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Building Capacity & Protecting Coastal Wetlands in Nova Scotia through Stewardship and Collaboration

Mahone Bay, NS: Coastal Action’s 3-year project, “Protecting Coastal Wetlands in Nova Scotia through Stewardship and Collaboration” (2022-2025), will engage Nova Scotian organizations and communities in ocean conservation using coastal wetlands as indicators for ocean health. Several coastal wetlands will be assessed across Nova Scotia and data collected will inform restoration, stewardship, and protection opportunities. Additionally, this project will build province-wide capacity for monitoring and stewarding coastal wetlands as part of the province’s broader ocean conservation initiatives. The project will develop effective communications materials and deliver workshops to a variety of audiences, including Indigenous communities, youth, students, and residents. Activities will use a collaborative approach by integrating knowledge from ENGOs, Indigenous perspectives, and subject matter experts to achieve the project’s goals and objectives.

The project will expand ocean conservation efforts in Nova Scotia and contribute to the federal government’s marine protection goals of 30% protection by 2030, as stated under the Convention of Biological Diversity and to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, using coastal wetlands as an indicator ecosystem. Coastal wetlands are some of the most productive and biodiverse ecosystems, both locally and globally, and face numerous threats. These wetlands also provide many vital ecosystem services (i.e., buffer storm surges, filter pollutants, and prevent erosion) and are intrinsically linked to the ocean environment. Identifying and assessing these sites will be critical for Canada to meet ocean conservation targets.

Data collection and outreach will be carried out by partners ACAP Cape Breton, Mi’kmaq Conservation Group, and Clean Annapolis River Project, with technical expertise from TransCoastal Adaptations and CBWES. Workshop hosting will be in collaboration with Dalhousie’s Diversity of Nature. Activities will expand community capacity (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) for coastal wetland assessments and marine protection in Nova Scotia through training, expert consultation, and networking opportunities. Data collection and reporting will help inform the federal government’s Marine Protected Area goals, with the overall goal of contributing to a better understanding of the ecological and culturally significant aspects of Nova Scotia’s coastal environments. Communication strategies and outreach activities will engage the public on Nova Scotia’s ecologically diverse coastal wetland ecosystems as well as important Indigenous perspectives from Mi’kmaq communities in the province.