**Habitat Restoration Fund Development Status Report**

July to October 2013

**Context**: The GOMA is contracting with The Keeley Group to “*write a minimum of 2 proposals for Habitat Restoration. The Contractor will work with the Habitat Restoration Committee to prepare applications. The proposals will focus on Habitat Restoration activities in the Action Plan 2012-2017 and where possible include funding for communications, IT and Gulf of Maine Times.*

*Products and deliverables:*

* *Prepare final recommendations and final proposal for partnership with Coastal America/ Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership.*
* *Prepare proposals to organizations such as JD Irving and Fisheries and Oceans, Canada.*

**Status Report**

1. Exploring JD Irving – GOMC partnership for ongoing habitat restoration funding – The contractor, with input from the HRSC, has prepared a proposal and package of six illustrative projects that seeks to establish an ongoing regional restoration initiative that is funded by JDI and managed by the GOMA. Specific tasks performed during the period include cultivation of JDI staff; HRSC screening of potential projects and identification of two illustrative projects in each of NB, NS and ME; contact with local applicants/partners to affirm restoration merits of their project and capacity to conduct restoration work; consultation with JDI staff; and GOMA submission of partnership concept to JDI Saint John office for their consideration.
2. Revitalizing and expanding the Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership – The contractor collaborated with state/federal members of the HRSC, Army Corps staff, the Director of the Coastal America Office (DC), TNC and the ME/NH/MA corporate chairs of their respective state chapters to expand corporate participation and to increase habitat restoration funding in the region. (This included a feature article in the GOMT on the existing GOMC-CWRP partnership.) Collectively we determined that our shared GOMC-CWRP objectives were:

* High quality and successful restoration projects are completed;
* More robust corporate, government and non-profit partnerships;
* Greater amounts of technical assistance and more dollars from all sources are leveraged;
* More efficient operations and resources are increased;
* Enhanced publicity / knowledge of restoration importance and successes;
* Greater visibility and recognition for all parties in restoring degraded ecosystems;
* More companies participating throughout the Gulf of Maine watershed especially in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick;

Our work over the past few months focused on engaging the state corporate chairs from MA, ME and NH in developing, disseminating and tabulating a survey of current CWRP members and prospective companies. (Company prospects were identified and the Environmental Business Council of NE was engaged.) These survey results clarify why companies are participating and the benefits they receive; how new companies might be recruited; the core communication materials businesses say they need; the degree of company satisfaction with CWRP; and suggestions for improvements. GOMC is also cultivating an ongoing relationship for future work together. The final report will summarize the interests of the business community and recommend ongoing GOMC-CWRP relations.

1. Creating ongoing corporate support for restoration in NB and NS – The contractor continued cultivation activities with the Fundy Community Foundation (FCF) and other community foundations in NB and NS. The focus is on them increasing their environmental portfolio in support of Action Plan priorities. Specific tasks conducted include introducing the CWRP concept of “voluntary business community cash and in-kind services (e.g., engineering, feasibility, permitting, etc.) for habitat restoration”; securing an initial commitment from private philanthropy to provide $5-7,000 in seed funds to the FCF to conduct basic due diligence about adapting the CWRP model to Charlotte County, to NB and NS; working with the FCF board, Executive Committee and Grants and Marketing Committees to create a relationship with the GOMC and to garner their support for a partnership with the Council; and organizing to conduct the “due diligence” analysis (e.g., hire a Canadian contractor familiar with the business community, continue identification of provincial business prospects, introduce “CWRP concept” to them, assess business community support for ongoing contributions to a restoration fund, report-out results and determine next steps, etc.). FCF plans to meet with NB GOM councilors Sochasky and Stephenson to continue this “relationship building effort”.
2. Preparing proposal to open DFO solicitation for habitat restoration program – The contractor formed an ad-hoc group (e.g., NB – Capozi, Swanson, Sochasky, McGarrigle; NS – Hilchey, McNeil (EC); GOMC – Moore, Krum) to advise in the development of a multi-site on-the-ground habitat restoration proposal due by December 18th. (Conceptual approach for the DFO proposal is identical to the recent $100,000 habitat restoration Royal Bank of Canada award to the Council.) Ad-hoc group commenced outreach to small watershed and conservation organizations to identify prospective projects including discussions with some of the regions more sophisticated non-profits (e.g., Atlantic Salmon Federation, Ecology Action Center, Conservation Council of NB, BoFEP, etc.). Interacted frequently with DFO program staff to affirm our approach. Expect to complete analysis of prospective projects by mid-October, determine those of merit and commence drafting the proposal. The applicant will be the Canadian Association and the funds will be managed by the GOMA using the established systems created for the Council’s restoration program.