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**VOLUME 13, NO. 2**  
**SPRING 2004**

**Random Casts**

**Gunning For  
Common-Sense  
Legislation**

**A Walk In The Woods**

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# NOVA OUTDOORS

## SPRING 2004

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# Nova Outdoors

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of Anglers and Hunters



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**STATEMENT  
OF PURPOSE**

The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters is interested in all aspects of the out-of-doors and is dedicated to the fostering of sound management and wise use of the renewable resources of the Province. We want to ensure that their economic, recreational and aesthetic values may continue for the benefit of this and all future generations.

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## President's Message

"Time marches on" and "time waits for no one", are two common sayings here in Nova Scotia, and are true to their



Gary Penney

words. I find these expressions particularly fitting as I near the end of my second year as president of The Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters. There are so many things needing to be done, and seemingly so little time to get them done, that sometimes one has to stop, look down and see which way the feet are pointing to know if we are stepping ahead or backward. Sometimes, it doesn't hurt to take a step back, regroup, and then move ahead. You're in trouble if one foot is pointing ahead, and one pointing back because then you are not going anywhere or doing anything.

Throughout the years, NSFAH has had both feet firmly on the ground, pointing in the same direction, making progress at improving conditions for wildlife and habitat, promoting good management of the renewable resources, and education of safety and conservation. This is all made possible through a province-wide support of volunteers and members of NSFAH and its 36 affiliated clubs. From hunting, fishing, trapping clubs, to all terrain vehicle clubs, to houndsmen and archery clubs, and everything in between, including conservation officers and guides associations, the NSFAH represents a complete and comprehensive cross section of expertise in most all aspects of the out of doors environment, sports, and recreation, pertaining to wildlife and habitat. It is from this base of expertise, combined with factual information from biologists and sound science, that decisions are made for managing wildlife resources for future generations. Often these decisions have to be communicated and negotiated with governments for approval or implication, a responsibility the NSFAH performs on your behalf.

Down through the years, NSFAH has taken on many challenges of that particular time; fish stocks, pollution, threatened water ways/wetlands, protected areas, pouching, gun registration, and hunting and trapping rights just to mention a few. Some of the challenges have achieved a resolve, while others are ongoing and will be for some time, and will continually be monitored and acted upon as necessary, by the NSFAH on your behalf and that of wildlife and habitat conservation. With all that in mind, I believe that currently the biggest challenge we have now, is the introduction of youth and participants into the skill and sport of hunting, fishing and trapping. Without new entrants into these activities, perpetuation of the sport and ultimately the care and management of the renewable resources will deteriorate. It is the hunters, fishers and trappers that are the "watchdogs" of the environment and its wildlife. We have a history of invested resources and interest to ensure perpetuation of wildlife and habitat for generations to come. For this to continue, new entrants must be available to pick up where others leave off.

In today's changing and high tech society, there are many opportunities for young people, but few of these offer the skills, challenge and natural environment of the out-of-doors like hunting, fishing and trapping. Those of us, still in this fraternity, need to reach out and encourage young people to give it a try, or at least support programs that offer such opportunities. Often, young people or potential participants of the sport, don't have a parent, mentor, or means to be introduced to wildlife recreation. Therefore programs and volunteers must be promoted to attract interests of potential participants, and pass on the skills, experience, and stories that are a natural part of our heritage. I would agree with those who say it's not the same today, "Wildlife and habitat" has changed, conditions are different, regulations are complicated,

*Continued on page 7.*

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# Executive Director's Voice



By Tony Rodgers

Fishing is on my mind a little more frequently these days for a couple of reasons. Mainly because I know spring isn't that far away. I already had my fly vest out trying to determine what flies I must replace from last year. You know those flies that were ripped from their leader by monsters of the deep. I guess I should stop here and catch myself, or this whole column risks being a piece of fiction.

The ice is still too thick to think about serious fly fishing, but the time is always right to get serious and think and talk about Nova Scotia's native fish.

It shouldn't matter what type of fishing tackle you use personally when it comes to protecting fish habitat and the individual uniqueness of streams, lakes and rivers. All anglers, fly fishermen, bait fishermen or spinning gear, each of us has a responsibility to the resource. The heritage of these special fishing places should be as important to anglers as the opportunity to fish them.

Nova Scotia is contemplating taking a giant step toward placing more of the responsibility for the health of fish habitat in the hands of the anglers themselves. The province is being urged by the Inland Fisheries Advisory Committee, a committee whose members come from provincial volunteer fishing groups, just like you, to move forward with a request to place a habitat stamp on all fishing licenses to raise money for the resource.

The stamp would have a charge (not yet determined but somewhere about \$2 to \$5) and like the Wildlife Habitat stamp, that's currently attached to the hunting license, all the money collected

will be used to improve the conditions of fish in Nova Scotia.

Anglers and hunters pay for wildlife conservation anyway, that's a fact, and you have heard me say that many times. Many other activities that people participate in require that people pay for the service they receive. Golfers pay memberships or green fees so that the condition of their golf habitat is maintained. Skiers pay lift tickets in order to have groomed trails as part of their skiing habitat enhancement. So this new stamp will be a natural for us. After all \$20.00 for 6 months of fishing compared to \$40 for 6 hours of golf, it's a no-brainer.

The hunting stamp brings in approximately \$125,000 annually on the collection of the \$2.00 stamp. Can you imagine what good we could do for fishing for an extra \$5.00. Some people will complain about the extra cost, and that is the nature of the beast. But we don't live in a province where you have to buy hunting and angling leases in order to participate either, so this really is very little.

The fish habitat fund will be established in such a way that none of this new money will go into the general revenue of the province. A fund board will be set up that will give weight to the number of anglers who will be on the board. It's only fair that the people who put the money in the pot should be the ones who decide how it's spent. This system has worked well for the hunters for the past number of years. So it can work for anglers.

That is just part of the activity around fish lately. The Atlantic Salmon Federation and the local Nova Scotia chapter is again calling on the federal government to establish a \$30 to \$50 million endowment fund for the Atlantic salmon in the whole Atlantic Region.

The idea is that the government would maintain its capital, but that groups working with the salmon will have the interest dollars generated from the endowment to help fund projects.

It's a simple concept and there is already such an endowment fund on the west coast for west coast salmon. The all

party Standing Committee on Fisheries in parliament has endorsed the idea, it's just a matter of Hon. Geoff Regan, the minister of fisheries, pushing that agenda item along. Mr. Regan is the minister for Halifax West, so if you know him, please promote this idea.

Another fishy subject I would like to mention here is the introduction of non-indigenous species of fish into waters where they do not belong.

Some people have taken it upon themselves to play God and are introducing fish species into provincial water courses that the fish were never in before. These shortsighted people are transferring smallmouth bass and chain pickerel in particular into lakes and rivers near their own homes to help provide better fishing opportunity for their greedy selves.

Unfortunately, their fish have never co-evolved with the existing fish species, and all hell breaks loose. The more dominate species, the introduced ones, can handle warmer water and harsher conditions. They end up taking over the system and drive the native species out. This is not what nature intended. It is not reversible.

Trout Nova Scotia is sweetening the pot for people who know of these selfish asses. They are offering a \$5,000.00 reward to anyone able to provide information in the conviction of one of these people. You will note that I have not referred to these criminals as anglers or fishermen in these past paragraphs, because they are neither. They are pond scum.

Everybody has a cell phone these days or at least one cell phone per fishing party. Lock in the Conservation Officers' number 1-800-565-2224 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-565-8477. Get a boat number, car license number, anything that will lead police to these people illegally dumping fish. It's important that we all participate in reporting poaching and other illegal activity like dumping fish because it is our resource. ❧

*Tony Rodgers, Executive Director  
tonyrodgers@eastlink.ca*

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# Letter To The Editor

## Say It Isn't So Ed!

I have always enjoyed reading the articles that appear in each edition of *Nova Outdoors*. I am a long time member of the Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters and a member in good standing of the Shelburne County Fish and Game Association. I have instructed the Atlantic Provinces Hunter Safety Course for more than twenty years and I have been an instructor for The Canadian Firearms Safety Course for the past fifteen years. So when I received my Winter 2003/04 copy of the magazine, the title of Ed Coleman's article "Tips on Upgrading Your Firearms License" caught my eye and I was looking forward to reading the "tips" Ed was going to share with us. I was disappointed to read that Ed's tips explained how some firearms users could avoid taking the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and qualify for a possession and acquisition license by means of the telephone version of the safety test. Now let me explain that I personally have no problem with the telephone version of the test. I understand that it was designed to provide a service for some individuals who may not have an opportunity to actually take a course at their local community college. What bothered me about this article was Ed's statement, "... there's no need to apply for a Firearms Safety Course and spend several evenings in a classroom being lectured on firearms stuff you don't need to know and will never have any use for." Ed, what part of firearms safety do you consider to be unnecessary? And, are

you suggesting that hunters or anyone who handles firearms "never use" safe handling procedures! I am certain that that is not what Ed meant to imply. In fact, one of Ed's final "tips" was to: "Concentrate on the safety aspect of firearms use when you study the book." *Yes!* Safety is the whole point of the course. After all, it's called The Canadian Firearms Safety Course.

It is my own belief that longtime firearms users are likely to have developed some bad and or dangerous habits over the years. It can't hurt to take a course that focuses on safety to refresh your skills. Young hunters, just getting started in the sport, need to hear experienced firearms users talk about just how careful you have to be every time you handle a firearm. I start every course I teach by telling the class that I am certain there are people in the room with far more expertise and knowledge about the workings of the various firearms than I have. I invite them to share their experiences with the class as we work through the course materials. As a result of this sharing of knowledge I am constantly learning from the people who attend these classes and we all have an opportunity to learn from each other. But, I stress the point that none of us can afford to be careless when handling firearms and that it is my hope that they will

leave the course with a renewed commitment towards firearms safety. I believe that the Canadian Firearms Safety Course is working and the emphasis on safety is making our sport a safer one than it was twenty years ago. I have had many experienced hunters and firearms owners, some of whom stated that they were rather negative about having to take the course at the start, express to me their satisfaction with the information they received. One night a man who had hunted for many years stated that he had really benefited from the experience and went so far as to say, "This course should be mandatory for every hunter every ten years!" Now that was quite a change in attitude let me tell you. And where else do young men and women, just beginning to develop an interest in hunting, have an opportunity to sit in a room for three nights and learn about the sport from those who have enjoyed it for many years. You are right Ed, concentrate on safety and learn the vital four *Acts*, but not so you can avoid "sitting in a classroom", but because we all want hunting and firearms use to be the safest sport it can be. 

Wayne Mullins

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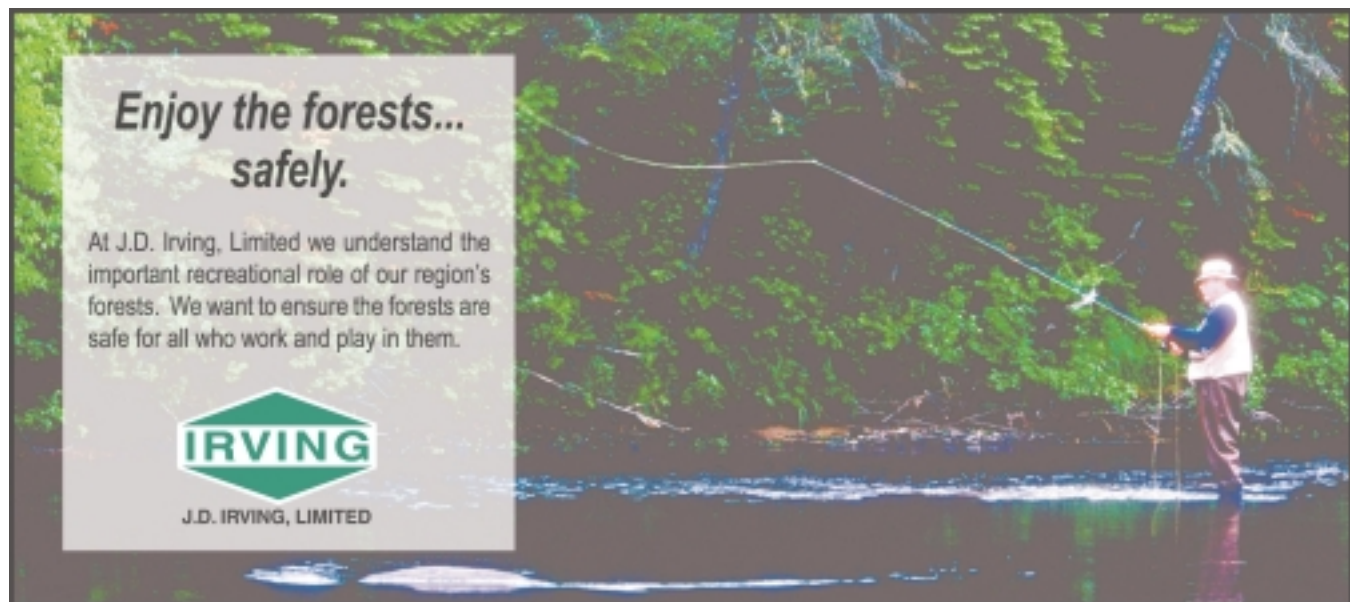
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# Random Casts

## Match The Hatch For Early Trout

By Don MacLean

Longer days and warming temperatures have many anglers anxiously awaiting their favourite time of year, the annual mayfly hatch. Wading the shores of a trout lake on a spring evening while casting to rising trout is one of my favourite forms of fishing. It is exciting and challenging, and, if you are in the right place, at the right time, with the right fly, very effective.

Many anglers consider the mayfly to be our most important trout stream insect. Mayflies belong to the order of insects called Ephemeroptera, from the latin Ephemero which means short lived, and ptera, meaning wings. The mayfly life cycle consists of four stages, egg, nymph, dun and spinner. Eggs hatch into an underwater form called a nymph. This period lasts about a year and is followed by emergence. When the nymph is fully developed it swims to the water surface and hatches into the winged mayfly known as a dun. The dun rests on the water surface for a short period of time drying its wings. This process is the hatch for which we anxiously await. The duns


are very vulnerable to trout while on the surface and the right fly can bring exciting action.

Its wings dried, the mayfly flies to nearby trees or shoreline vegetation to rest for a period of a few hours to several days. There it undergoes its final molt to the spinner stage. While duns are drab in colour that ranges from pale to black with shades of tan, grey, cream, green and brown, the spinner, in contrast, is bright and shiny, with long tails and clear transparent wings. The spinners fly back to the water where they mate in the air, lay their eggs in the water and fall spent to lie in the surface film where they die.

With over 100 species of mayflies in North America it is unlikely that anyone will be able to match the hatch for all of them. However in every area there are one or two hatches which are well known to seasoned anglers. They have names like the green drake, pale morning dun or light cahill, but one fly that is effective in imitating most of them, and which most Nova Scotia anglers wouldn't be caught on the water without is the Black Gnat. The Black Gnat represents a range of Nova Scotia mayflies and you should never be without a few in size #12-#18 in your tin.



The Black Gnat  
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Thread - Black  
Tail - A few strands of black hackle  
Body - Black floss or dubbing  
Wing - Mallard Quill  
Hackle - Black

So get out to your favourite lake or stream and "match the hatch". Tight lines. 

©2004 Don MacLean

*Donald A. MacLean is the Assistant Director Inland Fisheries Division for Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Pictou, NS.*


### President's Message... *continued from page 4.*

and costs increasing. All the more reason, I say, to have more people involved and educated in outdoor skills. The history of "the way it was back then" is important, to learn what was done wrong, or how "we" affected evolution, so that presently and for the future, "we" can protect and manage those resources.

In the last issue of Nova Outdoors, I mentioned a Youth Hunter Education

Scholarship, that was developed to address the issue of youth involvement. Hopefully this will be a catalyst for more program development and opportunity. The NSFAH program to provide financial assistance to youth attending a conservation camp during the summer, has been a long-standing youth program supported by wildlife enthusiasts' financial contributions. There are a number of ways people can contribute to youth and new entrants to wildlife sport and recreation, simply contact a wildlife club in your area, or the Nova Scotia Federation of Angler and Hunters. (information page in back of this magazine) Keep both your feet point-

ing in the same direction, the right direction with NSFAH.

On a final note, as you prepare for the upcoming fishing season, keep "safety first" as a priority at all times. Check those safety items of flotation devices, first aid kits, boats and associated equipment, taking the time necessary to be safe. When you are ready to go fishing, consider taking someone with you that may not have had the opportunity to try fishing. The experience, both for them and yourself, may be the best "catch of the day". 

*Yours in wildlife,  
Gary Penney*



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# Ribbons Of Green

## Are Forestry Regulations Really Conserving Eastern Woods, Waters and Wildlife?

The pace of forest flattening in eastern Canada has raised sufficient public concern to spawn a recent series of provincial guide-



Bob Bancroft

lines and regulations. These are supposed to conserve wildlife populations while protecting watercourses and water quality. Some aspects are relatively simple - such as leaving a forest stand around nest sites, or managing white-tailed deer wintering locations in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Prince Edward Island is taking baby steps to address its biggest environmental problem - spuds, silt and pesticides. Nova Scotia's new habitat rules only apply to forestry operations!

As a biologist and forest assessor, these regulations or guidelines concern me with their general sanctioning of large-scale clearcutting in close proximity to water. Failing to protect water, wildlife and the environment, they ignore the science. Some regulations are more than deficient - they're misguided.

Some of the scientific evidence regarding the habitats used by a majority of wildlife populations follows in this article, with suggestions for improved regulations. Areas bordering water have been called greenbelts, buffer strips, special management zones and riparian zones. I'll use riparian.

### The Importance Of Riparian Zones

About three-quarters of our wild animal species either depend upon, or prefer, habitats near water. Brinson et al. (1981), in a review paper on riparian (near water) ecosystems, state that the area of riparian vegetation most heavily used by wildlife is the zone within 200 metres (660 ft) of a stream or open water. These long, relatively narrow ribbons along water contribute little area to the total available habitat, but their wildlife value far outweighs their small size.

DiBello (1984) found that 85 percent of the locations of radio-collared fur-

bearers in Maine occurred within 100 m (330 ft) of a waterway. Coyotes and bobcats frequently move along frozen streams in winter, when traveling their home ranges, while red fox and fisher use the vegetation within 100 m of the waterway (Stocek, 1994). Red fox use lake edges, while coyotes frequently avoid them. Small mammals and birds also travel through riparian zones in dispersing from their original or natal habitats.

Migration routes along rivers and streams are consistently used by birds, bats and deer. Migrating songbirds probably use riparian forests disproportionately because of the abundance of food and dense cover. Some areas are major resting places for many north-south migrating birds, and may contain up to ten times the number of spring migrants than are found in adjacent, non-riparian areas.

The microclimate of riparian zones is different from that of the surrounding forest. There is generally more shade, higher humidity, and increased air movement. The increased humidity is important to plant growth and tends to make the habitat more favourable for many amphibians and some small mammals. Dense stands of conifers along waterways, with their milder microclimate, provide protective cover for tree swallows in cold, wet springs. Such stands in sheltered river valleys are commonly selected as deer wintering areas in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Riparian zones are also favourite moose habitat at various times of the year.

Research by Elliott and others in the State of Maine has demonstrated that many forest songbirds require a riparian zone that is at least 100 metres (330 feet) wide, on each side of a river or stream, and with minimum cutting intrusions and no large scale forest cutting. In Maine, taking this approach has been calculated to encompass about 15 percent of the land base. A few bird species may require a 200 metre (660 ft) wide riparian strip on both sides of the waterway. Bird use of riparian habitat is often related to snag (dead tree) occurrences coupled with plant species diversity and the vertical stratification (varying height) of vegetation.

In Nova Scotia, Bill Freedman of Dalhousie University and others have studied changes in bird species associated with intense disturbances as a result of forestry operations. Cindy Staicer of

Dalhousie University is currently studying bird use of forest habitats in western Nova Scotia. As vegetation on a site passes through successional sequences after a clearcut, so do trends in wildlife occurrence. The edge effect created between a residual stand (eg. - riparian zone) and a cutover area, for example, may attract more edge species of wildlife and reduce the number of forest interior birds such as ovenbirds. A 100 metre width on each side of the waterway is the kind of distance required to minimize some of these undesirable impacts. A typical forest songbird territory is about a hectare (100 m x 100 m) in size, so this width has potential benefits for wildlife.

Based on this kind of evidence, there should be a minimum 100 metre (330 ft) riparian zone from bank or shoreline inland on each side of a defined waterway. The closest 30 metres (99 ft) to the water would constitute a zone where live trees would protect banks and shorelines, dying and dead trees will offer cavities, and fallen trees could evolve naturally. The 70 metre (231 ft) band beyond that zone could be harvested on a gradual, small-scale basis. Possible harvest methods include selection, group selection, strip cuts at oblique angles, and patch cuts. Harvest openings would be designed so as to maintain the visual barrier (screen effect that hides wildlife) of the zone, foster new growth of shade tolerant species, and maintain soil and air humidity. Disturbance in this zone should be minimized during the breeding season, which is generally May to August.

Many forested areas are imperfectly drained. These areas often contain small, spring-fed pools, seeps or ponds where frogs and salamanders can lay their eggs without having them eaten by fish. Humans build these, but call them woodland fire ponds. Seeps, small ponds and other perennially wet sites located in forests that are scheduled for any form of cutting should be flagged out of the harvest zone and categorized as a riparian zone. Occasionally these sites grow excellent trees (like spruce) on hummocks within the wet area. With the appropriate equipment, and during a dry or frozen time period, it may be possible to harvest a few of these trees without causing undue drying or destruction of wetland habitat. This might be planned and economically accomplished when a crew is scheduled to conduct a partial harvest in nearby riparian zones.



Small brooks, even ones that are less than 50 cm (20 in) wide, can be traditional rearing sites for young speckled (brook) trout. These places often have sources of cool water, and are too small to be occupied by larger fish that might eat the young trout. Even small brooks that dry up in the summer can host spawning adult trout after fall rains. Eggs overwinter in bottom gravels, and hatch in the spring. Some young-of-the-year trout will move downstream if drought sets in later in the summer.

A healthy forest environment can offset drought conditions. Forest environments tend to be moist, whereas large-scale forest cutting generally leads to warmer air temperatures and drier soil conditions. Existing regulations to protect small watercourses are inadequate in the face of the large-scale forest removals that are occurring around them. Bogs and wet forest areas normally feed their water into small brooks. Existing three to five metre (10 -16.5 ft) provincial regulations may keep machinery out of small brooks, but do not address the role of wet places in the forest. Two forest bird species that nest in these wet areas are the Canada warbler and Veery. Populations of both species are declining across North America. This downturn has been linked to reductions in their available habitat.

Three to five metre regulations also do not address the role that small brooks have in supplying water to larger rivers, in addition to the specific in-stream habitat needs of young-of-the-year speckled trout. Riparian zones on brooks that are too small to warrant a 100 metre wide "no clearcut" zone, should still have a substantial buffer from the drying effects of clearcut operations.

Wet areas and small brooks considered too small for the 100 metre buffer should have a "gradual cut" 50 metre (115 ft) riparian zone applied around them. In the case of a defined channel, like a brook, this would be 50 metres on each side. The closest 20 metres (66 ft) to the water would constitute a zone where live trees would protect banks and shorelines, dying and dead trees will offer cavities, and fallen trees could evolve naturally. The outside 30 metres (98 ft) would be subject to the gradual harvest removals already discussed under the 100 metre riparian zones.

Reducing the riparian forest to a basal area of 20 m<sup>2</sup> per hectare, as one regulation suggests, leaves no effective forest cover along the water. Harvests in riparian zones should be light enough overall

to maintain riparian dampness and shade conditions.

### Wildlife Travel Corridors

Ecologists have long debated whether wildlife corridors are just someone's nice idea, or if they actually help species. An extensive study on the effects of wildlife corridors published in 2002, and based in the southern United States, offers positive proof that they encourage the movement of plants and animals across fragmented landscapes.

Wildlife Travel Corridors should be 100 metres (330 ft) wide. They will be considered gradual harvest zones where regular but minor harvests will maintain visual obscurity and encourage wind-firm, shade tolerant forest regeneration. Over time the entire area could be harvested, with rotations extended for longer-lived tree species, and leaving some (misshaped, inaccessible, etc.) standing trees to die and become deadwood on the ground. Snags could be removed from corridors on hilltops if their position posed a potential fire hazard from lightning.

These corridors should be linked to riparian zones, including wet ground that has the quiet pools and damp sites that some old wood and deadwood inhabitants, like frogs and salamanders, need for breeding.

### Weaknesses Of Riparian Zones And Wildlife Corridors

Leaving thin ribbons of trees across clearcut landscapes can prove very unstable when riparian and travel corridors are populated by even-aged, shallow-rooted and/or pioneer trees, on certain soil types and with topographic exposure to strong winds. Perhaps the most vulnerable period occurs when adjacent contiguous forests are clearcut harvested on a large scale, leaving riparian zones and wildlife corridors with bared edges for the first time, and open to blowdown. More gradual adjacent harvests might help, but some sites can wind throw with only a minor opening as a trigger. The challenge with inherently unstable riparian and wildlife corridors lies in *gradually* converting them to more stable, uneven-aged stands with a variety of site-suited tree species.

Riparian zones and wildlife travel corridors should be joined with the uneven-aged, shade-tolerant stands and other special areas set aside to provide connectivity at a landscape level for wild animals and plants.

To produce a reasonable facsimile of natural forest environments within shade-tolerant stands, inside riparian buffers and throughout wildlife travel corridors, the management regime within all these zones should involve extending the longer-lived tree species rotation times. This will enable long-lived, shade-tolerant species (like red spruce, hemlock, yellow birch and sugar maple) to pass through their natural age classes. Less valuable (e.g. misshapen) and more inaccessible individual trees would be selected for "no-cut", over-mature status as potential dead tree habitat material, and for eventual forest nutrient recycling. Poor candidates for the sawmill can be winners for wildlife. These older trees will eventually provide holes for cavity dwellers, and dead woody material as food for a wide variety of wild animals and plants, including the "decomposers" - microscopic bacteria, fungi, and soil animals that work over deadwood on the ground, producing essential nutrients for a new forest.

### Legacy Trees

The idea of leaving a few trees per hectare of clearcut on larger clearcuts is included in some wildlife regulations. It would be far better to leave the required government "clumps" of standing trees along the edges or borders of these cutovers, rather than as isolated islands in the middle of them. To quote Parker, Doucette and Hacheè (1996) "Studies at Hayward Brook, New Brunswick, raise serious questions relative to the effects of certain forestry management practices on species of cavity nesting birds. For instance, leaving a few large, mature and often dying white pine or yellow birch trees in the middle of clearcuts to serve as nesting substrate for cavity nesters is of little value to most species." Leaving some older trees along the edge of the cutover does not satisfy the regulations, but would prove more useful to wildlife, especially if these trees could left to grow old, die and fall to the ground, instead of being cut with the next harvest.

Many of these regulations could have incorporated more science, and promoted other forms of harvest besides large-scale clearcuts when shade tolerant trees form part of the forest. The regulations permit old growth and shade-tolerant forests to be clearcut to any size, and converted to simplified, intensively-managed plantations. The ecology of Acadian forests, waterways and wildlife would be better served with new regulations. ❧❧

*Bob Bancroft is a Biologist and Outdoor Writer.*

# Enjoy The Outdoors — Become A Campground Host

*Submitted by The Department of Natural Resources*

Imagine camping for two weeks this summer in one of our provincial parks ... walking in the woods, sitting by the fire, meeting new campers, surrounded by nature. If you also enjoy helping people, you may want to become a campground host. As a host, you help visitors get oriented to the park and local community and in return you camp for free.

Over 40 people have been hosts since the program began in Nova Scotia in 1996. Some of them return year after year, like teacher Elizabeth Balser of Windsor who hosted at Blomidon for five years with her husband and two sons. "I loved every minute," she says. "My favourite part was helping staff and campers." She also did a program on wildflower identification and led hikes. She recommends hosting to others, especially teachers who have summer months off and program presentation skills.

Eleven of the 21 provincial campground parks now participate in the program. Hosts are "on duty" for a minimum of four hours a day, five days a week and stay from two to four weeks per park. They greet new visitors and provide information on the park, local services and attractions. They keep an eye on the facilities and campers, and report anything amiss to park staff. Some hosts offer programs, like birdwatching, if they have a special area of interest.

Don and Gloria O'Brien of Sackville, Nova Scotia, are another example of dedicated hosts. For the past four years, this retired couple have hosted at The Islands in Shelburne County, Smileys Park in Hants County, Amherst Shore in Cumberland County, and Valleyview in Annapolis County for up to 10 weeks per summer.

"I really like meeting people", says Don. "In the job I had before, I was out meeting people all the time." Some parks have "regulars" that the hosts get to know, plus there are lots of tourists. "I bone up on events and what's going on around." One couple from Florida were only plan-

ning to spend one night in the park until Don talked to them about local attractions. "I kept them in the area for a week," he says. He has helped others plan a two-week itinerary staying at various provincial parks.

Thanks to hosts, visitors are better informed; park staff have more time for other work maintaining the park; and speeding, vandalism and other park problems are reduced. ❧

*If you are interested in becoming a host, contact Susan Hruszowy at the Department of Natural Resources (902) 424-5832 or [sjhruszo@gov.ns.ca](mailto:sjhruszo@gov.ns.ca).*

*You must be 19 or older and a background check will be done. The deadline for applying is April 30 and training will be provided at the start of the season. You can learn more about the Campground Host program at <http://parks.gov.ns.ca>.*

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# Nova Scotia Salmon Association Offers \$5,000 Reward For Illegal Bass-Dumping

## Foreign Invader Threatens Margaree Watershed

The Nova Scotia Salmon Association (NSSA) has issued a notice of a one-time reward in the amount of \$5,000 to anyone providing information that leads to a conviction of any person or persons responsible for the illegal releasing of non-native fish into Nova Scotia watercourses.

"The illegal transportation and dumping of exotic fish species into our local watersheds has got to stop. It's been going on far too long", says NSSA president David Reid. "Smallmouth bass and chain pickerel have been deliberately spread into watersheds across the province where they have never existed before. It's against the law and it represents an ecological disaster for native salmon and trout."

Smallmouth bass and chain pickerel are highly efficient predators who compete directly with juvenile salmon and trout for food and habitat. These warm water fish also have a biological edge over native cold-water species - they can actively forage dur-

ing the heat of the summer when salmon and trout are under temperature stress and concentrated into limited cool-water pools, making them easy pickings for the introduced exotics.

"Last year it was chain pickerel in the Shubenacadie River. Before that it was bass in the LaHave River system. Now it's happened again in Lake Ainslie - part of the Margaree watershed, our most famous salmon river," says Reid. The Margaree is the province's top-producing salmon river with a sports fishery valued at approximately \$1 million annually. "Smallmouth bass have been deliberately dumped there and they have the very real potential to do serious damage to the Margaree's native salmon and trout populations," says Reid. "That's why, in conjunction with our affiliate, the Margaree Salmon Association, we have decided to offer this one-time \$5,000 reward to anyone who can provide information leading to the successful conviction of any person or persons responsible for illegal fish dumping into Nova Scotia watercourses. We are particularly interesting in the Lake Ainslie incident."

The introduction of non-native fish species is illegal according to the Fisheries Act and carries a maximum penalty of \$100,000 for an initial conviction. To date there has never been a successful case tried in Nova Scotia, although the problem has been known to fisheries officers for years.

"The Margaree River sports fishery is a major economic driver to our local tourism industry and we can't afford to loose it to some short-sighted clown with a bucket," says John Hart, president of the Margaree Salmon Association. "It's a shock to the whole ecosystem." "We applaud NSSA for taking this action and for their support of our river," says Hart. "I hope someone calls it in and they nail whoever's responsible for this." ❧

*Anyone with information about the illegal introduction of bass into Lake Ainslie is asked to contact the Nova Scotia Salmon Association at (902) 275-3407 or by e-mail at [nssa@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:nssa@ns.sympatico.ca).*

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# Family Discover Fishing Day 2004

For the second consecutive year NOVA BASSMASTERS Association and the Canadian Association of Smallmouth Anglers (CASA) will be putting on a Family Discover Fishing Day (FDFD 2004). The purpose of FDFD 2004 is to introduce the novice, and in particular youth anglers, to the enjoyment of sport fishing. FDFD 2004 will take place from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sunday, May 30, 2004, at the Sackville Arena, First Lake Drive, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia.

For the adult there will be several semi-pro and master anglers on hand to talk to about techniques, equipment, baits, locations, etc. There will also be a boat display with knowledgeable people in attendance ready to give tips on how to choose the boat that best suits your needs. The exhibitors will cover the entire range of fishing activities. Useful and interesting information will be found on conservation, habitat protection, and safe boating as well.

For the children, there are free refreshments, games, contests, and door prizes. One of the highlights of last year's FDFD was the kid casting com-

petition where every child was a winner. This competition will be held again this year. Rods and reels will be supplied.

Several other fishing clubs will join Nova Bassmasters and CASA at FDFD 2004. You will be able to find out what activities they have planned by speaking to them at the Atlantic Outdoor Sports and RV Show. For more information look for us at the Atlantic Outdoor Sports and RV Show, March 18-21, 2004, at the Exhibition Park, Prospect Road, Halifax. 

*Come on out. The admission for adults is only \$1.00 and children under 16 who bring an adult get in free. For further information please check out the following web site [www.novabass.com](http://www.novabass.com) or contact [ken@novabass.com](mailto:ken@novabass.com).*

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# A Walk In The Woods

## Association Offering Seedling Program For Old Fields

*"When freedom prevails, the ingenuity and inventiveness of people creates incredible wealth. This is the source of the natural improvement of the human condition."*

—Brian S. Wesbury



Don Cameron

Landowners now have another option to acquire financial assistance if they would like to plant trees in former fields. Under the provincial Forest Sustainability Regulations, the forest industry is responsible for reinvesting in silviculture to offset the volume of wood that they acquire for processing (such as sawing lumber or making pulp and paper). Since the majority of timber harvested in Nova Scotia comes from privately owned land, the majority of the silviculture funding must be directed to private lands. Interested landowners may be able to access the funding via the various forestry companies that acquire more than 5000 cubic metres (approximately 2400 cords) per year.

Another source of silviculture funding is via the Association for Sustainable Forestry (ASF). Since November 2000, the ASF has administered the Sustainable Forestry Fund in Nova Scotia. The ASF's mission is to ensure the sustainable harvest and regeneration of privately owned woodlands within the province of Nova Scotia, including the application of appropriate silviculture.

The ASF consists of a Board of Directors, a Coordinator, and an Assistant Coordinator. The Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the small private landowner sector and the forest industry, with ex-officio representation from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Products Association of Nova Scotia. This makes the ASF a unique enterprise in which private landowners, forest industry, and government are working partners.

Through the Sustainable Forestry Fund, the ASF provides funding for several silviculture treatments in its current program. Funding is available for Fill Planting, Plantation Establishment, Manual Weeding/Chemical Release in both natural stands and plantations, Pre-commercial Thinning in both natural stands and plantations, Commercial Thinning, Crop Tree Release, Crop Tree Pruning, and Selection Management.

The opportunity to participate in this program is available to all private landowners in Nova Scotia. In cases where Registered Buyer (forestry companies) presence is limited or absent, the ASF is able to fund silviculture treatments. The ASF also funds treatments that may be difficult to complete under Registered Buyers silviculture programs. More information on this program, including how to apply for funding, can be found at the contact information below.

Since October 2003, the ASF has also been involved in the Forest 2020/Greencover project. This project is a federal initiative in which the Government of Canada wishes to facilitate a series of fast-growing plantations on private land across Canada. The key benefit of this project is to sequester carbon in plantations in order to offset green house gas emissions which will aid Canada in meeting its climate

change commitments. The ASF will be responsible for administering this project in Nova Scotia.

Qualifying sites must have been in a field condition since December 31, 1989 and currently bare of woody vegetation with a minimum of 1 ha (or 2.5 acres) in area. Funding is available for Reforestation and Afforestation activities; including site preparation and tree planting. The purchase of the tree seedlings is the responsibility of the ASF.

The ASF needs to secure more land for this project in order to meet the goals set out by the Government of Canada. Anyone interested in this project is encouraged to contact the ASF. More information on this project can also be found at [www.climatechange.gc.ca](http://www.climatechange.gc.ca) or [http://www.ccfm.org/forest2020/about\\_e.html](http://www.ccfm.org/forest2020/about_e.html).

Contact:

Rebecca Aggas, Coordinator,  
Association for Sustainable Forestry  
PO Box 696

Truro, NS B2N 5E5

Phone: (902) 895-1179;

Cell: (902) 890-4685;

Fax: (902) 893-1197

Website: [www.asforestry.com](http://www.asforestry.com)

*Tree Trivia:* The Unilever-Evergreen Aquatic Stewardship Grant provides grants of between \$2000 and \$15,000 to support small scale, community driven, partnership projects including wetland, riparian and littoral zone restoration, in-stream bioengineering, and wildlife monitoring. For more information, contact: Stewart Chisholm, Evergreen Common Grounds; Phone Toll Free 1-888-426-3138; Email: [stewartc@evergreen.ca](mailto:stewartc@evergreen.ca).

*Don Cameron is a Registered Professional Forester.*

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# Cape Breton Highlands Trout Study 2003

By Tara Crandlemere and John MacMillan, Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Inland Fisheries Division

The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Inland Fisheries Division embarked on a journey to the Cape Breton Highlands to study various brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) populations in somewhat remote lakes. The purpose of this project was to assess the population and environmental factors that exist in the Highlands and compare the data with the brook trout populations on the mainland.

One of the ways to develop management strategies is to understand brook trout populations on a regional basis. Our department gathers data to evaluate populations from fieldwork, angler diary program, license stub returns, and creel surveys. This project allowed us to gather baseline data on a variety of lakes using field sampling techniques and a creel survey. Much of the data collected from this area of the province is consistent with what we find in our angler diary books. Some initial thoughts were to obtain more data on trout populations of angler interest, compare lakes that are under different pressure by anglers, and demonstrate the effectiveness of incorporating regional data into the design of regulations for Highland lakes.

Special regulations were implemented in Cape Breton Highland lakes to increase

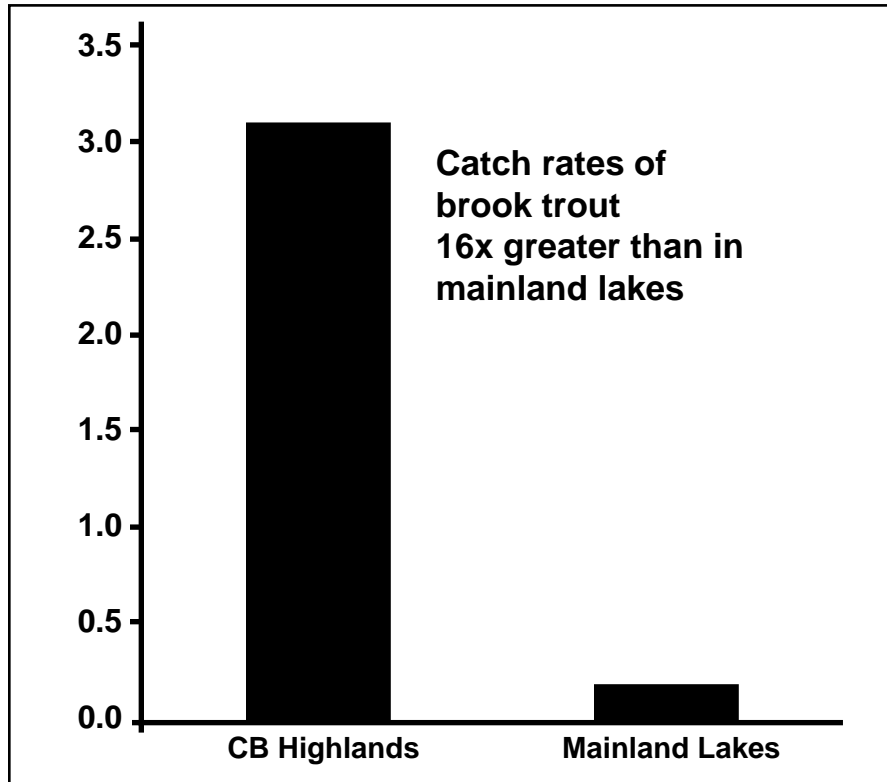


Figure 2. Catch rates of brook trout per net night in Cape Breton Highlands and Mainland Lakes.

the angling opportunities and the number of larger trout in the catch. Initially, regional and provincial data was used as a base on which to develop regulations that included an increase in the bag limit from

five trout to ten trout and the use of a nine inch length limit where only one fish could be retained over the length (9 inches). The rationale for the regulation came from creel survey data prior to 2002 which generated a length frequency distribution of only twenty percent of the catch over nine inches. Additional data indicated that angler catch rates were five times higher in the Cape Breton Highlands compared to the mainland lakes and growth rates in the Highlands were slower compared to mainland trout populations.

Mainland populations of brook trout display a faster growth rate, which indicates that food supply is not limited to the population. For example, our departments East Taylor Bay Lake trout study showed fast growth, which indicates that individuals in the population are not crowded, and probably have the potential to grow to a larger size. This mainland lake fits the criteria of a special management area because

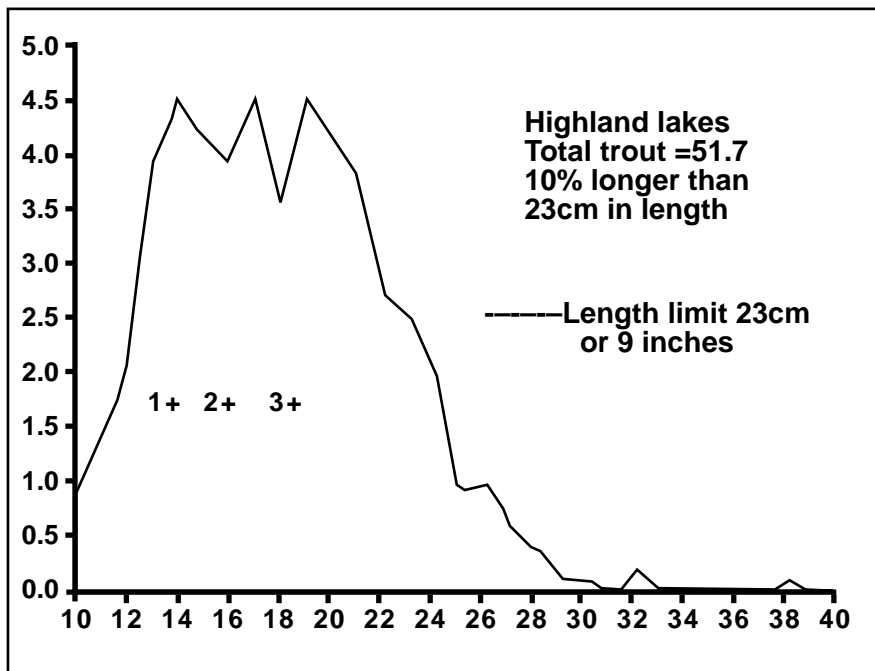


Figure 1. Brook trout length frequency distribution from Highland lakes captured by angling and lives trapping methods.

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Mike Gullo, student	Halifax
Mark Quade, Trout Unlimited	Halifax
Ed Woodsworth, Trout Unlimited	Sydney

Table 1. Volunteers in CB Highland trout study.

of the potential to shift the size structure to more older, larger trout, growth is fast (good forage), population is young (exploitation), over summering habitat is good (oxygen in deep cool water), and competition is weak (few competitors). However, in the

Cape Breton Highlands age cohort overlap exists between trout of different ages (see Figure 1). Fish of the same size range will occupy similar habitats and compete for similar food items. When cohort overlap occurs in a population an increase in

competition (among brook trout) develops which results in slow growth. Large catch rates are indicators for a large number of trout in a population. Our study found catch rates for brook trout in the Cape Breton Highlands to be sixteen times greater than in mainland lakes (see Figure 2).

Cape Breton Highland lakes offer a unique environment for brook trout populations. Many of the lakes our department studied were cool, shallow, and had very few competitors. The lakes included in the study were; Timber, Tara Pond, Round, Moose, Larken, MacDonalds Ponds, Bonnie, and Bell. The only competitor species present in these lakes was eels. The lakes where larger fish were present tended to have a minnow (killifish) population.

Our preliminary data indicates that the populations of brook trout in the Cape Breton Highland lakes are crowded, which has had an impact on individuals resulting in slow growth. The rationale behind the bag limit of ten, is to thin the population out and allow for increased growth. The idea is to see larger, older fish in the population and eventually in the angler catch. Recently, our department had Recreational Fishing Area Committee meetings throughout the province, and the regulation suggestion that came from RFAC 2 for the spring fishery, was ten fish only one over ten inches. Our department now has even better baseline data to look at over the next few years, and will examine how these regulations are working to improve angling opportunities in the Cape Breton Highlands. Special thanks to the following volunteers in the Highland trout study (see Table 1). 🐟

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# How The Firearms Act Applies To Me If I Own An Air Gun

## Air Guns

*From The Canadian Firearms Center*

This fact sheet explains the main requirements under the Firearms Act and Criminal Code for individuals who own or want to acquire an air gun. The Criminal Code determines which air guns are classified as firearms for purposes of the Firearms Act. The Firearms Act sets out the rules for possessing an air gun that is classified as a firearm.

Air guns (also known as BB guns, pellet guns or spring guns) fall into three categories:

Air (pneumatic system),  
spring (spring-air), and  
gas (CO<sub>2</sub>/nitrogen)

The rules for possessing an air gun depend mainly on the muzzle velocity and muzzle energy of the air gun. The "muzzle velocity" is the speed of a projectile at the instant it leaves the muzzle of an air gun, normally expressed in metres per second or feet per second.

The "muzzle energy" is the energy of a projectile at the instant it leaves the muzzle of an air gun, expressed in joules or foot-pounds.

In the case of an air gun with a very low muzzle velocity and energy, the rules also depend on whether the air gun meets the definition of a replica firearm.

## High-Powered Air Guns

As set out in the Criminal Code, an air gun is classified as a firearm for the purposes of the Firearms Act if it was designed to:

- Have both a high muzzle velocity (greater than 152.4 meters or 500 feet per second) and a high muzzle energy (greater than 5.7 joules or 4.2 foot-pounds), or
- Discharge projectiles that were designed to have both a high velocity and high energy.
- High-powered air rifles are classified as non-restricted firearms.
- High-powered air pistols are

classified as prohibited firearms if their barrel length is 105 mm or less, or restricted firearms if their barrel is longer than 105 mm.

As a rule, the manufacturer's specifications are used to determine what muzzle velocity and muzzle energy an air gun was designed to have. You may be able to find this information in the user's manual or on the manufacturer's web site. If the information is not available, call 1-800-731-4000, select option 2 from the menu of services, and ask to speak to a firearms technician to find out if your air gun is classified as a firearm for purposes of the Firearms Act.

These air guns are subject to the same rules as any other firearm under the Firearms Act. To be able to possess or acquire a firearm, you must be at least 18 years old and have a firearms licence that is valid for that class of firearm. As well, the firearm must be registered.

For more information on the licence and registration requirements,

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please refer to the fact sheet called How the Firearms Act Applies to me if I Own a Firearm.

You must store, transport, display and handle these air guns safely, as set out in the Storage, Display, Transportation and Handling of Firearms by Individuals Regulations.

### Air Guns That Are Replicas

Low-powered air guns that meet the Criminal Code definition of a replica firearm are prohibited. In particular, this affects many devices commonly known as "air soft guns". Air soft guns are devices that have a low muzzle velocity and muzzle energy, and that usually discharge projectiles made out of a substance such as plastic or wax rather than metal.

To be classified as a prohibited device, an air gun must have been designed to:

- Look exactly or almost exactly like an existing make and model of firearm, other than an antique firearm; and
- Discharge no projectiles or discharge only harmless projectiles that are not likely to cause serious injury or death.

Devices that resemble a generic firearm rather than an existing make and model of firearm are not generally considered to be replicas. Neither are devices designed to discharge projectiles with enough force to penetrate skin or an eye.

The Canada Firearms Centre receives many enquiries from people wondering whether an air soft gun would be considered a replica if it resembles a real firearm in terms of its shape and size, but it is made of clear or brightly coloured plastic. It might still be considered a replica because many of these devices can be changed to look more like a real firearm simply by painting them. Similarly, if brightly coloured devices are exempted, someone might then try to pass off a real firearm as a fake by painting it a bright colour.

Many people also ask whether there are any limits to the muzzle velocity and energy that an air gun must have to be classified as a replica. There are not any fixed limits because the calibre and other variables may affect the ability of a low-powered air gun to cause serious injury or death.

Many of these devices have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If you have questions about a particular make and model of air gun, call 1-800-731-4000, select option 2 from the menu of services, and ask to speak to a firearms technician.

Although replicas are prohibited, you can keep any replicas you owned on December 1, 1998. You do not need a licence to possess them, and they do not have to be registered. As an individual, you cannot acquire a replica, nor can you give or sell a replica to another individual. If you take a replica out of Canada, you cannot bring it back in. The ability to import or acquire a replica is limited mainly to businesses licensed to have prohibited devices for an approved purpose, such as for use in a film or theatrical production.

Under certain conditions set out in the Special Authority to Possess Regulations (Firearms), an unlicensed business or individual may borrow a replica firearm to use in a movie, television, video or theatrical production, or in publishing activities. Instructors designated by a Chief Firearms Officer may also borrow a replica to provide instruction in the safe use and handling of firearms. Please refer to the Regulations for more information on the conditions that the borrower and lender must meet.

### Other Low-Powered Air Guns

If an air gun's muzzle velocity is less than 152.4 metres per second and/or its muzzle energy is less than 5.7 joules, it is not considered a firearm for the purposes of the Firearms Act. You do not need a licence to acquire or possess it, and it does not have to be registered.

However, any person who uses one of these air guns to commit a crime can be charged with a firearm offence under the Criminal Code.

Otherwise, these air guns are regulated mainly by provincial and municipal laws and regulations. For example, some provinces have set a minimum age for acquiring an air gun. For more information, please contact your local or provincial authorities.

Although these air guns are exempt from the safe storage and transportation requirements in the regulations supporting the Firearms Act, owners are urged to store and transport their air guns safely to deter loss, theft and accidents.

*Provincial, territorial and municipal laws, regulations and policies may also apply.*  
[http://www.cfc-ccaf.gc.ca/en/owners\\_users/fact\\_sheets/airguns.asp](http://www.cfc-ccaf.gc.ca/en/owners_users/fact_sheets/airguns.asp)

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# Gunning For Common-Sense Legislation

By Tony Rodgers

The prime minister, Paul Martin, has indicated that he wants to take some very positive steps toward addressing the spending habits of government, with Canadian taxpayers' dollars. What he has decided to do is look for cost-benefit analysis of a number of government programs. One of them is the gun-control legislation. He has tasked Public Safety Minister Anne McLellan to review this program, that has gone 500 times past its original cost estimates under the former prime minister. She, in turn, has assigned the file to Minister of State Albina Guarnieri to do the groundwork on the review. This review by Ms. Guarnieri is still active.

Canada has always been a country of government reviews and studies. We like to study the devil out of everything before making a decision. Well, after 10 years of debating this firearms issue, that is now the law of the land, it has failed to go away and it is back on the table being reviewed.

I'll deal with the recent studies. A \$60,000 KPMG study was underway a year ago when Martin Cauchon, the minister then responsible for the registry, announced an additional \$92,000 review. These two studies were to add to Auditor General Sheila Fraser's December 2002 report that confirmed the overspending of tax dollars, and another 115-page economic impact study of the Canadian Firearms Program by government that has since become a "cabinet secret."

We in the firearms community feel comfortable with government doing another review because we feel secure with the position we have taken and know that if all of the evidence surrounding this fiasco is on the table for all Canadians to see, then something good will be done to change the gun legislation.

On the other hand, groups like the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Coalition for Gun Control are starting to circle the wagons. Even through Bill C-68 is now in law, they appear to be not as secure in their position. They are, as the chiefs did, preaching worn-out misinforma-

tion about the benefits of a gun registry to try to prop up and justify this inefficient failure.

I have read the press release from the chiefs' news conference of January 2004. It's ironic that most of what they were calling for was in the old legislation, Bill C-17, brought in by then justice minister Kim Campbell. It was never given a chance to be tested before being replaced by the more expensive Bill C-68.

Crime in this country has dropped steadily for the past 10 years. That's long before C-68 had any effect on it. Crime continues to drop. This fact makes it even more interesting that, according to Statistics Canada's Homicide Report, less than three percent of violent crimes in Canada involve firearms and it's the known criminals who are committing most of the violent crimes, not law-abiding gun owners. So, why spend a billion dollars and frustrate the innocent?

The chiefs' press release admits that they don't represent all of the police chiefs of Canada. As a matter of fact, the police chief of Canada's largest city, Julian Fantino of Toronto, has called for the gun bill to be scrapped. Since the beginning of the new year, the Calgary Police Officers Association has added its name to the growing list of police unions that have called for the bill to be scrapped.

Maybe the solution to the problem of the misuse of guns by criminals is just under our noses. Justice statistics from 65 countries show that Canada is No. 1 when it comes to letting criminals off with short sentences. There would be little need for government to disguise its attempt to fight crime by hiding behind such programs as gun control if the justice system in this country got down to work. Stop all plea bar-

gains. Today, if a person is caught robbing someone with a firearm, he or she pleads guilty on the robbery and gets the gun charge dropped. Our suggestion would be to charge such a person with the use of a gun in the commission of a crime, and drop the robbery charge. The penalties are harsher, and deliver a message about gun use.

Judges should stop accepting plea bargains from Crown and defence lawyers and impose the full sentence for any gun crime. Police need more help keeping criminals behind bars and off the streets, and who in society can do that better than a judge?


Please don't encourage government to waste another billion dollars on this program. Yes, it's been estimated to cost another billion over the next eight years. Let's put more officers on the streets and give them the equipment and tools they need to fight crime. I have always had a great deal of respect for police and the job they do. However, on this issue, they have been given a false sense of security - a gun law that was designed for the ideal world. This is not an ideal world. All guns in this country will never be in this registry system; therefore, police can never rely on it as a crime-fighting tool.

It's time for a clean piece of paper, some common sense, controlled emotions and the writing of new legislation that will come close to satisfying everyone but the criminals. ✖✖

*Tony Rodgers is executive director, Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers and Hunters.*

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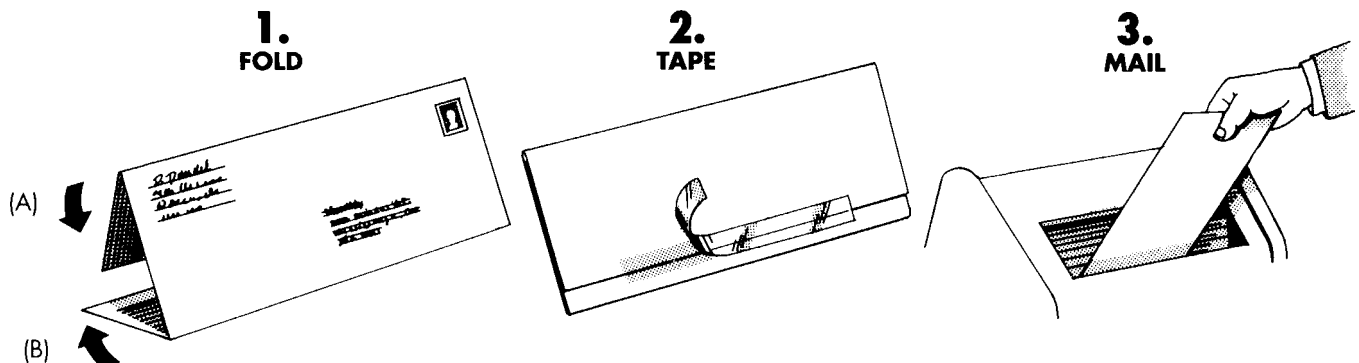


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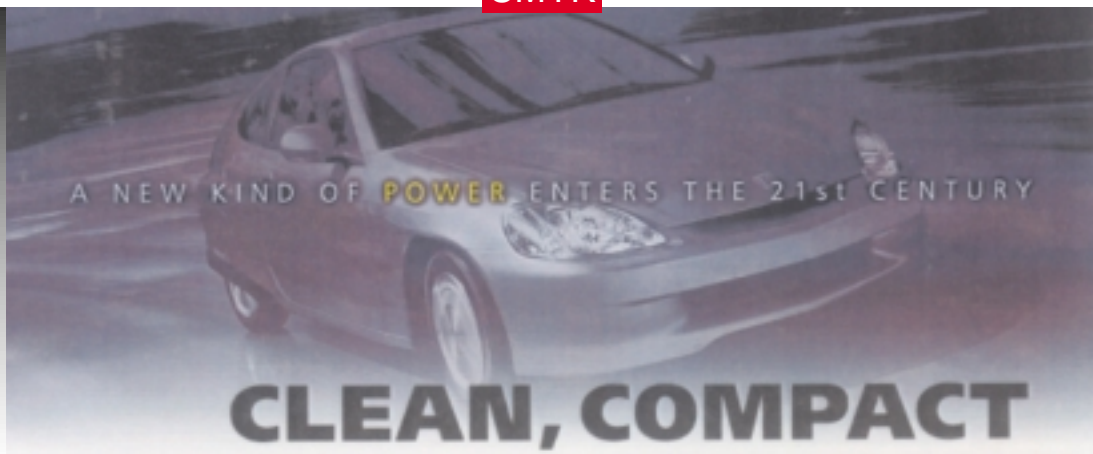
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