members focus on both permanent securement and non-permanent stewardship, although their mission emphasizes the value of permanent land acquisition and easements. The Alliance does not itself hold lands.
Focus (e.g. are science-based priorities established?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alliance does not appear to establish science-based priorities but does help to support regional efforts, both directly and through regional conservation initiatives and partnerships.
Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope, type of values covered - Acres conserved - Management plans - Other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stated accomplishments include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocacy on relevant policy issues at the national level; key stated accomplishments include 2015 enhanced federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations - Developing <i>Land Trust Standards and Practices</i>, the guidelines for ethical performance by land trusts and - Completing a land trust census every five years (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015) The Alliance established the Land Trust Accreditation Commission in 2006 to provide independent verification of high standards for voluntary land conservation. More than 370 land trusts had reached initial or renewed accreditation by February 2017.

Partnerships (number, type)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the 2015 National Land Trust Census 56 million acres had been conserved by state, local and national land trusts (an increase of 9 million acres since 2010).
Program Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alliance has over 1,000 members. It works with corporate and military partners in addition to other land trusts and conservation organizations. The Alliance also partners with a number of coalitions and others on specific initiatives of interest to its membership. For example, the Alliance helped forge a coalition of over 30 conservation groups in 5 states to protect and restore the coastal region along the Gulf of Mexico.
Funds Levered/ matched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Alliance's 2016 annual report shows total support and revenue of approximately \$15 million. 2016 expenditures included \$3.7 million in direct grants to land trusts and other conservation organizations for organizational and leadership development, advocacy and innovative conservation projects.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No leveraging indicated.
Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational since 1982.
Updates:	<p>US Land Trust Alliance website www.landtrustalliance.org 2016 Annual Report http://s3.amazonaws.com/landtrustalliance.org/2016AnnualReport.pdf 2015 National Land Trust Census https://www.landtrustalliance.org/about/national-land-trust-census</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2004 Land Trust Standards and Practices were updated in 2016-17 and now include a set of 12 overarching principles, 59 practices and 188 practice elements. Alliance land trust members must adopt the standards. To be accredited, land trusts must demonstrate that they have implemented the standards through verification of 59 indicators. The land trust accreditation body will fully incorporate these standards into their work by 2019. The number of land trusts having secured initial or renewed accreditation has more than doubled since the first assessment in 2012. In 2015, the Alliance secured an enhanced federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations from Congress. Described as 'one of the most powerful conservation mechanism in decades', the Alliance states that this will represent vastly increased opportunities for land trusts to encourage donations. For example, this permanent incentive: raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement to 50%, from 30%, of his or her annual income; extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take a tax deduction for a conservation agreement to 15 years from 5 years; and allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income, increased from 50%.

Table 5: UK Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Purpose and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was created in 1889. It currently carries out a wide range of conservation projects and advocacy efforts to influence land use and other policies. Its mission states that 'our birds and wildlife are increasingly vulnerable in a rapidly-changing world. Together we can create bigger, better, more joined-up spaces to save our wildlife and our shared home.
Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RSPB operates throughout the United Kingdom, both directly and through networks of local groups. ▪ RSPB is also active internationally through the BirdLife International.
Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Own and manage over 200 nature reserves, which provide havens for threatened species and act as launching pads for such birds to recolonize. ▪ Other activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activities to protect, restore and manage habitats for birds and other wildlife, including hands-on recovery projects for threatened species; ○ Work with landowners and farmers to support birds and bird habitats in rural areas; ○ Advocacy efforts both in the UK and internationally to champion birds, their habitats and the broader environment; and ○ Outreach efforts to engage individuals and communities in nature conservation and connecting children with nature ▪ Now working on climate change in wake of 2015 Nature of Climate Change report. ▪ Management plans are developed for all nature reserves.
Land Securement tools/ mechanisms (Permanent and Non-permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permanent Land securement: through the establishment and management of nature reserves. ▪ Non-permanent through a variety of restoration and stewardship activities.
Focus (e.g. are science-based priorities established?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RSPB is actively involved in monitoring species and habitats, researching the problems they face (including the cause of decline in priority species), and proposing and implementing practical and effective solutions.
Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope, type of values covered - Acres conserved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The RSPB manages @ 151,000 hectares in its 214 reserves. Over 16,000 species of wildlife have been recorded on RSPB reserves. ▪ RSPB is working with other wildlife organizations through Farm Wildlife, an advisory partnership which works with the farming industry to promote conservation practices.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management plans - Other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RSPB also undertakes policy initiatives such as coordinating responses to the State of Nature report and working to maintain and strengthen EU Nature Directives. ▪ In 2010, RSPB launched its “Futurescapes Programme” to expand its focus from land acquisition to working collaboratively with landowners on broader landscape. Between 2011 and 2015, the organization worked in 144 partnerships on 198 projects that delivered conservation enhancements on more than 100,000 ha and provided advice to landowners and farmers on over 168,000 ha.
Partnerships (number, type)	
Program Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RSPB has grown to 1.8 million members, over 12,500 volunteers and 1,500 staff. ▪ Part of the global partnership BirdLife International.
Funds Levered/ matched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2016, total income was 137.4 million pounds (\$232M Cdn). 35% of funds raised were from membership, subscriptions and donations. ▪ 2016 charitable expenditures were 97.3 million pounds £83M (@\$130 million Cdn) of which £6.9 M were spent on acquisition of new nature reserves and investing in visitor facilities.
Timeframe	N/A
Sources	<p>More than one hundred and twenty years of history.</p> <p>RSPB website www.rspb.org.uk RSPB Plans for 2007-2012: www.rspb.org.uk/about/run/2007-2012.aspx Annual Review 2015-16 https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/abouttherspb/annualreview_20156.pdf Futurescapes summary 2011-2015 http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/futurescapessummary_tcm9-407124.pdf</p>
Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No major changes in scope, scale or delivery approach ▪ Enhanced focus on climate change in wake of 2015 report ▪ Enhanced focus on public policy, particularly Nature Directives

Table 6: Bush Heritage Australia

Purpose and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bush Heritage is a national non-profit organisation conserving biodiversity in Australia by buying and managing land of outstanding conservation value, and working in partnership with other landowners. They also help protect native plants and animals on millions of hectares of the most ecologically important landscapes
Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National in scope, across Australia.
Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Committed to returning Australia's bush to good health by carefully selecting, buying and then managing land of outstanding conservation value. ▪ Own outright covenants apply in perpetuity so they are protected forever, no matter who owns them. Where they hold a long-term Crown lease, the covenant holds for the life of the lease. Where the Federal Government's National Reserve System program has provided funds towards a lease, the lease can't be on-sold except to an organisation whose primary goal is conservation. ▪ On every property, BHA prepares a management plan in which staff identifies the habitats, plants and animals that need special protection. Conservation goals and associated actions and timelines are set for each of these 'targets'. This could include removing or reducing grazing pressure on the vegetation; undertaking controlled burns; controlling weeds and feral animals; and protecting waterways and soils. ▪ Also work in partnership with private landholders and other conservation groups to expand their reach and encourage landscape-level approaches.
Land Securement tools/ mechanisms (Permanent and Non-permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary focus is on permanent land securement through acquisition of reserves.
Focus (e.g. are science-based priorities established?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work is focused in 'priority landscapes' where there are conservation assets of national importance and the organization can make a significant difference. Key criteria for acquisition is land that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ will help preserve biodiversity or threatened species ○ will help maintain a functional natural landscape ○ protects communities and species under-represented in other reserves ○ helps meet our strategic conservation goals ○ is the right size, shape and location to offer effective protection to plants and wildlife ○ is within our scientific and financial capabilities to manage in the long-term ○ isn't likely to be subject to Indigenous land claims ○ can support viable populations of species and ecosystems for the long term. ▪ Released a 10-year science and research plan in 2015 to guide research and management activities.
Outcomes:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope, type of values covered - Acres conserved - Management plans - Other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bush Heritage Australia owns and manages 37 reserves throughout Australia. ▪ As of 31 March 2016 they also work directly and with others to manage 6.2 million ha of land for conservation. ▪ In total, they own and protect 1.22 million hectares and help partners manage over 4.98 million ha.
<p>Partnerships (number, type)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work in a collaborative, supportive and respectful way with others on their land, including with Aboriginal groups, pastoralists, private land owners, non-government and government organisations. ▪ 2015/16 report lists 35,690 volunteer hours contributed by 454 volunteers and 25 volunteer community groups. ▪ Work in partnerships with Aboriginal groups to help plan and deliver conservation outcomes on their lands.. Four new partnership commitments began with Aboriginal groups across northern Australia in 2016
<p>Program Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2015-16 report shows \$20.3 million AUD (\$20.26Cdn) in revenues of which \$17.4 million is contributions and grants from supporters. ▪ 2015-16 expenditures were \$18.5 million of which more than 50% were spent on conservation management activities. ▪ Have received support from the federal government national Reserve System Program to acquire some properties.
<p>Funds Levered/ matched</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>25 years</p>
<p>Sources</p>	<p>Website https://www.bushheritage.org.au/what-we-do/landscape-management Annual Report 2015-16 https://www.bushheritage.org.au/getmedia/83f5a23c-34f5-48dd-938c-b69cbe1c22cf/annual-report-2015-16</p>
<p>Updates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A

Table 7: Ontario Land Trust Alliance

Purpose and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Ontario Land Trust Alliance strengthens land conservation in Ontario by building and supporting a strong land trust movement. ▪ Have over 40 members, including local land trusts across the province, provincial land trusts, and associates, including conservation authorities
Scale (jurisdictional and geographic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provincial, across Ontario
Delivery Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Alliance focuses its efforts on helping to achieve lasting conservation results on-the-ground through education and training, coalition building, public engagement and outreach, and administration of funding and partnership programs. OLTA also works to uphold and promote standards and practices by land trusts. ▪ The Alliance also administers several granting programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Cross-Border Conservation Training Program (a three year collaboration with the American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts and funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation) which aims to help land trusts increase their capacity to secure land and conservation easements from US taxpayers who own ecologically significant properties in the province. A total of \$43,200 was available for grants in its first CCTP funding cycle. ○ The Alliance has also administered funds from the OMNRF Species at Risk Stewardship Fund to support member land trusts who have adopted the CLTA Standards and Practices to manage and steward their properties for Species at Risk, including inventory projects as well as costs associated with developing property management plans. ○ The Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program is a three year partnership between OLTA and ECCC (concluding in March 2018). The Program supports the acquisition and management of ecologically sensitive lands by eligible recipients with a current focus on projects that help protect species at risk. This includes support for: associated costs of land securement, management planning and/or SAR inventory, and direct management actions to improve SAR habitat or mitigate impacts. The total available in 2017 is \$73,450.
Land Securement tools/ mechanisms (Permanent and Non-permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Primary focus is on securement of land and conservation easements as well as management actions (inventories, property management plans, direct actions) that help protect species at risk.
Focus (e.g. are science-based priorities established?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not applicable as focus on activities that provide support to members
Outcomes:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope, type of values covered - Acres conserved - Management plans - Other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not hold properties themselves. OLTA member land trusts conserve over 80,000 acres in the province. ▪ Support securement of properties through OLTAP (15 properties covering more than 600 acres in 2015) as well as property management plans, species inventories (20 in 2015 under OLTAP) and direct management actions (8 properties in 2015). ▪ Deliver specialized training and networking opportunities, including on-line training and webinars.
Partnerships (number, type)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work in partnership with a broad range of members and associate members. Also have professional partners that provide services to the land trust community.
Program Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2014-15 report shows revenues of \$640,000 of which government grants represent \$491,000. ▪ 2014-15 expenditures were \$613,000 of which OLTAP was \$216,000.
Funds Levered/ matched	N/A
Timeframe	25 years
Sources	<p>Website https://www.olta.ca</p> <p>Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program Guidelines http://olta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/OLTAP-Guidelines-2017.pdf</p> <p>OLTA brochure http://olta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/OLTA-2015-Brochure-FINAL-accessible.pdf</p>
Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ N/A

FINDINGS

Table 6 below highlights the key similarities and differences between each of the initiatives examined.

This table underscores the fact that these initiatives differ significantly in terms of their purpose, scope and approach. As such, they offer different perspectives with respect to the evaluation questions under consideration.

For example, the first three initiatives (EGP, HSP, and NAWCA) are most pertinent to evaluation questions related to relevance and potential overlap with other programs. The U.S. Land Trust Alliance and the OLTA offer insights that are more related to program design.

Following this table, further analysis is provided by evaluation issue.

Table 6: Comparison of land conservation initiatives studied

	NACP	Ecological Gifts Program	Habitat Stewardship Program	US NAWCA	US Land Trust Alliance	UK Royal Society for Protection of Birds	Bush Heritage Australia	OLTA
Scale	National, focused on southern Canada	Federal, active in all regions (except north)	Federal, active in all regions	Continental (with country-level implementation)	National (US)	National, regional, local (UK); active in Bird Life International	National (Australia)	Provincial (Ontario)
Permanent vs non-permanent conservation	Permanent	Permanent	Combination	Combination	Primarily permanent	Combination	Primarily permanent	Combination
Science based priority setting	Yes	No, must demonstrate ecological sensitivity	Yes; species at risk stream establishes priority regions	Focus is wetlands and associated upland habitat for waterfowl, other migratory birds	No	Yes – species-based	Yes – focus work in priority landscapes	No
Delivery approach (lead agency, etc.)	NCC lead agency Both direct delivery and through OQOs	Administered by ECCC Gifts are received by qualified recipients; tax benefits conferred by government following independent certification of fair market value	ECCC-administered Proposal based funding program; includes both a species at risk stream and a prevention stream (new since 2011)	NAWCA-appropriated funds are made available to projects that support implementation of NAWMP	Advocacy and support role to members, including training and accreditation	Own and manage nature reserves Conduct research, monitoring, conservation and outreach	Select, buy and manage land of outstanding conservation value; prepare property-level management plans to identify priority stewardship actions.	Support role to members, including training, networking, promotion of standards, and administration of grant programs, including ECCC partnership
Outcomes³	430,254 ha	1250 ecological gifts	2400 local	13.5 acres affected	2015 Land	214 nature	Own 1.22	Provide

³ It should be noted that there is overlap between the acres identified under each program (in other words, some sites are funded by more than one of these programs). While it is outside the scope of this assessment to delineate the extent of this overlap, such an exercise would help to understand the full reach these programs as a whole.

	NACP	Ecological Gifts Program	Habitat Stewardship Program	US NAWCA	US Land Trust Alliance	UK Royal Society for Protection of Birds	Bush Heritage Australia	OLTA
	Secured since 2007 156 species at risk observed on secured lands	valued at over \$807 million protecting over 180,000 ha since 1995.	species at risk conservation projects benefiting the habitat of 420 species at risk. Average 200,000 ha protected through direct actions annually.	under NAWCA over 20 years; projects in Canada cover 7.8 million ha. NAWMP reports that Habitat Joint Ventures have secured 7.1 million ha and influenced 56.4 million ha through direct actions.	Trust Census reports 22.6M ha held by land trusts Sector-wide guidelines, accreditation program, advocacy outcomes.	reserves totaling 151,000 ha.	million ha in 37 reserves; also help manage 6.2 million ha of lands for conservation.	specialized training to members; also support some aspects of land securement, management planning and actions.
Partnerships (number, type)	46 organizations participating in OQO program	Over 150 eligible recipients/partners	460 partnerships with broad range of sectors	3-4 different Canadian grantees yearly accessing NAWCA funds. ~ 200 different NAWMP partners annually contribute to overall NAWMP implementation.	1,000 member land trusts; also many partnerships	Over 1.8 million members, 12,500 volunteers. Part of BirdLife International network.	Work in partnership with Aboriginal groups private land owners, pastoralists and non-governmental groups.	40 members, multiple partnerships
Program costs	Cumulative spending from 2007 to 2016 = \$821M, with \$281M from GoC (34%).	\$550K annually (not including salaries); plus approximately \$100K in grants and contributions	Cumulative investments since 2000: \$151.5 M Species at Risk stream; \$2.5M in prevention (first year of operation)	Expenditures to 2016:504.7M from NAWCA to Canadian projects	Annual budget@ \$15M/year	2016 expenditures 97.3ML, or \$163M Canadian	2015-16 expenditures of \$18.5 M Canadian	@\$600,000 expenditures in 2014-15, with roughly one third from OLTAP
Leveraging	Target 2:1	N/A	Requires 1:1	NAWCA requires a	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	NACP	Ecological Gifts Program	Habitat Stewardship Program	US NAWCA	US Land Trust Alliance	UK Royal Society for Protection of Birds	Bush Heritage Australia	OLTA
ratio	(dollar for dollar) In practice: 1.93:1 over 10 years; 2.76 over last two years		including in-kind (2:1 in earlier assessment)	1:1 dollar match from U.S. and Canadian sources. NAWCA projects report leveraging rates of closer to 3:1 in practice (including in kind)				

FINDINGS BY EVALUATION THEME

Relevance

The Natural Areas Conservation Program forms one component of the Government of Canada's overall approach to nature conservation and stewardship. Other related federal programs include the Ecological Gifts Program (EGP) and the Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP).

The Program continues to be by far the largest of the Canadian funding initiatives. The Program is also the only national initiative to be administered via an external non-governmental organization; both EGP and HSP are administered directly by the federal government. At a regional level, ECCC does partner with OLTA through OLTAP to support province-specific activities that support land acquisition.

Given its focus on private land conservation, the Program is most similar to the EGP. However, in practice, these two programs serve different purposes and are highly complementary: the NACP provides a *funding mechanism* to support land acquisition by NCC and other qualified organizations, while the EGP provides a tax incentive to *landowners* who donate ecologically sensitive lands to a qualified recipient. The synergy between these two programs is underscored by the fact that the Nature Conservancy of Canada is often a recipient of private land donations under the EGP.

There is greater potential for duplication or overlap with the HSP, as both HSP and the Program serve as sources of federal funds for land conservation initiatives. However, the HSP supports a far wider range of both lands (i.e. private, provincial Crown, Aboriginal) and project types, such as habitat restoration, stewardship, and monitoring. As such, the risk of duplication is minimal.

NAWCA is also a funding mechanism to support land conservation efforts on wetlands and associated uplands (including those led by NCC), although it is a US program that supports activities across North America as a whole. Similar to the HSP, NAWCA funds support a range of conservation activities that go beyond the eligibility requirements of the Program (for example, in addition to securement, which is defined more broadly than in the context of the Program, NAWMP also tracks acres that are 'influenced').

Overall, the comparative assessment found the Program continues to be highly supportive of and complementary to existing programs in Canada and North America. The Program remains the only funding mechanism that maintains a strong focus on permanent land securement of private lands across a wide range of ecosystems (e.g., wetlands, forests, etc.). Given both its size and reach, it represents a significant cornerstone for the Government of Canada's conservation efforts.

Best Practices

The Program is the only national-level government program examined that is delivered by a third party. This has contributed to its success in a number of ways. In particular, while the other programs examined increasingly identify priority areas, NCC's strong science base (which enables it

to be highly targeted in the establishment of priority areas under the program), remains a key best practice.

The Program is also highly successful in ensuring that the conservation outcomes it secures are permanent. As noted above, the other funding programs examined support a wide range of conservation and stewardship activities on both private and publicly-held lands, in contrast to the more targeted focus of the Program.

At the same time, while Program-acquired lands and the ecological values they represent are protected in perpetuity, other programs both in Canada and internationally, do engage a larger number of volunteers and partners, given their broader focus on land stewardship. Greater recognition of on-the-ground impact, including partnerships with OQOs and the contribution of volunteers, could be a more prominent focus of NACP communications efforts moving forward.

Program Design

The Program, with its focus on permanent land conservation guided by science-based priorities and delivered by an expert lead agency, remains an effective model for conservation, given the experience and expertise NCC has in both establishing conservation priorities and acquiring properties that address them. In particular, this approach has enabled NCC to leverage outside donors in ways that would not be possible if the program was delivered by government alone.

Another important aspect of the program is its requirement for management plans to be developed to guide longer-term stewardship of areas acquired through the Program. This is consistent with emerging trends and best practices in other jurisdictions such as Australia.

Efficiency

A comparison of the funding programs examined on the basis of resource expenditures is challenged by a number of factors, including the Program's focus on land acquisition versus other forms of conservation (a number of which are less expensive than direct land acquisition), and the fact that the programs differ significantly in terms of both their definitions of securement and the ways in which they track program accomplishments and expenditures.

However, one indication of efficiency identified relates to the leveraging potential of the NACP. The NACP was the only initiative examined that requires a 2:1 match on a dollar to dollar basis (1:1 is a more consistent approach, and several initiatives recognize in kind contributions). The fact that the NACP continues to meet and exceed this target is an important indicator of both efficiency and value for money.

D. Key Informants Categories

Nature Conservancy of Canada:

1. VP, Conservation
2. Federal Programs Manager
3. Federal Funding Agreement Coordinator
4. Stewardship Compliance Manager
5. VP, Public Affairs and Communications
6. VP, Regional Operations
7. Senior VP, New Conservation Strategies
8. President and CEO
9. Chief Financial Officer
10. Ontario Regional VP

Environment and Climate Change Canada:

11. Conservation Partnerships
12. Ecological Gifts Program
13. Habitat Conservation

OQOs:

14. Fondation québécoise pour la protection du patrimoine naturel (QC)
15. Centre de la Nature Mont Saint-Hilaire (QC)
16. Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy (NS)
17. Fraser Valley Conservancy (BC)
18. Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (ON)
19. Ducks Unlimited Canada
20. Ducks Unlimited Canada
21. Kawartha Land Trust (ON)
22. Corridor Appalachien (QC)
23. Meduxnekeag River Association Inc. (NB)
24. Nature Action Quebec (QC)
25. Ontario Nature (ON)
26. The Nature Trust of British Columbia (BC)
27. Galiano Conservancy Association (BC)

Other partners/ Experts:

28. External Science Advisor
29. Legacy Donors, WWF-Canada
30. Legacy Giving, WWF-Canada
31. Ontario Land Trust Alliance

E. Case Studies

INTRODUCTION

As part of the evidence collection process anticipated in the evaluation plan for the Natural Areas Conservation Program (NACP), the evaluation team committed to completing case studies.

The purpose of these case studies was to showcase the achievements of the Program, by examining a particular program area that can highlight where the NCC has made an impact, and/or where processes and partnerships have worked well to inform future efforts.

Case studies were chosen by NCC from a few categories:

1. Land securement projects led by the NCC, Ducks Unlimited or Other Qualified Organizations;
2. Projects that help protect species at risk; and/or
3. Capacity building or communications-related projects.

This report contains brief summaries of the two case studies selected by NCC for review: a land securement purchase by Ducks Unlimited Canada in Manitoba (the “Dornn” property), and a communications initiative in Saskatchewan (“Escape into Nature / Wideview”).

This report is being provided to NCC for review and comment. Lessons learned from these case studies will be included in the overall evaluation report.

INTRODUCTION

In 2014-2015, Mrs. Elaine Dornn, daughter of former Manitoba legislative member and Minister of Agriculture Charles Shuttleworth, sold a quarter section of land from the family farm to Ducks Unlimited (DUC) for conservation purposes. This transaction led to the preservation and restoration of important natural habitats.

DUC assessed that the Dornn property presented several valuable ecological features, including preserved wetlands and a potential for grassland restoration. Restoration efforts and land management planning would thus enhance local ecosystems and benefit various species - especially waterfowl. The preserved zone is located in an important breeding area, where DUC has made a number of other conservation purchases over the years.

This case study was selected as it illustrates the land securement component of the Natural Area Conservation Program (NACP), as operationalized through DUC. In particular, it demonstrates the impacts and benefits of the NACP program, including:

1. Successful securement of private lands for conservation;
2. Wetland preservation and upland restoration; and
3. Grassland restoration benefitting local species and enhancing ecosystem services.

METHODOLOGY

This case study was selected by NCC in partnership with Ducks Unlimited Canada.

It was developed through a review of relevant documentation, including a January 2015 news story (available on the DUC website and in the Minnedosa Tribune), as well as the DUC Project Proposal for NACP funds. Key informant interviews were conducted with a DUC representative and Mrs Dornn, the landowner involved in the transaction.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT EXAMINED

Activities

Transaction

The land section was advertised on Kijiji by the realtor whom Mrs Dornn had tasked with selling the quarter section. The advertisement caught the attention of DUC as it is located in an area with a high density of waterfowl pairs, and where there is significant risk of habitat loss due to agricultural development. After two separate appraisals, DUC purchased the land for the asking price.

Mrs Dornn indicated that she was well aware of DUC's activities in the region prior to the sale, and felt that the securement of the land for conservation was consistent with her desire to carry on her family's legacy in the province.

Assessment

The land in question spans a total of 160 acres, which DUC staff described as a standard size for a securement transaction, albeit on the smaller side of the spectrum. At the moment of the purchase, the Dornn property included 49 acres of wetlands, 22 acres of native prairie uplands, and 89 acres of crop land. DUC conducted an aerial photo assessment of the land, as well as site visits to confirm its condition.

Of particular importance on this property are the practically pristine wetlands: a total of 46 ponds and basins of variable permanency which had never been drained. DUC noted the presence of typical wetland species thriving on the property. Documents reviewed suggest that while drainage is not as advanced in this area as in other parts of Manitoba, there was a risk of degradation occurring eventually, considering the sought-after nature of the land and the likelihood of a new owner adopting a different management model.

DUC's project proposal also emphasized that the property is located in an area showing high waterfowl density for various species: 40 to 50 predicted breeding pairs per mile square. According to the proposal, waterfowl common to this area include mallard, gadwall, blue-winged teal, northern shoveler, canvasback, ruddy duck, scaup, ring-necked duck and Canada goose. The land provides important pairing, nesting and brood rearing habitat, as well as staging areas for waterfowl and shorebirds. The Dornn land is located in a landscape described in the DUC proposal as "the most valuable canvasback breeding ground in North America". A Prairie Habitat Joint Venture (PHJV) and Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research (IWWR) assessment study conducted in 1998 had found a waterfowl density of 104 pairs per mile square for all species surveyed, in an area within 1.5 mile of the property. The land also offered an opportunity to restore grassland.

Grassland restoration and land management

The securement projects undertaken by DUC are geared toward four objectives: retaining wetlands, restoring wetlands, maintaining native grassland and restoring cover. No wetland restoration was necessary on the Dornn property considering the excellent condition of the basins; however, DUC is working to convert cropland back to native stand. Restoring grassland is meant to increase cover and habitats, as well as ecological services provided by this type of landscape. The DUC plan also includes upland management allowing for a combination of grazing and haying during specific time periods, following internal and program guidelines.

PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

In general terms, DUC funding comes from various sources including grassroots fundraising, North American Wetlands Conservation Council (NAWCA) funding, Government of Canada funding obtained through the NACP and funding from participating American States.

In the case of the "Dornn Land" project, the proposal indicates that 33% of the funding required came from NACP. The exact amount (including all types of expenses) is presented below:

- Total securement expenses (purchase, associated costs, science, securement staff time, etc.): \$261,932.90
 - Total NACP funds: \$87,310.52
 - Total Securement Match Funds: \$174,622.38

SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT

Key results associated with this project included:

- Land conservation and restoration
 - The purchase allowed for the successful conservation of 160 acres, along with the restoration of 89 acres of cultivated land to perineal grassland cover, as planned. Grasslands are among the most endangered ecosystems in the world and their

- preservation is fundamental for the preservation of local biodiversity and important ecological services.
- Land management activities are planned and ongoing to maintain the property, under the supervision of DUC's habitat management team.
 - Benefits to local species
 - The project provided increased nesting habitat and valuable cover beneficial to waterfowl, canvasback in particular.
 - The restoration is also beneficial to other land and bird species: deer and other wildlife have been spotted on the property recently, which Mrs Dornn described as particularly rewarding.
 - Ecological services
 - Grasslands offer a number of significant ecological services such as flood attenuation and erosion control, natural filtration and regulation of water flows, soil nutrients recharge, etc. In the long term, the grasslands restored on the Dornn Property will contribute to these important services.

The Dornn Property securement transaction and subsequent restoration activities provide a good example of a successful project under the NACP. One informant confirmed that the program and collaboration with NCC is essential to DUC's conservation efforts, especially in leveraging additional funds for land purchases such as this one.

Beside the immediate benefits of protecting wetlands, restoring the landscape, enhancing habitats and ensuring important ecological services; such securement projects also have wider implications for DUC's overall conservation objectives. A DUC informant felt that the Dornn purchase may contribute – along with other successful DUC projects - to improving relationships with municipalities and the local farm industry board. These initiatives show how DUC can purchase and secure land in Manitoba and to what effect. Rural municipalities may have concerns about issues such as land easement, and, smooth and fruitful securement projects can help improve and maintain collaboration. Furthermore, at the time of the transaction, the securement project was covered in a local newspaper and Mrs Dornn is hopeful that the project has or will inspire other landowners to think about conservation. Her family remains in touch with DUC to discuss other potential projects in the area.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Dornn Purchase led DUC to pay greater attention to land advertised on Kijiji, in addition to the local "E-Brandon" online platform on which land sales are more typically advertised. More generally, DUC also tries to contact landowners and realtors directly – namely on the ground and through print media – to inform them about upcoming or potential projects. Mrs Dornn was also of the opinion that having signage clearly identifying the property as a conservation area could contribute to promoting this type of initiative.

A DUC informant explained that management activities can be impacted or delayed by numerous factors, such as weather, timing and coordination with local producers. Seeding and planting, for example, is done through contracting local landowners, but scheduling problems can occur. Naturally, producers have their own priorities. In the case of the Dornn property, DUC staff completed the seeding themselves and purchased equipment (e.g., GPS for a tractor) to improve results. Overall, this case also illustrates the need for DUC to maintain positive landowner relationships and a solid stakeholder network to draw from.

CONCLUSIONS

The Dornn Purchase in Manitoba was a successful DUC project funded through the NACP, leading to the preservation of intact wetlands and the restoration of grasslands in an area with rich waterfowl diversity. The interaction between DUC and a landowner already dedicated to land conservation led to a smooth transaction and significant ecological benefits, as well as other indirect positive impacts furthering broader conservation objectives in the area.

REFERENCES

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- Minnedosa Tribune January 16 2015, "Shuttleworth/Dornn Land Purchased for Conservation" , <http://www.ducks.ca/news/provincial/manitoba/shuttleworth-dornn-land-purchased-for-conservation/>

INTRODUCTION

From Tuesday March 14th to Thursday March 16th 2017, the Art Gallery of Regina hosted a Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) special exhibit entitled “Escape into Nature”. This communication initiative came in the wake of a major securement project completed under the Natural Area Conservation Program (NACP): the creation of the Wideview Complex conservation area, located close to Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan.

In addition, on Wednesday March 15th, the exhibit served as the venue of a joint news conference for the official Wideview announcement. Over three days, more than 440 visitors attended the exhibit. The initiative elicited strong public interest and engagement through a mix of “traditional” exhibition material and interactive components showcasing properties purchased and protected by NCC in the region.

The intent of the event was to promote this significant development while the property was inaccessible due to winter weather conditions. It was also designed to raise awareness on the importance of grassland conservation more generally and to inform visitors on NCC’s mandate and activities. The event was also meant to celebrate NCC’s successes and boost the visibility and reach of the Wideview announcement by engaging the public and the media, as well as government representatives.

This case study was selected as it provides insights into activities completed under the “communication” component of the NACP program. In addition, this initiative showcases:

- An innovative and fruitful communication activity organized in collaboration with various partners;
- The creation of an event model using exhibit-type activities and interactive technologies to inform the public on conservation issues; and
- Successful engagement of government representatives, good media coverage and effective outreach.

METHODOLOGY

This case study was developed through:

- A review of relevant documentation including:
 - The NCC presentation deck summarizing the event’s results and outcomes
 - Social media posts, webpage content and blog posts
 - News articles in various outlets; and
- Interviews with two NCC key informants involved with both the organization of the exhibit and government relations in the context of the Wideview announcement.

ACTIVITIES

Planning and preparation

Planning began six months prior to the exhibit. The event plan was provided to ECCC early in the process for feedback and timing was discussed with them in advance. In preparation for the week-long event, NCC staff captured the Wideview footage that would serve for a wall projection and the images needed for a virtual reality component. The Art Gallery of Regina offered the space for free. Information material was put together (including maps, posters, displays, etc). Outreach and

promotional work was also planned and initiated ahead of time to ensure sufficient visibility. NCC also reached out to federal and provincial government officials to secure their attendance for the Wideview announcement. School group visits were scheduled in advance.

Promotional work and visibility

Prior to and during the course of the exhibit, NCC used various tools to advertise the event. The organization sent three “e-blasts” or virtual newsletters to 1,211 people, each release resulting in a 30% open rate. Close to 300 mail-outs were sent. The exhibit team also created and published social media content through Twitter and Facebook using videos, 360 degrees images and regular posts accompanied by pictures. NCC representatives appeared on morning shows to discuss Wideview and promote the event. The exhibit was also promoted on NCC’s webpage and was the object of posts on the NCC blog.

Exhibit content and activities

The entertaining and informative audio-visual features of the exhibit were particularly important in capturing visitor as well as media interest. “Escape into Nature” included an interactive map about the location of species at risk in the region. It featured a series of dried local plant specimens loaned by Royal Saskatchewan Museum, and a small exhibition of bison skulls collected from NCC properties. Informative posters provided visitors with information on wildlife, landscapes and conservation issues. The key visual element of the exhibit was however the wrapped footage stretching 72 feet wide on the gallery wall, displaying images of properties recently purchased by NCC. Recording of songbirds added a pleasant touch to the environment. Presentations were given to school groups and visitors about the importance of grassland conservation, about the Wideview property and about ECCC’s and NCC’s conservation initiatives.

Virtual reality

The exhibit also offered visitors the opportunity to partake in a virtual reality viewing of three NCC properties: the new Wideview property located in the Milk River Basin in southwest Saskatchewan, the “Fairly Hill” property located 35 kilometers north of Regina at the edge of the aspen parkland ecoregion, and the “Nebo” property found 70 kilometers west of Prince Albert in the boreal transition zone. Visitors could read brief descriptions about the properties and then see these environments using virtual reality goggles made available by Jump.ca, a local technology company. A key informant reported that finding the right technical support to make the virtual reality segment possible had been somewhat challenging, but that partnering with Jump.ca had proven quite successful. During school group visits, students would build their own virtual reality boxes and could also view the footage of the properties.

Announcement

The Wednesday March 15th official announcement was the high-profile segment of the exhibit. NCC President and CEO John Lounds, Regina-Wascana MP and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Ralph Goodale, and, Manitoba MLA Gene Makowski were in attendance. The announcement was formally made by Jennifer McKillop, NCC’s Director of Conservation in Saskatchewan, who presented the new conservation complex and explained how this new NCC securement project fits within the larger goal of protecting highly endangered grasslands in the region. The announcement provided an opportunity for various stakeholders to connect on site and was positively covered by several media outlets.

PARTNERS AND RESOURCES

Partners of the event included the Art Gallery of Regina, the Government of Canada, the Government of Saskatchewan, Jump.ca and the Royal Saskatchewan Museum. “Escape into Nature” was organized with \$25 000 from the NACP communications budget. The securement project was funded by the Government of Canada through the NACP and by the government of Saskatchewan. The breakdown of expenses is provided below:

Support visual material (posters, photos, notebooks, flag, etc.)	\$963.91
Google goggles for Wideview Event	\$921.66
Photography and video at the event	\$1,410.00
Audio and video for the exhibit (arrangement, editing)	\$15,904.49
Staff time	\$5,772.00
Total	\$24,972.06

KEY RESULTS

The key results of the project included:

- Attendance :

	Public	School groups
Monday	40	93
Tuesday	90	
Wednesday	117	
Thursday	95	8
Total		443

- Attendance was higher than expected and the event successfully attracted a diverse crowd and visitors of all ages, including school children and families. One informant said that gallery staff was pleasantly surprised by the number of visitors, which indicates that the traffic during the exhibit exceeded regular gallery attendance.
- An informant also reported that people were engaged and curious about NCC’s work and overall greatly appreciated the exhibit.
- The event also saw visitors signing up to NCC’s mailing list. One informant stressed that this type of event can help reach out to people who are not already aware of the importance of conservation, thus gathering new supporters.
- Media coverage :
 - The post-event data indicates that a search about the exhibit gathered 68 media hits on Thursday March 16th. Eight news outlets were present at the Wideview Complex announcement, which resulted in articles in the National Post, the Saskatoon Star Pheonix, the Waterloo Region Record and the Regina Leader Post.

- Media attention was considerable and also exceeded expectation. Informants noted in particular that journalists were briefed about the NACP and that the program was explicitly mentioned in several articles
- Evening news broadcast also covered and promoted the exhibit and the announcement.
- Overall “brand promotion”:
 - A prize draw was organized, with the winner receiving an NCC prize pack. Using the draw’s entry form, 48 people subscribed to NCC online notices. This shows how people discovered and connected with NCC through the event.
 - Furthermore, one informant explained that the Wideview announcement contributed to relationship building by bringing influential people together, namely allowing high-profile individuals to make personal connections through a celebration of conservation activities. The event also showcased NCC as a major conservation player at the regional and national level, as well as its broader objectives of influencing decision making, mindsets, ideas and values.

SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT

The event was indeed successful in attracting public and media attention to NCC’s activities and to the Wideview securement project. Informants noted that visitors of the exhibit were enthusiastic and engaged. They also reported that media coverage was considerable and positive, and that government representation was meaningful and impactful. Both informants were confident that the success of the exhibit created a model for future communication initiatives. One informant explained how the event was particularly important to celebrate and recognize the federal government’s role through the NACP. Having a federal government Minister present at the event and in discussion with NCC’s president, for instance, also represented a major success.

LESSONS LEARNED

The use of drone footage and interactive technology proved a valuable feature of the event, with its intriguing appeal. Visitors enjoyed the experience and these features were also important in attracting media attention. Informants confirmed that these elements of novelty and innovation greatly contributed to the event’s success, and will likely be used again in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

The “Escape into Nature” exhibit showcases the success of a communication initiative supporting and promoting a land securement realization under the NACP. The event brought public and media attention to major initiative under the program, circulated information about the importance of conservation (more importantly with regards to grassland), and informed people on NCC’s activities. The two levels of governments were involved and represented. Overall, the exhibit and Wideview announcement proved successful initiatives under the communication component of the Nature Area Conservation Program.

REFERENCES

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