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Commissioned Research

**Appreciating the Values, Needs and Potential of the
Stewardship and Conservation Sector in Canada:
Strategic Directions for Funding and Other Support**

June 15, 2003

*Julia Gardner, Catherine Sherlock and Garvin Hunter
Dovetail Consulting Inc., Vancouver, B.C.*

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	i
Authors.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Executive Summary	iv
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Purpose.....	1
1.2 Organization of the report.....	1
1.3 Scope: What do we mean by stewardship and conservation?	1
2 Methodology	4
2.1 Literature review	4
2.2 In-depth telephone interviews.....	4
2.3 Telephone survey.....	5
2.4 Use of research results	6
3 Findings	7
3.1 The nature of Canada's stewardship and conservation sector	7
3.2 The value and contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector.....	18
3.3 Current funding realities	35
3.4 Capacity-building and the road ahead.....	49
4 Conclusions and Recommendations	64
4.1 Funding sources, priorities and processes.....	64
4.2 Non-financial mechanisms for capacity building	77
4.3 Networks and connections: Towards a broader vision.....	83
4.4 Overview of conclusions	90
4.5 Systemic changes required to support the long-term sustainability of organizations providing stewardship and conservation services in Canada...	94
4.6 Popular, but problematic options	98
4.7 Future research.....	99
5 Sources of Information.....	101

5.1	Direct references	101
5.2	Personal communications	106
5.3	Supporting documents	106
5.4	Interviewees	112
5.5	Groups surveyed	113
Appendix 1: Interview and Survey forms		1
	Interview Form.....	1
	Survey Form.....	5

List of Tables

Table 1: Regional distribution of respondents	5
Table 2: Group type distribution of survey respondents.....	6
Table 3: Focus of biodiversity or habitat conservation.....	6
Table 4: Geographic focus of the groups.....	7
Table 5: Numbers of groups with members, directors, staff and advisory committees.....	8
Table 6: Number of individuals directly involved	8
Table 7: Projects carried out by stewardship and conservation groups	10
Table 8: Roles played by stewardship and conservation groups	10
Table 9: Areas of expertise volunteers bring to stewardship and conservation groups....	34
Table 10: Annual budget, salaries and administrative expenses.....	35
Table 11: Sources of funding	36
Table 12: Sources of funding for “other” funding sources	37
Table 13: Sources of funding for projects.....	37
Table 14: Grant-based sources of funding for core costs	38
Table 15: Level of dependence on project grants to cover salaries and operating expenses	39
Table 16: Extent that paying salaries and administrative expenses is a challenge	40
Table 17: Level of success in securing funding.....	40
Table 18: Percentage of groups finding it easier or more difficult to secure funding	40
Table 19: Impact of time spent fundraising	47
Table 20: Challenges to be faced over the next 10 years.....	48
Table 21: Factors that would improve the capacity of groups to achieve their objectives	53
Table 22: Stated reasons for success.....	53
Table 23: Major needs and challenges facing the conservation and stewardship sector ..	91
Table 24: Examples of recommendations sorted by roles of government, grantors and groups.....	95

Authors

Julia Gardner, Ph.D., is a Principal with Dovetail Consulting Inc. in Vancouver. She is also an Adjunct Professor in the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia as well as a Director of the Georgia Strait Alliance and of the BC Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society.

105-2590 Granville Street, Vancouver, B.C., V6J 3M5 Email: jgardner@interchange.ubc.ca

Catherine Sherlock is an environmental consultant based in North Vancouver. She has a Master's in Environmental Studies from York University and is active in the North Shore Streamkeepers. #27-3939 Indian River Drive, North Vancouver, B.C., V7G 2P5 Email:

sherlock@intergate.ca

Garvin Hunter is a consultant with Masters degrees in Genetics and Planning

602-1686 West 12th Ave., Vancouver, B.C., V6J 2E4 Email: garvin_consulting@telus.net

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to facilitate discussions on ways of building and sustaining the capacity of Canadian stewardship and conservation organizations. The key question it seeks to answer is: What are the systemic changes required to ensure the long-term sustainability of organizations providing stewardship and conservation services in Canada? The research involved a telephone interview survey of 150 conservation and stewardship group representatives across the country, 22 in-depth telephone interviews of people with extensive experience in the sector, and a literature review.

The nature of Canada's stewardship/conservation sector

The number of volunteers in the 150 stewardship and conservation organizations surveyed approaches 30,000. The groups play a range of interconnected roles, including education, landowner contact, restoration, research, advocacy, land acquisition, monitoring and networking. They are engaged in the full suite of activities that care for our land, air and water, and sustain the natural processes on which life depends.

Over the past decade the sector has increased influence, has grown in size and diversified, has a broader geographical scope, and is adopting a more proactive, longer-term perspective. Groups have increasing expertise, capacity, and activity levels, are taking on work formerly done by government, and are implementing measures directly through hands-on projects.

The value and contributions of the stewardship/conservation sector

The environmental contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector include:

- awareness raising;
- public and community engagement;
- policy and legislation improvements;
- innovation and management advances toward sustainability;
- protection of land;
- promotion of stewardship practices on private land;
- research;
- provision of information, knowledge and tools; and
- building partnerships.

The social contributions of the sector include:

- community building and cooperation;
- education and awareness-raising;
- health benefits of a clean environment;
- quality of life, including recreation;
- increasing community debate and engagement; and
- cultural and spiritual benefits.

The economic contributions of the sector include:

- preventing costs to society and the government – now and in the future;
- protecting/restoring environmental services;

- protecting/restoring the resource base;
- doing work on a volunteer or lower cost basis than government;
- providing a basis for recreation and tourism;
- spending on conservation measures;
- spending by stewardship and conservation organizations; and
- attracting population and higher property values.

These extensive, highly important contributions of the sector are largely under-appreciated by Canadian society – the work is valued, but not to the degree it deserves. This is largely because of inadequate public awareness of the importance of stewardship and conservation, especially in relation to economic pressures: when environmental priorities are perceived to compete with economic ones, the economy comes out ahead. Another societal trend that is unfavourable to the sector is declining participation in volunteer activities.

Current funding realities

Budgets: The budgets of the organizations surveyed ranged from zero to around \$2 million. On average, the groups had an annual budget of approximately \$230,000. One third of the total budget of groups was spent on core costs and the remaining two thirds went to projects.

Sources of funding: Stewardship and conservation groups receive their funding from a variety of sources, with larger groups being predominantly dependent on grants from foundations and governments. The latter sources are accessed for project funding more often than other sources such as membership fees, individual donations and the private sector. For some, government and foundations are *not* an important source of funding.

Adequacy of funding: Groups have been successful in raising funds, but meeting salaries and administrative expenses is a challenge. Designated funding for core expenses is obtained by less than a third of the groups surveyed. Views are divided on whether funding is getting easier or more difficult to secure, with most feeling that it has become more difficult to secure. The scale of dollars required by the sector is growing as costs rise and the need for more work to protect the environment grows. The outlook for funding for the next ten years is not positive.

Funding pressures:

- Generally, levels of funding are insufficient.
- Core funding to cover operating expenses, including salaries, is especially difficult to access.
- Smaller groups with a narrower focus are at a disadvantage.
- Funding priorities do not support the mission of some groups.
- There is a risk of compromising the mission of a group as it adapts to funding opportunities.
- Most funding is short-term, constraining the ability of groups to accomplish stewardship goals.
- Funding notification does not always coincide with project start dates.
- Increased demands for accountability impose pressures, including onerous funding application and reporting procedures.
- The costs of raising and administering funds are a major burden, especially for smaller groups.
- The human resource costs of fundraising can have a negative effect on the morale of a group.
- As funding from foundations and the government decreases, competition for funds is fierce.
- Charitable status is increasingly difficult to obtain and retain.

The research indicates that current and projected levels of funding are not meeting the needs of the conservation and stewardship sector. *While many factors affect the capacity of groups and organizations to meet their full potential, the top factor is funding, and many other variables such as staffing and infrastructure are directly affected by funding.* There is an array of spending needs that groups would usefully fund with additional monies.

Capacity-building and the road ahead

Given the powerful contribution of the stewardship and conservation sector to the Canadian environment, economy and society, it is in everyone's best interest to have the sector work at its full capacity. The need for the sector to fulfill its potential is even more pressing when the pace of environmental degradation, and the need to save threatened and scarce natural assets are taken into account. While funding is the factor that most impacts the capacity of stewardship and conservation groups to achieve their objectives, capacity is affected by contextual factors, organizational development within groups and organizations, and other resources than money.

Contextual factors affecting capacity include:

- Currently, *governance* in Canada currently does not provide to the conservation and stewardship sector sufficient power, priority, or policy and legislative support. Power and influence in our political system work against stewardship and conservation groups, and government does not place a high enough priority on conservation and stewardship. Furthermore, government policies, environmental laws and regulations need improvement to better protect the environment.
- With respect to private landowners and individuals, motivating behaviour change and commitment to stewardship becomes more difficult as the focus moves to the "unconverted." *Landowners need more incentives* to practice stewardship on their property.
- Currently *negative economic forces* present a number of challenges for the conservation and stewardship sector.
- *Pressures on ecosystems and resource scarcity* add to the workload of conservation and stewardship groups, and make projects more difficult.
- *International, political-economic issues* compete with environmental priorities for attention.

Organizational development affects capacity and effectiveness in a number of ways.

Strategic planning helps groups manage growth and stay focused on their mission, and management and decision-making practices also affect performance. While organizational culture or health is somewhat intangible, many groups attribute their success to characteristics of style, decision-making approach, workplace atmosphere, etc.

A variety of resources, from human resources to information resources, are central to capacity.

One of the biggest challenges for many groups is staffing, and many groups lack sufficient physical infrastructure and technology. Recruiting and keeping members and volunteers can be "a matter of survival," and leadership is a key factor in sustaining and building organizations. Groups need good knowledge, information and data to justify and guide their conservation and stewardship actions. Access to skills and expertise can make them more proficient in their work and add to their credibility. An area of performance often limiting capacity is marketing and communication. Better "messaging" and communication of the value of the work would increase support for stewardship and conservation groups.

A conservation and stewardship sector working at full capacity would:

- do more work with greater ease and quality, at a faster pace and with a broader scope;
- have credibility because of its track record, and the public would recognize and appreciate the work of the sector;

- prompt improvements in government’s approach to protecting the environment;
- have a positive impact on public awareness and engagement in stewardship and conservation;
- more effectively protect the environment “on the ground”: more land would be protected, more landowners would adopt stewardship practices, environmental quality would be improved, and there would be progress towards sustainability.

Conclusions

➤ *Funding sources, priorities and processes*

In terms of *funding sources*, foundation funding is a cornerstone of the funding mix and continued support from philanthropic organizations is necessary, even as greater diversity in sources is pursued. Government funding sources will continue to be important, although the private sector should play an increasing role in funding. Individual donations are the funding source with the most potential to help diversify the financial base for conservation and stewardship groups. Sales of services and other mechanisms provide limited opportunities for groups and organizations to be more self-sufficient.

Funding priorities, from the perspective of the stewardship and conservation groups, generally focus on capacity-building – or core funding. Many feel that funders need to better appreciate the kind of support the sector needs to do to meet its conservation and stewardship potential. Another area of funding needs, from the stewardship perspective, is financial compensation to landowners for the costs of stewarding their lands.

In terms of *funding forms and processes*, longer-term, more stable funding is a necessity for the accomplishment of stewardship goals. Leveraging is a process that has promise to expand available funds, although perhaps not as much promise as is generally assumed. Cooperation among groups can reduce competition for limited funds and increase the effectiveness of fundraising. Application and reporting processes are a drain on the resources of the groups that seek and receive grants, so these need to be streamlined.

➤ *Non-financial mechanisms for capacity building*

Non-financial mechanisms for capacity building relate to: governance; information, in-kind and communications support; conservation and stewardship group organizational development; and networks and connections between different players.

In terms of *governance*, there is a need for clear and lasting commitment to the environment and the work of the stewardship and conservation sector. Legislation respecting charitable status needs to be changed to allow stewardship and conservation groups to do their work without risk of losing this status. Government needs to strengthen policy and legislation supporting sustainability, stewardship and conservation, and coordination between government agencies and between the various levels of government needs to be improved. Finally, governments should increase meaningful consultation with stewardship and conservation groups.

Government agencies and the private sector could contribute a variety of *in-kind forms of support* to stewardship and conservation groups. More research is needed to underpin conservation and stewardship work, and the sector needs easy access to data and information that has already been gathered. Technical support can be donated through government programs and individual scientists to reduce costs incurred by conservation and stewardship groups and increase their capacity more generally.

Conservation and stewardship groups need to put more effort into *organizational development*. Support needs to be provided to groups for organizational development, particularly in the form of low-cost training opportunities.

➤ *Networks and connections: Towards a broader vision*

Overall, there is a general need for a *broader, longer-term vision*. All sectors – government, private sector, and the conservation/stewardship sector – need to increase their *communications and coordination*, ideally in sharing an ecosystem based management perspective. *Strong connections to local communities* are central to the effectiveness of many conservation and stewardship groups, and local groups especially benefit from a good working relationship with government. Many conservation and stewardship groups also view *increasing involvement with the private sector* in a positive light.

Within the sector, duplication of efforts and competition has led to the need for more *cooperation among groups*. At a minimum, networking and communication among groups needs to improve, since coordination of the work of groups working towards common or complementary goals can strengthen the effectiveness and the efficiency of the sector. Closer collaboration, towards partnerships and the sharing of resources among groups, may be feasible in some circumstances.

Recommendations

The question is how can long-term sustainability of conservation and stewardship organizations be achieved in this climate of economic hardship and lack of political support? How can progress be made in ways that do not depend immediately on high levels of support from government? What kind of actions can lead to effective conservation and stewardship work in lieu of, or on the way to, a greener political-economic regime? What roles can government, grantors, and stewardship and conservation groups themselves play? The final section of the report organizes over 30 recommendations stemming from the above conclusions into categories corresponding to these three actors in order to paint a picture of their roles. In turn, the recommendations for each actor group are sorted into three sub-categories: removing impediments to conservation and stewardship, enabling or facilitating conservation and stewardship, and systemic change to support the effectiveness of the conservation and stewardship sector. Recommendations in the latter category are listed below.

➤ *Actions for systemic change to support the long-term sustainability of the conservation and stewardship sector*

Actions for government

- Governments across Canada, at all levels, should place a higher priority on funding the stewardship and conservation. In addition to continuing environmental programs that provide financial support, they should assess the potential for tax- or fee-based sources of funding for the stewardship and conservation sector.
- Endowments should be used to the greatest extent possible and governments should continue to support standing Funds.
- Government agencies and different levels of government should strive for a harmonized approach to policy development to coordinate stewardship and conservation programs and support a more integrated, broader scale approach.

Actions for grantors (foundations and government grant programs)

- Project funding should be accompanied or supplemented by core funding that allows for effective implementation of projects and long-term capacity-building.
- Funders should provide more multi-year grants and support applications for continuing as well as new projects.

Actions for conservation and stewardship groups

- Stewardship and conservation organizations should build strong linkages with the local community, including diverse social and business communities.
- Business and stewardship/conservation groups need to educate themselves about each other's activities, and stewardship groups need to emphasize messages about a sustainable landscape both ecologically and economically in order to be better received by business and the general public.

Inter-sectoral actions

- Communications between funders and stewards or conservation groups should aim to clarify the needs and priorities of the conservation and stewardship sector. A funding gap analysis should be undertaken.
- All those involved – including government agencies, conservation and stewardship organizations and the private sector – need to connect the value of stewardship with its benefits to society and local communities, including its function in protecting the foundations for life.
- All sectors – government, private sector, and the conservation and stewardship sector – need to increase their communications and coordination.
- To support stewardship and avoid duplication, governments at all levels *and* national, provincial and territorial and local stewardship and conservation organizations should harmonize efforts to promote program integration and the effective and efficient use of financial resources.
- Local groups and local governments should cultivate closer working relationships to increase support for the work of the groups and increase its effectiveness.

➤ *Popular, but problematic options*

Certain recommendations made in this report, based on the input from the survey and interviews and on the literature on the non-profit sector have caveats that should be highlighted.

Leveraged funding: Matching dollars programs should be established by government to provide groups with an ongoing ability to leverage private donations. Partnerships between funding agencies or levels of government should be explored to enhance the potential of the leveraging effect. The National Conservation Fund proposed by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy would have the effect of encouraging such partnerships. *Caveat: Matching funding should not be over-emphasized. Matching funding does not work if there are no funds to match it with, or if the matching currency is increasingly scarce volunteer time. The pursuit of matching funds – often from numerous sources – can also be highly time-consuming.*

Diversification of funding sources: Conservation and stewardship groups should broaden their funding base so as to be more self-sufficient. One way is to pursue more individual donations. Planned giving (bequests and monthly giving) in particular should meet a larger proportion of funding needs. *Caveat: Limitations of these funding approaches, such as availability of willing donors and motivated volunteer fundraisers, need to be recognized.* Groups may also explore sales of services as a new form of fundraising – many are already engaged in this. *Caveat: Sales of services should be pursued with caution, in ways that are consistent with the mandate of the group. It is often unsuitable for smaller, community-based groups, and can act as a disincentive in landowner contact. Funders need to recognize that organizations are not businesses and in fact, are organized for very different purposes than businesses.*

Collaboration: Collaboration is a theme that permeates the discourse around capacity building for stewardship. Government agencies are requested to harmonize their policies and programs. Levels of government are seen as inadequately coordinated. Funders would like environmental and stewardship groups to coalesce – to rationalize their numbers and relationships so that redundancies of roles are reduced, resources are shared, and funding can be more centralized in its distribution. Environmental and stewardship groups in turn want funders to harmonize their application and reporting procedures, and coordinate funding priorities. *Caveat: Within each sector, the potential for collaboration is not regarded with as much optimism. For example, government agency representatives sometimes argue that resources for increased coordination are scarce; group representatives reply that there is strength in diversity and value in independence; and foundation representatives maintain that their priorities have to be driven by the priorities set by the holders of the funds.* It nevertheless behooves the participants in each of the three sectors to reflect on, and communicate about the potential for increased collaboration within their sector. Improvements in communication and coordination should be considered at a minimum. At the same time, each must recognize the limits to the benefits and the feasibility of collaboration in the other sectors.

Future research needs

Even though this study was broad and “data rich,” there are several more lines of inquiry that it opens rather than closes. Some of these are as follows:

- Analysis of the conservation and stewardship sector
- Comparison with the voluntary service sector
- Collaboration, coalitions and the role of partnerships
- Granting procedures and grant administration
- Evolving roles in the sector
- Funding alternatives
- Organizational development

The value of the stewardship and conservation sector to the environment and Canadian society is inestimable. Its contributions will more than repay the investments we should make in finding the best ways to build sector’s capacity and ensure its sustainability.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to facilitate discussions towards the long-term sustainability of Canadian stewardship and conservation organizations.

This research analyses core support and funding challenges faced by non-government organizations engaged in stewardship and conservation, aiming for an understanding that will bear long-term solutions to these perennial problems. How are stewardship groups surviving now? How does a lack of long-term, core funding hamper their accomplishments? What will it take for the groups that are contributing so much to the protection and restoration of the Canadian environment to continue their work into the future with the stability they need to be most effective? How can the extraordinary value of this work be recognized by investment commensurate with its worth to the quality of life of Canadians and our globally significant ecosystems? What fundamental roles need to be played and by whom?

In summary, the key question this research seeks to answer is:

What are the systemic changes required to ensure the long-term sustainability of organizations providing stewardship and conservation services in Canada?

The perspective taken in this report is predominantly that of the conservation and stewardship sector, with most of the findings being driven by opinions and experience gathered from some 172 participants in the sector. Other current and potential participants in the system of conservation and stewardship – government and the private sector – have a vital role to play, and we hope that this report can provide a tool for engaging all three sectors in ongoing discussions towards the sustainability of this system.

1.2 Organization of the report

The third part of this introduction, below, describes the scope of this study in terms of working definitions of conservation and stewardship. The research methodology is described in part 2.

Part 3 of the report sets out the research findings under four main headings:

- The nature of Canada's stewardship/conservation sector
- The value and contributions of the stewardship/conservation sector
- Current funding realities
- Capacity building and the road ahead

Recommendations are made in part 4 of the report under the headings funding, non-financial mechanisms for capacity building, and "Networks and connections: towards a broader vision." The final part lists sources of information.

1.3 Scope: What do we mean by stewardship and conservation?

"Every day, thousands of Canadians at work, home and in their communities take action to improve their natural environment through a variety of stewardship projects – a contribution that is worth millions of dollars. These activities reflect the recognition and importance of a common ethic and means for achieving environmental objectives." (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002b p.3)

1.3.1 The research scope defined by stewardship and conservation is broad, but not all-inclusive.

There is a wide range of interpretations and applications of the terms stewardship and conservation. Conservation is a term used loosely to include any efforts toward protecting the environment ranging from creating parks to advocacy and education. The term is not meant to imply a static image of preservation or “locking up” land.

While some people define stewardship as working with private landowners to ensure environmental best management practices are incorporated on private land, the term is defined broadly here to be any actions taken on the land or water or on behalf of the environment to protect or restore environmental integrity. The working definitions of stewardship and conservation that apply to this research are related to natural heritage and related assets. These assets can be found anywhere in the Canadian landscape, from wilderness to farmlands and settled areas.

The research scope defined by stewardship and conservation is broad, but not all-inclusive. A number of important topics were not covered in order to allow in-depth research into a narrower range of topics. The focus is on groups and organizations that have a direct relationship with land, water, species or ecosystems. The study purposefully excludes groups whose main focus is pollution, human health, recreation, or a single development issue (e.g. a particular mine, salmon farming, nuclear waste). The focus is thus on the work of organizations with a direct focus on natural heritage (e.g., ecosystems, biodiversity) rather than environmental quality in general (e.g., climate change, environmental health/pollution). Topics related to sustainable development or sustainability are included to the extent that they apply in a certain community or area (e.g., a watershed) rather than to a particular activity (e.g., recycling). The emphasis is on not-for-profit groups and volunteer-based organizations rather than on corporate or government stewardship work.

1.3.2 There is no single definition of stewardship but definitions have common characteristics.

One of the reasons that stewardship is difficult to define is that it refers to a “wide range of actions and activities of individuals, communities, organizations and businesses acting alone or in partnership” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c p.6). “Stewardship taps our basic human impulse to care for our home and its surroundings – be it a parcel of land, a neighborhood, or a historic monument, or the larger area of a watershed, mountain range, or stretch of coastline. It builds on our sense of obligation to other people: our family, our community, and future generations” (Brown and Mitchell 2001 p.211-212).

“Stewardship means many things to a many people. Among other things, it is a fusion of the concepts of sustainability, governance and justice. Stewardship is arguably the foundation of all holistic concepts which attempt to bring diverse interests together for the purpose of addressing complex issues. While these concepts use a diversity of titles including watershed initiatives, wellness initiatives, ecosystem initiatives, coastal zone management initiatives, social development initiatives, and integrated management initiatives, all successful initiatives share common qualities [...including enabling communities] to address the root causes of social, economic and environmental issues.” (Fisheries and Oceans Canada 2001 p.10)

Examples of stewardship definitions include:

- “an ethic by which Canadians care for our land, water and air as parts of a natural life-support system and act to sustain and enhance it for generations to come” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c p.6);
- “people taking care of places” (Brown and Mitchell 2001 p.211-212);
- “one who manages the affairs or property of another” (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.15);
- Canadians – including landowners, private companies, voluntary organizations, and individual citizens – caring for our land, air and water, and sustaining the natural processes on which life depends (Stewardship Canada Website);
- “the practice of carefully managing land usage to ensure natural systems are maintained or enhanced for future generations” (The Land Stewardship Centre of Canada Website).

The definitions of stewardship share a variety of characteristics. They involve caring for places. They talk about sustainability and sustaining natural systems for generations to come. Stewardship usually involves the recognition of natural systems and processes as vital life-support systems and attempts to take a holistic perspective. Stewardship also tends to recognize the importance of community involvement. (How stewardship is accomplished is discussed under the ‘Roles of Stewardship and Conservation Organizations’). Stewardship groups tend to “see themselves involved in projects for a long time and their goals are long term” as distinguished from those “who come together in response to a specific local crisis” (Donald 1997 p.383-4).

1.3.3 Conservation and stewardship groups are part of the non-profit, voluntary or third sector, but the literature on that sector rarely addresses them.

Defining stewardship and conservation is made more complicated by the fact that they are a part of what is known as the non-profit, voluntary or third sector. While these terms may be used interchangeably, they have different connotations. “All of these terms are an attempt to describe those organizations that are not part of the government and that are not motivated primarily by a profit motive. Each term has its origins in different academic disciplines, and each has its limitations” (Banting 2000 p.4, Hodgkinson et al. 1989 p.4).

Economists with their focus on the market have called the sector ‘non-profit’ as they “see activity which is not productive in the sense of profit-making, as a residual and relatively minor realm of activity.” Political scientists “orient first to the realm of governments and politics and are, therefore, inclined to highlight this emerging sector as ‘independent’ vis-a-vis government, or to refer to it as ‘third’.” Sociologists “are more interested in the sociality, participation and association that are general in this sphere, and so tend to favour the term ‘voluntary’” (Reed and Howe 1999 p.6).

Although widely used, the term non-profit has been “criticized because it is a residual definition which defines the sector by what it is not rather than by any positive attributes (Banting 2000 p.5). In Canada, there are estimated to be over 175,000 ‘non-profit’ organizations (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector 1999 p.7).

“By default, if not by plan, the role of Revenue Canada in granting charitable status has significantly shaped the way in which we define the non-profit sector. The sector is normally considered to include: religious organizations; hospitals; universities; culture, arts and heritage organizations, all of which are charities, but not to include, for example, most political or adversary groups or co-operatives.” (Reed and Howe 1999 p.6-7)

The International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO) divides the non-profit sector into “12 major activity groups according to the primary type of goods and services its

provides” (Banting 2000 p.6), one which is ‘Environment’. Revenue Canada also has a classification system for registered charities and it does not even mention the environment as a category (Reed and Howe 1999 p.11-12). The lack of inclusion of the environment in the non-profit and voluntary sector discussion was prevalent in the literature. Typically, the large volume of literature on these sectors looks at the social service sector addressing issues such as human health and welfare. Many texts will list various categories of volunteer groups and charitable giving which include service clubs, hospitals, etc. but do not mention conservation or stewardship groups.

Records from organizations registered as charitable organizations result from the Revenue Canada requirement that all registered charities must submit an annual information return. Since 1993, other non-profits (with above \$10,000 revenues) have been required to file annually as well (Reed and Howe 1999). It has been estimated that there are at least as many non-charitable non-profits as there are registered charities (Reed and Howe 1999). While these groups “are often the lifeblood of a community,” they are usually “largely unknown beyond the borders of a particular neighbourhood” (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector 1999 p.8).

2 Methodology

The research was undertaken through:

- a literature review;
- a telephone survey of 150 groups spanning all provinces and territories, using a short, structured questionnaire;
- in-depth telephone interviews of 20 Canadians with extensive experience in the stewardship/conservation sector.

2.1 Literature review

The literature review gathered information available from journals, books, unpublished studies and government documents. An annotated bibliography was produced and used to guide the literature analysis. Section 5 of this report includes sources that are cited in the text and a list of supporting documents.

2.2 In-depth telephone interviews

The questionnaire for the telephone interviews is included in Appendix 1. The questions were developed to meet the research objectives, in consultation with the project advisors.

A pilot interview was conducted and the initial questionnaire was improved on the basis of that test. Catherine Sherlock conducted all the interviews, typing replies into the computer during the interview. The interviews were conducted between March 15 and April 7, 2003. They were tape recorded so that gaps could be filled in the typed interview record after the interview.

Interviewees from Quebec whose first language is French generously replied to the questions in English.

The 22 interviewees are listed in the final section of the report, “Sources of Information.” The interviewees were selected based on advice from the project advisors and from many other opinions solicited via email communications. The project advisors as well as groups and individuals across the country were invited to submit nominations. The candidates with the most nominations were selected, and an attempt was made to balance the total sample according to

geographical distribution through six regions of Canada: British Columbia, the Territories, the Prairie Provinces, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic Canada. Variety of experience and gender balance were also considerations, although gender balance was not possible to achieve given the large number of men nominated relative to the number of women.

The interview analysis was mainly qualitative. Answers to questions were sorted into sub-categories based on specific research questions and/or themes that emerged from the interview results and the literature review.

2.3 Telephone survey

2.3.1 Telephone survey questionnaire

The telephone survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 1. This survey instrument was designed to complement the in-depth interview questionnaire and as a result some of the questions appear in both instruments. However the survey instrument was primarily focused on helping to better understand the current funding levels and spending needs of stewardship and conservation groups in Canada. To this end, the survey instrument was designed using mostly multiple-choice, or closed-ended questions, thereby allowing for quantitative analysis. Project advisors again had input into the survey questionnaire design.

Five pilot interviews were conducted using the initial questionnaire and improvements were based on the result of those test interviews.

2.3.2 Selection of survey respondents and execution of survey

The names and contact information of groups to be surveyed were drawn from “The Green List: A Guide to Canadian Environmental Organizations and Agencies: Third Edition” (Canadian Environmental Network, 2002), as well as from word-of-mouth contacts. The interviews were conducted over a 5-week period (April 1 to May 9, 2003), as interviewees could be reached by telephone. One person, Garvin Hunter conducted all but 5 of the interviews. The 5 interviews were conducted in French and translated by Erin Collings. E-mail was also used as a supplementary means of contacting candidates. The groups represented in the survey, and the names of interviewees, are listed in section 5.

Within the time constraints of the research, the attempt was made to achieve a reasonable distribution of the interview sample across the country. See Table 1 for the number of respondents from each region.

The second sampling priority was to reach groups in each of 6 types of groups or organizations, as demonstrated in Table 2. Sampling also sought regional representation, urban-rural distribution, and the inclusion of First Nations groups. Despite extensive efforts to locate First Nations conservation or stewardship groups only 3 First Nation groups participated in the study.

Table 1: Regional distribution of respondents

Distribution of Respondents by Region		
Region	No. of respondents	Percentage of groups (n=150)
Territories	8	5.3%
British Columbia	35	23%
Prairie Provinces	29	19.3%
Ontario	27	18%
Quebec	24	16%
Atlantic Canada	27	18%

The wildlife group type included fish and game clubs or organizations. Groups classified as watershed or regional stewardship were generally watershed groups or groups focused on a particular region not necessarily defined by a watershed. They were distinguished from the biodiversity/habitat groups by a broader purpose, including sustainability.

Table 2: Group type distribution of survey respondents

Group Types		
Group Type	No. of respondents	Percentage of groups (n=150)
Biodiversity or Habitat Conservation	44	29.3%
Watershed or Regional Stewardship	38	25.3%
Land Trusts, Conservancies	22	14.7%
Naturalists	21	14%
Parks, Protected Areas	16	10.7%
Wildlife	9	6%

Groups focused on a particular stream or a local creek rather than a regional watershed were included in the biodiversity or habitat conservation group. The biodiversity or habitat conservation group also included other types of foci, as shown by the sub-categories in Table 3.

Table 3: Focus of biodiversity or habitat conservation

Of the 150 groups participating in the study, 28 (18.7%) were focused on streams, rivers or watersheds of any size (distributed between the biodiversity or habitat conservation group and the watershed or regional stewardship groups).

Focus of Biodiversity or Habitat Conservation Groups			
Focus	No. of respondents	Percentage of Groups (n=150)	Percentage of Groups (n=44)
Local Areas	18	12%	40.9%
Streams, rivers, watersheds	14	9.3%	31.8%
Specific ecosystems or species	9	6%	20.4%
Agriculture, farm or ranch land	3	2%	6.8%

2.3.3 Analysis of survey results

The survey responses were entered directly into an Access database and results were tabulated using the database. The results were analysed by comparing observations of actual totals and percentages. No analysis beyond descriptive statistics was performed (e.g., no cross-tabulations). Answers to the open-ended questions were coded so that categories of replies could be totalled and assessed. One drawback to coding open-ended questions is that the process is subjective. For example, many single statements could be justifiably placed in any of one, two or three categories. Therefore, the counts and percentages provided should only be considered to be estimates.

2.4 Use of research results

Some sections of this report depend solely on interview and/or survey results, while others draw in more of the literature. The research design anticipated this by setting out to answer various research questions using particular sources of information. In sections with few citations, the reader can assume that the findings reported are from the interviews and survey responses. Quotations referenced as (Interviewee) are from the 22 interviews. Since some interviewees wished to remain anonymous, the decision was made not to cite interviewees individually. Note that the quotations are not necessarily verbatim – they are “cleaned up” for readability, but no key words are changed.

Note that in the discussion, “interviewees” refers to the 22 people interviewed in depth, and the terms “survey respondents” or “group representatives” refers to the 150 people who answered the shorter, more quantified questionnaire.

3 Findings

3.1 The nature of Canada's stewardship and conservation sector

Who is doing stewardship in Canada? What is the nature of this sector? This section takes a snapshot of the stewardship and conservation sector in Canada by describing the 150 groups surveyed for this study.

3.1.1 Where do stewardship and conservation focus their activities?

Slightly more than half of the groups surveyed have a local geographical focus for their activities and the percentage drops as the region of focus widens except that only 4.7% of groups had a national focus while 6% had an international focus (see Table 4). This is not surprising as many organizations are grassroots groups that begin their life in response to an issue or crisis in the local community (Lerner and Jackson 1993).

Table 4: Geographic focus of the groups

The majority of the respondents surveyed indicated that their group was focused on a particular land type or habitat. When asked to specify, respondents mentioned a diverse range of habitat land types including:

- water types such as watersheds, rivers, creeks, lakes, and estuaries;
- land types such as coastal land, agricultural land, forests, mountains, native rangeland, wetlands, grasslands, marine areas; and
- particular areas such as parks or specific habitats for wildlife species.

Presumably groups that are not focused on a particular land type or habitat are more involved in areas such as policy, advocacy, and networking, or they are generally concerned with stewardship in a particular locality or on private lands in general. Some may be focused on parks and protected areas.

Geographic Focus of Stewardship and Conservation Groups		
Focus	No. of respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=150)
Local	78	52%
Regional	54	36%
Provincial	39	26%
International	9	6%
National	7	4.7%

3.1.2 How are stewards and conservationists organized?

Table 5 and Table 6 provide an overview of the human resources of stewardship and conservation groups.

The number of volunteers in the stewardship and conservation organizations surveyed approaches 30,000.

To gain a sense of the numbers of volunteers that work with stewardship and conservation organizations, survey respondents were asked to estimate the average number of volunteers that worked with their group on an annual basis. In total, approximately 29,800 volunteers worked with the groups for an average of 203 volunteers per group (n=147). This average, however, was skewed because one of the organizations had approximately 18,000 volunteers, considerably more than the next highest group of about 1400 volunteers. If this group is removed from the sample, the average is 80 volunteers per group. It is important to understand that these numbers are approximate, based on the respondent's best guess. Estimating the number of volunteers

working with an organization or group is complicated by the fact that the numbers of volunteers may vary considerably depending on the projects and the time of year.

Table 5: Numbers of groups with members, directors, staff and advisory committees

Stewardship and conservation groups in Canada tend to be membership based, with boards of directors but not usually with full-time paid staff.

➤ *Membership in stewardship and conservation organizations*

136 out of 150 groups or over 90% of the organizations surveyed had members. The number of members in these groups ranged from 3 to 30,000 with an average membership of 343. When calculating the average number of members, answers from five survey respondents or 3% of the survey groups were omitted to avoid skewing the data with outliers that had unusually large numbers of members.

➤ *The use of Board of Directors and Advisory Committees*

Almost 90% of the groups had a Board of Directors and 20% had Advisory Committees. The size of the Board of Directors ranged from three to fifty with an average of ten people. Advisory Committees tended to be larger with a range of 4 to 100 and an average of 15 people.

The Human Resources of Stewardship and Conservation Groups		
Type	No. of respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=150)
Members	136	90.7%
Board of Directors	134	89.3%
Contract Staff	75	50%
Full-time Staff	61	40.7%
Part-time Staff	41	27.3%
Advisory Committee	30	20%

Table 6: Number of individuals directly involved

➤ *The staff in stewardship and conservation organizations*

In total, 619 people were employed by the 150 organizations in the survey. Over forty percent or 61 of the 150 groups surveyed had full-time staff for a total of 225 full-time staff. For the groups that employed full-time staff, the average number of staff was 4 and the range of staff employed was 1 to 16.

The groups surveyed also employed an additional 83 part-time staff in 41 organizations. The average number of part-time staff for the groups with part-time staff was 2 with a range of 1 to 8 part-time people.

Number of Individuals Directly Involved in Stewardship and Conservation Groups			
Type	Total	Average	Range
Members (n=136)	147,932	343 *	3 – 30,000
Full-time Paid Staff (n=61)	226	4	1 - 16
Part-time Paid Staff (n=41)	83	2	1 - 8
Contract (n=75)	310	4	1 - 32
Board of Directors (n=134)	1,388	10	3 - 50
Advisory Committee (n=30)	456	15	4 – 100
*When calculating the average number of members, answers were omitted from five respondents from groups with unusually large memberships.			

In addition, 75 organizations employed contract staff for a total of 310 positions. Staff in this category were often hired for specific projects or seasonal employment (e.g., summer students). The average number of contract positions in those organizations that hired people on contract was 4, while the number of positions ranged from 1 to 32. The average number of contract staff over 150 groups is just over 2 people.

A 1999-2000 survey of Canadian conservation organizations which focused on land securement (e.g., land trusts) found that most of the groups had paid employees. The 100 groups which

replied to that survey had a total of 1,137 full-time and 1,196 part-time employees (Barla et al. 2001 p.8). With averages of over 11 full-time employees and just under 12 part-time employees per group, this is significantly higher than the averages of 4 full-time and 2 part-time employees found in this research and raises questions of whether land trust organizations tend to have more employees than other groups in the stewardship and conservation sector. Another explanation might be the downturn in the economy resulting in groups hiring fewer employees, but given a difference of approximately only 3 years between the research projects, it would be surprising to see such a dramatic change.

Comparing the employment patterns of the group types of the organizations surveyed, the biodiversity or habitat conservation groups, land trust and conservancies and the watershed or regional stewardship groups employed between 25 to 50% more people than did the naturalist, parks and protected areas and wildlife groups. However, the former group types made up about 55% of the respondents, and thus, statistical analysis would need to be completed to see if the observation was significant.

3.1.3 What do stewards and conservationists do?

Stewardship and conservation organizations generally play a range of interconnected roles.

Some observers believe that some of the roles that groups play are more valuable than others; however as one interviewee commented, the variety of roles is a strength: “Nature pleases itself in diversity – and it’s the same in the movement. The diversity of styles and approaches that the different groups undertake is critical to reaching as broad an audience as they can.” This report assumes that all efforts undertaken are of value and makes no effort to assign relative values to roles.

Roles are both interconnected and overlapping and roles frequently evolve over time as the group develops new goals and strategies often in response to the changing societal structure and a deepening understanding of environmental issues. For example, it is likely that groups that “begin as single-issue advocacy groups will develop wider environmental interests, while those who main interests have traditionally been outdoor sports, recreation, and enjoyment of nature will increasingly engage in advocacy activities. It is probable that stewardship groups’ need for allies and pooled resources, as well as the changing priorities of individual members and the emergence of new local issues promote this convergence of issues” (Lerner and Jackson 1993 p.392).

As well, the changing cultural context within the sector affects the role the sector plays. For example, as government cutbacks result in the withdrawal of government programs and activities, the stewardship and conservation sector is increasingly expected to fill the gap left by government (Lerner and Jackson 1993, Rosenau and Angelo 2001). In addition, “underlying cultural and political forms are destructuring” (Henderson in Bernard and Young 1997 p. 38) and the trust that governments have the will and capacity to do the right thing is decreasing (Solomon 2003; Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.1). There is increasing recognition of environmental crises such as climate change, ozone thinning and biodiversity loss and “that community survival will depend on the revival of those resources which have shaped community history, culture, language, skills, knowledge, and social relations” (Harvey 1994 p. 18). Bernard and Young (1997) report an increase in a new form of resource management – “place-based initiatives” – which are advanced by people in communities working separately and in small groups:

“They are conceived by people who understand the limits of the old culture of patriarchy and colonialism in which government is expected to do all, who are not diverted by bureaucracy’s fixation on procedures, and who know that their future depends upon good care of the living resources in their neighbourhood. These people, firmly rooted at home, are

listening carefully to nature before taking resource management into their own hands. Their strategies derive from knowledge that nature is ‘full of surprises’ and that the human environment and the natural environment are interlocked in labyrinthine ways. They are initiating and sticking with environmental restoration projects. They are using the marketplace to their advantage. They are engaged in collaborative, participatory community planning. And they are taking risks to find common ground with the big institutions of the day.” (Bernard and Young 1997 p.39)

Stewardship and conservation groups in Canada are engaged in the full suite of roles that care for our land, air and water, and sustain the natural processes on which life depends.

In the survey, respondents were given a list of roles that stewardship and conservation organizations play and asked to check as many of the roles that they felt their organization played. Groups were also asked their mission or purpose statements and their three most important projects they conducted in the last five years. Table 7 lists the frequency of identification of a range of project types that made up these top three choices.

Table 7: Projects carried out by stewardship and conservation groups

Projects Carried out by Stewardship and Conservation Groups					
Project Type	Occurrence	Percentage of projects (n=500)	Project Type	Occurrence	Percentage of projects (n=500)
Education	91	18.2%	Recreational	19	3.8%
Restoration	49	9.8%	Communications	18	3.6%
Policy and Management	48	9.6%	Fundraising	17	3.4%
Research	47	9.4%	Wildlife	16	3.2%
Advocacy	39	7.8%	Biodiversity	12	2.4%
Protecting Land	36	7.2%	Sustainability	9	1.8%
Raising Awareness	26	5.2%	Capacity building	7	1.4%
Land acquisition	20	4%	Networking	6	1.2%
Monitoring	19	3.8%	Legal	2	0.4%
Stewardship	19	3.8%			

Table 8 lists survey respondents’ indication of the roles that their groups play, from most often to least often mentioned. It also provides an example of a mission or purpose that includes references to the role and examples of projects that demonstrate the role – the mission and projects are not from the same group.

Table 8: Roles played by stewardship and conservation groups

Roles Played by Stewardship and Conservation Groups			
Role Played	% of Respondents n=150	Example of Mission or Purpose Which Reflects this Role	Example of Project Which Demonstrates this Role (Note that these examples are not from the same group as the mission example)
Education	94.7%	“To deliver quality wetland education we will develop the capacity of individuals in communities to assess their wetlands and, using new-found skills and knowledge, conserve or restore those ecosystems.” (http://www.bcof.bc.ca/programs/wetl)	Example 1: The group often brings school children (ie., elementary grades) to the local marsh and provides them with environmental education. Example 2: The group raised the necessary funds to construct an Interpretative Centre

		http://www.bcwf.bc.ca/programs/wellands/aboutus.html)	for their local park. The centre includes: an interpretative display area, classrooms, administrative offices, an amphitheatre, and a gift shop which is run and managed by the group. Example 3: The group hosts three summer camps per year, each lasting approximately 1 week. The summer camps are focused on education with an emphasis being placed on natural history.
Networking and/or Umbrella	90%	The BCLSS mission is to act as a resource, communication, and information network among scientists, environmental professionals, lakeshore stewardship groups, lakeshore residents, the public, and government agencies in order to preserve, protect, and restore lakes in British Columbia. (http://www.coppermoon.ca/news/ws_donation_may2003.html)	Example 1: The group organized the first international symposium on an important aquatic ecosystem. Example 2: The group hosted a conference which brought together 80 - 85 people from both the public and private sectors to discuss stewardship and conservation issues within the province.
Monitoring	82%	To monitor and assess ecosystem changes in the range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd and adjacent coastal and marine areas; To encourage use of both science-based studies and studies based on local and traditional knowledge in ecological monitoring and ecosystem management; To improve communications and understanding among governments, aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities and scientists with regard to ecosystem knowledge and management; and, To foster capacity-building and training opportunities in northern communities in the context of the above-listed goals" (Personal Communication).	The group conducts fish studies every summer (ie., up stream migration) for Atlantic Salmon and trout. For example, the group carries out both bio-sampling and electro-fishing (ie., determines the density of the stock by age classification) on an annual basis. The group's results are then shared with the DFO's science branch.
Habitat enhancement	69.3%	The establishment, restoration, maintenance and environmental protection of the Castle Wilderness as a viable wilderness within the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem" (http://www.ccwc.ab.ca/ccwcbref/about2.html/about2.html).	Example 1: The group has worked to enhance spawning channel enhancement. For example, in a local stream they have removed debris, added spawning gravel, and planted large trees along the stream to provide shade. Example 2: The group installed rock riffles to improve water oxygenation and provide suitable habitat for fish pools. Example 3: The group installed a fish ladder near a local low-head dam.
Policy development	68.7%	CPAWS envisages a healthy ecosphere where people experience and respect natural ecosystem. We will achieve this by: (1) protecting Canada's wild ecosystems in parks, wilderness and similar natural areas, preserving the full diversity of habitats and their species; (2) promoting awareness and understanding of ecological principles and the inherent values of wilderness through education, appreciation and experience; (3) encouraging individual action to accomplish these goals; (4) working co-operatively with	Example 1: Working with local municipalities to develop policies to reduce cosmetic pesticides. Example 2: The group worked with the provincial government to develop and implement regulations regarding the proper use of ATVs. The group wants to ensure that ATVs are used in a manner which is respectful and mindful of the environment.

		government, First Nations, business, other organizations and individuals in a consensus-seeking manner, wherever possible (http://www.cpaws.org/aboutus/mission-statement.html).	
Advocacy or Lobbying	68.7%	"To promote through education, lobbying and programs, the conservation and utilization of fish and wildlife and to protect and enhance the habitat they depend on." (http://www.afga.org/)	Example 1: The group is working to get a local bay designated as a Green boating Area. The designation will make it illegal to discharge any foreign substance (e.g., sewage) into the local bay. Example 2: The group has worked to prevent provincial parks from being privatized.
Landowner Contact	64.7%	To work cooperatively with and offer assistance to landowners and organizations Cortes Island and the surrounding area to preserve and protect lands of natural and cultural significance. CLC will seek support from the local community and operate in as inclusive a manner as possible. CLC will maintain a credible and professional organization dedicated to its vision.	The group works with landowners to encourage sustainable development and to maintain natural landscapes and habitat.
Land-use Planning	64%	Incorporated in 1990, the Grey Association for Better Planning (GABP) promotes good land use planning in Grey County and its municipalities. (http://www.riversides.org/newwin/GOM_0103_GABP.html#AboutGABP)	Example 1: The group has worked closely with planning commissions to facilitate natural area conservation. Example 2: The group has worked to establish a network of protected areas in their province.
Sustainable development	59.3%	CARC is dedicated to the long-term environmental and social well-being of northern Canada and its peoples. We believe in the application of the principles of sustainable development and precaution. Our policy and advocacy work is grounded in solid scientific and socio-economic research and experience. We address a wide array of northern, circumpolar and international issues — including the revived Mackenzie Valley pipeline proposal. (http://www.indelta.com/carc/pubs/Compass/CARC_Compass_no1_2002.pdf)	Example 1: A member of the group is working to educate a nearby community on the importance of energy efficient buildings. To this end, the group has developed various pieces of literature and given presentations on the importance of sustainable development. Example 2: Working in cooperation with a local farmer the group works to educate and showcase sustainable agriculture practices.

➤ *Education (and Awareness-raising, including holistic/ecosystem thinking)*

The most common role played by the groups surveyed was education; almost 95% of the groups stated that they played an education role. Education projects in the groups surveyed ranged from environmental education for school classes and for children outside of school to a variety of projects that educate target individuals (e.g. beach users), communities, industry and government at all levels.

Education and awareness-raising for members and the general public is a major focus for organizations who “foster the appreciation of the natural world through a wide range of projects. They have guest speakers such as fisheries researchers at club functions; they hold fishing clinics; they schedule river-front walks; they organize conferences, public displays and exhibitions; they

disseminate information in government publications and via radio and newspaper columns; and they sponsor public lectures on environmental topics” (Gardner 1991 p.254).

The education role of the sector appears to be having an impact. Many interviewees mentioned that the sector has brought attention to the issues we face as a society with the result that there has been a change in attitude in the Canadian public over the last ten to twenty years. Today, citizens have a greater awareness and commitment to the environment.

➤ *Networking and/or umbrella*

Ninety percent or 135 groups out of 150 identified themselves as playing a networking or umbrella role. For some groups, networking or acting as an umbrella organization is one of their main roles. Other groups may network on a more informal basis, sharing information and know-how, holding workshops and conferences and keeping one another aware of issues and concerns. In addition to networking among stewardship and conservation groups, organizations network with residents and citizens, scientists and environmental professionals, and all levels of government and public agencies.

Networking has increased as groups communicate with one another to share experiences and find the most effective approaches to problems. As well, “when a sense of urgency has been created by failure to get action from public officials... concerned groups realize the need to form alliances, pool their resources and bring stronger pressure to bear on decision-makers” (Lerner and Jackson 1993 p.387).

There are also a number of umbrella organizations that play a role in coordinating community groups and informing the public issues. Umbrella groups have a variety of objectives including: providing an information exchange for groups, coordinating the efforts of groups, lending a larger voice to groups and issues, facilitating education and training for groups, supporting existing groups as well as those starting up, and fostering cooperation amongst stakeholders (Rosenau and Angelo 2001).

➤ *Monitoring and/or mapping and/or inventory*

Approximately 80% of the survey respondents chose monitoring as one of the roles that their groups play. Monitoring can involve detailed fieldwork such as taking regular water quality samples. Completed projects can be monitored for their effectiveness. Industry and municipalities may be monitored for negative impact on the environment. Groups also often have informal methods of monitoring such as “rambling, exploring, inquiring, looking and listening” (Martin 1993 p.378).

Monitoring “helps communities to identify their concerns about ecological change...Monitoring environmental changes in the community provides scientific data that policy makers can use to make more informed decisions. Community based monitoring creates an atmosphere of learning, understanding, and appreciation for the local environment” (Timko 2003 p.15). For many, the role of monitoring is one of the most important roles of the sector.

“The sector is valued as watchdogs above all. The idea in Canada that people have trusted government to do what is right has collapsed. There is no longer that same trust in governments and people now look to non-profits for information and trust them to act as watchdogs to challenge government and industry.” (Interviewee)

Some of the indicators that are monitored include riparian zone vegetation, forest density, watershed health, invasive plant species, ice on and off, and air, soil and water quality (Timko 2003 p.15).

Stewardship and conservation groups in Canada have undergone and are undergoing major changes around the question of monitoring. In the past, monitoring has been reactive with groups

frequently only becoming involved “after a full-blown crisis has developed. This has often tended to produce a climate of confrontation and antagonism” (Martin 1993 p.377). Currently, groups are tending to shift toward a more proactive role that will help to “anticipate problems before they get out of hand” and “provide credibility and an established channel of communication with those in charge.” If successful in this shift, groups will be “in a much better position to present realistic and constructive management alternatives” (Martin 1993 p.378). Another change that one interviewee noted is that “stewardship groups are being asked to do more of the implementation of programs that were once done by government such as education, lake-monitoring, and a certain amount of on-the-ground or restoration work that once might have been contracted. They are filling in the gaps on volunteer basis.”

A number of interviewees identified the lack of monitoring and the lack of funders willing to fund monitoring as one of the problems facing the stewardship and conservation sector in Canada. If monitoring “is to be truly effective as a early warning network, clearer and more effective procedures will need to be developed” (Martin 1993 p.380). The stewardship and conservation sector will require a greater recognition of their role in monitoring as well as support to be able to accomplish this transition.

➤ *Habitat enhancement*

While this role type can imply an emphasis on restoration activities, projects carried out by the groups surveyed illustrate that more proactive habitat stewardship and conservation work is also undertaken. Groups doing proactive habitat conservation work may also have classified their roles in the other categories such as landowner contact, policy development and education.

Some people believe that habitat restoration has been overemphasized relative to more proactive ways of protecting areas. An explanation for overemphasis on enhancement and restoration is that proactive ways of protecting areas frequently involve advocacy and “community groups often tend to focus on hands-on stewardship types of activities, to the exclusion of advocacy” (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.21-22). For community members, advocacy is time consuming, lacks the physical connection to the habitat and species, requires extensive knowledge of legislation and policies and is often antagonistic. In describing the role of public groups in protecting and restoring freshwater habitats in British Columbia, authors, Rosenau and Angelo discuss the difference between saving habitat and restoring it:

“The task of saving fish habitat, compared to restoring it, has been described by some as guerrilla warfare. Much of the antagonism stems from the fact that many governments view the protection of aquatic ecosystems as being anti-development and a cost to businesses and tax revenues. In many municipalities and regional districts, the local media are inclined to side with city councils and view the federal or provincial governments as outsiders trying to foist a particular political agenda on the local constituency when a difference of opinion with regards to fish-habitat protection occurs between levels of government.” (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.21-22)

➤ *Policy development (and legislation)*

Policy development involves working with government to change regulations, legislation or policy. Although policy work is directed through government, survey responses indicate that it often involves the communication of ideas on environmental issues between the scientific community, government, and people. Some limitations to the role of policy development are discussed under advocacy and lobbying.

➤ *Advocacy and/or lobbying*

Although almost 70% of the groups surveyed identified advocacy or lobbying as a role played by their organization, only a few of the groups had a mission statement that directly spelled out this role. There may be a couple of explanations for the fact that advocacy and lobbying do not figure

more prominently in the mission statements of the groups surveyed. First, much of the lobbying and advocacy work is done on a local scale, i.e. advocating and lobbying local municipalities and industry to changes practices resulting in environmental damage. This type of advocacy and lobbying frequently does not get noticed or recorded beyond the local neighbourhood.

Another reason that groups may not identify their advocacy or lobbying role in their missions is because doing so can endanger their existence. This issue was mentioned by a number of the interviewees. If the group is a charity, they “are limited in their ability to participate in public policy debate or to advocate for changes to legislation, regulations, or government policy. Activities of this kind may be deemed “political” by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA), which interprets the common law and the federal Income Tax Act and applies them to charities (Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society & the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 2002 p.1). See the section on “Funding pressures” for further discussion of the implications of charitable status.

Advocacy often focuses on the defence of a special cause. It is “the activity of making governments accountable to existing legislation, policy and regulation” (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.16), and lobbying government for change in legislation, policy or management practices (Gardner 1993b p. 76). Approaches may either be confrontational or cooperative and relations between government, industry and advocacy groups range from antagonistic to cooperative. “Confrontational approaches to interaction, though prevalent among advocacy groups, are not taken by choice – most groups would rather be cooperative ... The confrontational stance has been adopted only out of necessity, in the face of lack of responsiveness from government and industry” (Gardner 1993b p.73). As the contribution of the sector is increasingly recognized, groups are working closely with government professionals in a spirit of teamwork. Indeed, some authors believe that working closely with other pertinent organizations or government agencies versus pursuing a ‘go it alone’ approach is one of the keys to the success of groups (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.3). In discussing the role of public groups in protecting and restoring freshwater habitats in British Columbia, Rosenau and Angelo state that “while stewardship provides an important ‘glue’ for many community groups wanting to protect or restore fish habitats and provides a needed connection to the resource, it is the inclusion of the advocacy role of these non-government organizations that really makes a group effective” (2001 p.22).

The modes and strategies of advocacy/lobbying include telephone calls, letter writing, public protests, civil disobedience, use of media, “written briefs and submissions in planning processes, personal and public meetings and presentations, delegations to meet politicians,” judicial processes, public education, identification of alternatives (Gardner 1993b p.73) and “hiring and engaging consultants to provide technical and scientific information to bolster arguments or counter the positions of others” (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.16).

For a number of individuals and community groups, advocacy is often how people get involved in the stewardship and conservation sector. “Issue-oriented stewardship groups initially develop to act as advocates in some situation that concerns them. They often see education, monitoring and hands-on efforts as part of their advocacy activity. The formation of such groups is typically triggered by a series of mobilizing events. In some cases the initial catalyst is a shock that creates anger or fear – or both” (Lerner and Jackson 1993 p.386). However, studies suggest that groups that start “life with a single-issue advocacy focus often do expand their interests to encompass broader environmental concerns” (Lerner and Jackson 1993 p.391).

➤ *Landowner contact (encouragement of private land stewardship)*

Landowner contact is a method of working with private landowners to improve the way in which private lands are managed. Stewardship and conservation groups contact landowners to provide education, support, tools, networking opportunities and incentives.

➤ *Land use planning*

Over sixty percent of the groups in the survey checked the land use planning category as a role they played, but this role rarely gets explicit mention in their missions or purposes. This role may come about as groups attract increasing recognition for their work in a region and are invited to send representatives to local and regional planning processes.

Land use planning is often linked to advocacy and lobbying as those roles are often played out through involvement in planning exercises (Gardner 1993b p.68).

➤ *Sustainability/Sustainable development*

A number of the groups surveyed identified sustainability as part of their mission or purpose. Frequently, their efforts were focused on the local community or watershed. Other groups focused on sustainability within specific aspects of society. For example, one group's goal involved finding work for people that was environmentally and economically sustainable, while another was focused on sustainable recreation.

Sustainable development has been defined by the UN Commission as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (in Bernard and Young 1997 p.38). Many believe this involves integrating environmental, social and economic systems. In resource management, "sustainability has come to mean managing resources for the long run and living on income rather than depleting capital" (Bernard and Young 1997 p.38).

"The potential of grassroots efforts to promote the sustainable development of various environments in North America has been well-demonstrated through the activities of citizens' organizations across the continent" (Gardner 1993a p.17). Groups concerned with sustainable development can generally be distinguished from single-issue groups that focus on a specific local concern (Kreutzwiser and Duff 1986 p.56). Such groups have been characterized with the ability to "think globally and act locally (Rosenau and Angelo 2001 p.2). Their struggles are often characterized by the "efforts of people, usually organized into groups, to gain some measure of control over the resource base on which they and their communities depend economically and over decision-making processes which affect them" (Harvey 1994 p.18).

➤ *Acquisition of interests in land*

Although all the goals in this role involve acquisition of interests in land, the reasons behind the acquirement of land by conservation and stewardship groups are diverse. In the survey, objectives ranged from preserving areas of natural, cultural and built heritage; protecting ecosystems and regions of ecological significance; creating greenway networks; keeping ranching heritage intact; and protecting coastal areas; to raising funds outside the province to protect land within the province. Many stewardship groups also secure land for conservation in other ways besides purchasing it, including voluntary management agreements and deed restrictions (e.g., conservation easements and covenants).

The roles of the sector are changing in a number of ways, largely involving growth and breadth of activity.

The social, cultural, economic and environmental context in which the stewardship and conservation sector operates has changed substantially over the last ten to twenty years and the changing context has influenced the work of the sector. To gain a better understanding of the changes within the sector, Interviewees were asked how they thought the roles of stewardship and conservation groups have changed over the last ten years. The following section outlines their responses.

➤ *The sector has increased influence.*

Many of those who thought that the role of groups had changed mentioned their increased influence with government, landowners and citizens as well as an increase in the scope of the work. The sector has become “much more mainstream and cannot be ignored anymore.” Groups have “more influence on decision-makers than we used to have.”

Reasons given for the increase of the sector’s influence included “there are more people making careers in the environmental sector, and involved in the sector in other ways” and “There is a lot more stewardship around, therefore there’s more awareness about stewardship.” Increased awareness has resulted in a population that is actively looking for stewardship and conservation opportunities. The number of good stewards has increased as has the emphasis on conservation from the country’s, industries’, and owner’s perspectives. Now people are looking for connections to the land to a greater extent.

Another reason for the change in scope has been change in the understanding of environmental issues. For example, groups are now focused around broader issues such as sustainable living and climate change. In order to successfully address these types of issues, groups have to build partnerships with the public, government and citizens, locally, nationally, and internationally.

➤ *The sector has grown in size and diversified.*

The number of conservation groups has increased and the groups have become more diversified. For example, interviewees commented on the growth of the land trust movement which barely existed 20 years ago and today plays much a broader role. A study of non-profit conservation organizations (focusing on groups involved in land securement and stewardship) in Canada determined that the number of such organizations increased by 50% in the 1990s, with particularly significant growth in BC (+300%) and PEI (+133%) (Barla et al. 2001).

“There is more of a dichotomy and more diversity. There has always been the radical fringe and co-opted conservatives. But the distance between them might be wider than ever before.” (Interviewee)

➤ *Groups have increasing expertise, capacity, and activity.*

The roles of stewardship and conservation groups have changed because of their increasing capacity which has grown exponentially and continues to grow. Groups are doing more and better and have growing expertise. Signs of increased capacity, expertise and activity mentioned by interviewees include the fact that groups:

- have opened offices over the last decade;
- have started working with communities and government;
- provide more concrete tools and incentives than 10 years ago;
- are attempting different strategies, activities and processes to keep the awareness level high;
- have a greater demand for their work reflecting their increased expertise.

To be able to accomplish their goals in today’s world, groups have had to be much more organized and capable.

“Groups are more organized, structured and specialized. They are more business-oriented - like small companies... Today, groups have specific goals and to reach those goals they have to focus on issues such as legal issues and fundraising.” (Interviewee)

➤ *The sector has a broader geographical scope.*

The role of groups has changed from focusing on small, local, isolated projects “to landscape-scale conservation.” The work is more “difficult and complex than ever before.” There are new issues and people are realizing the interconnection of issues and trying to take a more “holistic approach.” There are also more and more levels – local, national and international and cross-

sectoral: “There has been a shift from isolated local projects to provincial-wide ones to trying to push for national scope.”

Better information technology has broadened the work that groups do. Improved community technology has given groups tools and the work is more international and informed and there is a lot more networking: “We now spend more of our time talking to people in other countries – networking, lobbying, and bringing speakers from the south” (Interviewee).

➤ *The sector is adopting a more proactive, longer-term perspective.*

There has been a “substantial paradigm shift” to begin thinking long-term. People are much more aware of environmental issues and thus groups spend less time trying to get people to focus on the problem and are able to focus more on developing and promoting solutions. Groups are increasingly proactive and are often working toward a more integrated approach. An example of this is the increasing integration between conservation and land organizations, e.g., by getting representation from landowners onto the boards, etc. of conservation organizations. Some groups that formed in reaction to a specific issue (e.g., “stop the mine”) evolve into roles that are more constructive, focused on solutions that will protect the environment while contributing to the economy.

➤ *Groups are taking on work formerly done by government.*

With the cutbacks to government, stewardship and conservation groups are being asked to do more of the implementation of programs that were once done by government. Most of the time, they are doing this with very little financial support from the government. They are filling in the gaps on volunteer basis. At times, there is some seed money from government, but most of the time groups are finding their own resources.

➤ *Groups are implementing measures directly through hands-on projects.*

Various interviewees discussed a shift from advocacy and lobbying to getting into the trenches. Groups have begun to do what they feel should be done rather than just advocating for it. Ways that the role of stewardship groups has expanded into hands-on projects include:

- a shift from lobbying and forums to buying pieces of land and protecting them;
- a change in focus from park negotiations to developing the forest practice code and community economics;
- increasing environmental enforcement where groups are doing sampling to trigger enforcement action by governments;
- moving from advocacy to becoming active and becoming involved in carrying out businesses such as recycling at landfills.

3.2 The value and contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector

What has been the impact of the work of the stewardship and conservation sector – whether economic, social/community or environmental? What does the work that the groups in this sector influence? What is its value to society? How essential is this work for the well being of communities? This section describes how the work of the sector is perceived by society, and what it actually contributes, as a backdrop to following discussions of funding realities, needs, and capacity building.

3.2.1 Societal perceptions of stewardship and conservation, and levels of support

How is stewardship perceived and/or appreciated by society? How central is it to Canadian society? These questions are explored here through literature research and via responses to two questions posed to interviewees:

- “From your perspective as someone who works within the stewardship and conservation sector, what is the social value or social contribution of the work stewards and conservationists do?”
- “In your opinion, how is the work that stewards and conservationists do valued by society?”

Trends in voluntarism are not positive.

The number of Canadians who volunteer rose through the 1990s, but at the same time, “volunteers have increasingly sophisticated expectations about their role as volunteers, and many new volunteers anticipate they will be able to use and develop their training and skills” (Banting 2000 p.20). This can create additional challenges for the stewardship and conservation sector to satisfy volunteers while still accomplishing their goals. Since 1997, the estimated percentage of Canadians who volunteer declined by 4% (from 31%) (Hall et al. 2001 p.31). A journalist recently reviewed the literature and suggested that a renewed sense of community values might be on the verge of reversing this trend (Bramham 2003). In the meantime, declining government services combined with a lack of volunteers are placing communities in a double bind. Groups that want their communities to fill the gap by taking charge of their own futures thus need financial support to turn the tide.

There is inadequate public awareness of the importance of stewardship and conservation.

Environmental concerns have come into their own as a social movement (Banting 2000 p.20). In the words of one interviewee, “There is an increased awareness of all sorts of environmental issues coming from people taking an interest in own backyards.” At the same time, several survey respondents mentioned the need for improved public understanding and appreciation of stewardship and natural areas, and with this, a change in public attitudes towards the environment. Interviewees, as well, acknowledged that the general population has a lack of awareness of critical issues. Much work remains to be done to raise public awareness of the importance of a healthy environment and the need to maintain and protect natural resources. Lack of awareness makes it more difficult to get people involved and interested in stewardship and conservation work in communities, and to get people to invest in habitat conservation. The need to raise awareness right down to the local level was identified by a number of survey respondents who discussed a variety of education needs in local areas.

Stewardship groups find it particularly challenging to generate public understanding of private land conservation. The public has to understand the nature of the issues on public land, and to acknowledge that society should pay for ecological services that are produced from private lands at the landowners’ cost.

“Ninety-seven percent of the population is associated with urban society and have to some extent lost touch with land and that basic stewardship that comes from being in touch with the land and food production.” (Interviewee)

Canadian society values the work of stewards and conservationists – but not sufficiently, relative to the importance of the work.

When asked, “Do you think that society appreciates the work of the stewardship and conservation sector?” the majority of the interviewees felt that the work that stewards and conservationists do

is valued by society in some way; however, more than half said it was either not valued enough or qualified their answer in some way.

Only three interviewees said they thought the work was not valued by society:

- “In society as a whole, I am not sure the work of the sector is understood and valued: the urban population turns on tap and gets clean water but is not necessarily able to translate that water back to what needs to happen on the landscape in order to keep the resource viable.”
- “I think it’s taken for granted. It’s not a priority. People are happy if it’s done as long as it doesn’t cost them anything. Until there’s a scarcity of something and then people take a greater interest.”
- “Society as whole doesn’t have a great recognition of the value – it’s not promoted enough. If society had enough awareness, stewardship would be thought of more and its value in society would increase considerably. Also, there is little awareness that small actions can have big impacts; people don’t recognize the importance of small actions and the fact that they’re cumulative.”

The executive Director of the Pacific Salmon Foundation, in commenting on public reaction to recent federal and provincial government cutbacks from salmon restoration programs of \$44.5 million dollars per annum also concluded that levels of support are low. He stated that “the general lack of response by the public to the huge reduction in government funding” is as disappointing as the cutbacks themselves (Kariya 2002).

Just under a quarter of the interviewees answered affirmatively that the work of stewards and conservationists is valued by society without qualifying their replies. Two themes that ran through their responses were that the efforts were valued locally and that the appreciation of the work was increasing. Examples of how they have observed appreciation for the sector are:

- “In our area, it is strongly valued. And the more we sensitize people to what is on the land, the more they are on board”.
- “It is becoming more and more appreciated. We know this because more and more people are calling us for help and because most municipalities are partnering with us.”
- “More and more on local basis, we are really valued and appreciated because we work with a broad base of people. People are encouraged by doing work together. People are starting to see that it makes a difference to do things this way.”

Others felt that the work is valued, but qualified their answers: part of society notices and is aware of it and appreciates it, but it is not that well understood by the bulk of the community. A few people referred to recent polls showing that leaders of conservation organizations are currently more respected than governments (e.g., Solomon 2003).

“The sector is valued as watchdogs above all. The idea in Canada that people have trusted government to do what is right has collapsed. There is no longer that same trust in governments and people now look to non-profits for information and trust them to act as watchdogs to challenge government and industry.” (Interviewee)

When environmental priorities are perceived to compete with economic ones, the economy comes out ahead.

Shifting public priorities and keeping the public engaged and aware of environmental issues is particularly difficult in a time when general economic conditions mean that people are worried about other issues such as health care and their future security. Some believe that the poor economy has led to an anti-environmental view and note a public backlash against conservation (especially in the US), as evidenced by the wise use movement. Survey respondents and interviewees alike emphasized the need to convince society that it is good business and

economically feasible to be stewards, to get past the perceived conflict between landscape conservation and economic development. There is a need to make people aware that environmental protection represents an economic plus – especially in sectors of the economy that feel conservation measures may work counter to their concerns. Even protected areas will be advantageous to the economy in the long run, and on certain other valued lands it is possible to make landscape conservation and development for commercial purposes compatible.

The contradiction is that while conservation organizations are respected and valued, when an issue arises in which the environment is compared to the economy, the economy comes out ahead.

“At heart, the majority of society appreciates it intellectually. The man in the street says we have to take care of the environment, but the industry that supplies the jobs and incomes and our present industrial system where the bottom line is everything, militates against people truly appreciating where our wealth really comes from. An example is that there are some oil companies in Alberta who have bought into environmentally friendly practices, who are actually doing better than their competitors. But most people just scream ‘we can’t do that’ – rather than saying let’s do it and then looking at how it can be done.” (Interviewee)

Interviewees felt that the work is appreciated by the public in general, but certain aspects of society are threatened by it because they view stewardship and conservation activities as inhibiting to economic development. An attitude of distrust can be directed at the sector.

“The less trusting attitudes about organizations among the public at large apply to non-profit ones as well ... This trend has been reinforced by a more aggressive media which pounces on any hint of scandal and misuse of funds, and by neo-conservative criticisms of many social groups and advocacy organizations as ‘special interests.’ As a result, non-profit organizations are under pressure to be more transparent and accountable about their management of the public trust, and advocacy organizations often must operate in a less sympathetic environment.” (Banting 2000 p.20)

Some feel that the conservation and stewardship movement does not do enough to demonstrate its social and economic benefits to society and therefore it is not valued by society. While the work is valued, that value is not reflected financially: “people don’t pay for it”:

“We are not valued to point where we get financially supported as we should. A lot of people seem to think we have some sort of massive funding base like Greenpeace. If you pass the hat at a public meeting, people are quite generous – but that takes a lot of time.” (Interviewee)

The fact that people seem to have mixed responses to the environmental sector was reflected in the comments of one interviewee who distanced herself from the sector saying, “I really value what environmentalist movement has accomplished but don’t want to be lumped in with the negative aspect of environmentalists. I want to give people opportunities of what they can do rather than tell them what not to do.”

A few interview respondents identified certain elements of society as not aware of conservation and stewardship:

- stewardship efforts have not reached new Canadians;
- the public in general who primarily live in urban areas see conservation as good but do not know much of what is going on because they are not on the land;
- conservation is a good thing to do but “not in my backyard” is often the feeling in the local community.

The National Round Table on the Environment and Economy’s recent report, focusing on “securing Canada’s Natural Capital” highlighted “remote, rural, resource communities” as a

particular group that has “often seen conservation initiatives as running counter to their interests. In the struggle to improve their members’ social and economic quality of life, these communities often see nature conservation as an impediment to resource development that brings concrete economic benefits” (2003b p.68).

Overall, there was a feeling that there is growing appreciation for stewardship and conservation at all levels, but that it is not adequate. There is a lack of appreciation and understanding of the landowners’ role and of the role the various non-governmental groups have to play.

“People understand that the work has to be done, but they still have a long ways to go. People have become separated from land. As the Europeans settled, most were on farms but now a greater number of people live in cities– 97% of people are in cities and only 3% are farming or in living in the country. Society has lost touch with the land and food production and until it reconnects people won’t fully understand the importance of stewardship. As we begin to see the consequences of problems with water, etc. people will likely appreciate the work being done to a greater extent. That said, a lot of citizens already appreciate the basic services provided by the ecosystem.” (Interviewee)

3.2.2 *The environmental, social and economic contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector*

Interviewees were asked what they felt the major contributions of the stewardship and conservation movement have been in the last 10-20 years. Their answers are supplemented by commentary from the literature in the following discussion.

The environmental contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector

The environmental contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector include:

- awareness raising;
- public and community engagement;
- policy and legislation improvements;
- innovation and management advances toward sustainability;
- protection of land;
- promotion of stewardship practices on private land;
- research;
- provision of information, knowledge and tools; and
- building partnerships.

➤ *Awareness raising*

By far the most common type of major contribution identified by the interviewees was related to raising awareness. The environmental sector has increased the awareness of many environmental issues to the point that a change in attitude in the public has been created over the last 10-20 years. There is greater understanding of the importance of taking care of natural resources and the connection between resource use and the long-term sustainability of communities. In the last 20 years, there has been a shift of consciousness from the idea that the environment is there to exploit to the idea that the environment needs to be used wisely. Specifically, there is greater awareness of riparian areas, of the environmental impacts of resources such as forestry, agriculture and gas, and of the connection between human health and the environment. “People are becoming aware that stewardship is necessary to maintain both the quality and quantity” of natural resources and landowners and industry have become sensitive to the fact that the public desires conservation.

The results of the survey were consistent with the interviews. When groups were asked to list their three most important projects that they carried out in the last five years, over 18% of the groups mentioned education projects. (See Table 7 in the section on “What do stewards and conservationists do?”) This was almost twice the next common category of restoration at 9.8%. An additional 5.2% of groups had conducted projects related to raising awareness. For example, one group holds an annual boating event to celebrate a local river that has been negatively impacted by urban development. Another 3.6% of groups are involved in communications such as publishing journals, newsletters or brochures that discuss stewardship principles, resident species of fish, wildlife and plants, and local environmental issues. The total percentage of the groups conducting education, raising awareness and communication projects was 27%, which means that over one quarter of the activities of the groups in the survey were directly involved in raising awareness.

➤ *Public and community engagement*

Another benefit of the work of the conservation and stewardship sector is that it enables society to “have the opportunity to assist in the improvement and maintenance of their ecological needs” (E5 Environmental Inc. 2002 p.6). The increased awareness of environmental issues has led to a greater commitment of citizens toward their local environments. The stewardship and conservation sector has involved community people as active stewards of resources and also provided tools for communities to become active.

➤ *Policy and legislation improvements*

More than half the interviewees mentioned improvements in policy, legislation, management and advances toward a holistic ecosystem perspective. Examples of policy and legislation changes included better regulation and management of hazardous and other wastes, legislation for water, air, and soil, agreements to cut acidifying emissions, local provisions for protecting ground and surface water and drinking water from pollution and contamination, and tax act changes that allow people to hand on woodlots to family generations. As well, specific agreements and action plans were discussed such as The North American Waterfowl Plan and the St. Lawrence Plan. The United Nations Persistent Organic Pollutants Treaty was mentioned as an accomplishment of the environmental justice movement that involved the cooperation of the North and South.

➤ *Innovation and management advances toward sustainability*

In terms of planning and management, a gradual implementation of an ecosystem approach is largely attributable to the work of the conservation and stewardship sector. Environmental non-profits have played a large role in “noticing there were problems with sustainability.” This understanding has been a learning process for the stewardship and conservation sector as well. As one interviewee stated, we have moved “from focusing on tiny pieces of land or one species of plant or animal to a landscape-scale conservation focus that takes a global view and protects larger areas while considering economic development.” About 12% of the survey respondents had projects in this category.

Generally, conservation and stewardship groups often have more freedom to innovate and experiment with creative new approaches than do government agencies or private sector land managers. Land trusts, for example, have shown themselves to have capabilities that governments do not seem to have. Working in communities, they often discover issues and opportunities more quickly than governments and are in a position to respond more quickly (Sandborn 1996). Many advances in stewardship programs at all levels can likely be attributed to the work of the sector.

➤ *Protection of land*

Another accomplishment of the stewardship and conservation sector has been to protect land. Non-profits have played a key role in establishing parks and protected areas across the country

including those that are representative of biodiversity. These efforts have increased the amount of protected land, in some cases, doubling the amount of conservation land. An example is the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy which began in 1999. The Strategy committed both governments to help communities to identify and protect areas, and several areas have been identified for conservation through formal planning processes. On the east and west coasts, there has been a lot of work towards establishing Marine Protected Areas.

In the survey, 7.2% of the projects of groups were related to protecting land, and another 4% were involved in land acquisition for a total of 11.2%. A number of the other project categories are related to protecting land as well.

A survey of Canadian non-profit organizations engaged in land securement and stewardship in 1999-2000 determined that these organizations had secured a total of 5.4 million acres (21,000 km²), or .21% of Canada's surface area (Barla et al. 2001 p.6). Of the total land secured, 57% is protected through easements, 31% is owned by conservation or stewardship organizations, 7.5% is protected by management agreements with private landowners, 3.2% is leased and other options account for 1% (Barla et al. 2001 p.6).

Projects aiming to protect land and ecosystems are not restricted to large natural areas such as wilderness – stewardship groups have a strong urban presence. Environmental non-profits have recognized the problems inherent in conventional urban planning which arranges communities around service infrastructures such as sewer, water and roads, and have advocated, researched and initiated projects that recognize the natural systems and attempt to complement them rather than harm them. Protection and restoration work in urban areas “increases the biological diversity of urban landscapes, increases the availability of natural plant and animal habitats, and increases the ability of urban lands to function as part of healthy, intact ecosystems” (Evergreen Association, n.d.). Stewardship and conservation frequently protects or restores pervious surfaces which enhance water quality and decrease and filter stormwater runoff flowing into streams, rivers and seashores (Evergreen Association, n.d.). Open space sustains biodiversity (New York State 2002) and urban forests filter air-borne particulates (Evergreen Association, n.d.).

Other benefits include:

- the protection of groundwater resources (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.A-5);
- the protection of wetlands and wildlife habitat (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.A-5);
- the creation of greenways that provide travel corridors for wildlife and contribute “to the maintenance of biological diversity and ecological balance” (Sandborn 1996 p.58) and that protect environmentally sensitive areas such as riparian zones.

Other groups are involved in the restoration of environmentally damaged areas. Examples of the environmental benefits of restoration can be drawn from the work that has been done to restore brownfields. The contributions of cleaning up brownfields include reduced urban sprawl and development pressures on greenfield sites around a community, restoration of environmental quality in the community, improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b pp.ix-x).

➤ *Promotion of stewardship practices on private land*

The stewardship and conservation sector has worked extensively with landowners to incorporate stewardship practices. Non-profits are working with landowners to provide technical advice and financial incentives and to influence landowners to incorporate best management practices. Three of the interviewees mentioned the resulting increase in the permanent cover on lands and the tremendous change in tillage practices in farming towards more conservation tillage. With

woodlot owners, there has been a “shift in thinking from how to make most money and clearing land to using the best management practices and thinking of the future.” In places like Prince Edward Island where most of the land is private land, landowner stewardship has been very important in protecting and conserving land.

Several studies have confirmed the value of private land stewardship as a way of maintaining or even increasing production while protecting the environment (e.g., E5 Environmental Inc. 2002, Pottinger Gaherty Inc. 1998).

“Stewardship programs have been useful in showing farmers and ranchers how to reduce unnecessary environmental impacts from their operations. In many instances, changes in management have been beneficial to both the private landowner and the environment. These initiatives will continue to be important wherever landowner activities may be made more ecologically sustainable through better planning and more effective management.” (Pottinger Gaherty Inc. 1998 p. 24)

Although only 3.8% of the groups in the survey listed stewardship projects as one of the three most important projects they conducted in the last five years, the actual number of stewardship activities is likely much higher because this category overlaps with other categories such as land protection, education, sustainability and biodiversity.

➤ *Research*

The environmental non-profit sector is helping to fill the gap in research that has increased with government cutbacks. 9.4% of the survey respondents stated that their group had conducted a research project in the last five years.

➤ *Provision of information, knowledge and tools*

In addition to providing individual landowners with knowledge and tools to better manage land, environmental non-profits have provided tools and information for communities to become active. One way has been to involve people in restoration projects in their communities. Many groups are involved in restoring local watersheds from enhancing creeks, planting riparian areas, restoring wetlands to restoring local lakes. Other groups are engaged in restoration projects on the land in forests or valleys, caring for trails and cleaning up dump sites on local farms.

➤ *Building partnerships*

A few interviewees mentioned the creation of lasting partnerships as a contribution. Land trusts, for example, have frequently been able to build partnerships amongst various agencies that enable them to create agreements across public and private property boundaries. Building bridges between environmentalists was identified as important within the sector as was the development of strong partnerships with local citizens, government and corporations to protect the land. Groups are building partnerships through networking. Although partnership building was mentioned as a contribution of the sector, the idea that more partnerships need to be created within the sector and inter-sectorally repeatedly came up during the interviews.

The social contributions of the stewardship/conservation sector

While many spoke of the difficulty of assessing social and economic contributions, all of the interviewees felt that the stewardship and conservation sector provided significant social and economic contributions.

The social contributions of the sector include:

- community building and cooperation;
- education and awareness-raising;
- health benefits of a clean environment;

- quality of life, including recreation; increasing community debate and engagement; and
- cultural and spiritual benefits.

➤ *Community building and cooperation*

More than half of the interviewees mentioned community building and cooperation as a social contribution of the work that stewards and conservationists do. “The land cuts across ages, education, jobs classifications – it links and unites a variety of people – not just those interested in environment” (Interviewee). The environmental sector gets neighbours together, and talking to realize common interests. It also encourages people to share information and work toward positive common goals in the community that benefit both the community and the individuals. The resulting consensus on priorities and approaches can save communities time and money. The work also builds capacity in the community: “If you do something together you learn you can do things you never dreamed of.” It demonstrates to people that they can effect change by working collectively for common goals as citizens.

“Consumer society has made us individuals instead of part of the community and people have found themselves lonely. People like to work together and enjoy seeing success. The work creates a culture of dialogue within the community instead of conflict. People learn to talk, respect and trust one another.” (Interviewee)

Numerous authors have commented on the contribution of the stewardship and conservation sector to community building and cooperation. Below is a sampling:

- learning how to organize themselves and participating in democratic decision-making processes are all part of being involved in stewardship programs (Evergreen Association, n.d.);
- stewardship projects leave the landscape visibly better than it was before the steward arrived. These stewardship activities are affirming – people feel good when they see the difference they have made (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c);
- conservation fosters a sense of responsibility beyond oneself and one’s place: taking responsibility for the whole landscape, from inner city to wilderness, fosters bioregionalism and understanding the connection between the city and the wild (Forbes and Rogers 2002 p.5);
- “offering techniques that prompt individuals to act on their values and to use their time, treasure and talent adds benefit also to the broader community. Increased human well being depends on utilizing the imaginations and powers of many more people and on building networks that strengthen human willingness to more actively care for one another” (Dodman-Kevany 2001 p.2);
- recent studies have documented the benefits of a vibrant civil society and citizen participation in organized and informal activities. Voluntary activity promotes a sense of social responsibility, builds social ties and contributes to a healthy society (Brock 2000);
- conservation brings diverse people together to experience one another and the world and fosters multi-cultural interactions (Forbes and Rogers 2002 p.5).

Lastly, the work has a positive impact on individuals. People involved in the work get tremendous satisfaction from addressing a problem; they feel needed and important; they gain new skills and increased self-confidence; they get to know their neighbours and they take pride in what they are doing. People have an “increased sense of civic and community pride” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.A-5) and feel a greater connection to and love for the community which results in a greater involvement in community politics. “People become more responsible members of their communities, willing to play a leading role directing their community and the larger society” (Lerner and Jackson 1993 p.403-8).

➤ *Education and awareness-raising*

More than half of the interviewees also mentioned education as a social contribution of the work of the sector; i.e., programs educate the general public about the biological base that supports them. Interviewees spoke about both formal and informal education. Land conservation provides “opportunities for the study and understanding of the earth sciences, biological sciences, environmental education” (Forbes and Rogers 2002 p. 4). Education materials developed by the sector lead to more inclusion of stewardship and conservation in the education curriculum and in turn leads to more action. Public education has also been a major contribution; for example, showing the economic value of stewardship (better soil, less erosion, fewer pollutants downstream, changes in chemical usage); and demonstrating that Canada has a major asset in its natural resources, natural wilderness and natural values. Having this knowledge is a priority for Canadians in their ability to develop sustainable economic plans for their communities for the long-term. Perhaps the main contribution of education is the creation of awareness of the relationship between natural resources and livelihoods of people and awareness of the opportunity Canada has to create economic development that sustains other species’ ability to live.

➤ *Health benefits of a clean environment*

There are two ways in which cleaning up or protecting the environment results in better human health and community well-being. The first is that it results in the removal of threats to human health and safety (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b). For example, if the work is resulting in less pollution, then that means fewer health problems and an improved quality of life. Work to reduce toxic chemicals entering the food chain or the water supply (e.g., by restoration of toxic sites or education to reduce household use of chemicals) also results in a reduced risk to humans.

The second way that stewardship and conservation results in better human health is by providing access to nature. The work of the sector results in more areas for recreation and exercise (Forbes and Rogers 2002 p.5) and opportunities to interact with nature.

“Studies conducted in Norway and Sweden showed that, on average, the population in cities with numerous large greenway and waterway parks dispersed within the city limits had fewer physical and mental health problems than populations where the parks were located on the outside periphery of the city. This was true even when the parks could be reached easily using public or private transportation. Visual access as well as physical proximity are both factors which contribute to the feeling of well-being and to frequent use” (Daugherty 1997 p2).

➤ *Quality of life, including recreation*

Interviewees felt that stewardship and conservation increases the quality of life at the community level by providing:

- opportunities for recreation and various activities related to recreation;
- greenspaces or areas that are kept open for all people;
- nice places to live;
- the knowledge that “it’s alive in their life and that they and their children can see it from time to time”;
- value to whole community that comes from the benefits of restored properties, the reduction of weeds, etc.

The social benefit of a community that “retains its natural systems is a more livable community because it is more satisfying place to live with more green spaces for people to enjoy” (Sandborn 1996 p.43). Other benefits include parkland and open space and improved public waterfront access (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.A-5).

Restoring areas of environmental damage improves the “quality of life in neighbourhoods” and the “aesthetic quality of the urban fabric” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b pp.ix-x).

➤ *Increasing community debate and engagement*

Stewardship and conservation work provides many direct benefits to communities, from increasing the public debate, and providing alternatives for governments and public to take into consideration. It also helps people to assume responsibility for their own quality of life. By “providing leadership in community activities,” individuals are motivated “to participate and become leaders in their own communities” (Dovetail 2002 p.20). People become more proactive rather than waiting for the government to make decisions for them. The sector creates accessible and open community participation (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.A-5). By questioning and changing the power structures, getting people out of their private lives, and bringing people together, the stewardship and conservation sector has given rise to a process of civic engagement (Forbes and Rogers 2002 p.5). Specifically, the sector has brought the recognition of environmental dependence into the economic development debate.

➤ *Cultural and spiritual benefits*

“Wild places and creatures are an essential part of the Canadian identity. Symbols of nature adorn our flag, our currency and even our sports teams.” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b).

While landscape is a large part of the Canadian identity, the connection to landscape has been increasingly lost as we have become more urbanized. Thus, “directly or indirectly, groups are contributing something to maintaining the identity and the value of that identity at a national cultural level” (Interviewee).

The work of the sector also has spiritual value; for example, it “provides hope in world that can be grim by giving the feeling of some control over the world” (Interviewee). Natural places also provide spaces “for experiencing inspiration, beauty, humility, connection” (Forbes and Rogers 2002 p.5).

The economic contributions of the stewardship/conservation sector

The interviewees all agreed that there is an economic value to the work of the stewardship and conservation sector, but many commented that while we know there is an economic value, “it is difficult to evaluate it scientifically and to have good arguments to give to governments.” Furthermore, one interviewee suggested, “we should put more emphasis on studying the value of stewardship and land protection, because quite often people understand better when you talk about money.” The economic benefits discussed by the interviewees fall into several categories, as follows:

- preventing costs to society and the government – now and in the future;
- protecting/restoring environmental services;
- protecting/restoring the resource base;
- doing work on a volunteer or lower cost basis than government;
- providing a basis for recreation and tourism;
- spending on conservation measures;
- spending by stewardship and conservation organizations; and
- attracting population and higher property values.

These contributions are described below. The findings are based on interview results unless otherwise indicated with citations to the literature.

➤ *Preventing costs to society and the government – now and in the future*

A number of interviewees discussed ways in which the work of the environmental sector prevents costs into the future. Conservation and stewardship practices reduce the cost of infrastructure to government at all three levels. Examples that were cited include saving the costs of flood damage and the treatment of drinking water by protecting fish habitat, and reducing water quantity costs such as costs for drought compensation and the costs of providing water for irrigation. In addition, pollution reduction results in lower human health costs.

We are just beginning to understand the role that the environment – and those who protect it – play in reducing economic costs. Recent research has suggested that the global loss of habitat in a year “costs the human enterprise, in net terms, \$250-billion (U.S.) a year, and every year into the future” (Strauss 2002 p.A6). On the other hand, if \$45 billion were invested per year in conservation and used to create nature reserves out of 15% of the Earth’s land and 30% of the oceans, between \$4.4 trillion and \$5.2 trillion would be generated in annual benefits (Strauss 2002 p.A6).

Reducing environmental damage through stewardship saves money in not having to pay for restoration. As one interviewee stated, “It all ends up with dollars left in your pocket. This is true of any of the conservation practices.” Another went even further, “The work is the buffer between current society and complete economic meltdown – without community-based stewardship and conservation we would be in so much worse shape than we are. Ideas for improved lifestyles come from conservation sector – not the government.”

Open space and greenways in urban areas “can significantly reduce residential and commercial heating and cooling costs, reduce air pollution, lower consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels, and make our communities more liveable at the same time” (New York State 2002 p.13). As well, open space is less costly to maintain (Daugherty 1997 p.2). By conserving open space or a greenway, rather than permitting intensive development, municipalities save the cost of public services such as water, sewer, roads and schools (National Park Service 1995 p.8-3). Greenways can reduce the risk of flooding and associated damage costs by maintaining ground cover, stream corridors and wetlands and can also reduce the need for storm sewer infrastructure (Sandborn 1996 p.58). Increasingly communities are turning to stewardship and conservation as they realize it saves money. For example, Johnson County, Kansas saved \$120 million in stormwater infrastructure by protecting \$600,000 in riparian areas (Sandborn 1996 p.44). Faced with the price tag of \$6-8 billion to build a water filtration plant plus yearly maintenance fees of \$300-\$500 million, New York City opted to spend “\$1.5 billion to protect the upstate watershed” (Daily and Ellison 2002 p. 4) by putting the money “into land acquisition, training and incentives for landowners to reduce pollution and maintain watershed health” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.18). “Greenways and associated vegetation can also help control water, air and noise pollution by natural means, resulting in potential decreased pollution control costs” (National Park Service 1995 p.8-3). Researchers have found that natural properties of plants and trees help mitigate water, air, and noise pollution (National Park Service 1995). Another way that greenways reduce pollution is by providing natural transportation routes that decrease the number of car trips (National Park Service 1995).

Green infrastructure planning also saves money. In 1970, a study in Maryland compared uncontrolled development with development that preserved open spaces in a 760 square mile area. Uncontrolled development would have resulted in \$33.5 million in land sales and development profits by 1980. Development that preserved open space while accommodating the same number of residents would have exceeded \$40.5 million. “The resulting additional \$7 million translated into an increase in value of \$2,300 per acre for the planned 3,000 acres of open space” (National Park Service 1995 I-3-4).

Innovators, such as the stewardship and conservation sector, “are learning that it is often more cost-effective to conserve natural systems than to try to replicate or restore them” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b). “It is more efficient and affordable in the long run for Canadians to invest in stewardship, and to protect and sustain the natural resources that our health and economy depend upon than to repair or restore degraded environments” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c p.7).

Stewardship and conservation organizations play a huge role in both persuading government to conserve natural systems and preventing environmental damage that may have large costs down the road. Assessing the impact of public input on a landfill site in Ontario, a professor of environmental studies commented,

“Twenty years from now the Ontario and Regional governments may be very grateful that citizen intervention pointed out the need for these changes. Without these changes, waste management operations at the site may have resulted in severe environmental contamination problems, requiring large expenditures to correct.” (Farkas in Jackson 1993 p.406)

➤ *Protecting/Restoring environmental services*

Volunteer work and actions by groups contribute to protecting natural areas and ecological processes. When you protect a wetland, you are protecting the ecological processes of the wetland like water filtering. This protection of ecosystems has tremendous economic value. “In a study of 42 wetlands, an economist estimated the value of the ecosystems at \$22,300 per hectare of estuary per year. So, we estimate that by protecting the ecosystem, we have saved the equivalent of \$25 million per year. We are protecting Fort Knox – or Green Knox. We are saving the government tons of money. Financing stewardship groups is not an expense, it’s an investment” (Interviewee).

Scientists recognize the existence of ‘ecosystem services: a series of vital functions on which our lives depend performed by “healthy natural systems” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.16). Ecosystem services include air and water purification, natural pest control, pollination and flood control. “Although it is virtually impossible to precisely measure or place an economic value on these services, in 1998 some economists estimated their value worldwide to be \$16–54 trillion per year (the gross world product that year was \$28 trillion)” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.17). Per hectare, the average value of the services of the world’s ecosystems are about \$1100 (Kool 2001).

“The economic value associated with protecting open space for the purposes of conserving and sustaining the diversity and richness of the state’s fauna and flora species is staggering. Many critical economic goods and services provided by the preservation of open space and the species and habitats contained within serve as an important source of food, fuel, fibre and medicine. Other critical economic services or benefits associated with the conservation and preservation of these species through open space protection include pollination, recycling, nitrogen fixation and homeostatic regulation. For example, most commercially exploited fish and shellfish species depend on tidal marshes and other coastal environments for spawning and development. Furthermore, many wild plant species have important commercial value for medicinal, food and energy sources” (New York State 2002 p.13-14)

Recent research is suggesting that the economic worth of ecosystems for their ecological services is far more important than that which is gained by converting them to human uses such as agriculture, urban development or resource extraction. “These studies estimate that habitat destruction costs the equivalent of \$250 billion every year, and that spending \$45 billion to conserve natural habitat and establish a global network of nature reserves would deliver a net return on the services produced by nature of \$400–520 trillion each year—an impressive return on investment” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.17)

Society has tended to take the ecosystem services for granted, but their value is beginning to be recognized as we find ways to give them economic value. “Recent studies indicate that a single rural tree can intercept up to 50 pounds of particulates per year. In one study, it was determined that planting half a million trees in Tucson, Arizona would reduce airborne particulates by 6,500 tons per year. The annual value of this pollution control measure was estimated to exceed \$1.5 million annually” (McPherson in National Park Service 1995 p.8-9).

➤ *Protecting/Restoring the resource base*

Prolonging the utility of renewable resources through stewardship has obvious economic benefits. Stewarding the environment and moving toward sustainability leaves open more options for the future “It’s almost an economic motor because the more we conserve, the more we have” (Interviewee). Action to protect resources also protects the economies of communities that count on that resource base: “We have woodlots that have been producing products for over 200 years – obviously land that has been able to do that is, in some sense, producing in a sustainable way. This local production has had a great influence on the local economy” (Interviewee).

Human societies need food, water and shelter, which open spaces can provide for present and future generations if managed sustainably. For example, as the sources of river systems, “forests are a primary source of clean water” “Similarly, undeveloped land protects the quality of underground water supplies” (New York State 2002 p.16).

Sustainable management of renewable resources has direct benefits on the economy. “In 1996, for example, the forestry sector contributed more than \$34 billion to Canada’s trade surplus. New economic sectors that depend on healthy ecosystems are also emerging” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.16). “These economic activities, based on “use” values, are rooted in the concept of providing habitat for the harvest of particular species: commercial fish, game and crop farming; sport fishing and hunting of free ranging native species” (Pottinger Gaherty Inc. 1998 p.26).

Aside from the economic benefits of extraction or harvesting, the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and wild lands also supports other economic values, such as non-consumptive use of wildlife (see discussion under ‘Providing basis for recreation and tourism’). Other values that have been identified include the “option value” which is maintaining the option of using the resource in the future, the “existence value” – knowing that the resource exists, and the “bequest value” – the ability to pass the resource down to future generations (Pottinger Gaherty Inc. 1998 p.26-7).

Nature stewardship and conservation are also increasingly having an impact on Canada’s place in the world economy. International purchasers of Canadian natural resource products want “to ensure that the products they buy come from sustainable, healthy ecosystems. Canadian companies are feeling pressure to demonstrate corporate social and environmental responsibility to remain competitive in global markets” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.19).

➤ *Doing work on a volunteer or lower cost basis than government*

The work of the stewardship and conservation sector is done at lower cost than what it would cost the government to do the same work. One reason for this is that much of the work is done by volunteers who work for free and pick up the expenses that the government traditionally has had to pay from the tax base for things like monitoring birds, water levels and pollution analysis. One Interviewee said, I “don’t know where to begin adding up economic benefits. Wayne Campbell of the Royal Museum analyzed what birders are contributing – his analysis came up with tens of millions of dollars for B.C. alone” (Interviewee).

Over the past ten years, hundreds of stewardship and conservation groups have involved thousands of people in taking action to protect or restore species and ecosystems. “These are results that individual investments could not achieve acting alone. Pooling our skills, knowledge and financial resources is cost effective. From a taxpayer’s perspective, government spending is best directed to collaborative stewardship programs. Leverage ratios for funding are often reported to be from 4:1 to as much as 10:1 for stewardship programs” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c p.8).

Land trusts have also been documented as providing good value for the money invested: “Trusts can get the job done for less. They are able to elicit significant amounts of volunteer labour as well as contributions of money, land and services from individuals and businesses in the community” (Sandborn 1996 p.19). In the United States between 1985 and 1991, non-profit groups helped the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. National Park Service with 273 land acquisitions, saving U.S. taxpayers \$32.3 million. The U.S. General Accounting Office has concluded that non-profits saved the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service more than \$50 million from 1965 to 1980. Other countries are finding similar results. For example, a study out of Australia estimated that for every dollar granted to land trusts in that country, the trusts generate \$3.22 in conservation activity (Sandborn 1996, p.22).

➤ *Providing a basis for recreation and tourism*

Ecotourism and tourism have become major economic endeavours and stewardship and conservation play a big role in making these activities sustainable. “We also create tourism – trails, natural areas, hunting. By stewarding the land we are protecting that economic value” (Interviewee). “In recent years, the non-consumptive (also termed “appreciative”) use of wildlife has been steadily increasing.” As people visit areas for recreation activities such as wildlife viewing, campgrounds, nature trails and hiking, backcountry road adventures, and horseback trail riding, they spend money in the communities (Pottinger Gaherty Inc. 1998 p.26).

A recent government study found that Canadians today spend about \$12 billion annually “on nature-related activities such as bird-watching and canoeing. The outdoor tourism industry alone is now estimated to generate annual revenues of over \$1 billion.” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.16).

Protected areas and greenways also contribute significantly to both the local and national economies of Canada. Each year, national parks and historic sites create the equivalent of 38,000 full-time jobs and contribute more than \$1.2 billion to the economy. In 1998, the tourist income from Banff, Jasper and Waterton parks in Alberta was estimated at \$954 million. “Protected areas also offer a good return on investment: The Outspan Group has estimated that every dollar invested in national parks results in a \$3.50 increase in the GDP” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.16). In B.C., provincial parks are estimated to bring in about \$400 million to the province through tourism-related spending (Kool 2001). In Ontario, the 1.3 million tourists that visit the Bruce Trail have a direct economic impact of \$30 million on an annual basis (Sandborn 1996 p.57).

➤ *Spending on conservation measures*

When people put conservation measures into practice, they frequently spend money. “People spend money in the community as they make homes more energy efficient – this has actually been quantified” (Interviewee). “Increased active stewardship can mean an increase in local ‘buying’ of materials and supplies as residents become active patrons of local small businesses ranging from garden stores, to nurseries, to food suppliers as green spaces are restored, maintained, and celebrated” (Evergreen Association n.d.).

➤ *Spending by stewardship and conservation organizations*

Money raised through foundations, grants and donations pays staff who then spend their income in local economies. This includes funds coming from the U.S. and Europe to support conservation in Canada. “The work itself has economic value – there is a whole growing sector of the economy that revolves around the stewardship and conservation sector and this is growing” (Interviewee).

Some of the contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector are the creation of employment opportunities (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003a pp.ix-x), developments in cleanup technology and development in new enterprises (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003a pp.15) and increased export potential for Canadian cleanup technologies (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003a pp.ix-x).

➤ *Attracting population, higher property values*

Maintaining the quality of the landscape and healthy properties maintains or increases the property values. For example, “dealing with water quality from the point of view of what happens on the landscape and what that avoids downstream has economic value. It also increases property values” (Interviewee).

Restoring natural systems such as rivers in urban communities can have a revitalizing effect that results in “significant economic impact on local businesses and communities. The magnitude of these economic opportunities is only beginning to be understood” (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003b p.18).

Other economic benefits include the ability to attract business. “Livability and environment are among the top factors considered by companies looking to site operations” (Sandborn 1996 p.56). “Quality of life for employees was the third most important factor in locating a business, according to an annual survey of chief executive officers” (National Park Service 1995 p.7-3). The Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress reports that a city’s quality of life is more important than purely business related factors when it comes to attracting new businesses (New York State 2002).

Many studies have shown that property located near open spaces has higher property values. (National Park Service 1995 p.I-3). Following are a few examples taken from the literature:

- “urban land adjacent to the greenbelt was worth approximately \$1,200 more per acre than urban land 1,000 feet away from the greenbelt boundary, all other things being equal” (National Park Service 1995 p. 1-4);
- the value of properties in the United States, within a radius of up to 2.5 kilometres of a brownfield that is redeveloped, may rise by an average of 10 percent, with associated increases in property tax revenues. (National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy 2003a pp.15);
- properties located near parks, greenways and streams can be valued as much as 32 percent higher than property located 3,200 feet away (Daugherty 1997);
- the aggregate property value for one neighborhood in Boulder, Colorado “was approximately \$5.4 million greater than if there had been no greenbelt. This results in approximately \$500,000 additional potential property tax revenue annually. The purchase price of the greenbelt was approximately \$1.5 million. Thus, the potential increase in property tax alone could recover the initial cost in only three years.” (National Park Service 1995 1-8).

3.2.3 The value of volunteers: expertise as well as hours

Recently, “studies have documented the benefits of a vibrant civil society and citizen participation in organized and informal activities. High levels of voluntary activity promote a general sense of social responsibility, build social ties and contribute to a healthy society” (Brock 2000 p.54). Increasingly, in an effort to decrease public expenditures, governments are downshifting programs and services to the non-profit sector which is thus playing an ever more important role in providing services that make a fundamental contribution to the social fabric (Brock 2000).

“Participation in voluntary groups is effective in getting things done. It creates a sense of community and control over our own lives and our institutions and, in a participatory democracy, can bridge the gulf between the individual and the wider society. It represents a way of accomplishing goals that may not otherwise be achieved through the more traditional channels of public or private involvement. In the environmental movement the value of such groups is generally accepted. In the last decade alone, the number of grassroots organizations dedicated to the clean-up and restoration of waterways and greenways has exploded. While a large part of this growth is a result of declining federal and provincial funds for such projects, of greater importance is the bid by local citizens to take some responsibility for their local environment that they now see as threatened by pollution and development” (Donald 1997 p.483).

Volunteers provide tremendous value because they give their time and energy and complete work with no expectation of monetary recompense. The total number of volunteers in 147 groups that provided numbers in the survey was about 29,800, including the one organization with approximately 18,000 volunteers. Removing this group from the sample still leaves the impressive average of about 80 volunteers per group or approximately 11,800 volunteers over 146 groups. Multiplying these numbers across the hundreds or thousands of stewardship groups in Canada begins to give a sense of the magnitude of the volunteer contribution.

But the value of volunteers is more than just hours or “elbow grease.” Volunteers also contribute inestimable amounts of expertise at a fraction of the costs that professionals, technicians or other specialists would incur. An Interviewee spoke of chartered accountants and senior business people serving without charge, saying, “If you had to pay for those services, it would be in hundreds of thousands of dollars.” This expertise builds the capacity of government to deliver its stewardship and resource management responsibilities more effectively, benefiting all of society.

Table 9: Areas of expertise volunteers bring to stewardship and conservation groups

Areas of Expertise Volunteers Bring to Stewardship and Conservation Groups		
Area of expertise	Occurrence	Percentage (n=357)
Science	114	31.9%
Management	41	11.5%
Computer/ Technical	26	7.3%
Applied Knowledge	23	6.4%
Administrative	23	6.4%
Communication	20	5.6%
Fundraising	18	5.0%
Policy/Planning	17	4.8%
Local Community Knowledge	15	4.2%
Education	12	3.4%
Law	10	2.8%
Research	9	2.5%
Recreational/ Labour	8	2.2%
Stewardship	6	1.7%
Networking	6	1.7%
Social Knowledge	5	1.4%
Advocacy	4	1.1%

Survey respondents were asked to name three areas of expertise that volunteers bring to their organization. Their response is outlined in Table 9. Seventeen different types of expertise were identified. The top two areas of expertise that volunteers brought to the stewardship and conservation groups were scientific knowledge at over 30% and management skills at 11.5%.

3.3 Current funding realities

What does it cost to run conservation and stewardship organizations, and where do they get the necessary funds? Have they been successful? This section relates the results of the survey and interviews about current funding realities, trends and pressures. It also seeks to put funding in context, describing its importance relative to other factors affecting the capacity of the sector.

3.3.1 The costs of running stewardship/conservation organizations

The research in this section, which was conducted through the survey, examines the costs of running conservation and stewardship organizations. Survey respondents were asked what their group’s total budget was, their administrative and salary expenses, whether or not the group had office space and how it was paid for. The focus for this portion of the research was to find out the core costs for organizations or how much they need “just to keep the lights on” and to get an idea of what percentage of the budgets of stewardship and conservation groups go to core costs as compared to projects.

A number of groups either did not know their financial information or were not comfortable in providing it. Accordingly, the calculations of budgets, administrative expenses, and salaries are based on the numbers of those groups who did provide such information. Calculations that required all three numbers were made only for organizations that provided all three pieces of financial information and thus a total of 82 groups were used.

As shown in Table 10, the budgets of the organizations surveyed ranged from zero to approximately \$5,000,000 per year (with the next highest budget being about \$1,800,000). Four of the 150 groups – just under 3%, had a budget of zero, while 7 – just under 5%, had budgets of over a million dollars. The combined budgets of the 120 groups which supplied budget information was \$28,130,614. On average, the groups had an annual budget of \$234,422 (with the single \$5,000,000 budget excluded from the calculation).

Table 10: Annual budget, salaries and administrative expenses

A total of \$6,861,823 was paid annually in salaries by 117 groups. On average, groups paid \$58,648 per year in salaries with a range of \$0 to \$450,000. An additional \$1,754,432 per year was spent by 86 groups for administrative costs for an average of \$20,400. Administrative costs ranged from \$0 to about \$275,000 per year.

	Financial Information		
	Total	Average	Range
Annual Budget (n=120)	\$28,130,614	\$234,422	\$0 - \$5,000,000
Annual Salaries (n=117)	\$6,861,823	\$58,648	\$0 - \$450,000
Annual Administrative Expenses (n=86)	\$1,754,432	\$20,400	\$0 – 275,000

The combined average of salary and administrative costs was \$79,048. Three percent of annual budgets were spent on salaries, while administrative expenses made up about 8.9% of the annual budget. Thus, 33.2% of the total budget of groups was spent on core costs. The remaining 66.8% of the annual budgets was spent on projects. This is consistent with a survey undertaken in

Atlantic Canada in which the average amount of project funding received was 65% of the organization's total budget (Ford 2002).

Survey respondents were also asked whether or not they had office space. If the group had office space, they were also asked the type of tenure. At 62.7%, the majority of stewardship and conservation groups had office space. Over half of the groups rented their office space. Less than a tenth of the groups owned their office space, while just over a quarter had space donated. A number of groups had home-based offices.

3.3.2 Funding sources for the stewardship/conservation sector

Stewardship and conservation groups receive funding from a variety of sources, with larger groups predominantly dependent on grants from foundations and governments.

Table 11: Sources of funding

Table 11 shows how survey respondents answered the question, "Please indicate whether your organization or group receives funding from the following sources," with 11 choices offered. Respondents were welcomed to check off all of the funding sources that applied to their group. Most of the 150 groups surveyed received their funding from a variety of sources.

Note that the responses in the table indicate the proportion of groups surveyed that received funding from a particular source, but the table does not indicate the amount of funding received from those sources. For example, although 76% of groups received funding from membership fees, it is highly unlikely that membership fees were a major source of funding in terms of dollars raised for a large proportion of the groups sampled.

An examination of the group-by-group responses (untabulated) indicates that smaller, more community-based groups, and fish and wildlife groups tended to depend more on individual donations and membership fees whereas for the larger groups, funding from foundations and governments made up the vast majority of total funding. A survey of 25 groups in Atlantic Canada indicated that conservation groups there obtain approximately two thirds of their funding from foundations and government sources (one third each), and the remainder from memberships, individual donations, fundraising and businesses (Ford 2002).

Funding Sources for Stewardship and Conservation Groups		
Funding Source	Number of respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=150)
Donations	120	80%
Membership fees	114	76%
Foundations	83	55.3%
Federal government	74	49.3%
Fundraising events	74	49.3%
Private Sector	71	47.3%
Provincial government	69	46.0%
Merchandizing	59	39.3%
Municipal government	39	26%
Other	32	21.3%
Casinos, bingo or lottery funds	18	12%
Regional government	13	8.7%

Table 12: Sources of funding for “other” funding sources

Respondents who indicated they received funding from an “Other” source were coded into one of seven categories as shown in Table 12. The top category, Associations, included umbrella groups (e.g., Canadian Federation of Naturalists) and other organizations (e.g., Alberta Cattle Commission). Examples of trust funds are the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and the Columbia Basin Trust.

“Other” Funding Sources			
Funding Source	No. of respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=32)	Percentage of Respondents (n=150)
Associations	7	21.9%	4.7%
Endowment or Trust Funds	6	18.8%	4%
Fundraising events	5	15.6%	3.3%
Merchandizing	4	12.5%	2.7%
First Nations	2	6.2%	1.3%
Private Sector	2	6.2%	1.3%
Donations	1	3.1%	0.7%

Foundations and government sources of funding are accessed for project funding more often than other sources such as membership fees, individual donations and the private sector.

Table 13: Sources of funding for projects

Respondents were asked to “Please state the three primary sources of funding from which your organization or group receives project funding.” In this case, the type of funding most commonly drawn upon was from foundations, and the second most common source was the federal government (see Table 13). Recent federal government commitments such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Species at Risk Act are seen as promising for increased access to funding programs. Many respondents selected the “other” funding category, although many of their specific replies could have logically been slotted into one of the categories. The most common sources of “other” funding were trust funds (e.g., the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund) and other organizations (e.g., World Wildlife Fund, Ducks Unlimited, service clubs). Again, note that the figures do not indicate the amount of funding received from those sources.

Funding Sources for Projects Carried out by the Stewardship and Conservation Sector		
Funding sources for Projects	Occurrence	Percentage of Funding Sources (n=336)
Other	61	18.2%
Foundations	60	17.9%
Federal government	56	16.7%
Provincial government	51	15.2%
Membership fees	35	10.4%
Donations	29	8.6%
Private Sector	18	5.4%
Municipal government	9	2.7%
Fundraising events	7	2.1%
Merchandizing	6	1.8%
Casinos, bingo or lottery funds	3	0.9%
Regional government	1	0.3%

Studies of environmental grantmaking in Canada indicate a major financial investment into conservation efforts.

The Wilberforce Foundation gathered data on environmental grants to BC conservation efforts during 2000 and 2001. The total grant dollars awarded from private foundations to conservation issues in that time period was approximately US \$34,037,700. The average size of the 104 grants from 48 funders was US \$33,902 (mean) or US \$10,000 (median). Grants ranged in size from US \$161 to US \$2,105,000 (Wilberforce Foundation 2002). The top five funders by total dollars are all US-based.

The Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network profiled environmental grantmaking in Canada for 2001. The 51 grantmakers studied (predominantly foundations) gave a total of \$71,000,000 in 2001 through 1,464 grants. Twenty-two percent of the foundations were located in the U.S.A. Almost one third of the recipients of the grants were organizations other than environmental ones (e.g., universities, youth organizations) (Canadian Environmental Grantmakers' Network 2002).

See the section on “The outlook for funding ...” under “Current levels of success and trends” for a discussion of the decline in grants.

Designated funding for core expenses is obtained by less than a third of the groups surveyed.

Survey respondents were asked, “Does your organization or group receive any funding which is designated for salaries and/or operating expenses (e.g., rent, utilities, and office supplies)? If yes, please state the three most important sources for this funding and how often you have to re-apply?” The focus of the question was on grant-type funding as opposed to other sources of funding which may have also paid for core costs, such as membership fees and donations. The latter were not designated one way or another as the intent of the question was to explore the extent to which funders were providing for core costs.

Table 14: Grant-based sources of funding for core costs

Of the groups surveyed, 31.9% stated that they receive funding which is designated for salaries and/or operating expenses (e.g., rent, utilities, and office supplies). The other 68.1% did not receive such funding. Table 14 shows the source of the grants for the groups that did receive core funding. In this case, the “Other” sources were a mixture, with three mentions of provincial gaming or lottery corporations.

Grant-based Sources of Core Funding for Stewardship and Conservation Groups		
Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Stated Funding Sources (n=60)
Foundations	24	40%
Provincial government	14	23.3%
Federal government	8	13.3%
Other	8	13.3%
Municipal government	3	5.0%
Private Sector	2	3.3%
Regional government	1	1.7%

To further explore how core funding costs were covered, respondents were asked “To what extent is your organization or group dependent on project grants to cover its

salaries and/or operating expenses (rent, utilities, and office supplies)?” Replies indicated that just over half of the groups were moderately to very dependent on project grants to cover operating expenses, and about 30% were not at all dependent on project grants for this purpose (see Table 15).

One more line of inquiry was pursued on the topic of core funding. How did groups who did not receive core funding and yet had significant core costs pay for them? To find an answer to this question, groups with over \$8,000 a year in salary and administrative expenses which did not receive core funding were examined more closely. About 60% of this sub-sample indicated that they were either “completely dependent” or “very dependent” on project grants to cover their core costs (as opposed to about 40% of the full sample). Note as well the results presented in the next section, which show that most groups found paying salaries and administrative expenses a challenge, and 43% found this to be a serious or very serious challenge.

Table 15: Level of dependence on project grants to cover salaries and operating expenses

Of the groups who had significant core costs (salaries and administrative expenses), but were not very dependent on project funding to cover these costs, one group relied on service provision, another on merchandizing, and some were wildlife federations which presumably received money from stamps, a portion of licence fees, and/or membership fees.

For some, government and foundations are not an important source of funding.

Much of the analysis in this report relates to the issues associated with access to funding via grants from government agencies or philanthropic organizations. It is important to keep in mind that not all groups relied on these sources of funding. Out of the survey sample of 150 groups, 34 were not actively pursuing external funding via grant applications. They fell into the following categories:

- some had minimal cash requirements for the work they do;
- some were small and not interested in growing;
- some were dormant – they arose in response to an issue that has been addressed;
- some were “self-sufficient”; i.e., they obtained their funding from membership fees and donations that did not come through grants, or through fundraising activities such as events and lotteries.

In this report, where topics are being analyzed that are specific to grant-type funding (from foundations, government and the private sector), the responses of the 34 groups who did not rely on grants were excluded from the analysis. This is indicated by a footnote beneath the relevant tables. It is possible that these groups may be distinctive in terms of their needs, roles and preferences. The resources available for analysis at the present time do not, however, allow for the separation of results on these groups as compared to the other 116 groups.

Dependence on Project Grants to Cover Salaries and Operating Expenses		
Level of Dependence	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=116)*
Completely Dependent	13	11.2%
Very Dependent	32	27.6
Moderately Dependent	19	16.4%
Slightly Dependent	18	15.5%
Not at all	34	29.3%
Don't know	0	0%

*34 respondents were coded as being “Not Applicable”.

3.3.3 Current levels of success and trends in funding

How successful is the conservation and stewardship sector in accessing the funds it needs? What are the current trends and what is the outlook for the future? The following discussion relates how the people involved in the sector assess their current and anticipated funding success.

Groups have been successful in raising funds, but meeting salaries and administrative expenses is a challenge.

Table 16 and Table 17 set out survey results related to levels of success in funding stewardship and conservation groups. One indicates that the vast majority of groups have been somewhat or very successful in securing funds. The other paints a more negative picture, in that most groups found paying salaries and administrative expenses a challenge, and 43% found this to be a serious or very serious challenge. The higher level of overall success in funding might be attributed to success in obtaining funding for projects rather than operating expenses.

Table 17: Level of success in securing funding

Stewardship and Conservation Groups' Level of Success in Securing Funding		
Level of Success	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=116)*
Very Unsuccessful	0	0%
Somewhat Unsuccessful	3	2.6%
Somewhat Successful	61	52.6%
Very Successful	52	44.8%
Don't Know	0	0%

Table 16: Extent that paying salaries and administrative expenses is a challenge

Extent that Paying Salaries and Administrative Expenses is a Challenge		
Extent of Challenge	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=116)*
A Very Serious Challenge	14	12.1%
A Serious Challenge	36	31%
Somewhat of a Challenge	48	41.4%
Not a Challenge at All	15	12.9%
Don't Know	3	2.6%

*34 respondents were coded as being "Not Applicable"

Views are divided on whether funding is getting easier or more difficult to secure.

Interviewee opinions were equally divided on the question of whether stewardship and conservation groups in Canada are finding it easier or more difficult to secure funding now as compared to ten years ago. In contrast, almost twice as many survey respondents felt that securing funding is more difficult now than it was 10 years ago (Table 18). Interviewees were almost unanimous that the current sources of funding are unlikely to meet the sector's needs over the next ten years.

A minority feel that funding has become easier to secure.

Signs that funding is getting easier to secure, according to the interviewees, are that:

- there are more groups (which presumably are finding resources);
- more public money is being directed toward stewardship and government programs are providing funds (e.g., species at risk);
- there is more funding available from Canadian and American philanthropic organizations;
- potential funders have more stewardship funding priorities and programs.

Explanations from interviewees and survey respondents as to why funding is getting easier to secure are that:

- Canada is becoming more conscious of the need to take care of the environment and is giving this a higher priority;
- the existence of more groups has increased their political influence;
- there is a greater awareness in society of the need for conservation and stewardship, leading to support for funding and direct donations;

Table 18: Percentage of groups finding it easier or more difficult to secure funding

Percentage of Stewardship and Conservation Groups Finding it Easier or More Difficult to Secure Funding		
Difficulty level	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents (n=118)*
Easier	27	22.9%
Harder	51	43.2%
Unchanged	16	13.6%
Cannot Answer	24	20.3%**

*32 respondents were coded as being "Not Applicable."

**This group was composed of individuals who were new to the group/organization or their group was younger than 5 years and therefore they could not provide an accurate answer to the question.

- government is downloading work onto the groups;
- groups are more experienced at fundraising – “Today when we make a presentation, we are not often turned down.”

Survey respondents generally ascribed increasing success to the qualities and experience of their group. Longer-standing groups had more contacts/partners, were better known/higher profile, were aware of current funding priorities, had acquired fundraising expertise, had a proven track record, were seen as credible, had positive relationships with funding organizations. Newer groups could also attract funding if they quickly built a reputation of doing high quality work. Capacity to fund-raise was an important factor which depended on core funding and/or a staff person dedicated to fundraising, and fundraising skills. Flexibility in responding to funding opportunities – in terms of timing or the breadth of the mandate of the group also helped.

Most feel that funding has become more difficult to secure.

Interviewees and survey respondents who felt it has been more difficult to secure funding (the majority overall) had a different perception of the amount of money available from government and philanthropies. Poor economic conditions have generally affected both sources and there have been fewer funding opportunities. Interviewees observed that since the stock market decline, and particularly since “9/11,” foundation funding has dropped off. One person estimated that foundations have lost a third to half of their disposable income.

On the government side, funding has “dried up,” and government cutbacks at all levels have had a big impact. Provincial support especially has declined, although municipalities have replaced some of this. Losses vary across the provinces depending on program cuts. For example, B.C. groups are heavily impacted by the termination of fisheries-related funding programs.

Specific sources of support, such as office support or training for ENGOs, have been cut back in many cases. One interviewee commented on the inappropriateness of such cutbacks at a time when the government is looking for community to complete work formerly done by government. Another mentioned the issue of government “downloading” responsibilities onto organizations. Several respondents mentioned the difficulty of securing core funding today, as most foundations and government trust funds no longer provide core funding.

The poor economy that has reduced government and foundation funding has also impacted private sector donations as individuals and businesses tighten their belts. One example was a naturalist group that was funded by a local company until the downturn in the resource industry.

Other trends in funding that are discussed in later sections of this report include: increased competition for funds, more onerous application and reporting procedures, growing difficulties in obtaining and retaining charitable status, and the tendency for smaller groups to have more difficulty in accessing funds.

Even those who felt that it is getting easier to secure funding qualified their answers by saying that there are ups and downs and that it is still not easy.

The scale of dollars required by the sector is growing.

While more money is being raised, the cost of doing the work has become more expensive, and the scope of the work has grown; i.e., the need to perform more stewardship and conservation tasks has increased. For example, it is much easier to raise a million dollars now than it was 20 years ago, but land is more expensive today and less of it is still intact. And more money does not necessarily equate to more success in protecting land.

The outlook for funding for the next ten years is not positive.

On the question of whether current sources of funding will meet the needs of the stewardship and conservation sector over the *next* ten years, there was general agreement among interviewees that the sources of funding will not be adequate to do the work that will be necessary.

Some of the factors driving this negative view of the future are:

- *Environmental quality is a low priority.* Relative to other pressures, society is paying less attention to the environment and sustainability (e.g., as reflected in parliamentary debates and spending decisions). Concerns about health care and global unrest have pushed environmental issues down the list of priorities. In the words of one interviewee: “In some ways we are backsliding because everything seems so desperate.” There is a lack of recognition of the importance of a healthy environment to a healthy society and economy.
- *There are more demands for spending on conservation.* Even if there is continued access to current sources, these sources are unlikely to keep up with the increasing amount of work to be done and the need to expand programs to keep pace with the demand. As well, stewardship costs rise with success. Once an area is protected, money is needed for staff to monitor the area and ensure agreements are upheld. As well, when a group is successful, more people approach it for help.
- *Development pressure is increasing.* There is a suite of trends making conservation and stewardship both more necessary and more difficult. They include the decline of fisheries, forests, etc.; the lack of progress as a society towards sustainability; population issues; consumption of air, land and water; and economic competition to develop the landscape.

It is well known in the conservation and stewardship sector – and in the non-profit sector more generally – that the amount of funding available from private foundations has dropped. A study of such funding in BC over 2001 and 2002, with some comparison to the period from 1998- 1999, concluded that “2002 will go down as a terrible year for philanthropic foundations. (2001 wasn’t exactly stellar either.) While there are some nightmare stories of massive asset plunges, declines are nearly universal” (Wilberforce Foundation 2002 p.5). This study estimated cutbacks across all foundations of 20%. It cautioned that the anti-environmental agenda of the Bush administration in the US and the stock market decline will continue to draw funds away from the province. Note that the emphasis was on US foundations, which are the main funders of advocacy work by conservation groups in BC. The downward trend in these funding sources may have less of an impact in other provinces, or on stewardship groups that are not advocacy-oriented.

3.3.4 Funding pressures

What are the issues around funding? Is core funding adequate? How do funding levels and processes burden organizations? This section describes a number of funding pressures and the ways in which affect stewardship and conservation groups.

Generally, levels of funding are insufficient.

When interviewees were asked, “What factors most limit the stewardship/conservation sector from achieving its full potential?” lack of funding was the most emphasized response. Survey respondents generally shared this opinion, identifying funding as the thing that would most improve their ability to achieve their objectives. (See also the section on Relative importance of funding.) Funding is insufficient overall, and particularly for core costs, as described in the following section. The impacts of a loss of funding can be severe. Groups have had to lay off staff and drop activities at a time when there is more work than ever to be done.

Core funding to cover operating expenses, including salaries, is especially difficult to access.

As reported earlier, the survey results showed that most groups find paying salaries and administrative expenses a challenge, and 43% find this to be a serious or very serious challenge. Many group representatives listed core funding as one of the top three things that would most improve their organization's ability to achieve its objectives. Several interviewees also commented on the relative ease of accessing money for projects as compared to finding funds "to hold their organizations together." When core funding declines, or is not renewed, organizational infrastructure shrinks, and the month-to-month effort of implementing projects and delivering programs without the infrastructure becomes exhausting. The axiom, "it takes money to spend money" is applicable here. Loss of staff has the added repercussion of depleting the institutional memory. And a downward spiral can occur as the struggle to obtain funding adds to costs, takes away from time available for projects and presents a negative image to potential donors who do not want to pay for fundraising costs (Vale 1995).

Foundations and government grantors are aware of the challenges of core funding and some foundations have provided general support grants. Most, however, continue to be bound by mandates that set specific funding priorities. They are concerned that groups provided with general operating support will use it to support work which does not align with their mandate.

"A ... shortcoming of progressive philanthropy is the targeting of grants on specific programs (through 'project support') instead of institutions (through 'general support'). ... Without general support, an institution typically has weak management, weak fiscal discipline, weak press, weak media, and weak publications" (Shuman 1999 p.33).

Having stable core funding is critical to the ability of conservation groups to plan ahead with confidence – whether strategic planning, business planning or project planning. Groups that have core funding are able to spend the time to find other funds for future or ongoing projects, while groups without core funding often find themselves in a hand-to-mouth, short-term survival mode.

Stewardship projects involving agreements with landowners or the acquisition of land carry with them ongoing costs beyond organizational infrastructure, such as the costs of monitoring, defence and stewardship. One estimate is that 20% of the land value should be set aside to do this. This is another example of the need for core funding to be ongoing and stable.

Generally, funders are reluctant to pay salaries directly – even when the work is directly related to stewardship projects (e.g., bird banding). Without sufficient core funding, organizations frequently find ways to use project funding to cover salaries – "most of us do try to use a small portion of our government grants to build organizational capacity" (Goodno 1998). While this sometimes entails "bending the rules," funders have largely condoned this practice. Yet some grant recipients are uncomfortable with this approach; in the words of one interviewee, "it turns everybody into a semi criminal and makes whole thing nasty."

"You may be able to get funding to print a new brochure, but we need fewer brochures and more people talking to people." (Interviewee)

"People will give you a million dollars for a project but not give you the money you need to hire people to do the work." (Interviewee)

"Core funding allows you to look a few years ahead. Core funding is having wood for the winter." (Interviewee)

"If you want to go out and buy a property or implement a particular on the ground stewardship initiative, you can usually find the funds, but you can't do it unless you can pay the rent and the lights and all those less glamorous things that funders often don't want to contribute to." (Interviewee)

Smaller groups with a narrower focus are at a disadvantage.

The size and the mission of the group or organization also appear to affect funding success. It is much easier to access funds for staff salaries when there are already staff in place to do the proposal writing. One interviewee observed that there are many new, smaller, local groups which cannot access funds in this milieu and are therefore wasting energy. Another made a complementary point: that large organizations had more clout and success in obtaining funds. Foundations prefer to give the larger grants to organizations with a track record, which therefore show promise of continuing good work into the future. Smaller, volunteer groups are therefore at a competitive disadvantage, particularly when first starting out.

Funding priorities do not support the mission of some groups.

An interviewee commented that with the current methods of funding, the funders actually dictate what gets worked on. Many survey respondents highlighted the challenge of finding funding sources appropriate to the aims of their group. The majority of environmental funding is targeted to particular types of projects, activities and initiatives, and organizations must sift through an array of potential sources to find a good match. Often groups try to manipulate their projects to fit within funder's guidelines. Newer groups have a harder time because they are not aware of all the available funding sources. Groups with broader mandates may not be able to access funds which are dominantly issue-specific – "Given [the] trend of environmentalism toward more holistic thinking, it's dismaying to see green funders move in the opposite direction, toward narrower and more specialized grant giving" (Shuman 1999 p.32).

Some conservation or stewardship missions have a harder time attracting dollars than others. For example, advocacy work is rarely funded directly, and few funding programs support land acquisition. It appears to be more difficult to find funding for proactive projects (e.g., stewarding a healthy watershed than reactive projects. One local group representative mentioned that their aim of protecting a marsh did not seem to attract the attention of funders. Another stated that funders had moved away from their group's focus on planting trees. If the group does work that is not typical of its type (e.g., a land trust doing marine work), it may be particularly difficult to find funders with matching priorities. As funders increasingly require projects to have measurable results, the types of projects eligible for funding become more restricted. In other words, projects that cannot demonstrate results in the short term and projects with more qualitative impacts are less eligible.

Groups that have gone to the effort of doing a strategic plan may find that implementing the plan over the years becomes difficult as the priorities of funders change, and the funding "flavour of the month" no longer matches the long-term strategy of the group.

There is a risk of compromising the mission of a group as it adapts to funding opportunities.

In the application process, projects are sometimes contorted to fit funders' priorities, possibly compromising the ability of the group to carry out its mandate. Over time, the group's objectives may become distorted as projects are shaped to match the objectives of funding organizations. Ultimately, organizations may be forced away from their missions as they tailor projects to meet funding criteria. The extreme version of this is co-optation, in which the work of the group does more to serve the interests of the funder than to meet the group's own priorities. This risk has most typically been associated with private sector funding, and one respondent mentioned that corporations increasingly want more recognition in return for their contributions. In connection with government, acceptance of funds from federal or provincial programs raised concerns about limiting the freedom of the group to advocate for change in policy or legislation.

“Someone doing a program has to paint it to look like they are doing something new just to get funding – but it’s not realistic in terms of accomplishing stewardship.” (Interviewee)

Most funding is short-term, constraining the ability of groups to accomplish stewardship goals.

When asked “what three things would most improve their organization’s ability to achieve its objectives,” group representatives listed stable/long term funding more often than any other factor. Interviewees also highlighted the issue of core funding. Generally, long-term initiatives are difficult to fund – funders appear reluctant to support continuing projects in spite of the fact that stewardship is a multi-year commitment. Many groups find it a challenge to meet the annual grind of grant applications. The need to find new funding sources each year or two (with only a few grants extending to up to five years), or to make a case for the renewal of grants, constrains the continuity required for long-term programs. The kinds of work that are jeopardized by the risk of funding cuts from year to year include restoration, stewardship entailing permanent commitments to landowners, and projects involving partnerships. Other challenges around the need for longer term funding are mentioned in the section “Core funding to cover...” above.

Adding insult to injury, the funders are looking for deliverable results which are difficult to achieve within the short time frame of a grant.

“When you are getting involved with stewardship you are making a permanent commitment to land and landowners and that can be difficult to do if you don’t even know if you are going to have a budget next year.” (Interviewee)

Funding notification does not always coincide with project start dates.

Many group representatives feel that the time frame between submitting an application for funding and response from the funder is too long, preventing appropriate advance planning of fieldwork and compromising effective implementation. Sometimes notification arrives just days before a project is to begin, or the field season has started by the time the approval is received. Often groups are forced to look for other sources before finding out whether one application will be successful. In some cases, project start-ups have been delayed for up to a year.

Increased demands for accountability impose pressures, including onerous funding application and reporting procedures.

Increased demands for accountability are central to the current political-economic climate in North America. Non-profit groups, as well as government agencies and corporations, are being called to task on their management of fiscal resources: “Government agencies and the people and groups that finance the [conservation] projects are watching closely to see if greater accountability can be achieved” (Christensen 2002). In the US, the Nature Conservancy and the World Wildlife Fund have been leading conservation groups in a discussion of principals and accounting standards for auditing environmental projects, with an emphasis on measurable results (Christensen 2002).

As funders increasingly focus on accountability and measurable results, the application, documentation and reporting process for grants becomes more complex and demanding. Interviewees reported that application processes have become more laborious, with time being required to build creative funding partnerships, get letters of reference and fill out detailed project rationales. It can be difficult to understand exactly what funding organizations want in terms of projects, making it a serious challenge to ensure that the group’s application fits the criteria developed by the funding organization. Once a grant is received, solid and efficient financial

management systems are necessary to handle the project management and reporting requirements required by funders (Goodno 1998).

Smaller groups are particularly disadvantaged by complex application, administration and reporting procedures, to the extent that only larger organizations can meet the demands of some programs. Often relying on volunteers, smaller groups do not have the necessary human resources to bear the administrative burden. One survey respondent estimated that a modest application (\$5,000-\$10,000) takes 20 to 30 hours of volunteer time to prepare. Others reported that a single major application can take anywhere from three days to a month to complete. Often, many applications have to be submitted to cobble together enough grants to cover projects and operating expenses.

Government agencies are most frequently accused of presenting too many bureaucratic hurdles – to the point that some group representatives believe that applying for funding is more trouble than it is worth in terms of the ratio of time investment to return.

Specific concerns expressed by interviewees and survey respondents are as follows:

- each funder requires a different application format;
- successful programs should not have to prove their worth in annual reporting;
- turn-over in program officers and under-staffing in funding agencies adds to communication challenges and costs of reporting;
- time is wasted as new organizations are established so as to be able to apply for grants that can only be applied for once by any given organization.

“Every application to a different funder is in a different format– this means a huge amount of time is spent by people – often volunteers – who would prefer to be out monitoring a stream or something.” (Interviewee)

“Bureaucracy is a great obstacle to getting things done and it takes away from field actions.” (Interviewee)

The costs of raising and administering funds are a major burden, especially for smaller groups.

In the view of both interviewees and survey respondents, finding the time and resources necessary to pursue funding is a major challenge. Most groups cannot afford to hire a fundraiser, thus drawing on the valuable time of executive directors, coordinators or other staff to raise money. There seems to be a size threshold at which a staff person can be devoted to this work; before that point, many smaller organizations simply do not have enough people to do the fundraising. Further human resources are demanded for administering the funding once it is secured.

There is a general feeling that time spent on fundraising “keeps you away from the real work,” and less time spent on fundraising would mean more conservation action.

“You spend more time raising money than it takes to do the project. Every funder requires that the application be done in a slightly different way and you have to re-do the proposal on the same project a number of times. We spend thousands of hours raising money– this is a waste of time that could be spent on front-line work.” (Interviewee)

When asked how much the time spent on fundraising has impacted their group’s ability to conduct its work, more than two thirds of survey respondents reported that it has had a moderate to large impact (Table 19).

Table 19: Impact of time spent fundraising

Impact of Time Spent Fundraising		
Level of Impact	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents (n=116)*
Large Impact	35	30.2%
Moderate Impact	46	39.6%
Small Impact	23	19.8
No Impact	8	6.9%
Don't Know	4	3.4%

*34 respondents were coded as "Not Applicable."

The time required to prepare individual funding applications is described above, under "Increased demands for accountability..." Several survey respondents commented generally on the amount of time spent finding and securing funding, reporting on their performance, and otherwise administering grants. Of the 13 group representatives who volunteered estimates, seven said that a quarter to a third of their time is spent on these activities. Among these, three were referring to time invested by all staff as opposed to the executive director or coordinator. Five reported that it takes 50-80% of their time. The other commented that due to under-staffing, the executive director "can only afford to spend approximately 15% of her time finding and securing funds." At the other extreme, one representative remarked that at one point the *entire staff* was spending 90% of their time working on fundraising initiatives.

A survey of Land Trust Alliance of BC members offers comparable results: the 13 groups reported spending 22% of their time on obtaining funding. Furthermore, another 14% was spent reporting to the funders, leaving only 64% of the time for carrying out the funded work (Scull et al. 2001).

The human resource costs of fundraising can have a negative effect on the morale of a group.

Survey respondents and interviewees often mentioned motivational problems associated with fundraising. There was a sense that it adds up to a lot of hard work when compared to the amount of money received. Getting volunteers, including board members, to take an active role in finding and securing funding is difficult. This is partly because the process of finding and securing funding is time consuming and can be discouraging. The constant battle for funding and lack of economic security often causes stress and burn-out.

"Finding funding is not enjoyable – having to justify what they're doing, beg for money, it's demoralizing and burns people out faster than anything." (Interviewee)

As funding from foundations and the government decreases, competition for funds is fierce.

Because the number of stewardship and conservation groups has been growing as funding sources have declined, competition among groups for limited funds has increased dramatically – a trend exacerbated by competition from social NGOs (e.g., health, humanitarian aid).

Competition with other groups over funds can cause "turf wars" and discourage cooperation. At worst, groups may even seek to undermine one another. One interviewee suspected that long-established groups may subtly undermine a newer group, if they feel that group is encroaching on their territory.

Other impacts of competition include that it is more difficult to build working relationships with funders; increased effort has to be spent on fundraising; and money is diluted as funders seek to spread it around.

Charitable status is increasingly difficult to obtain and retain.

An additional hurdle in accessing funds is obtaining charitable status, which is a prerequisite for access to many funding sources. Registered charitable numbers have become difficult to obtain in the last ten years and some groups have lost their status as a result of the authorities deciding their group had too great a focus on lobbying. Once a group has lost its charitable status, it is very difficult to get it back. One interviewee felt strongly that this is unfair: “The determination of what is lobbying is what is killing democracy.”

3.3.5 Relative importance of funding

How important is funding relative to other factors affecting the ability of the conservation and stewardship sector to meet its potential? Research results show that it is very important – there is an array of spending needs that are not being met. It seems clear that funding is the top challenge facing most stewardship and conservation organizations and the factor most influencing the potential for future success. Other factors affecting the capacity and effectiveness of the sector are explored in following sections of the report.

Table 20: Challenges to be faced over the next 10 years

When asked to state the “three characteristics of your organization or group that have most contributed to its success,” survey respondents provided answers that fell into 10 categories, with 382 identifications of characteristics in total (see Table 22). In this list, fundraising was mentioned the least frequently, only being stated as a characteristic contributing to success in about 3% of the 382 statements. Conversely, in responses to a question asking about challenges for the future, funding was mentioned most often (see Table 20). Similarly, when group representatives were asked, “What three things would most improve your organization’s or group’s ability to achieve its objectives?” the vast majority of groups listed funding as one of their top three needs. Funding was identified 32% of the time, with the next factor (volunteer support) coming in at 14.5% (see Table 21). Thus, while success to date has not been attributed to funding, success in the future may depend on surmounting funding challenges. In other words, past successes have been achieved through sheer determination despite funding challenges, but the challenges persist, and are growing.

Challenges Facing the Stewardship and Conservation Sector in the 10 Next Years		
Challenge	Occurrence	Percentage of Stated Challenges (n=337)
Funding	92	27.3%
Keeping/Recruiting Members/Volunteers	92	27.3%
Organizational Development	42	12.5%
Ecosystem/ Scarcity Challenges	28	8.3%
Societal Attitudes/ Public Support	24	7.1%
Staffing and Leadership	20	5.9%
Government	19	5.6%
Miscellaneous	11	3.3%
Networking	6	1.8%
Land Management	3	0.9%

Interviewees were asked how important funding was to achieving success among all the issues stewardship and conservation groups face. There was general agreement that it is very important, with only a few rating it as “somewhat important.” Those who put it in this second category acknowledged that “without money, you can do some activities, but you can’t support the group,” or even that you “can do a hell of a lot with a little money,” but you “can’t do anything with nothing.” (Keep in mind that for some, government and foundations are not an important source of funding.) However, if a group and its work are to continue and make significant conservation or stewardship contributions, funding is generally a necessity.

There is an array of spending needs that groups would usefully fund with additional monies. Interviewees highlighted the need for funds to pursue their conservation and stewardship goals as follows (see also the section on Priority targets for funding):

- meet growing demands for stewardship and conservation;
- help private landowners provide stewardship;
- ensure conservation at key sites;
- manage land owned by the group;
- do the work to promote behaviour change;
- tap expertise through contracts with specialists such as notaries, biologists, etc.;
- gather data and do research;
- carry out and maintain good quality education programs and services.

The costs of maintaining the organization and infrastructure to enable the pursuit of conservation and stewardship goals were also emphasized (see also the section on Priority targets for funding in section 4). Funding is needed to:

- hire coordinators to coordinate volunteers;
- pay people to write proposals;
- maintain professional staff and put out professional looking materials;
- keep all staff, rather than having a constant turnover;
- cover expenses (even if there are volunteers rather than staff).

3.4 Capacity-building and the road ahead

Given the powerful contribution of the stewardship and conservation sector to the Canadian environment, economy and society, it is in everyone's best interest to have the sector work at its full capacity. The need for the sector to fulfill its potential is even more pressing when the pace of environmental degradation, and the need to save threatened and scarce natural assets are taken into account.

What factors affect the performance of the stewardship and conservation sector other than funding? What are the core issues affecting the capacity of the groups and organizations in the sector? What might they accomplish if they were working to their full potential? The following discussion expands on the need to meet growing demands for stewardship and conservation, and indicates the magnitude of the task in relation to the obstacles that have to be overcome.

3.4.1 Contextual challenges: beyond the conservation and stewardship sector

Beyond funding and the internal capacity of conservation and stewardship groups, what are the broader circumstances that affect the success rate of the sector? What are the relevant social, political and economic trends that need to be taken into account? Four categories of external forces are discussed below. A fifth was discussed earlier, in the section "Societal perceptions of stewardship and conservation ..." which outlined the societal challenges described including a lack of environmental awareness and pressing economic concerns.

Governance in Canada currently does not currently provide to the conservation and stewardship sector sufficient power, priority, or policy and legislative support.

➤ *Power and influence in our political system work against stewardship and conservation groups.*

A number of comments from interviewees reflected concerns about a relative lack of power in the stewardship/conservation sector – and even a loss of democratic rights. Concerns included:

- Large corporations, which are increasing in number, have more influence on government than the sector:
- The forest, agriculture, tourism industries are stronger than the conservation movement:
- Stewardship groups have relatively low access to the media with its increasingly concentrated power:
- It can be difficult to get data from government, and freedom of information in some parts of the country is under threat (freedom of information legislation in BC):
- The ability of groups to voice their opinion and communicate information to the public is being eroded by government perception of this work as lobbying, and the threat of loss of charitable status.

One survey respondent stated that enhancing the political clout of the organization is a challenge, and others reflected on their relationship with government. Challenges to success that they identified included a need to foster and maintain a positive working relationship with the different levels of government. Garnering the support of local/municipal governments was highlighted. At a general level, several group representatives called for more access to government agencies and decision-making processes. Others identified the need to be listened to by government in significant and meaningful consultation. Some feel that they are usually given only “lip-service.”

➤ *Government does not place a high enough priority on conservation and stewardship.*

Interviewees commented on a lack of understanding, awareness and support for the work of stewardship and conservation groups from government and politicians. Survey respondents often identified a need for governments at all levels to be more responsive to environmental issues, to acknowledge the importance of environmental protection, and “to do their share of the work” in protecting the environment. Governments need to recognize the importance of stewardship aims such as protecting agricultural lands and stewardship tools such as environmental education as a way of protecting natural areas. In some cases, meeting existing government mandates would be an improvement.

➤ *Appropriate environmental laws and regulations are necessary to support stewardship and conservation.*

Survey and interview respondents mentioned the need for more government enforcement of environmental protection regulations, in part, through harmonizing the work of the different departments involved. They also identified the challenge of needing appropriate laws and regulations to work with. Examples were property tax laws, planning legislation, the lack of support for easements in the Quebec civil code, lack of legislation to protect habitat, generally weakened environmental regulations, and inadequate environmental impact assessment processes. One comment was that governments need to modify disincentives to conservation in the form of policies and laws that work against conservation objectives and make the work of the conservation and stewardship sector more difficult and less effective.

➤ *Government policies need improvement to better protect the environment.*

Interviewees and survey respondents both mentioned the challenges posed by the lack of appropriate policies to protect the environment as well as the implementation of such policies.

There was mention of some improvement, but a general sense that policies could be more supportive of stewardship and conservation. For example, good environmental indicators are lacking in some provinces; ecologically sensitive appraisal processes need to be streamlined; land managers lack a common strategy across forestry, tourism and agricultural sectors; there is a lack of a long term perspective in land management; and government agencies do not do enough to help identify and establish and manage protected areas.

Private landowners and individuals can be difficult to convince of the need for stewardship action.

- *Motivating behaviour change and commitment to stewardship becomes more difficult as the focus moves to the “unconverted.”*

Interviewees and survey respondents pointed out that many of those people most interested and motivated have already moved to stewardship, and so the focus should be on convincing the people who are more difficult to convince. This audience includes urban people, youth and landowners who have not yet adopted the stewardship ethic. More work remains to be done to motivate sustained behaviour changes and engage support from more citizens for more personal commitment for small and large stewardship.

“You can think of it as a curve, all of your really supportive people jumped on first and the biggest challenge is going to be dealing with the rest of the population that hasn’t subscribed to the stewardship movement yet.” (Interviewee)

- *Landowners need more incentives to practice stewardship on their property.*

Interviewees highlighted the challenge of a lack of economic tools and incentives for landowners, so that landowners without the motivation to act voluntarily are unlikely to implement conservation measures. In fairness, landowners should be reimbursed for the ecological services they provide. Landowners or developers who are willing to donate land for protection likewise need to be freed from the tax disincentives and other costs of doing so (e.g., notary, surveying, biologists).

Currently negative economic forces present a number of challenges for the conservation and stewardship sector.

The economic downturn has had a number of interrelated impacts on the capacity of the conservation and stewardship sector:

- To generate revenue and bolster economic growth, governments are creating policy and legislation favourable to resource development with fewer environmental precautions. This may lead to increased environmental degradation, adding to the workload of conservation and stewardship groups, and it definitely increasing the need for a watchdog role – to monitor, for example, the effectiveness of performance-based regulations.
- Because of government cutbacks in environmental services, non-profit organizations are taking on larger roles (“downloading”).
- Governments have decreased funding for environmental programs which support the sector.
- Foundations have lost revenue from investments and have fewer dollars to distribute.
- Government and foundations have an increased need for accountability on the part of grant recipients, as they are increasingly concerned that their funds are spent responsibly and to good effect.
- Individuals have lost revenue from investments, possibly suffered from job cutbacks, and may be fearful of their future economic security, meaning that they have less money to donate to charity.

- The public offers less support to the environmental sector as people concern themselves with other issues such as security and health.

Pressures on ecosystems and resource scarcity add to the workload of conservation and stewardship groups, and make projects more difficult.

Of the challenges facing the stewardship and conservation sector over the next ten years identified by survey respondents (see Table 20), ecosystem or resource scarcity issues were near the top of the list. The factors most often mentioned within this set of issues were urban development pressures, including sprawl and rezoning of land for higher density development. Other pressures included decreasing native rangeland, impacts and expansion of agricultural practices, sensitive ecosystems under threat, development on agricultural land as a result of recreation and urbanization pressures, vanishing habitat and wildlife, over-grazing, increased tourism, pressures on natural areas in cities, species and ecosystems at risk, and increased impacts by private sector activities generally. Interviewees added two ecosystem issues to this list that are global in nature: “water wars,” as fresh water becomes scarcer globally, and the pressures of climate change.

International, political-economic issues compete with environmental priorities for attention.

International issues were highlighted by interviewees both as a source of societal distraction from environmental concerns, and as an added cause of ecosystem degradation. These issues include climate change, international security, terrorism, trade and globalization. The pressure is on conservation and stewardship groups to increase the scale of their attention to encompass higher-level issues and to become more effective beyond the local scale.

“There is a big risk that stewardship issues could get shoved aside for what are perceived as more immediate concerns.” (Interviewee)

3.4.2 Core issues affecting capacity: What do conservation and stewardship groups need, to meet their potential?

What is needed to sustain and improve the long-term effectiveness of the conservation sector? This section explores an array of factors affecting the capacity of stewardship and conservation groups.

Much of the information analysed in this section comes from the survey answers to the question: “In your opinion what three things would most improve your organization’s or group’s ability to achieve its objectives?” An overview of the answers to that question is presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Factors that would improve the capacity of groups to achieve their objectives

Funding is the factor that most impacts the capacity of stewardship and conservation groups to achieve their objectives.

Many group representatives feel that their organizations do not have the capacity to meet their full potential, due to lack of funding. They cannot do enough work; they cannot do it effectively enough; they cannot take on new projects as demands arise; they cannot extend the scope or depth of their work; and the work is difficult and tiring because they are constantly over-extended. (See also the section on “The promise of a sector working at full capacity”.)

“If the money was there, we could do major things.” (Interviewee)

“It is not an easy task for a land trust to protect conservation lands in perpetuity with very little money.” (Interviewee)

Factors that Would Improve the Capacity of Conservation and Stewardship Groups		
Factor	Occurrence	Percentage of Stated Support (n=255)
Funding	82	32.2%
Volunteer Support	37	14.5%
Human Resources (staff, membership, leaders)	24	9.4%
Policy/ Legislation	17	6.7%
Professional Services	16	6.3%
Miscellaneous	16	6.3%
Relationship to Government	12	4.3%
Attitudinal	11	4.1%
Communication/ Marketing	10	3.9%
Training	10	3.9%
Networking/ Coordination	8	3.1%
Infrastructure	8	3.1%
Research	2	0.8%
Application Process	2	0.8%

Organizational development affects capacity and effectiveness in a number of ways.

➤ Overall, organizational health is pivotal to success.

Effective organizational development – or health – has been the key contribution to the success of conservation and stewardship groups over the past five years, according to the survey results. Respondents were asked to identify the “three characteristics of your organization or group that have most contributed to its success.” Their 382 replies can be classified into 10 categories, as shown in Table 22. Several of the factors in success are related to organizational health – motivation, direction, organizational culture, human resources and management and decision-making.

Organizational health has several benefits: it keeps organizations together; it makes organizations more effective in their work; and it gives them a positive image in the

Table 22: Stated reasons for success

Stewardship and Conservation Groups' Stated Reasons for their Success		
Reason for Success	Occurrence	Percentage of Stated Reasons (n=382)
Motivation/ Commitment	123	32.2%
Organizational culture/approach	60	15.7%
Human Resources*	43	11.3%
Networking	34	8.9%
Programs/ Initiatives	37	9.7%
Management & Decision-making	21	5.5%
Community Based	18	4.7%
Track Record	19	5.0%
Fundraising	11	2.9%
Direction/Focus	16	4.2%

* Staff, membership, and volunteers

view of funders. On the latter point, one Canadian leader in fundraising in the social sector states, “The greatest asset we have is our credibility, so make sure you’re [fund]raising for an organization that is ethically and financially well-managed” (Carol Oliver in McClintock 2003).

At the same time as being a factor in past success, organizational development is an important challenge to the effectiveness of stewardship and conservation groups. Survey results suggest it is the third most important challenge next to funding and sufficiency of members and volunteers. The desires of group representatives in relation to organizational development were numerous. They included the following:

- establishing financial security; e.g., paying off a debt, taking on responsibilities for a trust, and getting charitable status;
- learning and getting the experience necessary to be effective;
- making progress towards the group’s objectives, goals and mission statement (e.g., having an impact on environmental decision-making, becoming a leader in a certain area);
- ensuring that the group’s work remains relevant to the local community and otherwise maintaining a connection with the community (e.g., ensuring group membership is representative, encouraging involvement);
- strategic planning and managing growth.

➤ *Organizational culture is somewhat intangible, yet a key factor in a group’s effectiveness.*

Factors identified by survey respondents as contributing to the success of their groups were overwhelmingly focused on the culture of their organizations: the commitment of the people involved and the approach to their work. These factors are described below.

According to survey respondents, the people in successful groups (membership, staff, board, executive and volunteers) are:

- **Dedicated** – Other phrases used to describe this quality were: strongly interested, sincere, dedicated to the mission, committed to the group and its work/projects and conservation issues, work hard, and take pride in their work.
- **Determined** – In other words, patient, single-minded, persevering, persistent, energetic, have fortitude, tenacious, stubborn, and stay with the issue.
- **Highly motivated** – Also described as enthusiastic, devoted to the area, passionate, concerned for species, and love the ecosystem/area/environment.

According to survey respondents, successful groups:

- **Have cohesiveness** – In the form of trust and respect among volunteers, support of the membership, ability to work together, and willingness to get involved.
- **Have an upbeat and positive atmosphere** – The people involved have fun. They have a dynamic and enjoyable workplace where staff enjoy doing the work and enjoy working together.
- **Are principled (hold true to their vision), responsible and reliable** – They finish projects and act in a professional manner.
- **Use scientific information and their work is fact-based** – They base decisions and recommendations on good scientific and/or traditional knowledge. They engage in creative problem solving.
- **Are proactive** – But also responsive (responds to environmental issues quickly, responsive to needs of members and volunteers), flexible, adaptive and innovative.
- **Are open to new ideas** – That is, willing to learn, try new things, learn from experience (experimentation) and explore new opportunities.

- Are open-minded – show diplomacy, are objective, are respectful of other’s opinions, and have broad representation from all sectors of society.
- Take a broad view – Or a broad approach. They try to balance economic, social and ecological sustainability.
- Are non-adversarial – They play a non-advocacy role and are non-political and non-confrontational. They take a soft approach and show a positive attitude.

➤ *Strategic planning helps groups manage growth and stay focused on their mission.*

Survey responses show that some groups are naturally or purposefully growing. They are expanding services and programs, playing new roles such as advocacy, taking on more responsibilities such as acquiring more land, or expanding their geographical focus. Examples of the latter were expansion from a stream to an entire watershed or from a local to a provincial or national scale. Growth in any of these forms has accompanying challenges, particularly in financial and human resource management. Some groups are deliberating on whether to stay small or expand their mandate and activities, and others have chosen to maintain a more limited focus, e.g., within a small geographical region. An important way groups make decisions about growth and manage it effectively is by staying focused on a clear vision or mission through strategic thinking, the identification of practical targets to drive short-term accomplishments, and long-term planning. Survey respondents identified as qualities contributing to success: a compelling vision, a long-term mission, a keen sense of purpose, a focus on projects directly related to the mandate, well-defined goals, and a steadfast focus on objectives.

Many group representatives drew attention to the need for better and more frequent strategic planning, sometimes with the help of a professional facilitator. One representative also called for clear workplans for staff and volunteers. These tools were seen as necessary to focus the work of the organization. One of their top three challenges identified by several representatives was the difficulty of deciding what issues to engage with or what projects to work on. Others listed the challenge of keeping programs current and updated so that they reflect the interests of the membership, or staying attuned to the needs of members and volunteers. A couple of respondents mentioned the challenge of adapting to the changing world, and ensuring the organization remains relevant and effective with limited resources.

Interviewees similarly asserted that to be effective conservation and stewardship groups need to concentrate on their mission and not spread themselves too thin. They should do a few things well, ensuring that operations are as streamlined as possible and that the work taken on is within the available budget. Scarce funds should be spent on projects that are most justified scientifically and in terms of the group’s mandate. Part of this focused approach involves learning to say “no” and part involves good goal and objective setting. Business planning is another function that could help groups function efficiently and effectively, and help build the case for core funding.

Regular evaluations should accompany sound strategic planning. Groups need to take time to critically evaluate their work. Plans need to be adapted over time and the achievement of short-term goals celebrated.

“Groups should be accountable to the outcomes of their programs. Look at the progress on the ground to evaluate success. All we’re currently measuring is the amount of money spent and staff time and numbers and that is not really being effective.” (Interviewee)

➤ *Management and decision-making practices also affect performance.*

Survey respondents pointed to management structures and practices that bolster organizational health. Excellent internal administration and especially good fiscal management is an important factor. Decision-making that is consensus-based, non-hierarchical and transparent was emphasized. For example, one survey respondent explained that the opinions and ideas of the

membership are filtered up and play an important role in guiding the organization. Some representatives of small groups felt that they had an easier time making decisions and developing and implementing programs and projects efficiently than larger groups.

A variety of resources, from human resources to information resources, are central to capacity.

➤ *One of the biggest challenges for many groups is staffing.*

Many groups place lack of staff on par with lack of funding – and the two constraints are related. Interviewees and survey respondents observe that funding to pay salaries is difficult to obtain (a low priority for funding agents), and staff shortages reduce the capacity for fundraising. Having paid staff is often seen as a key factor in increasing overall capacity – especially for small groups that have so far depended on volunteers.

Typically, stewardship and conservation groups cannot provide their employees with the same level of compensation and job security as employees working in other sectors, and this makes it difficult to attract and keep workers. As their employees gain expertise they become more attractive to the private sector and may be lured away to offers of higher pay and more stability. This leads to high turnover, loss of continuity, and less experienced staff in the conservation and stewardship sector. Qualified staff can be difficult to attract at less competitive salaries, and positions can take a long time to fill. High turnover also means the groups are constantly training new people.

Other factors affecting continuity of staffing are the shortage of ongoing funding and the requirement of some employment programs that employees (often interns) may not stay in a position more than one year. Lack of funding affects not only salaries, but also a group's ability to keep staff fully utilized, active and motivated. Uncertainty – e.g., not knowing whether the group can afford a coordinator for the coming year – stifles a long-term approach in the pursuit of the group's mission.

Particular types of employees that would especially add to capacity according to survey respondents are administrative staff, executive directors, communications experts, volunteer coordinators and staff who could plan events. An interviewee also identified a lack of lobbyists.

With fewer staff, more work falls on the shoulders of volunteers, and employees may be over-worked. Furthermore, without staff to coordinate volunteers, there are fewer volunteers. The lack of adequate numbers of people contributes to a pervasive problem of burnout. Several group representatives said they wish their groups could hire more staff to prevent or mitigate burnout, and to have the capacity to deal with new and emerging issues. Interviewees also emphasized the issue of burnout.

“The work is very demanding – there's a burnout of staff and volunteers. The work is hard and it can take a long time before you see any benefits.” (Interviewee)

➤ *Recruiting and keeping members and volunteers can be “a matter of survival” for conservation and stewardship groups.*

After funding, volunteer support was the factor most often identified as most likely to improve a group's ability to meet its objectives. Mirroring this priority, recruiting and keeping members and volunteers was the second most pressing challenge for the majority of conservation and stewardship groups surveyed. Some group representatives refer to matters of membership and volunteers in terms of “organizational survival.” The more sufficient the number of volunteers, the less dependent the group is on funding for salaries.

Dedicated volunteers with good connections in the community can contribute much to the effectiveness of a group. Related issues are: sustaining the energy level of volunteers, the amount

of time that volunteers have available to contribute, keeping volunteers interested in the organization, finding younger volunteers, getting more experienced and knowledgeable volunteers, having volunteers who are dedicated to the group's goals, and maintaining highly skilled volunteers. Interviewees as well as survey respondents identified volunteer burnout as a serious issue.

A key category of volunteers is the board of directors of an organization. Many survey respondents (over 20) highlighted the challenges of successional planning and sustaining the board of directors. Related problems are frequent turnover in board membership, keeping a core of directors active and dedicated to the organization, ensuring that the organization has board members interested in taking a leadership role, finding directors with skills and energy, improving the skills and knowledge of the board, ensuring that the board is representative of the community, and attracting young people into the board of directors. The challenge of filling positions is particularly difficult in the case of leadership roles such as the executive positions on the board. A common fear is "what will happen when the president steps down?"

Given the importance of volunteers, ways must be found to minimize turnover and burnout. Measures that can help are professional services support, staff support, training, and recognition of the time they expend and the contribution they make.

Closely related to volunteers is the topic of membership. Approximately 40 survey respondents identified loss of members or the need to maintain membership or recruit new members as one of the top three challenges their group will face over the next ten years, and this challenge represented 27% of the total number of stated challenges. Membership issues included challenges such as fostering diversity, attracting active members and maintaining the interest and support of the membership. A key concern was the need to get younger people involved, with more than 16 respondents listing this as a challenge. Younger members are needed to ensure that the group is sustainable, since older members will retire from active membership eventually.

"Right now a lot of the way we operate is to send out requests or demands for money, but you can't ever get enough money, therefore it's a question of whether you can substitute public volunteers for money." (Interviewee)

➤ *Leadership is a key factor in sustaining and building organizations.*

Leadership positions include executive directors, presidents or chairs and boards of directors. A good leader will be an anchor and at the same time be visionary, guiding the group to new levels of accomplishment. Leadership is especially important at the early stages, to sustain an organization until it is up-and-running.

"In terms of the landowner organizations, we need more people within our organizations who have the skill and vision to be more effective proponents of stewardship." (Interviewee)

Survey respondents and interviewees highlighted the need to recruit new people for leadership positions from time to time. Concerns about the aging of the current generation of leaders were consistent with the calls for younger volunteers and youth.

To remain new and enthusiastic about the group's work, the group needs to bring new people into the organization and into leadership positions. Having the same staff people for many years at a stretch can cause the group to become stagnant in terms of projects, finding new funding opportunities, and getting new members.

➤ *Access to skills and expertise can make groups more proficient in their work and add to their credibility.*

In addition to having sufficient numbers of staff and volunteers for program delivery and other tasks, survey responses made it clear that organizations need access to a range of expertise. Many

group representatives attributed past success in part to having the necessary expertise; for example, technical expertise, scientific expertise and lobbying expertise. Important skills mentioned included problem solving and grant proposal writing. Both interviewees and survey respondents commented on a lack of skilled technical people and other experts who could bring enough expertise to the organization to carry out some of things they are advocating.

“Funding builds the expertise which builds the credibility.” (Interviewee)

Upgrading the skills and knowledge of staff members and volunteers through training is a priority. Many group representatives said their organizations would benefit from high quality, affordable training on topics such as social marketing, “the nuts and bolts of conservation initiatives,” and fundraising, including internet-based fundraising.

Access to professional services can supplement the skills and expertise of staff and volunteers. Access to experts on an issue-by-issue basis was a factor in the success of one group, and having experienced professionals or experts in the membership was also mentioned. Areas of assistance identified by group representatives in the survey were communication expertise, financial planning/accounting expertise, legal advice/services, and developing a high quality website.

“If you’re negotiating a stewardship agreement with a landowner and they would like a tax receipt for a value of a covenant, getting an appraisal for that can be extremely costly right now particularly under the new eco-gifts legislation.” (Interviewee)

➤ *Many groups lack sufficient physical infrastructure and technology.*

For many groups, capacity is constrained by the lack of physical infrastructure. Staff and volunteers require certain resources to do their work. Some groups need office space or improved office space (e.g., a street front office with greater public visibility). Others need to obtain or update technology, including computer equipment, audio-visual equipment and photocopiers. Some highlight information technology, for example Internet and cellular equipment (especially in rural areas).

➤ *Groups need good knowledge, information and data to justify and guide their conservation and stewardship actions.*

Some organizations have research or data gathering as a central purpose, usually via mapping, inventory and monitoring programs. The information gathered by these groups can then be used by other stewardship and conservation organizations.

More research would provide the knowledge needed by the sector to keep progressing toward ecological and sustainable goals. Research in the area of stewardship and landscape conservation would help in identifying priority sites, achieving connectivity between sites, getting larger protected areas, etc. Having knowledgeable people in the organization – whether staff or volunteers – contributes to success. Survey respondents highlighted knowledge of local lands and resources, knowledge from other areas with comparable circumstances, knowledge of natural history and knowledge of the community.

Some interviewees and survey respondents pointed to a lack of knowledge, science, information or data as constraints on their capacity. The credibility and effectiveness of their work depends on good research and on access to existing information. Government cutbacks to research and data collection programs are a serious loss in this respect, particularly since information from contractors may be less reliable and data in private organizations may be impossible to obtain. (Others prefer non-government sources of research.) One suggestion was that the State of Environment Report should be updated regularly.

“It’s easy to be emotional about issues, but we have to back them with data. This is poorer than it was a few years ago. ... Government opting out of objective analytical processes is a big mistake; they’re responsible to all parties.” (Interviewee)

“We need research and information for organizations themselves to fully understand the importance of stewardship in the system.” (Interviewee)

An area of performance often limiting the capacity of groups is marketing and communication.

➤ *Groups need to improve their skills in communication, including “messaging.”*

The survey responses did not reflect a strong emphasis on communications as a factor in success, although one representative did recommend a good communications strategy in this respect. In contrast, all three stewardship organizations examined in case studies in a BC report put effective use of the media forward as a reason for success. More specifically, strong linkages with the local media helped to spread the message of the groups and get political leverage (Rosenau and Angelo 2001). Similarly, the interviewees highlighted the need for good conservation marketing. This would help people to realize the importance of conservation in their daily lives, and would give landowners and the broader public a better understanding of what stewardship is and what it takes to put it into practice. If successful, the educational effect would change attitudes, leading to behaviour changes, more individual contributions to conservation causes, and public support to put more tax dollars into protecting basic ecological services.

Several survey respondents said that their group’s ability to achieve its objectives would be improved through better communications – from remodelled websites to communications strategies. Groups need to pitch their messages at the appropriate level for each audience. Messages and tools such as maps, graphs, brochures and videos need to effectively make the case for the group at the political, corporate and broad social levels. They also need to pursue a wider audience – the public at large – rather than those who are already on side.

“Conservation organizations ... need to learn how to express opinions in a way that it is understood. Most communication is way too complicated for the average Canadian.”
(Interviewee)

Better messaging is a particular concern in communications about stewardship with landowners. A survey respondent said that the communication process should be streamlined so that landowners are not bombarded with competing messages sharing a similar focus, while an interviewee mentioned that stewardship groups need to make it more clear that they are talking about multiple uses of land rather than locking land up. Communication between stewardship groups and landowners and industry should be two-way, rather than the usual one direction, from the groups to these players.

“A lot of the time, when you first start talking to landowners, there’s a bit of a misunderstanding, they think you want to restrict all uses and put a big fence around it, which certainly isn’t the case.” (Interviewee)

In general, interviewees felt that closer attention to the market for the conservation message would lead to less confrontational and negative messaging, and more emphasis on the benefits of protecting the environment.

“We need a shift from purism - what we’re finding is that in US and Canada, groups think that solution to getting behaviour change is to have everyone on bikes and kayaks, but from the marketing perspective you can’t try to inflict own ideologies on others because you lose people. ... We have to be consumer driven by the needs of client rather than the needs of the group and even, the needs of the environment. Don’t let your own ideology get in way of the work.” (Interviewee)

- *Better communication of the value of the work would increase support for stewardship and conservation groups.*

Another area of communication and messaging of some importance is the need for promotion of the conservation and stewardship groups themselves. Survey respondents identified a number of related challenges: maintaining the public's interest in the group's work, promoting the group's work, marketing the group, engaging the community in the group's work, raising the group's profile among other organizations, and changing the public image of naturalists.

Better marketing could increase a group's public profile, build public support of the group and the value of their work, and portray a more accurate image of the group (e.g., some are misunderstood to be part of government). To the latter end, better branding is called for. Groups could also do a better job of making funders aware of the value provided in return for each dollar contributed, through leveraging of other funds and the investment of volunteer time.

“One of the things that we like to do with funding partners is really clearly point out that for every dollar you're contributing to our program, this is the actual return for your dollar. For some programs, the return may be \$15-\$16, because every bit that you contribute helps us lever funds elsewhere.” (Interviewee)

Activities and events for members and the public can be an effective way of publicizing the qualities of a group and the values it promotes. Survey respondents said that speaker programs, field trips and guided walks draw interest and attracted new people.

3.4.3 *The promise of a sector working at full capacity*

The research indicates that current and projected levels of funding are not meeting the needs of the conservation and stewardship sector. While many factors affect the capacity of groups and organizations to meet their objectives, the top factor is funding, and many other variables such as staffing and infrastructure are directly affected by funding. Before going on to examine potential solutions to the funding problem in section 4, this section looks at what might be accomplished if the sector was working to its full potential.

The findings reported here primarily come from interviewees' responses to two questions:

- What is the most important work that the stewardship and conservation sector needs to undertake over the next 10 years?
- If the sector was working at its full potential, what else do you think it would be able to accomplish? OR Please describe two or three additional contributions that the stewardship/conservation sector could make if it was working at its full potential.

A sector working at full capacity would do more work with a broader scope.

- *More would be accomplished, with greater ease and quality, at a faster pace.*

There would be more staff and volunteers to do project work, research, communications and outreach, etc. Groups would plan further ahead in their work, using strategic plans and conservation plans.

“Our job would be so much easier it would be unbelievable. Dossiers would be zipping out in days rather than months.” (Interviewee)

- *The scope of stewardship and conservation work would broaden and take on a longer-term perspective.*

The emphasis of the work of many groups or organizations would shift to provincial or national programs or approaches. Attention to national policies would increase.

Rather than focusing on individual sites or parcels of land, perspectives would be at a broader landscape scale that reflects issues of connectivity, etc. An integrated approach such as an ecosystem approach would be used to integrate large goals. Groups would look further ahead in their work through conservation land planning and strategic planning, making better use of their resources.

“It will be a different scope from working on a wetland at home to a national program – we will have to have a wide frame visioning process.” (Interviewee)

“We have an overarching vision of measuring what we do now to seven generations down the road – multiply every land use decision by 100 years – and every time we do something – even along a local creek, we do it in that context, so people begin to understand. We need 7th generation ethics and sustainability filters.” (Interviewee)

“The more pressed you are, the less able you are to make good use of your resources. With a planned and long-term perspective, you could make more comprehensive use of your resources.” (Interviewee)

A sector working at full capacity would have credibility because of its track record.

➤ *The public would recognize and appreciate the work of the sector.*

Through better communications and promotion, the public would come to recognize the value of stewardship work and how it is beneficial to individuals and society as a whole. Recognition would also spread through government, beyond Environment Canada and other environmental departments to other government agencies. The private sector – corporations and industry – would also increase its appreciation for the contribution of stewardship. This increased appreciation would translate into electoral and behavioural support, which would in turn build the effectiveness of the sector. Stewardship and conservation groups could then invest more of their energy into actions for the environment and less into the work of changing attitudes.

“The biggest thing for public as whole, and especially for politicians, is to value the contribution that stewardship makes. Politicians and constituents are reluctant to support stewardship because they believe it takes away from the economic development potential of the province. We have to get past that and realize the opposite is actually true: stewardship activities actually contribute to economic development.” (Interviewee)

➤ *A cumulative record of success would lead to more success.*

One of the factors to which many of the surveyed group representatives attribute their success over the past five years is their experience in conducting environmental work and their record of accomplishments – success breeds success. A group that has had positive impacts is better known and respected by other groups, organizations, government agencies, local residents and individuals.

Longevity, combined with a reputation for high quality work, gives groups credibility among stakeholders, with government and with the media. Funding organizations also have confidence in a group with a proven track record. Representatives of groups surveyed attributed some of their success over the past five years to having delivered projects that are innovative, pioneering, popular, original and diversified.

A sector working at full capacity would prompt improvements in government’s approach to protecting the environment.

➤ *Stewardship and conservation groups would have more influence on government and impact on government policy.*

The sector would play a leadership role in setting the public agenda. Greater efforts to influence government, e.g., through lobbying, nominations at election time and education of elected

officials, would result in more government responsiveness to environmental issues. The state of the environment would be more integrated into public debates and politics. Government would take on conservation responsibilities and bolster environmental policies as part of serving the public trust.

➤ *New tools, and improved methods of environmental management would be developed.*

The sector would help to develop new ways to protect and manage land so as to maintain ecological functions. Adequate research would be undertaken to support good management. Environmental protection policies and legislation would be better implemented, and backed up by an increasing focus on enforcement.

A sector working at full capacity would have a positive impact on public awareness and engagement in stewardship and conservation.

➤ *The sector would have more involvement in education.*

Many groups surveyed identified effective public education as a factor in their success over the past five years. Different respondents mentioned the following as attributes of their groups: provision of useful information to the public, linkages of public education with meaningful work, strong education component, effective awareness-raising, educational focus, dedication to public education, unique and innovative educational program, ability to inspire the general public to care about the natural area, detailed education campaign, high quality educational material, etc.

In a sector working at full capacity, public education would be even more central, including linking and outreach to schools. In addition to seeking closer integration of conservation and stewardship into current curricula, the sector could catalyze change in the education system. It can also deliver educational opportunities outside of the school system. These efforts would increase the next generation's understanding of environmental processes and imperatives.

“We could be assisting in the education process for sustainability. I don't think education should be left with school system or universities. There's a big role for the ENGO sector which could do it better than the private sector or government. ENGO's are innovative, and often more knowledgeable...” (Interviewee)

➤ *Awareness of the need to protect the environment would increase.*

With appreciation of the value of stewardship would come higher societal awareness that the future depends on a healthy environment. The public would understand that everything is intertwined and that basic ecological resources provide for our essential needs. Eventually, a conservation ethic or sustainable land use ethic in the public at large would increase the demand for change and again, lead to support for the work that needs to be done.

“Everybody would be working on same wavelength. The problem with conservation is that you feel like you are always fighting. If you weren't always struggling, and fighting against something, you could just get on with your work.” (Interviewee)

➤ *Communities would be more involved in the work of the sector.*

Greater capacity would be developed among community-based groups, largely by using a learning-by-doing approach. There would be more hands-on, “feel good,” projects in communities. Groups would interact intensively with communities and local government. As a review of BC's Habitat Conservation Stewardship discovered, “In many communities, HCSP [Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program] was successful at expanding community capacity as it provided funding for the hiring of staff to facilitate, coordinate and engage citizens in proactive habitat protection” (Malette, pers. comm. 2003).

A sector working at full capacity would more effectively protect the environment “on the ground.”

➤ *More land would be protected.*

Protection of the full range of ecosystems would meet the ultimate goal of the conservation movement. This would include the securing of critical habitat such as riparian zones remaining on the landscape. It would be achieved largely through the designation of protected areas (e.g., through land use planning in BC) and by acquiring and placing land in trust for ecological purposes. In addition, new ways would be found to use land with minimal impacts while securing as habitat.

“[A sector working at full capacity] would be able to do more in acquiring and designating land for ecological purposes. In past, it’s been easier for groups to approach government and ask them to designate crown land, but in future it’s not going to be that easy.” (Interviewee)

➤ *Landowners would adopt more stewardship practices.*

Landowners and land managers would clearly see the value of stewardship. Because more individuals would feel a greater responsibility to implement stewardship practices, a greater proportion of landowners would change their land use practices. There would be a lot more land under stewardship across Canada – in stewardship agreements and in legal protection agreements, and ecological values would be protected across the landscape. The broader society would share in the cost of producing, maintaining and enhancing the production of environmental services from private land.

➤ *Overall, environmental quality would be improved.*

As a result of all the accomplishments discussed above, a variety of environmental benefits would be achieved through stewardship and conservation, including:

- cleaner water, more consistent water supply and reduced flooding;
- soil conservation;
- energy conservation;
- increased biodiversity;
- sustainable food production and healthier food supply;
- restored ecosystems for recreational use;
- a healthier society - on both physical and psychological levels.

“Let’s go back to the basic concept of stewardship– taking care of something that doesn’t belong to just to you, but rather to the whole world. If we were actually accomplishing this, we would be taking better care of the environment.” (Interviewee)

“We would go further in restoring degraded ecosystems which brings back their lost uses. People in communities love to have ecosystems restored. You often hear things like, ‘I haven’t fished there in years’. It enlarges people’s experience of their own environment.” (Interviewee)

“[A sector working to its full potential would start showing verifiable environmental results – physically and chemically cleaner air and water, all kinds of critters running around, an ecosystem back to good working system and able to take care of itself, increased hunting opportunities ...” (Interviewee)

➤ *There would be progress towards sustainability.*

Ultimately, effective work by the sector would move Canada toward an economy that would afford economic opportunities within the environmental realities. Sustainability would be maintained on both the economic and landscape level. Local communities would experience a full range of benefits from having protected areas and carefully stewarded private lands.

“In the end, the movement that we are part of, what we are working towards, is to re-engineer society. From equipment use to the way we do land-use planning – it’s a major rebuilding project. To be sustainable, we need to kick in a whole bunch of facets from leaving land to changing the food supply to changing windows and doors – it’s a huge job.” (Interviewee)

“The value of stewardship and conservation work would be demonstrated in economic ways – in the ability to create education, job opportunities, etc.” (Interviewee)

“If the sector was working at full potential, it would ensure that Canada would always be a great place to live.” (Interviewee)

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

How can the extraordinary value of the work of the conservation and stewardship sector be recognized by investment commensurate with its worth to the quality of life of Canadians and our globally significant ecosystems? What fundamental roles need to be played and by whom? This section of the report develops options and recommendations for improving the long-term sustainability of conservation and stewardship groups. Three aspects of funding are addressed, and then non-financial mechanisms for capacity building are set out. Finally, the notion of integrating sectors towards a broader vision as a way of increasing the effectiveness of conservation and stewardship is discussed.

The ideas in this concluding section of the report are drawn directly from interview results as well as being derived from the preceding analysis. Findings of other studies and literature resources supplement the primary research results.

4.1 *Funding sources, priorities and processes*

Conclusions and recommendations are put forward here on three interrelated aspects of funding: sources, priorities, and forms and processes.

4.1.1 *Funding sources*

Setting aside for now questions of what funds are needed for (priority targets), and the processes of funding, what are the relative roles of different sources of funding? Below, the main categories of funding sources are discussed. Note that current sources of funding and associated funding pressures for conservation and stewardship groups are described in an earlier section.

Foundation funding is a cornerstone of the funding mix and continued support from philanthropic organizations is necessary, even as greater diversity in sources is pursued.

Ideally, foundation grants would continue or even increase; more Canadian foundations would make grants in the environmental field, and the ranks of the environmental grant makers would grow. Barring a significant economic recovery and some changes in philanthropic priorities, this is unlikely. Instead, as grants dwindle in size and numbers, stewards and conservationists are having to confront an over-reliance on foundations for funding. Even in better economic times, foundations may close or change their funding priorities, and Canada’s foundation asset wealth is a small fraction of that available in the US.

Interviewees noted the problem of reliance on foundation grants that appear to be no longer as reliable as an ongoing source of funds due to the current economic downturn. As some conservation and stewardship groups make the changes to reduce their dependency on major

grants, it would be helpful if foundations could provide transitional funding to bridge the period when alternative sources have not yet been built up to the necessary levels.

The main improvements that foundations could make other than stable and increased funding, from the perspective of conservation and stewardship groups, are to provide more *core* funding (general support) and to streamline grant application and accounting procedures. This latter recommendation, which also applies to government, is discussed under funding forms and processes.

Michael Shuman, who publishes often in the US press on funding issues, listed 11 specific recommendations for funders in the form of a “Grantee Bill of Rights.” While almost 15 years old, the recommendations would appear to serve many of the needs of the interviewees and respondents in this study. In summary, these “rights” are:

1. The right to know a foundation’s interests (the fields and activities they’re interested in and the kinds of programs they like)
2. The right to just hear “no” (rather than a false maybe)
3. The right to a meeting
4. The right to grants larger than the cost of getting them
5. The right to general support
6. The right to multi-year support
7. The right to uniform paperwork
8. The right to uniform reporting
9. The right to help and be helped
10. The right to achieve self-sufficiency
11. The right to respect (Shuman 1989).

Government funding sources will continue to be important.

A central part of any government’s mandate, in administering the public trust, is to support conservation practices happening on the landscape. Good “value for money” is derived on the taxpayer’s behalf when government provides funds to stewardship and conservation groups towards environmental work. The groups can accomplish more for less money than government agencies can, and long-term social and economic benefits of this work will accrue to society in the form of environmental services.

Programs such as the Habitat Conservation Stewardship Program in BC, and the federal Agricultural Policy Framework (an anticipated new source) are appreciated as providers of stable funding, and loss of stewardship funding programs has been a major blow in some areas (Kariya 2002).

Regional and local governments can be more responsive to needs of conservation movement and volunteers than higher levels of government. As more environmental management responsibilities are “downloaded” to municipalities, they will need to work more closely with stewardship groups to have the capacity to meet these responsibilities. *Canada’s Stewardship Agenda* states that “governments should invest resources at the local level in order to encourage the recruitment and retention of stewards, support the administration of programs and increase capacity to help implement stewardship programs” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002b).

“I think it’s great that Environment Canada and other governments have decided to do some prioritization of environmental work since we have seen the opposite for years. Hopefully as we begin to understand issues such as climate change and water, we will have more tax dollars spent on ensuring the long-term sustainability of our communities. Although, it’s negative that we’ve had to wait until we have seen the negative impacts, at least we are now recognizing that you cannot separate economics and health from environmental protection

and accessing natural resources. So we will see new sources of funding due to recognizing this link.” (Interviewee)

Governments have an array of possible funding sources they could establish, or draw upon, including:

- conservation lotteries;
- conservation license plates (revenues from extra fees to have a license plate showing support for conservation);
- “green taxes” which would take a percentage of expenditures on goods or activities that use environmental services, e.g., outdoor recreation equipment;
- surcharges on profits of industries that impact on the environment in their operations or use non-renewable resources (resource taxes);
- fees from licences or permits, as fishing/hunting licence fees are currently used in some jurisdictions;
- a portion of the income from “user-pay” systems such as household water billing;
- “polluter pay” – fines from pollution convictions, etc.;
- carbon credit income for stewardship groups involved in activities that offset carbon.

A number of other diverse fundraising approaches that depend on government initiative are discussed by Sandborn (1996) in connection with revenue generation for protected areas. These include conservation bonds, gasoline taxes, monies from unclaimed container deposits, dedication of a percentage of revenues from the sale of Crown Lands and income tax check-offs in which the taxpayer has the opportunity to donate a portion of their tax refund.

Despite the continued major role that government funding must play, there is a downside to over-reliance on government funding. First, groups that depend on a particular program can find themselves suddenly short of funding should that program be cancelled; second, there is a possibility that groups which receive a high proportion of funding from the government may be less inclined to take on an advocacy or watchdog role even when circumstances might call for that (Rekart 1994). A workshop on “Local Stewardship and Caring Communities” pointed out other common pitfalls of stewardship programs, including lack of long term planning or vision, lack of training, limited resources, lack of information, and “in some places, a resistance to, or a lack of awareness of the potential of, partnership-building” (Evergreen Association, n.d.).

(See also the sections on “Funding forms and processes,” and “Non-financial support from government.”)

The private sector should play an increasing role in funding.

Although many stewardship and conservation groups already seek funding from industry and the private sector, there is further potential for the sector to invest in conservation either through specific funds or in other ways. Many believe that industries that have had an impact on the environment, or that rely on natural resources for their income (such as forestry and agriculture), should be investing more in conservation as part of their corporate responsibility. The private sector stands to gain not only public support (which can translate into spending) but also a sustainable resource base.

Several corporations have established stewardship and conservation funding arms to provide funds (e.g. TD Friends of the Environment). Some of these corporate donation programs have a reputation for being genuine while others are more “greenwash” in their image. Different groups have different ethical judgements not only of the programs, but of the appropriateness of

corporate sponsorship in general and willingness to accept these funds varies. The appropriateness also varies according to the group's mandate and the types of projects involved.

At the local level, where relationships can be built on a face-to-face basis and the players are all part of the same community, assistance from the private sector may pose less of a dilemma, and partnerships with business and industry are increasingly being pursued. In contrast, "in many smaller communities in Atlantic Canada, the most prominent businesses are those engaged in resource extraction, making it difficult for conservation organizations to receive funding from them" (Ford 2002 p.9).

"Corporate contributions and funding from the private sector should be increased. Companies can show that they are environmentally friendly and have an environmental consciousness by being willing to support greening initiatives." (Interviewee)

A new source of private sector funding is "community development banking." These financial institutions may provide a non-profit revolving loan fund that provides loans at lower rates, and to ventures too small or too risky to qualify for loans from traditional banks (Grossman 1998 p.10). While these are more oriented to the support of progressive businesses, they could have some relevance to conservation and stewardship. For example, an interviewee suggested that a revolving loan fund could be established and stewardship groups could borrow from it to secure both working land and high-priority conservation land. The revenue stream generated by the working land could be used to repay the loans used to purchase both the working land and the conservation land. In essence the working land would subsidize the conservation of high-priority ecological land.

Individual donations, including bequests, are the funding source seen to have the most potential to help diversify the financial base for conservation and stewardship groups but they are not a panacea.

Some groups, such as wildlife and naturalist groups, often depend solely on membership fees, possibly combined with annual fundraising events, as their sole source of funds. These tend to be smaller groups and/or organizations with less ambitious, or at least less costly programs. They also target user groups who have a recreational or consumptive interest in the resources that are being protected through the efforts of the group.

Increasingly, the organizations that depend more on foundation and government grants are being urged by major funders, and are acknowledging the need, to shift their sources of revenue towards individual donations. These sources include membership fees, donations via direct mail campaigns, major donors, planned giving and bequests. A key advantage of this type of funding is that it supports core expenses and allows independence, as opposed to money from other sources that is tied to particular projects that may or may not relate directly to the organization's mandate. Other advantages are that it is more stable (less vulnerable to changes in government policies or interests of private foundations); it does not require time for applications and reporting; and, to many groups, it represents community support (Ford 2002 p.11).

"My strong belief is we should go on a 12-point program of weaning people from grants. Instead, we should be getting funding from donations and members." (Interviewee)

The individual donor route is not, however, a panacea. There are perennial challenges associated with fundraising this way:

- The Canadian public generally puts charitable causes other than the environment at the top of their donations list.
- "Because charitable giving usually mirrors the economy, the general public is stingier with its already scarce environmentally earmarked money" (Seipell 2003 p.8). Only two percent the

total number and value all charitable donations made by Canadians goes to environmental organizations (Hall et al. 2001a). There are regional variations too, with Saskatchewan having the highest levels of contributing and Quebec having the lowest (Reed and Selbee 2001).

- Organizations that do not have a user-group constituency (e.g., hunters, fishers, naturalists) have to engender interest in a larger public with a (perceived) less direct interest in the work of the group.
- Canvassing, advertising, asking for donations is time consuming, and even exhausting. Often the capacity to do this work in addition to project work is lacking.
- Active members of groups – volunteers including board members, are not very interested in fundraising.
- Asking members for money risks alienating them.

The success of donor development initiatives can be increased with the help of training in fundraising, advice from professional fundraisers, staff dedicated to fundraising, and by the involvement of board members as well as staff.

Types of individual donations with promise to supplement the traditional membership building and general appeal routes are planned giving (estates, bequests), and monthly giving – in which individuals commit to automatic monthly donations. A guide, *Green Legacies: A Donor's Guide for BC*, offers a range of tools and incentives to encourage bequests of money or land to environmental causes (Layard 2002). Planned giving has current promise in relation to demographics which put many people in an estate planning phase of life – Canadian society is entering a period of high, intergenerational transfer of wealth. However, by its nature it is future-oriented and funds are not immediately available.

See also the section on funding forms and processes, which includes a discussion of partnerships among groups to obtain funding.

“As we get buy-in from populace at large, funding opportunities will present themselves. For example, hunters have always been interested in conservation, because it's been to their benefit and they invest large dollars in all types of projects to support wildlife and habitat. The urban population is not connected to the environment so it will be a long, drawn out education process. But when the population says we want this, then funding will be a moot issue because the money will be there.” (Interviewee)

Sales of services and other mechanisms provide limited opportunities for groups and organizations to be more self-sufficient.

Funding has been changing due to a variety of impacts and will continue to change. Current sources of funding are not going to meet the needs of stewardship and conservation organizations, and foundations cannot remain to be the dominant type of funding instrument. It is broadly recognized that the conservation and stewardship sector needs to expand and diversify its base of funding sources and be more creative in finding funds.

“Diversification in funding is going to be required. We can't rely on government as much as in the past and foundations come and go and their priorities change, so you can't afford to put all your eggs in one basket.” (Interviewee)

Individual donations, discussed above, are the alternative to government and foundation sources of most interest. Other means of fundraising that are not dependent on government, philanthropic or private sector programs include the traditional activities of raffles, auctions, sales artwork, merchandizing and special events. While websites and email are adding to the efficiency of some of these efforts, they are still time-consuming and often more effective at “friend-raising” than

“fundraising.” Some groups that have specialized in merchandizing, such as in gift shops associated with national parks, have attained high levels of self-sufficiency.

An area of increasing interest is that of services for sale. Interviewees were asked directly whether they think that in the future stewardship and conservation groups will need to develop services for sale, and opinions varied widely. Those in favour of this form of revenue generation saw it as having good potential for diversifying funding sources and a way of spreading the costs of stewardship and conservation work. They felt that groups in the sector will have to think of themselves as a business at some point. Many organizations have developed expertise that is not available anywhere else and they should be paid for their time to develop alternative solutions to environmental management challenges. An approach that would bridge service and merchandizing could be a green, or “eco-labelling” marketing strategy.

The services themselves can be a way of further advancing the mission of the groups (a counter-opinion to this follows) by helping the private sector to operate more sustainably, by injecting conservation expertise into government decision-making, or by providing recreational and educational opportunities to the public that can raise environmental awareness. The kinds of services groups could charge for include:

- knowledge-based, fee-for-service consulting;
- conservation plans to real estate developers or for recreation or tourism on protected land;
- landowner directed education and technology transfer services;
- guiding, nature tours and/or interpretation in protected areas, parks or at special events (e.g., outdoor festivals);
- re-cycled paper buying clubs;
- inventories, mapping, monitoring;
- taking care of parks – facilities management, visitor services.

Many conservation groups are already providing de facto consulting services via their participation in processes for resource use planning or more general land use planning. Government and industry participants at these negotiating tables are well-paid and it is reasonable to expect that the conservation group representatives should also be paid. Sometimes these processes already do pay honoraria, or intervener funding.

“Our work is consultation– we are consulting most of the time. We are sitting down at negotiating tables for hours with well-paid people from the government and industry to give our opinion. This is the service of the conservation sector. Obviously, you have to be paid when you are sitting down with a bunch of very well paid people.” (Interviewee)

“The knowledge of the environmental sector has often been under-valued, and so groups haven’t thought to sell their knowledge, but in the future it will happen increasingly.” (Interviewee)

There are several risks associated with sales of services by conservation and stewardship groups, and some feel that it is simply not an appropriate way to achieve good stewardship. In principle, the work of the groups benefits the whole of society rather than the direct recipient of a service.

“Groups provide services now – environmental, change advocacy, watch dogging and in some cases enforcing – which is why individuals support the organizations. Individuals can’t provide these services themselves but can do so by supporting organizations and volunteering in them.” (Interviewee)

At the local level communities already contribute to costs of stewardship through volunteer time, donations and membership fees. Stewardship groups are there to share their knowledge with

community members who want to take action for the environment – they do not wish to add to the costs of those actions.

As charitable organizations, stewardship and conservation groups are often business-oriented, and can be unsuited to compete in the private sector. It is possible that stewardship could lose some of its credibility if offered as a for-profit activity. The most fundamental risk is that of constraints on an organization's ability to pursue its mandate, in that maintaining positive client relationships could take precedence over conservation-related priorities. Similar concerns have been raised in the broader literature on the not-for-profit sector. Eakin (2001 p.ii) states that “the literature documents the general failure of ‘contract funding’ as an efficient or effective method of funding services.”

“When you get into selling, your customer changes. Right now, if you're in stewardship, your customer is possibly the landowner or the land itself. When you're getting into selling services, it changes the focus and it can shift priorities – it might not shift them too seriously or negatively but has the potential to do so.” (Interviewee)

Beyond arguments of principle, the feasibility of fee-for-service options is potentially limited in the following ways:

- *Lack of business skills and infrastructure:* Those good at stewardship and conservation are not good at being entrepreneurs and keeping books. Not-for-profit groups are not usually interested in or experienced in providing tools and education for a cost. Smaller groups, especially, do not have the accounting infrastructure to handle sales of services. Busy volunteers would not have the time to develop services and products.
- *Willingness to pay:* The inappropriateness of charging community members for services was mentioned above. Similarly, landowners who are being encouraged to practice stewardship are unlikely to be willing to pay for the services provided by the stewardship group, and many of them are not in a position to pay for services. Putting the costs on the individual would limit the amount of work that gets done.
- *Profitability:* It is difficult for conservation and stewardship groups to find services or products that will be profitable and consistent with their mandate. Most feasible enterprises will already be provided by the private sector.

4.1.2 Funding priorities

Funders need to better appreciate the need for long-term conservation and stewardship and the kind of support the sector needs to do this work.

To some extent there is a lack of fit between the priorities of funding agencies and the needs and priorities of stewardship and conservation groups. This might be attributed to an actual divergence in priorities, differences in organizational culture, or a lack of understanding and communication. Stewardship and conservation group experience is that funders do not take enough of a long term perspective, for example, focusing on endangered species to the exclusion of protection of species that might be in decline but not endangered. Similarly, land trusts should be funded to protect a range of landscapes and habitat, and not just land that currently has a high ecological value. The priorities of some funding programs have been described as “feel-good stuff” or “busy work” rather than the long-term sustainability of environmental services.

“I don't know whether there needs to be greater understanding amongst potential funders, or maybe a greater diversity of funders or maybe just better communication from the stewardship community to potential funding partners as to what the priorities are and where the needs are.” (Interviewee)

Priority targets for funding from the conservation and stewardship group perspective generally focus on capacity-building.

Core funding, particularly payment for salaries, represents the biggest gap between funders priorities and group needs. When asked to identify three things that would most help their groups to accomplish their objectives, approximately 27 survey respondents stated core funding. Another five or so mentioned funding for staff or executive positions. Interviewees also focused on the need for core funding, including administration. They identified reluctance on the part of funders to fund “some of the less glamorous activities,” and grantmakers do indeed have a “program-oriented view of funding that does not take into account the ongoing supportive relationships that programs need to succeed” (The Environmental Support Center and Innovation Network, Inc. n.d.).

Funds for projects are generally not accompanied by funds that cover the infrastructure to support the project work. One possibility is to augment project or land acquisition funding with a proportion of the total grant to support implementation and/or ongoing management. For example, for every acquisition of land (through donations, payment, servitude) that the funding agencies provide for, a certain percentage (e.g. 10%) could be added to the grant for stewardship, monitoring and defence of the land. Another possible model is for funders to collaborate in contributing to a “virtual” fund for core funding – committing to put certain amounts into that fund to which groups could then apply for core funding.

“Funders need to recognize that if you don’t have an office and a computer and a telephone, it’s really difficult to conduct your stewardship program.” (Interviewee)

“Funding sources for conservation need to understand that there needs to be a relationship between core funding and project funding. For every million dollars of project funding you need reasonable percentage of funds to be able to deliver it.” (Interviewee)

These conclusions, based on the views of survey respondents and interviewees, are corroborated by a survey of executive directors of western environmental organizations which provided the following advice to funders: “Fund infrastructure and overhead as well as program activities in order to enhance organizational stability and reduce the fundraising pressure on executive directors. ... Continued emphasis on funding for special projects, rather than critically needed infrastructure, is in direct opposition to our study’s findings” (Vesnecki and Adess 2002).

Other stewardship and conservation group priorities that are not typically supported by government and philanthropic organizations relate to capacity-building or organizational development. This finding is supported by the conclusion reached by a Vancouver Foundation report in 1997: “The largest gap identified ... was the lack of resources and tools available to help not-for-profits build capacity and improve organizational effectiveness” (Ramsey and Reynolds 1997). Capacity building grants from foundations are especially appreciated. Specific needs include training (e.g., leadership, technical skills, fundraising), staffing (e.g., intern programs), and infrastructure (e.g., office space, computers).

Groups focused on private land stewardship or conservation of purchased properties need more funds to manage the lands in stewardship. They also put a high priority on funding for incentives or compensation for landowners who are incurring costs in order to maintain the ecological values of their properties.

Landowners need to be financially compensated for the costs of stewarding their lands.

Canada’s Stewardship Agenda— Compendium of Stewardship Programs and Activities in Canada— states that “economic incentives strengthen and facilitate a commitment to stewardship, especially where conservation actions or activities involve cost to landowners and resource

developers” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002a p.5). This document also provides examples of tax exemption or incentive programs from across the country. An example of a proposal for a new program is that being put to the Federal Government by a representative of Ducks Unlimited Canada is a Conservation Cover Incentive Program, which would pay landowners to protect or restore degraded Prairie potholes and other wetlands (Silverstone 2003). It is nevertheless doubtful that existing mechanisms are sufficient. A 1992 report on tax aspects of ecologically sensitive lands, particularly wetlands, concluded that the federal income tax system actually has negative economic impacts on a landowner wishing to gift environmentally significant land to charity or a government (Denhez 1992). Interviewee opinions suggest that the situation has not improved much over the past decade. Some emphasized the lack of funding for landowner incentives as a more serious constraint on conservation and stewardship than lack of funding to stewardship groups.

“There is still room for more tools in terms of tax improvement. Mostly in the income tax act – to make giving to organizations easier - whether you are giving a donation or gifts of stewardship agreements such as easements. Tax benefits have been improving but there’s still room for more improvement.” (Interviewee)

Interviewees often called for more and improved incentives – carrots rather than sticks – to private landowners and managers to steward their land. One asserted that currently, there is a tax incentive to clear the land. The opposite is needed: the best possible incentive package (fiscal and tax) that would encourage landowners to protect land. While it is ultimately beneficial to the private sector to have an amenity-based economy, the immediate costs of stewardship practices which maintain the flow of environmental services to all must be shared.

“You need to pay for the process of achieving impact on the ground by ensuring there are resources, incentives, etc. for landowners to maintain the function of ecological processes.” (Interviewee)

“Landowners make decisions based on many inputs of information from their accountants, business managers, environmental information, etc. If the goal is to maintain the function of ecological processes, we have to ensure that the economic, social and environmental benefits to these landowners point to that goal when they are making their key decisions.” (Interviewee)

4.1.3 Funding forms and processes

Longer-term, more stable funding is a necessity for the accomplishment of stewardship goals.

When asked to identify three things that would most help their groups to accomplish their objectives, more stable, long-term funding was the most frequently identified factor – with over 30 survey respondents mentioning it. Interviewees also called for long-term funding commitments instead of small-scale, piecemeal funding. This would allow groups to implement larger projects and projects that take time to realize results such as changing behaviour. It would also alleviate the year-to-year fundraising pressure. While most grants are on an annual or sometime two-year time frame, five years would be more suitable. At the least, when the same projects seek renewed funding, that should be an option. Too often groups are pressured to change their projects every couple of years. This reduces stability and the potential to achieve goals. Funders who seek to establish accountability on the part of the grant recipient would also benefit from multi-year financing because it would permit “the implementation of strategic objectives and consistency in programming, thereby allowing outcome-based assessment to be carried out in an ongoing way” (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector

1999). In other words, groups would have the capacity to make real progress and provide indications of this in their performance reviews.

“Doing a project on private land is like having a baby. Once it’s born, you have to care for it.” (Interviewee)

“Commit to multi-year projects; if you fund a program in year one and it comes back for funding in year 6, don’t automatically turn down because you have already contributed to it. Recognize that stewardship has to be ongoing and that funding needs to recognize that.” (Interviewee)

Endowments or other permanent funding sources can provide the long-term security that the environmental and stewardship sector is seeking. They may offer more stability than other sources of funding though economic downturns and unfavorable political regimes. Possible alternatives for this kind of funding include:

- Industries such as forestry and agriculture could put money in a specific fund for land conservation or stewardship.
- A portion of lottery funds could be earmarked for stewardship and conservation (e.g., the Great Outdoors Colorado program is financed this way) (Nowlan 1999).
- Government agencies such as Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada could combine project funding into a stewardship endowment fund.
- Organizations can acquire working lands from which they derive revenue via resource harvesting (e.g., agricultural lands).

Recently, a national fund to protect species at risk has been proposed, and it has been suggested that this fund could be broadened to include protection of biodiversity (Nowlan 1999). Examples of similar funds include Wildlife Habitat Canada, the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program in Ontario and the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program in the Yukon. Such funds need to be backed by strong government commitment, but the sources of funding for them could be a mixture of government, individual and private sector. Linda Nowlan (1999), at the time Staff Counsel for West Coast Environmental Law, analyses experience with such funds and lays out useful guidelines for their use, financing and structure.

“The various mechanisms need to be housed in such a way that won’t allow the next government who comes along to cancel them. Put the money into place so it can’t be tampered with and then partner, participate, and guide, but let us deliver it.” (Interviewee)

Leveraging is a process that has promise to expand available funds, although perhaps not as much promise as is generally assumed.

Matching funding is “the conditional approval of funding for a portion of a project subject to the agency securing the balance from another funder” (Eakin 2001 p.i). In the typical matching dollars process the government contributes an amount of funding equal to the amount raised by a group – generally in the context of money raised to purchase property. The group is able to use this commitment to encourage private donations. This kind of approach could be formalized into a program so that it would happen automatically rather than on an ad hoc basis. Federal and provincial partnerships could build the ability to leverage private money. A national-scale commitment could engage the provincial resources that will further leverage and engage private sector resources. Foundations or other funding programs could provide groups with core funding or seed money for use in matching and leveraging funding from industries and society in general. A cautionary note is in order, however. A report to the Voluntary Sector Initiative on the funding of Canada’s voluntary sector concluded that matching contribution funding, as a key funding trend of the 1990s, has not served the sector well (Eakin 2001). If there are few other sources to

tap, matching funding can be of little use, and the pursuit of (sometimes numerous) partners can be exhausting.

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy has proposed an ambitious new “highly leveraged” National Conservation Fund:

“The Round Table calls on the Prime Minister to make an initial investment of \$250 million in the Fund, and to encourage the provinces, territories and conservation community groups to match that investment by a target of 3:1. The fund would support priority conservation activities on a project-by-project basis consistent with the priorities outlined in this report, as well as other conservation initiatives across the country” (NRTEE 2003b p.81).

Cooperation among groups can reduce competition for limited funds and increase the effectiveness of fundraising.

A few survey respondents reported that one of the key factors in their success over the past five years was partnerships with other organizations in the pursuit of funding. Increased collaboration with groups sharing a common goal could reduce competition for the same pot of money. In Quebec, groups that have joined together have found it easier to get funding, and new partnerships are being formed between nature conservancy groups across the US border that are accessing American funds for Canadian conservation initiatives. This is particularly appropriate for species or habitats that go across boundaries.

When multiple groups pool their fundraising efforts it can open doors to new sources of funds. Social service models demonstrate a way of cooperating in fundraising; for example, in BC groups have collaborated on a work-place fundraising initiative similar to the United Way, but focused on environmental causes, via the Environmental Fund of BC. This kind of approach can allow multiple groups to benefit from the services of one (or a few) paid fundraisers. A single staff person can coordinate legions of volunteers.

“If you could tie the groups together, you could send a letter to funders with a checklist of groups asking them to check the one they want to fund or have the option of spreading the funds amongst all the groups. Then, rather than duplicating positions such as every group has an Executive Director, you would have one for all the groups and then each group just needs a volunteer coordinator.” (Interviewee)

Benefits of coordination gained in the pursuit of funds also extend in the reverse direction – the distribution of funds. Funders could be more efficient by funding large organizations and then having them lead a granting process to administer funds in user-friendly way. Access to funding could be facilitated by national and regional stewardship networks (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c p.13). Many small groups already obtain their funding from larger umbrella groups or associations. In addition to provincial and national federations, groups are also organizing increasingly at a regional or ecosystem level, such as in the Yellowstone to Yukon campaign. Already, grantmakers often distribute funds through a single conservation organization which serves as a “fiscal sponsor” and may or may not itself tap those funds for its own work. An example of an organization that plays this role is the Sierra Club of BC Foundation.

“Our organization is getting funding to help all the other organizations. This is impressive to funders and the government because we are protecting a large area. This gives us more clout; we are considered cutting-edge.” (Interviewee)

See also the section on cooperation among groups in the section on “Networks and connections.”

Application and reporting processes are a drain on the resources of the groups that seek and receive grants.

It would be easier for conservation and stewardship groups if there were more coordination between funding programs at the different levels of government and between foundations. Funding organizations could collaborate to reduce “red tape” in application, administration and reporting processes; to reduce duplication; and to enhance linkages among programs and projects. One suggestion is that they build a network to enhance effectiveness and reduce bureaucracy (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002c p.12).

Specifically, the stewardship and conservation groups surveyed would like:

- a letter of interest/inquiry prior to full scale submissions to ascertain eligibility and get guidance on applications,
- standardized application forms,
- a longer time between calls for proposals and deadlines for submission,
- two or three deadline dates per year to submit proposals,
- a shorter review time with faster decisions,
- simplified administration processes,
- straight-forward reporting and accountability processes,
- standardized reporting procedures across funders,
- fewer requirements for results-based evaluation and reporting,
- better funder service.

Increased staffing capacity within foundations could make the grant application and administration process smoother. Expert program officers, who understand the sector and who are with the foundation over a long period, are appreciated for the efficiency they can add to the process. If funding staff turn over frequently, new officers take time to become oriented to the needs and circumstances of their applicants.

“The most successful model is TD Friends of the Environment. They are a most satisfying group to work with as a funder. They meet regularly, make fairly quick decisions, and offer the expertise of their project officers.” (Interviewee)

“Trying to put every project into a results-based management template is ridiculous. Instead, they [funders] should get out of the way and allow us to the work – we have particular skills and energies and funders are always asking us to do things we don’t have the skills and energies to do.” (Interviewee)

Community-based, peer review of proposals is a way to help make the granting process more transparent, to provide for input from stewards and conservation groups on the direction of priorities, and to foster networks.

4.1.4 Recommendations on funding

➤ Recommendations on funding sources:

1. Foundations should provide bridge funding to groups that are making the transition to other forms of financial support.
2. Governments across Canada, at all levels, should place a higher priority on funding stewardship and conservation. In addition to continuing environmental programs that provide financial support, they should assess the potential for tax- or fee-based sources of funding for the stewardship and conservation sector.

3. Corporations should expand donations and funding programs, while groups continue to use discretion in choosing sources of private sector funding that are compatible with their mandates. Partnerships between stewards and businesses should be pursued within communities.
 4. Conservation and stewardship groups should pursue more individual donations. Planned giving (bequests and monthly giving) in particular should meet a larger proportion of funding needs. However limitations of these funding approaches, such as availability of willing donors and motivated volunteer fundraisers, need to be recognized.
 5. Conservation and stewardship groups should broaden their funding base so as to be more self-sufficient. Sales of services as a form of fundraising should be pursued with caution, in ways that are consistent with the mandate of the group. It is often unsuitable for smaller, community-based groups, and can act as a disincentive in landowner contact.
- *Recommendations on funding priorities:*
6. Communications between funders and stewards or conservation groups should aim to clarify the needs and priorities of the conservation and stewardship sector. A funding gap analysis should be undertaken.
 7. Project funding should be accompanied or supplemented by core funding that allows for effective implementation of projects and long-term capacity-building.
 8. Governments at all levels need to ensure that tax implications of actions taken by landowners to steward their lands are positive for the landowner, and supplement tax benefits with other financial incentives.
- *Recommendations on funding forms and processes:*
9. Funders should provide more multi-year grants and support applications for continuing as well as new projects. Endowments should be used to the greatest extent possible and governments should continue to support standing Funds.
 10. Matching dollars programs should be established by government to provide groups with an ongoing ability to leverage private donations. Partnerships between funding agencies or levels of government should be explored to enhance the potential of the leveraging effect. The National Conservation Fund proposed by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy would have the effect of encouraging such partnerships. At the same time, matching funding should not be over-emphasized.
 11. Conservation and stewardship groups should pursue opportunities to coordinate their approach to funding, including the formation of partnerships to obtain funding and to distribute funding.
 12. Funders should coordinate as far as possible to harmonize their application and reporting procedures, and these procedures should be made less onerous.

4.2 Non-financial mechanisms for capacity building

This section discusses at a general level changes that could be made to build the long-term capacity of the conservation and stewardship sector other than funding. The three general themes are governance, in-kind support, and conservation/stewardship group organizational development.

4.2.1 Governance

Governments, particularly at the senior levels, need to make a clear and lasting commitment to the environment and the work of the stewardship and conservation sector.

Generally, conservation and stewardship group representatives would like to see more demonstration of support from all levels of government, particularly provincial and federal governments. Interviewees suggested that the government has to define its role and responsibility, and to show the political will to follow through on that responsibility. The electoral cycle does not support the long-term perspective that is required for effective change. While there is some buy-in from the upper levels of government, its international commitments are ahead of its domestic follow-through, and some feel that it lags behind public perceptions of the importance of the environment.

Interviewees called for an attitude shift that would be reflected in the language governments use in reference to stewardship, for example, being more complementary of the efforts of conservation and stewardship groups. Sustainability would be integrated into the language of all departments, not just the Ministry of the Environment. Governments could do much to supplement the awareness-raising efforts of the sector by using social marketing to publicize the achievements of stewardship and the benefits of implementing stewardship to individuals and society as a whole.

Perhaps the most important form of support that government can provide to the sector is legislative, since laws are more likely than policy to survive changes in government and provide the necessary long-term foundation for conservation and stewardship. Two main areas of law are relevant: tax laws and environmental law, supporting the aims of conservation and stewardship. Three types of tax laws need strengthening: tax laws that compensate landowners for the costs of stewarding their lands, tax laws that encourage donations of land or money (including bequests) from individuals and the private sector, and laws that facilitate charitable status for conservation and stewardship groups. The latter is briefly discussed below – the former were discussed in the sections on funding. The need for environmental law and policy to support stewardship and conservation is discussed below.

Legislation respecting charitable status needs to be changed to allow stewardship and conservation groups to do their work without risk of losing this status.

Interviewees called on government to relax restrictions on advocacy on groups with charitable status so as to lessen their risk of losing this status as they seek to influence public policy. There needs to be room for groups to do their work to inform Canadians and urge them to action for the environment, without being accused of lobbying. The issue is related to a rule which, under the federal Income Tax Act, “restricts charities to using no more than 10% of their resources on ‘political activities’” which include speaking out to achieve changes to laws, policies, or government decisions” (Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society 2003 p.3). Proposals by advocates for the not-for-profit sector, including the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS) have called for the removal of this rule (2003). Other ways to lessen the constraints of

charitable status on the work of organizations would be to clearly identify what charities cannot do, broaden the definition of education, create a new category of tax exempt organization, adapt the American model or create a new legislative definition of charity (IMPACS 2002).

Interviewees also suggested changes in charity laws to more closely resemble those in the USA, emphasizing a clearer definition of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable advocacy/lobbying activity. In the US, there is a broader range of tax law classifications that groups can use, including one that keeps groups tax-free and allows them to pursue unrestricted lobbying, but allows them to accept only non-deductible donations. Some groups in the US are even making contributions to political parties to support environmental platforms (Motavalli 2003).

Another argument for tax law change is that groups should be exempted from paying GST – currently, they only have to pay half but this is still a burden. A change in the charity law might also be required to make it feasible for groups to increase their funding through fee-for-service enterprises, although court rulings seem to open the door for the pursuit of commercial activities by charities (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Canadian Policy Research Networks 1998 p.17).

Government needs to strengthen policy and legislation supporting sustainability, stewardship and conservation.

Canada's Stewardship Agenda states has as its third goal (of four) “Strengthen Policy and Legislative Support for Stewards – by providing the essential economic, policy and legal tools and instruments required to support stewardship programs and activities” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002b). A report related to the *Agenda – a Compendium of Stewardship Programs and Activities in Canada* – states that legal and policy instruments to support stewardship may include guidelines, codes of conduct, amended or new legislation and management tools, and it points out the need to ensure that existing policies and programs do not discourage stewardship activities (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002a). This document also enumerates existing legal and policy tools which provide good examples from across the country.

Comments from interviewees support the conclusions of the *Stewardship Agenda*. In addition for calling for legislative tools to support stewardship work on private land, they said environmental protection laws need to be strengthened (as opposed to the current trend towards weakening), and regressive policy and laws that run counter to ecological sustainability and work against conservation need to be changed. Broad level improvements that interviewees said would contribute to the capacity of the sector were clear policies that promote ecological and economic sustainability on the landscape, and more national level goals.

“Policy-wise, it would be nice to shift towards more national type goals. If we could do this nationally, we could take the quantum leap forward and make major changes to landscape rather than piecemeal we are doing now.” (Interviewee)

“The biggest thing [that government could do] would be to make policy, enforcement regulation and legislative changes that assist groups in doing their work. Change the policies to impact resource use which would help the stewardship/conservation sector do their job. Generally rethinking of a lot of subsidies and policies to favour the conservation/stewardship of natural resources. A lot of subsidies create a perverse effect on landscape and conservation.” (Interview)

Coordination between government agencies and between the various levels of government needs to be improved.

A harmonized approach to policy development could reduce the problem of contradictory policies (i.e., both encouraging and discouraging stewardship) and would support a more integrated,

broader scale perspective. Interviewees also recommended improved cooperation and coordination among the different levels of government so they do not overlap in their programming. Better connections among federal government agencies and between municipal, provincial and federal governments would allow conservation and stewardship programs to function in a more coordinated manner, with more continuity. Furthermore, a lack of coordination among government agencies and departments adds to public cynicism.

Governments should increase meaningful consultation with stewardship and conservation groups.

Governments at all levels should improve their efforts to communicate with, and particularly to seek, listen to and respect the views of the sector. Interviewees called on municipal government to give their groups a more active role in decision-making, and on provincial governments to include them in regional landuse planning. Improved consultations on stewardship and conservation programs and policies were also called for. Governments at all levels need to recognize the importance of having the environment and conservation sector at the table, even if this means policies and decisions are challenged. Agencies have to accept diverse opinions and acknowledge that decisions will only be fully informed once relevant perspectives are brought to bear on various options.

Many stewards and conservation group representatives feel that when government is soliciting information from their groups, the individuals or groups involved should be paid for the services provided. Financial compensation recognizes the substantive contribution made and helps maintain the capacity of the groups to continue to make such contributions. There is an obvious inequity in the dynamic of increasing fees charged by government for data and information, along with cutting back of government support to the conservation and stewardship sector, and continued expectations from government that the sector should provide its information and expertise at no charge. See also the section below on “Inter-sectoral communication/coordination.”

“The government should develop programs with the input of NGOs in the field so they are more oriented to support conservation actions and not just oriented to reach government objectives – it works both ways. There needs to be good communication between people in the field and the government.” (Interviewee)

4.2.2 Information, in-kind and communications support

Government agencies could contribute a variety of in-kind forms of support to stewardship and conservation groups.

A 1995 study conducted for the BC Ministry of Environment explored a range of non-financial options for government support to environmental non-government organizations (Dovetail Consulting Inc. and Eclipse Environmental Consulting 1995). Representatives of the organizations who participated in the study gave the following 11 of the 30 specific options the highest ratings:

- Briefings and meetings between ENGOs and Ministry staff at provincial and regional levels
- Access to long-distance telephone lines.
- Access to postal services and/or inter-office mail.
- Computer communication links through e-mail, the Internet or other means.
- Donation or purchase at reduced price of used or out-dated equipment and furniture
- Free or reduced rates for Ministry or other government publications.

- Access to database information.
- Use of selected branch references and information files.
- Use of technical services.
- Selective access to technical specialists for research information.
- Participation by ENGO representatives in relevant Ministry education, training or briefing sessions.

More research is needed to underpin conservation and stewardship work, and the sector needs easy access data and information that has already been gathered.

Survey respondents noted that success in stewardship efforts is enhanced when it is fact-based and grounded in science (see the section on “Core issues affecting capacity”). Better information is needed on the land base, the conditions of habitat, the effectiveness of conservation and stewardship practices, and rates of change. Consistent state of the environment reporting can contribute to this supply of information. Conservation and stewardship groups also need access to information that already exists. Government should make more available: studies, research results, reports, mapping and spatial data. The trend to increased user fees has to be turned around, and information should ideally be provided free of charge. Senior levels of government are often regarded to be most problematic in terms of access to information. At local and regional levels there is often more openness, but coordination and support can still be improved.

Electronic networks and websites have been used to good advantage as “one-stop shops” for access to information useful in stewardship. Examples are www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca and www.stewardshipcanada.ca.

“The federal Freedom of Information Act is not too bad but the provincial one has become an instrument to deny people information because they have put horrendous user fees on it.” (Interviewee)

“There is a lot of governmental information that gets stuck in government departments. The internet is helping and is a good way to offer support.” (Interviewee)

Technical support can be donated through government programs and individual scientists to reduce costs incurred by conservation and stewardship groups and increase their capacity more generally.

Government programs that provide stewardship coordinators or advisors on an ongoing basis have been of great assistance to local groups in some provinces and it is unfortunate that government cutbacks are reducing this form of assistance. On a more ad hoc basis, stewardship and conservation groups benefit from expertise extended to them by government experts such as biologists. Other types of contributed expertise that can mitigate serious costs to non-government organizations include legal support and land appraisal. One suggestion was that the government should have more staff in positions parallel to those held in the stewardship/conservation sector to facilitate interaction and improve government’s capacity to integrate conservation into decision-making.

Technical support in terms of equipment (particularly computers) and communications is also much appreciated by conservation and stewardship groups.

“What we really need is a 1-800 number ... where people can get information such as who to call, how to form a non-profit group, basic reference materials, etc.” (Interviewee)

“Some is happening – if you approach government offices and you know who to approach, they can be very generous with the donating of their outdated equipment to NGO sector – which is very much appreciated.” (Interviewee)

The private sector could offer various forms of in-kind support.

As part of a movement towards corporate social responsibility, many businesses and corporations are taking various actions to support environmental conservation, often around procurement policies and recycling. Some also support their employees in volunteer activity by giving employees time off to volunteer, varying employees' work schedules to accommodate volunteer work, or helping employees find places to volunteer (Luffman 2003). Other in-kind support that businesses can offer includes donation of used equipment and provision of space for meetings.

4.2.3 Conservation/Stewardship group organizational development

Conservation and stewardship groups need to put more effort into organizational development.

The importance of skills and expertise in the human resources of conservation and stewardship groups was highlighted in the section on "Core issues affecting capacity." A 1997 assessment of stream stewardship and fish habitat advocacy for the Lower Fraser Valley observed that "... many of the environmental stewardship groups are very strong on the term 'sustainability', and in urging society to live within its means in terms of how it uses resources, but they fail to apply that concept of sustainability internally to their own activities" (Paish 1997). The stewardship-focused Quebec-Labrador Foundation has similarly concluded, based on two decades of experience in international exchange programs, that "important to the program's effectiveness have been an emphasis on process rather than the technical aspects of solving conservation problems" (Brown and Mitchell 2001 p.214). Groups that are "unhealthy" are likely to have reduced capacity because they are less able to retain staff, members and volunteers; they are less attractive to funders; and they are generally less able to maintain momentum and enthusiasm.

Over the past several years, many groups have become more sophisticated in organizational development, acquiring skills and capacity in areas such as strategic planning and outcome-based evaluation. Nevertheless, interview and survey results suggest that much remains to be done in this area. To provide encouragement, groups that invest effort into organizational development could be rewarded with preferential funding opportunities from foundations and government.

Human resources, particularly in the form of active volunteers, were discussed as a key factor in the capacity of stewardship and conservation groups. A case study of volunteerism in an environmental stewardship group determined that presence or absence of active volunteers has to do with fostering the volunteers: "organizational factors may play a role in determining how active a member becomes" (Donald 1997).

Organizational health has much to do with leadership, and those who rise to higher positions in conservation and stewardship groups often have done so for reasons other than their leadership skills. Courses like "The Art of Leadership," offered to social and environmental change activists by the Rockwood Centre, can help to provide leaders with the skills they need (Joslyn 2003).

Support needs to be provided to groups for organizational development, particularly in the form of low-cost training opportunities.

There is an extensive literature aiming to advise non-profits and environmental groups, including guides which set out useful approaches to the challenges raised by the survey and interview respondents. Examples include: *Community Stewardship: A Guide to Establishing Your Own Group* (Canadian Wildlife Service et al. 1995), and *How to Save a River: A Handbook for Citizen Action* (Bolling 1994). There are also electronic resources, such as www.wildcanada.net which promises to provide "online training and tools you need to be an effective grassroots advocate."

Written and electronic resources are not enough though. Survey respondents as well as interviewees emphasized the need for training support in areas such as fiscal management, communication and fundraising. Face-to-face training in courses such as those offered by Training Resources for the Environmental Community (TREC), are of great benefit. A TREC survey of grant recipients recently found that respondents want training in fundraising to help them to establish a diversified funding base. Relevant topics are working with major donors, attracting new members and establishing planned giving programs (TREC 2003).

Training opportunities could be provided by government as well as the private and non-profit sectors. Government employees have skills that they could share, and internships of group members in government agencies could improve understanding between government and nongovernmental organizations. Many groups cannot afford to pay for training and staff/volunteer development, so the training opportunities must be highly subsidized or free-of-charge, or funding has to be provided to pay for them. Provision of occasional professional services is another way of supporting organizational development. For example, survey respondents and interviewees identified a need for professional advice or facilitation in communications and strategic planning.

The most important assistance that groups could receive to enhance their organizational health, would, however, be funding. As explained earlier, the human resource costs of fundraising can have a negative effect on the morale of a group.

4.2.4 Recommendations on non-financial mechanisms for capacity building

➤ *Recommendations on governance:*

13. Senior governments should engage in social marketing to publicize the achievements of stewardship and the benefits of implementing stewardship to individual and society as whole.
14. Coordination on conservation and stewardship programs and initiatives should be improved among federal government agencies and between municipal, provincial and federal governments.
15. Legislative changes should be made to lessen the constraints of charitable status on the work of conservation and stewardship organizations.
16. Government should put in place appropriate legislation and regulation to protect the environment including incentives and disincentives.
17. Government agencies and different levels of government should strive for a harmonized approach to policy development to coordinate stewardship and conservation programs and support a more integrated, broader scale approach.
18. Governments at all levels should improve their efforts to communicate and engage in meaningful consultation with groups in the conservation and stewardship sector.

➤ *Recommendations on information, in-kind and communications support:*

19. Governments should provide easier and lower-cost access to data and information.
20. In areas where stewardship support programs are no longer providing personnel who can advise stewardship groups in an ongoing way, government should provide access to expertise available within government be provided on an as-needed basis.
21. Municipal and regional governments should build constructive relationships with stewardship groups, providing infrastructure, professional support, and where possible, financial support to these groups.

- *Recommendations on conservation/stewardship group organizational development:*
22. Conservation and stewardship groups should put a priority on organizational development (e.g., strategic planning and leadership) and invest the necessary effort.
 23. Conservation and stewardship groups should foster volunteer involvement.
 24. Government, foundations and the private sector should support the conservation and stewardship sector in organizational development by providing training and access to professional services at low cost or by donation.

4.3 Networks and connections: Towards a broader vision

The report, *Canada's Stewardship Agenda: Compendium of Stewardship Programs and Activities in Canada*, poses the question, "How can Canadians enhance linkages among stewards, and integrate local priorities with regional, provincial, territorial, national and international activities and objectives?" (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002a p.42). By way of an answer, it presents examples of projects or programs engaged in bioregional planning and management across the country. These themes of enhanced linkages, collaboration, partnerships, networking, etc. also arose frequently in this research.

4.3.1 A broader, cross-sectoral vision

There is a general need for a broader, longer-term perspective or vision.

Interviewees emphasized the need for a longer-term vision for both government agencies and conservation and stewardship organizations. There is a belief that a more holistic perspective, as part of the public agenda, could heighten public appreciation of future economic benefits and the value of stewardship and conservation. Related integrative concepts are sustainability, bioregionalism and ecosystem-based management. The latter is increasingly driving the agenda of the environmental movement (Weber 2000). A manual for community-based ecosystem management has been published by the Institute for Research on Environment and Economy at the University of Ottawa (1996). Ecosystem-based management follows natural geographic boundaries and requires multi-sectoral representation.

All those involved need to take on a broader perspective: conservation and stewardship groups, as well as government and the private sector, have to recognize the contributions of their different roles to the protection of the landscape as a whole.

"From a global perspective, we need to adopt authentic sustainable development – to make the connection between having a strong resource base and the economic and social aspects. ... We have to be sustainable: you move from a common vision to a common strategy. We have to protect the ecosystems *for* something versus protecting it against detrimental uses."
(Interviewee)

Recommendations of interviewees often went back to the fundamental need to connect the value of stewardship with benefits to society and to local communities – from having clean water, to healthy wild life populations to hunt, to economic sustainability. This is consistent with a core element of the National Round Table for the Environment and the Economy's Strategic Framework for Action, which is "Value Natural Capital to ensure that economic decisions formally factor in the value of nature" (NRTEE 2003b p.5). Whether through the educational system or through other means of engaging society in conservation and stewardship, the message has to be communicated that stewardship is about looking after the base of resources we require for our life support. The rationale for this is only secondarily to engender support for stewards and conservation groups. The primary need for a change in social values is to speed the process of

transformation towards sustainability. Conservationists and stewards on their own cannot protect the land at a rate faster than the rate of development. As a presentation at a US Land Trust Alliance said, “Our best hope is for a shift in American culture. By inviting citizens to imagine their lives differently, by offering them new ways of dwelling in the land, we can help replace the culture of exploitation with a culture of conservation” (Forbes and Rogers 2002).

“We are not just protecting ecosystems, we’re developing sustainable communities which include social and economic functions as well.” (Interviewee)

All sectors – government, private sector, and the conservation/stewardship sector – need to increase their communications and coordination.

Conservation and stewardship groups need to consider not only improved cooperation within their sector, but they need also to engage with partners in other sectors, including government and the private sector, as well as a broader cross-section of the public. Interviewees made the following related suggestions:

- The most significant thing would be to increase the connection with citizens and civil society – networking and working in collaboration with other sectors in society.
- We need to work in a more coordinated way with other NGO’s, governments and corporations.
- We have to keep developing, broadening and reinforcing partnerships beyond the traditional ones.
- We need to get as many partners as possible and as wide a buy-in as possible.
- Bringing in other sectors and recognizing the stewardship links among sectors is going to be important.
- We need some conservation consultation or agency that regroups the conservation, government and business sector and gets them together to discuss and plan on all levels including funding and what needs to be done.
- We need a more integrated approach in which we come to understand the limits and needs of others – “there is an amazing creativity that springs from putting people in tune with one another.”
- We need ongoing, open dialogue between private and public and stewardship groups.
- The conservation and stewardship sector needs to work to have effective relationships with government, industry, and local communities. It is important to work with government and industry on issues toward a common goal and not be on opposite sides of the fence.
- Non-profit stewardship organizations can deliver effective programs but they can’t do it all by themselves: they need partners.

“We need a shift from individualism to multi-partnerism. We can’t go it alone anymore – we must be sharing and cooperating and must work together even more closely.” (Interviewee)

4.3.2 Cooperation among groups

Duplication of efforts and competition has led to the need for more cooperation among groups.

Both interviewees and survey respondents identified problems of redundancies among groups with similar aims, fragmentation of groups, overlapping projects, and multiple organizations focused on related issues (e.g., groups focused on a single species). This leads to political infighting, competition for funds and duplication of administrative structure and costs. It can also

make those whose behaviour the sector is striving to change hostile, for example if a number of groups are all approaching the same landowners.

As a solution, many called for increased networking and more coordination with other groups having similar goals. Some go further, proposing partnerships between organizations working toward a common goal, and even a national vision. One interviewee stated that partnerships are especially important if private land stewardship groups are to meet their potential. Different degrees of integration are discussed further below.

“Competition such as all kinds of groups chasing the same issue, groups splitting off and forming new groups, and groups tripping over one another is a problem.” (Interviewee)

“There is overlap and duplication of groups trying to do the right thing on the landscape and to attract money. We have to figure out how to make the best use of the money. There is a lack of cooperation and coordination.” (Interviewee)

At a minimum, networking and communication among groups needs to improve.

Many survey respondents identified strong linkages and networking with other organizations and individuals as a contributor to the success of their groups over the past five years. Close, positive working relationships were key, including sharing resources. Active networks of groups and interests within and beyond the local community allowed groups to present a “common front” to achieve common goals. Interviewees also acknowledged the importance of communication within the sector. They pointed out that this produces better products without “reinventing the wheel” and without duplicating demands for funding. One suggested a national network structure so people across the country can share experience and provide mentoring and support. Regular, face-to-face interaction was part of this image, rather than just electronic communications.

Coordination of the work of groups working towards common or complementary goals makes sense, to strengthen the effectiveness and the efficiency of the sector.

There is good reason for environment groups to work together to a greater extent. As reported above, survey respondents emphasized the importance of networking with partners and allies to the success of their organizations. Beyond the “strength in numbers effect,” coordination of activities in pursuing shared conservation objectives would save resources due to less duplication of effort. Interviewees suggested that groups should purposefully:

- get all of the different players involved in the same line of work around the table and do a rationalization of who does what and who is best able to do what;
- divide roles to avoid duplication;
- “put aside egos and join others”;
- be more supportive of one another;
- discuss shared goals and possibilities for coordinating strategies “in the open and get on the same page” rather than lobbying behind the scenes.

Non-government organization networks such as the Canadian Environmental Network already play an important function in facilitating the kinds of processes described above. They deserve ongoing support, but there are cautions as to the limitations of their role. Some feel that some umbrella organizations are not objective enough and there is a tendency for strong environment groups to move the network in their direction.

Regional networks focused on stewardship could make a variety of contributions, including the following ones suggested by the British Columbia Watershed Stewardship Alliance (2001 p.2):

- building trust between organizations,

- increase understanding of local needs, regional needs and the importance of partnerships,
- accelerate the development of groups and the maintenance of existing ones,
- facilitate sharing of resources between groups;
- build companionship so that groups wish to cooperate rather than compete;
- build a common voice of advocacy on key issues;
- share ideas, information and experience – what has worked and what has not;
- resolve problems that may be unique to one group or common to many.

Closer collaboration, towards partnerships and the sharing of resources among groups, may be feasible in some circumstances.

As discussed above, groups can network to improve the coordination of their work and lessen redundancy and competition. Cooperation can be taken a step further as they collaborate on projects and in various aspects of capacity-building. Partnerships can form around the use of, and access to, shared resources. Potential forms or mechanisms of collaboration include:

- partnerships on grant applications (already a common practice);
- regional centres to serve groups with a variety of resources and services such as legal and technical advice, geographical information systems and computer access;
- joint work on information collection – a prime activity around which groups can collaborate (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002a);
- a 1-800 number at a central organization to take calls for many groups from potential volunteers and people looking for information;
- joint administration of groups;
- exchanging expertise, shared training opportunities and shared access to professional expertise.

“Maybe in Canada we need to have a serious re-grouping. In the US, they have a national land trust alliance that gives help and training.” (Interviewee)

Government-sponsored stewardship programs such as BC’s Habitat Conservation Stewardship Program can compel groups that normally compete for resources to work together in partnership by leading them to share a resource such as a salaried Community Advisor or Stewardship Coordinator. Funders can require even closer collaboration by requiring groups to form coalitions around particular projects or campaigns. This has been a strong and problematic trend in the Canadian non-profit sector as a whole: “Collaboration cannot be expected to happen spontaneously or necessarily be implemented smoothly” (Phillips and Graham 2000). The groups that are required to collaborate can have disparate cultures and styles, and they might not be sufficiently motivated to overcome their cultural differences if they are only coming together opportunistically. One clearinghouse-type arrangement in BC, called “BC Wild,” was considered by some to have caused conflict within the environmental sector in that province. Another current coalition, for Coastal Alliance for Aquaculture Reform, which receives funding through one member group to be shared with other groups for agreed upon projects and campaigns, has been very effective. In a study of Environment Canada’s Action 21 program in the Pacific and Yukon Region, funding recipients emphasized the strong potential of the program to build community or regional networks and to bring together groups that have a role to play in shared health and environment problems (Dovetail Consulting Inc. 1997). (See also the section on cooperation among groups under “Funding forms and processes.”)

Coalitions can be a highly effective approach whether or not they are required by funders; for example, environmental campaigns in BC have been effectively waged by coalitions to save old

growth forests. Such coalitions have tended to be adversarial in approach, and the approach may be less suitable to more local, cooperative stewardship and conservation roles. One interviewee noted that a downside of coordination, if taken to an extreme, could be the loss of opportunity to set goals and move towards them at the community level. At a regional level, however, coalitions with a more proactive, bioregional or conservation biology rationale may be ideal for leveraging the impacts of the work of multiple smaller groups to greater advantage.

“Groups have to find ways to partner with other groups in the region so we can work more globally. There is too much infighting with groups and competition over lands and funds rather than finding alliances and using mutual strengths.” (Interviewee)

4.3.3 *Inter-sectoral communication/coordination*

Strong connections to local communities are central to the effectiveness of many conservation and stewardship groups.

More than 20 of the group representatives surveyed reported that strong linkages or integration with the local community were a main factor in their success over the past five years. Variations in replies described the following specific qualities of groups illustrating this factor:

- programs reflect the issues identified by the community, attentive to the concerns of citizens;
- high level of visibility within the community and surrounding municipalities;
- community wants to use the group’s skills to benefit the area;
- broad base of support/buy-in from the local community;
- representative and inclusive of a cross-section of the local community;
- board members live in the area and can develop good working relationships with other landowners,;
- highly developed contacts within the community;
- composed of like-minded, concerned citizens/local residents;
- works openly with the community, tremendous effort to reach out;
- has been able to mobilize/involve the local community;
- has been able to sustain the community’s interest in the group and its work;
- ability to work with the agricultural community, rancher driven.

Interviewee input was consistent with the survey responses. Many interviewees made suggestions for building capacity that focused on community connections:

- practice continual integration with folks who have to make living from land;
- focus on community-based initiatives;
- design programs to help people help themselves versus top down programs;
- operate at the community level rather than having large outside groups moving into communities;
- listen to the ideas of the community;
- work actively with the community
- know what’s happening in your region and stay informed.

A key process again is networking: “Networking is key to advancing stewardship efforts, especially to promote local participation in stewardship initiatives” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002a p.40). Some interviewees commented that conservation and stewardship groups are not currently doing a good job in such networking. One comment was, “I don’t think our groups are

structured very well right now to make contact with grassroots passion,” and another was that “Conservation groups are often guilty of a do-gooder attitude without understanding its implications.” Old adages apply here: actions speak louder than words, and think globally, act locally – organizations that can be good neighbours in their communities will do much to gain public support. Conversely, taking a confrontational, polarized position tends to erode public support.

“Conservation organizations need to understand the community – the community’s sense of the land, etc. and design programs that are consistent with values of the community instead of sitting in a boardroom somewhere and designing programs that having nothing to do with the realities of the community. Programs have to be integrated with the cultural and economic realities of the community. It’s a networking challenge.” (Interviewee)

Within or beyond the local community, it is important for conservation and stewardship groups to strive to influence a broader community of actors. For example, in the context of agricultural land stewardship, groups have to reach the urban community because the urban community has a huge impact on the agricultural areas in the world. Individuals who have a significant impact on numbers of people, such as realtors, are also a good target in the area of private land stewardship. Generally, different social communities should be reached out to – people of different ethnic backgrounds and the arts community, for example.

“Another way to be effective in the long-term is to attract newcomers. They help you in some ways but they are also ambassadors of the environment, your organization and its goals. They spread knowledge and tools in their communities and in their families.”

The conservation/stewardship sector and government agencies would benefit from collaboration, although lobbying and watchdog roles are of continuing importance.

A suggestion that arose more frequently in both the survey and the interviews – perhaps as a result of the focus on capacity building – was that conservation and stewardship groups need to work more closely with government. *Canada’s Stewardship Agenda* agrees with this perspective: “To support stewardship and avoid duplication, governments and national, provincial and territorial stewardship organizations should collaborate to promote program integration and the effective and efficient use of financial resources” (Canadian Wildlife Service 2002b).

While municipal level networking was mentioned most often, positive working relationships with provincial governments and, to a smaller extent, federal agencies, were also seen as desirable. Provincial government involvement could help catalyze better coordination among the province’s groups and organizations.

“We need to have representatives of groups talking to representatives of the government. One way is to have round tables with government – but it’s still hard to take the time unless that’s your job.” (Interviewee)

Because the stewardship sector is a key constituency of the government agencies with environmental mandates, those agencies have much to gain from cultivating a positive relationship. Properly informed, stewardship groups can act as advocates for the conservation responsibilities of those agencies, so it is in the interest of the agency representatives to build the capacity of the groups to act in this manner. An assessment of community-based processes and organizations for habitat conservation and stewardship for Fisheries and Oceans Canada thus recommended “that DFO incorporate a program to raise the profile of constructive advocacy as an essential element of all of its streamkeeper and stewardship functions under the Habitat Conservation and Stewardship program. Specifically DFO should ensure that objective information on the role of governments at all levels with respect to habitat protection, including

local government, becomes a significant part of DFO-supported training and support for community programs” (Paish 1999 p.47).

A few interviewees felt that conservation and stewardship groups should increase their lobbying and watchdog roles. They argued that organizations have to watch over industry and the government to ensure protection is happening, particularly at the present time when governments of some jurisdictions do not put the environment high on the public agenda.

Local groups especially wish to cultivate a good working relationship with local government.

Several of the groups surveyed wish to strengthen their relationship with local municipal staff and politicians. They seek good contacts with local government employees, political connections, and/or a more formalized relationship with the municipal government. An interviewee suggested that community groups should go so far as to work with government to meet common objectives by sharing funding, expertise, tools and contacts. More commonly, groups aim for cooperation from local government or other levels of government employees on an issue-by-issue basis. They seek interactions with government staff who can answer questions and work with the organization to resolve their issues or concerns.

Closer linkages between local groups and local governments over time can build stronger trust and ongoing working relationships. Good connections with local government can also increase support for the work of the groups and increase its effectiveness. Groups that purposefully locate their projects within the existing decision-making context – e.g., official community plans, regional policies or regulations– have a better chance of seeing their stewardship and conservation priorities implemented. The funding criteria of the Real Estate Foundation of BC (2003) reflect the importance of this focus.

Many conservation and stewardship groups view increasing involvement with the private sector in a positive light.

Interview findings suggest that the conservation and stewardship sector is increasingly interested in working more closely with the private sector – business and industry. It is a way to get the business sector involved in conservation and possibly a new way to further the goals of both sectors. A first step is to learn how to speak each other’s language. If stewardship and conservation groups start talking about a sustainable landscape both ecologically and economic ally they will be better received in the business community. Both business and the groups need education about each other’s activities.

Some opinions support the trend towards partnerships, which is stronger in the US. One possible mechanism for advancing conservation objectives through partnerships is regional programs for economic development. Such programs could demonstrate how effective stewardship can have positive economic impacts, for example in the management of community forests.

A related and stronger trend is towards government partnerships with the private sector. In this milieu the conservation and stewardship sector has a new role to play in monitoring the possible impacts of these “public-private partnerships” on the environment, and ensuring that the partnership agreements are designed to be consistent with conservation and stewardship objectives.

“We have to develop new partnerships with business for conservation. We have not cultivated this mentality here in Canada. Right now we are victims of our own success, and don’t have the money to do the stewardship. We need new ways of doing things – there are examples of doing this – look to our neighbours. The Americans have been at it longer.”
(Interviewee)

4.3.4 Recommendations on networks and connections

- *Recommendations on building a broader, cross-sectoral vision*
- 25. All those involved – including government agencies, conservation and stewardship organizations and the private sector – need to connect the value of stewardship with its benefits to society and local communities, including its function in protecting the foundations for life.
- 26. All sectors – government, private sector, and the conservation and stewardship sector – need to increase their communications and coordination.
- *Recommendations on cooperation among groups*
- 27. Stewardship and conservation organizations should increase cooperation to decrease redundancy of efforts and competition.
- 28. Stewardship and conservation groups should network and communicate strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the sector, to build positive relationships, to present a common front to the public, and share resources.
- 29. In some circumstances, groups could take cooperation a step further towards collaborating on projects, capacity-building, and building partnerships around shared resources.
- *Recommendations on inter-sectoral communications and coordination*
- 30. Stewardship and conservation organizations should build strong linkages with the local community, including diverse social and business communities.
- 31. To support stewardship and avoid duplication, governments at all levels and national, provincial and territorial and local stewardship and conservation organizations should harmonize efforts to promote program integration and the effective and efficient use of financial resources.
- 32. Local groups and local governments should cultivate closer working relationships to increase support for the work of the groups and increase its effectiveness.
- 33. Business and stewardship/conservation groups need to educate themselves about each other's activities, and stewardship groups need to emphasize messages about a sustainable landscape both ecologically and economically in order to be better received by business and the general public.

4.4 Overview of conclusions

4.4.1 The current and prospective benefits of a stewardship and conservation sector working at full capacity

At a time when governments can least afford to steward the environment, and various economic and development pressures are taxing the life support systems on which all species depend, the stewardship and conservation sector has an invaluable contribution to make.

The environmental contributions of the stewardship and conservation sector include innovation and management advances toward sustainability, protection of ecosystems and biodiversity, and the promotion of stewardship practices on private land. The social contributions of the sector include community building and cooperation, health benefits of a clean environment and improved quality of life. The economic contributions of the sector include preventing costs to society and the government – now and in the future, protecting/restoring environmental services, doing work on a volunteer or lower cost basis than government, and providing a basis for

recreation and tourism. At a very low cost, the sector provides extensive expertise and innovation across all of these types of contributions.

A sector working at full capacity would do even more to prompt improvements in government’s approach to protecting the environment, raise public awareness and engagement in stewardship and conservation, and protect the environment “on the ground”: more land would be protected, more landowners would adopt stewardship practices, environmental quality would be improved, and there would be progress towards sustainability.

Clearly, measures to support the sector in its work promise results to the benefit of all Canadian society.

4.4.2 *The challenge: An interconnected web that is difficult to break out of*

The 150 stewardship and conservation group representatives and 22 interviewees who were consulted for this study raised five central needs and challenges, related to funding, organizational development, societal attitudes, government and networking. These needs and challenges are remarkably consistent with those identified in three consultative processes which were conducted in 2002. Table 23 compares the themes from these four sources.

Table 23: Major needs and challenges facing the conservation and stewardship sector

Needs and challenges facing the conservation and stewardship sector				
Theme	This study: needs, challenges	Volunteer Sector Stewardship workshops: Top 3 problems and solutions (Wildlife Habitat Canada 2002)	Workshop on the future of community stewardship in the Lower Fraser, BC: 3 of 5 key elements in success (Dovetail Consulting Inc. 2002)	Workshop on conservation and stewardship in Newfoundland and Labrador: 3 of 6 objectives (Bath 2002)
Funding	funding to cover core costs	economic issues: providing financial incentives to private landowners, adequate funding and support, the need for long-term core funding	securing resources, funding and continuous support	
Organizational development	strategic planning, keeping/recruiting members and volunteers, staffing and leadership			
Societal attitudes	attitudes towards the environment and public support for the work of stewardship and conservation groups	need for awareness and education programs		increase public awareness and support for environment and stewardship issue
Government, or “political will”	government programs, support, policy and legislation			create the political will to address environmental and stewardship issues in a meaningful way
Networking	networking and communication	improving networks among groups and creating better linkages with all partners and stakeholders	building relationships and/or partnerships with key stakeholders in the community; working together to build coalitions, encourage leadership and provide stewardship experiences	increase cooperation and communication among various interest groups

The long-term sustainability of Canadian stewardship and conservation organizations is closely intertwined with the four recurring themes— funding, public awareness, political will, and networking – and with a fifth: organizational development.

The diagnosis of “lack of political will” often stifles initiative – because people tend to believe that without it progress cannot be made. It is true that political will cannot be tackled head on – there is no “just do it,” yet democratic process does allow for the opportunity to shift government priorities. Through education, community engagement and advocacy, conservation and stewardship groups have the potential to influence public opinion and set a new mandate for government that recognizes the dependence of economic prosperity on environmental health. However, funding, public awareness and political will are so closely interconnected that they pose a conundrum: The public has to be convinced of the value of the work of the stewardship and conservation sector before they will donate time and money, and elect governments with a green agenda. On the other hand, stewardship and conservation groups need funding support from government to do the public awareness-raising, but governments are currently attending to economic rather than environmental priorities and lack the political will to provide the funding support. Thus, the problem is circular: the sector does not have the resources it needs to convince the public to elect a government that would provide the sector with the resources it needs to raise public awareness, and so on.

Conservation and stewardship groups could still fully engage in public-awareness raising activities if they had sufficient funding from other sources, such as foundations. However, a poor economy has led to a downturn in funding from foundations and an imperative to diversify funding support, particularly from individual donations but individuals are impacted by the poor economy as well, and, like government, are not placing environmental concerns above economic ones. Therefore they are not inclined to provide significant levels of funding to the conservation and stewardship groups. The same circumstances apply to the private sector – another possible source of support.

4.4.3 Means of building and sustaining the capacity of the sector

Three broad approaches to building and sustaining the capacity of the sector were explored: funding, non-financial mechanisms, and inter-sectoral communication/coordination. Conclusions on the potential for each of these approaches can be summarized as follows.

Funding

Funding sources

- Foundation funding is a cornerstone of the funding mix and continued support from philanthropic organizations is necessary, even as greater diversity in sources is pursued.
- Government funding sources will continue to be important.
- The private sector should play an increasing role in funding.
- Individual donations, including bequests, are the funding source seen to have the most potential to help diversify the financial base for conservation and stewardship groups but they are not a panacea.
- Sales of services and other mechanisms provide limited opportunities for groups and organizations to be more self-sufficient.

Funding priorities

- Funders need to better appreciate the need for long-term conservation and stewardship and the kind of support the sector needs to do this work.

- Priority targets for funding from the conservation and stewardship group perspective generally focus on capacity-building.
- Landowners need to be financially compensated for the costs of stewarding their lands.

Funding forms and processes

- Longer-term, more stable funding is a necessity for the accomplishment of stewardship goals.
- Leveraging is a process that has promise to expand available funds, although perhaps not as much promise as is generally assumed.
- Cooperation among groups can reduce competition for limited funds and increase the effectiveness of fundraising.
- Application and reporting processes are a drain on the resources of the groups that seek and receive grants.

Non-financial mechanisms for capacity building

Governance

- Governments, particularly at the senior levels, need to make a clear and lasting commitment to the environment and the work of the stewardship and conservation sector.
- Legislation respecting charitable status needs to be changed to allow stewardship and conservation groups to do their work without risk of losing this status.
- Government needs to strengthen policy and legislation supporting sustainability, stewardship and conservation.
- Coordination between government agencies and between the various levels of government needs to be improved.
- Governments should increase meaningful consultation with stewardship and conservation groups.

Information, in-kind and communications support

- Government agencies could contribute a variety of in-kind forms of support to stewardship and conservation groups.
- More research is needed to underpin conservation and stewardship work, and the sector needs easy access data and information that has already been gathered.
- Technical support can be donated through government programs and individual scientists to reduce costs incurred by conservation and stewardship groups and increase their capacity more generally.
- The private sector could offer various forms of in-kind support.

Conservation/Stewardship group organizational development

- Conservation and stewardship groups need to put more effort into organizational development.
- Support needs to be provided to groups for organizational development, particularly in the form of low-cost training opportunities.

Networks and connections: Towards a broader vision

A broader, cross-sectoral vision

- There is a general need for a broader, longer-term perspective or vision.

- All sectors – government, private sector, and the conservation/stewardship sector – need to increase their communications and coordination.

Cooperation among groups

- Duplication of efforts and competition has led to the need for more cooperation among groups.
- At a minimum, networking and communication among groups needs to improve.
- Coordination of the work of groups working towards common or complementary goals makes sense, to strengthen the effectiveness and the efficiency of the sector.
- Closer collaboration, towards partnerships and the sharing of resources among groups, may be feasible in some circumstances.

Inter-sectoral communication/coordination

- Strong connections to local communities are central to the effectiveness of many conservation and stewardship groups.
- The conservation/stewardship sector and government agencies would benefit from collaboration, although lobbying and watchdog roles are of continuing importance.
- Local groups especially wish to cultivate a good working relationship with local government.
- Many conservation and stewardship groups view increasing involvement with the private sector in a positive light.

4.5 Systemic changes required to support the long-term sustainability of organizations providing stewardship and conservation services in Canada

4.5.1 A strategic approach

The question is, how can the measures to support long-term sustainability of conservation and stewardship organizations be delivered in the current climate of economic hardship and lack of political support? How can progress be made in ways that do not depend immediately on high levels of support from government? What kind of actions can lead to effective conservation and stewardship work in lieu of, or on the way to, a greener political-economic regime? What roles can government, grantors, and stewardship and conservation groups themselves play?

Below, the recommendations of the report are organized into categories corresponding to the three actors – government, grantors and the conservation/stewardship sector – in order to paint a picture of their roles. With a view to a strategic approach to breaking free of the above conundrum, within each section, the recommendations are sorted into the three sub-categories described below. Listed in order from the lowest to the highest level of change required, the expectation is that if impediments are removed, then conservation and stewardship can be better facilitated, and finally, systemic changes can be achieved.

Removing impediments to conservation and stewardship: The recommendations in this category call for relatively modest changes. Although these changes might not result in substantive support to the stewardship and conservation sector, they would free the sector of certain burdens that are currently reducing its capacity. They should be possible to accomplish with current political-economic constraints.

Enabling or facilitating conservation and stewardship: These recommendations should be acceptable and doable in the current socio-political-economic climate, and would do much more to bolster the capacity of the conservation and stewardship sector.

Systemic change to support the effectiveness of the conservation and stewardship sector:

The recommendations in this category may not be feasible in the short term, under current constraints. However, if enough of the recommendations in the first two categories are implemented, sufficient change may be accomplished to break out of the conundrum described above – i.e., to build sufficient capacity in the environmental and stewardship sector to empower it to influence both public opinion and the government agenda, obtain more adequate levels of funding and meet its full potential.

Table 24 portrays the above framework in a matrix format, with examples of recommendations that fit each cell. The full set of recommendations is listed in the framework following the table.

Table 24: Examples of recommendations sorted by roles of government, grantors and groups

Examples of Roles of Government, Grantors and Groups			
Recommendation category	Government	Grantors	Groups
Removing impediments	Legislative changes should be made to lessen the constraints of charitable status on the work of conservation and stewardship organizations.	Funders should coordinate as far as possible to harmonize their application and reporting procedures, and these procedures should be made less onerous.	Stewardship and conservation organizations should increase cooperation to decrease redundancy of efforts and competition.
Enabling or facilitating conservation and stewardship	Senior governments should engage in social marketing to publicize the achievements of stewardship and the benefits of implementing stewardship to individuals and society as whole.	Foundations should provide bridge funding to groups that are making the transition to other forms of financial support.	Stewardship and conservation groups should network and communicate
Systemic change to support the effectiveness of the conservation and stewardship sector	Governments across Canada, at all levels, should place a higher priority on funding stewardship and conservation.	Project funding should be accompanied or supplemented by core funding that allows for effective implementation of projects and long-term capacity-building.	Stewardship and conservation organizations should build strong linkages with the local community, including diverse social and business communities.

4.5.2 Actions for government

Removing impediments

- Governments at all levels need to ensure that tax implications of actions taken by landowners to steward their lands are positive for the landowner, and supplement tax benefits with other financial incentives.
- Legislative changes should be made to lessen the constraints of charitable status on the work of conservation and stewardship organizations.
- Governments should provide easier and lower-cost access to data and information.
- Governments at all levels should improve their efforts to communicate and engage in meaningful consultation with groups in the conservation and stewardship sector.

Enabling or facilitating conservation and stewardship

- Senior governments should engage in social marketing to publicize the achievements of stewardship and the benefits of implementing stewardship to individual and society as whole.
- Coordination on conservation and stewardship programs and initiatives should be improved among federal government agencies and between municipal, provincial and federal governments.
- In areas where stewardship support programs are no longer providing personnel who can advise stewardship groups in an ongoing way, government should provide access to expertise available within government be provided on an as-needed basis.
- Municipal and regional governments should build constructive relationships with stewardship groups, providing infrastructure, professional support, and where possible, financial support to these groups.
- Government should put in place appropriate legislation and regulation to protect the environment including incentives and disincentives.

Systemic change to support the effectiveness of the conservation and stewardship sector

- Governments across Canada, at all levels, should place a higher priority on funding the stewardship and conservation. In addition to continuing environmental programs that provide financial support, they should assess the potential for tax- or fee-based sources of funding for the stewardship and conservation sector.
- Endowments should be used to the greatest extent possible and governments should continue to support standing Funds.
- Government agencies and different levels of government should strive for a harmonized approach to policy development to coordinate stewardship and conservation programs and support a more integrated, broader scale approach.

4.5.3 *Actions for grantors (foundations and government grant programs)*

Removing impediments

- Funders should coordinate as far as possible to harmonize their application and reporting procedures, and these procedures should be made less onerous.

Enabling or facilitating conservation and stewardship

- Foundations should provide bridge funding to groups that are making the transition to other forms of financial support.
- Government, foundations and the private sector should support the conservation and stewardship sector in organizational development by providing training and access to professional services at low cost or by donation.

Systemic change to support the effectiveness of the conservation and stewardship sector

- Project funding should be accompanied or supplemented by core funding that allows for effective implementation of projects and long-term capacity-building.
- Funders should provide more multi-year grants and support applications for continuing as well as new projects.

4.5.4 *Actions for conservation and stewardship groups*

Removing impediments

- Stewardship and conservation organizations should increase cooperation to decrease redundancy of efforts and competition.
- Conservation and stewardship groups should put a priority on organizational development (e.g., strategic planning and leadership) and invest the necessary effort.

Enabling or facilitating conservation and stewardship

- Corporations should expand donations and funding programs, while groups continue to use discretion in choosing sources of private sector funding that are compatible with their mandates. Partnerships between stewards and businesses should be pursued within communities.
- Conservation and stewardship groups should pursue opportunities to coordinate their approach to funding, including the formation of partnerships to obtain funding and to distribute funding.
- Stewardship and conservation groups should network and communicate to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the sector, to build positive relationships, to present a common front to the public, and share resources.
- In some circumstances, groups could take cooperation a step further towards collaborating on projects, capacity-building, and building partnerships around shared resources.
- Conservation and stewardship groups should foster volunteer involvement.

Systemic change to support the effectiveness of the conservation and stewardship sector

- Stewardship and conservation organizations should build strong linkages with the local community, including diverse social and business communities.
- Business and stewardship/conservation groups need to educate themselves about each other's activities, and stewardship groups need to emphasize messages about a sustainable landscape both ecologically and economically in order to be better received by business and the general public.

4.5.5 *Inter-sectoral actions for systemic change*

In addition to the changes that could be made by each of the three players somewhat independently, there are changes that work across or between sectors which would do much to support the long-term sustainability of Canadian conservation and stewardship organizations. These include the following recommendations:

- Communications between funders and stewards or conservation groups should aim to clarify the needs and priorities of the conservation and stewardship sector. A funding gap analysis should be undertaken.
- All those involved – including government agencies, conservation and stewardship organizations and the private sector – need to connect the value of stewardship with its benefits to society and local communities, including its function in protecting the foundations for life.
- All sectors – government, private sector, and the conservation and stewardship sector – need to increase their communications and coordination.

- To support stewardship and avoid duplication, governments at all levels *and* national, provincial and territorial and local stewardship and conservation organizations should harmonize efforts to promote program integration and the effective and efficient use of financial resources.
- Local groups and local governments should cultivate closer working relationships to increase support for the work of the groups and increase its effectiveness.

4.6 Popular, but problematic options

A number of recommendations made in this report, based on the input from the survey and interviews and on the literature on the non-profit sector, have much support, while at the same time “warning flags” have gone up. For each of these popular options there are caveats that should be highlighted.

Leveraged funding

Matching dollars programs should be established by government to provide groups with an ongoing ability to leverage private donations. Partnerships between funding agencies or levels of government should be explored to enhance the potential of the leveraging effect. The National Conservation Fund proposed by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy would have the effect of encouraging such partnerships. *Caveats: Matching funding should not be over-emphasized. Matching funding does not work if there are no funds to match it with, or if the matching currency is increasingly scarce volunteer time. The pursuit of matching funds – often from numerous sources – can also be highly time-consuming.*

Diversification of funding sources

Funding has been changing due to a variety of impacts and will continue to change. Current sources of funding are not going to meet the needs of stewardship and conservation organizations, and foundations cannot remain to be the dominant type of funding instrument. It is broadly recognized that the conservation and stewardship sector needs to expand and diversify its base of funding sources and be more creative in finding funds. Conservation and stewardship groups should broaden their funding base so as to be more self-sufficient. One way is to pursue more individual donations. Planned giving (bequests and monthly giving) in particular should meet a larger proportion of funding needs. *Caveats: Several limitations of these funding approaches, such as availability of willing donors and motivated volunteer fundraisers, need to be recognized.*

Groups may also explore sales of services as a new form of fundraising – many are already engaged in this. *Caveats: Sales of services should be pursued with caution, in ways that are consistent with the mandate of the group. It is often unsuitable for smaller, community-based groups, and can act as a disincentive in landowner contact. Funders need to recognize that organizations are not businesses and in fact, are organized for very different purposes than businesses.*

Increasing collaboration

A theme that permeates the discourse around capacity building for stewardship is, to mimic the real estate adage: collaboration, collaboration, collaboration. Government agencies are requested to harmonize their policies and programs. Levels of government are seen as inadequately coordinated. Funders would like environmental and stewardship groups to coalesce – to rationalize their numbers and relationships so that redundancies of roles are reduced, resources are shared, and funding can be more centralized in its distribution. Environmental and

stewardship groups in turn want funders to harmonize their application and reporting procedures, and coordinate funding priorities.

Caveats: In reaction to calls for collaboration, government agency representatives sometimes argue that their programs are more complementary than overlapping, and that resources for increased coordination are scarce. Foundation representatives maintain that their priorities have to be driven by the priorities set by the holders of the funds – the philanthropists or boards to whom funding officers report. Group representatives assert that there is less duplication in the sector than meets the eye; there is strength in diversity; and there is value in independence which provides the ability to be more responsive to communities. Furthermore, lobbying and watchdog roles, and to some extent, advocacy, largely depend on independence from government.

It behooves the participants in each of the three sectors to reflect on, and communicate about the potential for increased collaboration within their sector. Improvements in communication and coordination should be considered at a minimum. At the same time, each must recognize the limits to the benefits and the feasibility of collaboration in the other sectors.

4.7 Future research

Even though this study was broad and “data rich,” there are several more lines of inquiry that it opens rather than closes. Some of these are as follows:

Analysis of the conservation and stewardship sector: The survey data could be further analysed to get a clear picture of the conservation and stewardship sector in its various dimensions. The different types of groups could be described in terms of their needs, roles, capacity, and differences regarding options for funding.

Comparison with the voluntary service sector: Much insight could be gained by comparing the longer and more studied experience of the voluntary service sector to that of the conservation and stewardship sector. For example, the pros and cons of leveraged funding and fee-for-service income generation could be investigated.

Coalitions and the role of partnerships: Given the emphasis placed on networking and collaboration, it would be useful to explore the effectiveness of coalitions and their role in the funding system. Also in this context, research could investigate what makes one group more suited or ready to enter into partnerships than another, and what qualities or practices could be cultivated to improve partnering. Related questions include: What are the real risks, given the obvious benefits of collaboration? What aspects of collaboration might help significantly while avoiding the pitfalls? For example, if groups have to form coalitions to access funds, what could help them work more cohesively rather than being driven apart by the challenges of sharing? Could a suite of “best practices” provide the security, or quality control needed for effective collaboration? What is the potential for specific mechanisms such as a virtual pool of funds for core costs that would be built cooperatively by different grantors?

Granting procedures and grant administration: The potential for grantors to work together in streamlining grant application, administration and writing procedures could be explored. Ways of supporting groups in grant administration could be assessed, from training in book-keeping to the provision of functional fiscal accounting systems.

Evolving roles in the sector: The interactions and transitions between different roles would be interesting to explore – in what direction is the sector evolving and why? For example, many are calling for more advocacy, while others emphasize the advantages of a close, cooperative relationship with government?

Funding alternatives: Research could usefully evaluate the pros and cons of various funding alternatives, focusing on more innovative ones.

Organizational development: The role of organization health or organizational development as a factor affecting capacity and effectiveness deserves to be further explored. Survey respondents reported this to be a key factor in the past success of groups and organizations, regardless of funding shortage. It is the one main theme arising from this primary research that is not strongly echoed in other recent research and consultations on challenges and opportunities in the stewardship and conservation sector. Research should focus on how funding and in-kind support could help with organizational development. It could also investigate how groups that attribute their success to organizational health have managed to attain their level of performance in this regard.

The value of the stewardship and conservation sector to the environment and Canadian society is inestimable. Its contributions will more than repay the investments we should make in finding the best ways to build sector's capacity and ensure its sustainability.

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5.4 Interviewees

5.4.1 Territories

Juri Peepre, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society’s Yukon Chapter

Gerry Couture, Yukon Salmon Committee Habitat Conservation and Stewardship Program

Jennifer Morin, Ecology North

5.4.2 *British Columbia*

Bill Turner, The Land Conservancy of BC/The Land Trust Alliance of BC
Anne Levesque, East Kootenays Environmental Society
Clive Callaway, Living By Water Project
Delores Broten, Friends of Cortez Island, Reach for Unbleached, Watershed Sentinel
Bert Brink, BC Federation of Naturalists (Pilot interview)

5.4.3 *Prairie Provinces*

Larry Simpson, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Land conservancy
Ernie Ewaschuk, Land Stewardship Centre of Canada (LSCC)
Margaret Skeel, Nature Saskatchewan
Herb Goulden, Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council

5.4.4 *Ontario*

Jamie Fortune, Ducks Unlimited Canada
Dick Hunter, Conservation Ontario
Vic Janulus, Norfolk Land Stewardship Council

5.4.5 *Quebec*

Michel Chouinard, Chaleur Bay Zip Committee
Francine Hone, Comité du marais de Kingsbury, Fiducie foncière de la Vallée du Ruiter
Terri Mohahan, Appalachian Corridor Appalachien

5.4.6 *Atlantic Canada*

Kate MacQuarrie, Island Nature Trust
Peter Demarche, Federation of Woodlot Owners
Irene Novaczek, Save Our Seas
David Coon, Conservation Council of New Brunswick

5.5 *Groups surveyed*

5.5.1 *Territories*

Arctic Borderlands Ecological Knowledge Coop, Gary Kofinas
Canadian Arctic Resources Committee, Karen Wristen
Downstream Coalition, Graham MacCannell
Ecology North, Alex Borowiecka
Streamkeepers North Society, Trix Tanner
The Yukon Conservation Society, Alice Hartling
Yukon Fish and Game Association, Jim Haney
Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council, Sam Skinner

5.5.2 *British Columbia*

BC Lake Stewardship Society, Angie Cleavland
BC Spaces for Nature, Dona Reel
BC Wildlife Federation, John Wholstock
BC Wildlife Federation - Wetland Education Program, Theresa Southam
Bilston Watershed Habitat Protection Association, Ian McKenzie
Boundary Naturalists, Ron Walker
Bowen Island Conservancy, Sue Ellen Fast
Burns Bog Conservation Society, Eliza Olson
Cariboo Chilcotin Conservation Society, Mark Evans
Como Watershed Group, Pamela Zevit
Cortes Island Conservancy, Sabina Leader-Mense
Cowichan Community Land Trust, Jennifer Lous
Cowichan Estuary Preservation Society, Bob Holdin
Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust, Jack Baits
Denman Conservancy, Patti Willis
East Kootenay Environmental Society (Creston Valley Branch), Tanna Anderson
Federation of BC Naturalists, Jeremy McCall
First Nations Environmental Network, Susanne Hare
Fraser River Estuarium Education Society, Gordon Kibble
Friends of Caren, Paul Jones
Friends of Cortes Island Society, Kathy Smail
Friends of Cypress Provincial Park Society, Katharine Steig
Friends of Mt. Revelstoke and Glacier, Maurine
Galiano Conservancy, Paul LeBlond
Green Club, Joseph Lin
Habitat Acquisition Trust, Claudia Copley
Hecate Strait Streamkeepers Society, George Farrell
Mackenzie Nature Observatory, Vie Lambie
Quesnel River Watershed Alliance, Chris Blake
Salmo Watershed Streamkeepers Society, Gerry Nellestijn
Society Promoting Environmental Conservation, Ivan Belic
The Discovery Coast Greenways Land Trust, Lucy Reiss
Turtle Island Earth Stewards, Tyhson Banighen
West Kootenay Naturalists, Ed Beynon
Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Sue Fox

5.5.3 *Prairie Provinces*

Alberta Fish and Game Association, Martin Sharon
Albertans for a Wild Chinchaga, Helene Walsh
Alonsa Conservation District, Harry Harris
Big Shell Lake Watershed Stewardship Association Inc., Doug Wilson
Bow Valley Naturalists, Mike McIvor
Calgary Fields Naturalists Society, Chris Havard
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Manitoba), Beth McKechnie
Castle-Crown Wilderness Coalition, Jeffrey Emmett
Crooked Creek Conservancy Society of Athabasca, Harvey Scott
Forest Fringe Citizen's Coalition, Marilyn Noland

Fort Qu' Appelle Natural History Society, Ron Hooper
Friends of Fish Creek Provincial Park Society, Kristin Dyer
Friends of Lilly Lake, Barbara Collier
Friends of Sprucewoods Inc., Don Forbes
Friends of the Bluebirds, Ann Smith
Friends of the Whaleback, James Tweedie
Grasslands Naturalists Society, Micheal O'Shea
Jasper Environmental Association, Basil/Jill Seaton
Manitoba Wildlife Federation, Ray Rybuck
Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin, Susan Lamb
Peace Parkland Naturalists Club, Margot Hervieux
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Sandra Dewald
Saskatoon Nature Society, Bill MacKenzie
Society for Range Management(SRM), Trevor Lennox
Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS), Keith Crowder
Sturgeon Creek Association, Tania Gottschalk
The Federation of Alberta Naturalists (FAN), Glen Semanchuk
Vermilion River Naturalist Club, Warren Westover
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, Jeff

5.5.4 Ontario

Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation, Greta McGillivray
Bruce Peninsula Bird Observatory, Ethan Meleg
Canada South Land Trust, Elizabeth Learmouth
Canadian Thousand Islands Heritage Conservancy, Dave Warner
Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy, Bob Barnett
Espanola Game and Fish Protection Association, Leonard Houle
Friends of Highland Creek, Karen Boniface and Cathy
Friends of Laurier Woods, Dick Tafel
Friends of Red Hill Valley, Don McLean
Friends of Second Marsh, Chris Conti
Friends of the Don East, Erica Wilson
Friends of the Grand River, Ian D. Martin
Friends of the Spit, Jacqueline Courval
Friends of the Tay River Watershed, Carol Dillon
Friends of the Wye Marsh Inc., Laurie Schutt
Grey Association for Better Planning, Peggy Hutchison
Hamilton Halton Watershed Stewardship Program, Joanne
Hastings-Prince Edward Land Trust, Olive Root
Junction Creek Stewardship Council, Carrie Regenstreif
Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists, Jim Burrell
Lambton Wildlife Inc., Peter M. Banks
Little River Enhancement Group Essex-Windsor, Ian Naisbitt
Lower Grand River Land Trust Foundation Inc., Betsy Smith
National Aboriginal Land Managers Association, Leona
Norfolk Field Naturalists, Peter Carson
Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, Tom Atkins
Temagami Stewardship Council, Gaye Smith

5.5.5 *Quebec*

Le Club des Ornithologues de la Gaspésie, Pierre Poulin
Alive Rivière, Jean Roberge
Amies De La Montagne, Gabrielle Corn
Association Pour La Protection Du Lac Brompton, Lucie Gagnon
Association québécoise des groupes d'ornithologues, Daniel Jauvin
Committee of Valorization of Beauport River, Natalie Piedopus
Conseil Regional De L'Environnement Et Du Developpement Durable De LOutaouais, Nicole Desroches
Conseil Regional De L'Environnement De Lanaudiere, Gilles Coté
Envir-Action, Pierre Morin
Fondation De La Faune Du Quebec, Andre Le-Tellier
Great Lakes United (Montreal Office), Genevieve
Groupe De Recherche et D'Education Sur Le Milieu Marin, Veronik De La Cheneliere
Heritage Saint Bernard, Dominique Gendron
Mont Saint-Hilaire Nature Conservation Centre, Anke Roth
Pinnacle Mountain land Trust, Helene Leduc
Province of Quebec Society for the Protection of Birds, Christine Murphy
Québec Society for Wetland Conservation, Mr. Alain Gouge
Societe D'Amenagent De La Riviere Madawaska Et Du Lac Temiscouata, Rene Dirion
Société de Biologie de Montréal, Robert Boulanger
Société de conservation et de mise en valeur de la Grande Plée Bleue, Robert Gauthier
Société de l'arbre du Québec (SODAQ), Ammie Lessard
Société pour la conservation de la tourbière de Lanoraie, Luc Robillard
The Lefavre Hunting and Fishing Conservation Club, Yves Lacombe
Union québécoise for the nature conservation (UQCN), Harvey Mead

5.5.6 *Atlantic Canada*

Annapolis Field Naturalists Society, Dave Tinker
Bedeqe Bay Environmental Management Association, Brenda Penak
Blomidon Naturalists Society, Neil Cloghesy
Bluenose Atlantic Coastal Action Program, Brooke Cook
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Nova Scotia), Dave Miller
Ecology Action Centre, Mark Butler
Gander River Management Association Inc, Jim Crewe
Halifax Field Naturalists, Bob McDonald
Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy, Greg Amos
L.M. Montgomery Land Trust, George Campbell
Maritime Atlantic Wildlife, Barry Rothfuss
Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee, Harry Collins
New Brunswick Federation of Naturalists, Mike LeBlanc
New Brunswick Protected Natural Areas Coalition, Roberta Clowater
Newfoundland and Labrador Legacy Nature Trust, Edward Hollett
Nova Scotia Coastal Guardian Program, Anna McCarron
Nova Scotia Nature Trust, Doris Cameron
Partridge Forever Society, David Moores
Pays De Cocagne Sustainable Development, Léopold Bourgeois
Protected Natural Areas Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Laura Jackson

Salmon Preservation Association for the Waters of Newfoundland, Keith Piercy
Sea View Watershed Association, Dale Adams
Sentinelles Petitcodiac Riverkeeper, Léa Olsen
Shubenacadie Watershed Environmental Protection Society, Anna McCarron
South Shore Naturalists Club, Jill Comolli
The Halifax Wildlife Association, Peter J. Weal
The Nature Conservancy of Canada - Atlantic Regional Office, Linda M. Stephenson

Appendix 1: Interview and Survey forms

Interview Form

Supporting Stewardship in Canada

Name of Group:		Date:	
Name of Interviewee:		Phone:	
Position/Role of interviewee, if any		Email:	
Region			

Introduction

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in an interview.

Dovetail Consulting, a Vancouver based company specializing in environmental management and group decision-making, has been retained to prepare a research paper that will serve as a resource and/or discussion paper for the conference: *The Leading Edge: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada 2003* (Victoria, B.C. July 3-6). The purpose of our research is to examine what stewardship and conservation organizations in Canada need in terms of support to function at their highest level as well as how that support might best be provided.

In this phase of the research we are conducting 20 in-depth interviews with individuals who are experienced in stewardship from across Canada. Your answers to the following questions will help to provide a clearer picture of the value, support structure, challenges and future directions of the stewardship and conservation sector in Canada.

We expect the interview to take about 45 minutes (however, this version is the early draft version). If you have any questions, please contact Catherine Sherlock at 604-924-4880 or sherlock@intergate.ca

A Who are stewards and conservationists and what do they do?	
<p>1. In your view what are the major contributions or greatest impacts that the stewardship and conservation movement have had in the last 10-20 years– Tell me if you want to answer for your area of expertise, your geographical area or the country.</p> <p><Prompt = Non-profit and volunteer.></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Expertise <input type="checkbox"/> Geographical area (locality) <input type="checkbox"/> Canada</p>	
<p>2. Has the role of stewardship groups changed over the last 10 years? How?</p>	
B What is the value of the stewardship/conservation sector?	

3. From your perspective as someone who works within the stewardship and conservation sector, what is the social value or social contribution of the work stewards and conservationists do?

<Prompt = what is that; can you explain further?>

4. Do you think there is an economic value?

5. In your opinion, how is the work that stewards and conservationists do valued by society?

<Prompt = from your experience and/or in your community>

C Current funding realities for the not for profit stewardship sector?

This next section is about the role funding plays in helping groups to achieve their goals

6. Of all the issues stewardship and conservation groups face, how important is funding to achieving success.

Not important Somewhat important Very important Don't Know

7. Generally speaking, are local stewardship and conservation groups in Canada finding it easier or more difficult to secure funding now as compared to 10 years ago?

Easier More Difficult

8. What is the most important funding issue that stewardship and conservation groups face today?

If answer is sufficiency of funding, prompt with Can you identify other systemic barriers such as funding processes, coordination, new sources, core funding versus project funding?

9. In your opinion, what would be the most effective way to address these issues? <choose one issue as an example>

10. In the future, do you think stewardship and conservation groups will need to develop services for sale?

<Prompt - Do you have any scenarios or mechanisms that you could recommend?>

5.5.7 D Where is the sector going?

Now I'm going to shift to some questions that are future-oriented

11. What is the most important work that the stewardship and conservation sector needs to undertake over the next 10 years?

<Prompt – continuation of the sector's current work, or new emphasis?>

12. Do you expect the current sources of funding will meet the needs of the stewardship and conservation sector over the next 10 years?

<p>13. Do you see any new funding opportunities on the horizon or can you suggest new funding opportunities that could be developed to meet the needs of the stewardship and conservation sector?</p>
<p>14. What challenges do you envision the stewardship and conservation sector facing over the next decade <i>other than funding</i>?</p>
<p>E The core issues facing capacity for the stewardship/conservation sector</p>
<p>15. What three factors most limit the stewardship/conservation sector from achieving its full potential?</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>
<p>F The promise of a sector working at capacity</p>
<p>16. If the sector was working at its full potential what else do you think it would be able to accomplish? OR Please describe two or three additional contributions that the stewardship/conservation sector could make if it was working at its full potential.</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>
<p>G Recommendations</p>
<p>17. What changes can public and private funding agencies make to ensure that stewardship and conservation groups have the ongoing capacity to meet their full potential?</p>
<p>18. What can the stewardship/conservation organizations do in their operations, plans, and programs to improve their effectiveness?</p> <p>< Prompt - Aside from funding and support issues we've been discussing ></p>
<p>19. What kind of support – other than funding – do you think the government should be providing to the stewardship/conservation sector?</p> <p><Prompt – e.g., legal, policy, or staff support ></p>
<p>20. What else do you think is needed to sustain and improve the long-term effectiveness of the stewardship and conservation sector?</p>
<p>Would you suggest any changes to the questionnaire?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wording clarity</p> <p>Additional Comments:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Content – any new questions or new lines of inquiry or any not appropriate?</p>

Additional Comments:

Too long

Additional Comments:

May we quote you in our report? some of the ideas you've given us?

Yes

No

Only if check first

Survey Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our study.

If you have any questions regarding the survey instrument please do not hesitate to call Garvin Hunter (604) 732-8240 or E-mail garvin_consulting@telus.net . We look forward to hearing your opinions on this exciting and important issue.

Introduction

Dovetail Consulting, a Vancouver based company specializing in environmental management and

Supporting Stewardship in Canada

Name of Group:		Date:	
Name of Respondent		Phone:	
Position/Role, if any		Region	

group decision-making, has been retained to prepare a research paper that will serve as a resource and/or discussion paper for the conference: *The Leading Edge: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada 2003*. For this study we are examining the following issues: the value of stewardship and conservation work done by non-profit organizations; the support received and how it is provided; and strategies for systemic change and policy recommendations.

In the first phase of the study we conducted 20 in-depth interviews with leaders from Canada's stewardship and conservation sector. In this second phase we plan to survey 150 stewardship and conservation groups located across Canada. Your answers to the following questions will help to provide a clearer picture of the value, support structure, challenges and future direction of the stewardship and conservation sector in Canada. Your individual responses will be kept strictly confidential, but they will be combined with those of other stewardship and conservation groups to help us answer our research questions.

To help us conduct our research in a timely manner, we would appreciate receiving your responses to this survey by April 9, 2003. After you have completed the survey, please email it to us at the following email address garvin_consulting@telus.net. If you have any questions regarding the completion of the survey please do not hesitate to call Garvin Hunter at (604) 732-8240. We anxiously look forward to your answers by April 9, 2003. Thanks for your help.

In appreciation of your support would you like us to email Yes No
a copy of the final report to you?
E-mail address

A Who are stewards and conservationists and what do they do?

1. What is your organization's mission statement?

Please Explain:

If the respondent does not know his/her organization's mission statement then we will ask the following question:

What is your organization's purpose?

Please Explain:

2. What is the geographic priority of your organization's focus?

Local Regional Provincial National International

3. Is your organization or group focused on any particular type of land or habitat (e.g., agriculture land, a watershed, or a particular wetland)?

Yes No

If so, please specify:

4. I now will ask you about the types and number of individuals directly involved in your organization or group. Does your organization or group have:

<input type="checkbox"/> Members	# of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Advisory committee	# of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors	# of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time paid staff	# of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time paid staff	# of people
<input type="checkbox"/> Contract staff	# of people

5. Has your organization or group played any of the following role(s).

<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy and/or Lobbying	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring and/or Mapping and/or Inventory
<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Networking and/or Umbrella
<input type="checkbox"/> Land acquisition	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability/Sustainable development
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Habitat enhancement	<input type="checkbox"/> Landowner contact
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Please Explain:	

6. In your opinion what have been the three most important projects or other initiatives your organization or group have carried out in the past 5 years.

1

2

3

Volunteers often work in stewardship and conservation organizations. The next few questions will focus on your organization's or group's volunteers.

7. On average annually how many volunteers work with your organization or group? # of Volunteers:

8. Please state three areas of expertise that volunteers bring to your organization or group (e.g., strategic planning, mapping, accounting, or fundraising).

1
2
3

9. In your opinion what three characteristics of your organization or group have most contributed to its success.

1
2
3

C Current funding realities for the not for profit stewardship sector?

10. Please indicate whether your organization or group receives funding from the following sources.
<Prompt – including all types of expenses from project to operations>

<input type="checkbox"/> Foundations	<input type="checkbox"/> Donations
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal government	<input type="checkbox"/> Private sector
<input type="checkbox"/> Provincial government	<input type="checkbox"/> Merchandising
<input type="checkbox"/> Regional government	<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising events (e.g., slide shows, silent auctions, bake sales)
<input type="checkbox"/> Municipal government	<input type="checkbox"/> Casinos, bingo or lottery funds
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership fees	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Please specify:

11. Does your organization or group receive any funding which is designated for salaries and/or operating expenses (e.g., rent, utilities, and office supplies)?

Yes No

If **yes**, please state the three most important sources for this funding and how often you have to re-apply?

1	Other: please specify	Reapply Every	years
2	Other: please specify	Reapply Every	years
3	Other: please specify	Reapply Every	years

12. Please state the three primary sources of funding from which your organization or group receives project funding.

1	Other: please specify
2	Other: please specify
3	Other: please specify

<p>13. Does your organization or group have an office space?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If so, do you:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Rent <input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Donated <input type="checkbox"/> Other Please specify:</p>
<p>14. What is your organization's or group's total annual or monthly budget?</p> <p>\$ Per Year \$ Per Month <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p>
<p>15. What is your organization's or group's total annual or monthly expenditure on salaries?</p> <p>\$ Per Year \$ Per Month <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p>
<p>16. Can you estimate your organization's or group's total annual or monthly administrative expenses (i.e., not including salaries)?</p> <p><Prompt – e.g., rent, utilities and office supplies></p> <p>\$ Per Year \$ Per Month <input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know</p>
<p>17. To what extent is your organization or group dependent on project grants to cover its salaries and/or operating expenses (rent, utilities, and office supplies)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly dependent <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately dependent <input type="checkbox"/> Very dependent <input type="checkbox"/> Completely dependent <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
<p>18. In your opinion does your group find it <i>easier</i> or <i>more difficult</i> to secure funding now as compared to 5 years ago?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Easier <input type="checkbox"/> Harder</p> <p>Additional comments:</p>
<p>19. Please indicate how successful your organization or group has been at securing funding to meet its objectives.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very unsuccessful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat unsuccessful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat successful <input type="checkbox"/> Very successful <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
<p>20. Please describe the challenges that the pursuit of funding poses on your organization or group <i>other than sufficiency of funding</i>.</p> <p>Please Explain:</p>
<p>21. Please indicate the extent that time spent on fundraising has impacted your group's ability to conduct its work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Large impact <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate impact <input type="checkbox"/> Small impact <input type="checkbox"/> No impact <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know</p>
<p>5.5.8 D Where is the sector going?</p>
<p>22. Please list three challenges your organization or group will face over the next 10 years.</p> <p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>
<p>E The core issues facing capacity for the stewardship/conservation sector</p>
<p>23. In your opinion what three things would most improve your organization's or group's ability to achieve its</p>

objectives.

<Prompt - e.g., more stable funding, better strategic planning, communications expertise, access to government decision-making, data management systems, GIS, office space, volunteers, etc.>

1

2

3

24. Please indicate the extent that your organization or group has found it a challenge to meet its operational costs.

- Not a challenge at all Somewhat of a challenge A serious challenge A very serious challenge Don't know