

Eastern Habitat Joint Venture (EHJV) staff in PEI are putting ducks on ponds and smiles on landowners' faces in an effort to improve and protect wetland habitat.

The Eastern Habitat Joint Venture is bringing back to life small marshes that have become partially, or completely, clogged with vegetation. At one time these wetlands, which range in size from under an acre to 10 acres, had a good mix of vegetation and water but now have less and less open water.

EHJV staff have devised an innovative management technique to deal with the problem. It involves excavating the vegetation to open up areas for surface water and then using the excavated material to create islands in the wetland. This ensures a good balance of water and vegetation.

The wildlife response to their renewed wetlands is immediate and gratifying. In many cases, waterfowl are landing in ponds and sandpipers are feeding on the spoil piles while excavation equipment is still working away on the wetland. One morning when the crew reported to work to continue excavation on a wetland, a brood of ducks which moved in from a nearby wetland the previous night was observed inspecting the new habitat. They liked what they saw.

Landowners are also delighted with the program and continue to keep EHJV staff busy with requests to evaluate their wetlands in the hope their wetland may be restored. To show their support, landowners have signed 15 year agreements with the Province of Prince Edward Island to protect their wetlands from any harmful land use practices.

For more information on the project, please contact Brenda Brydon, Tom Duffy, or Rosemary Curley at 368-4683.

PEI MUNICIPAL WETLAND STEWARDSHIP

The objective of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture's Wetland Stewardship program is to secure and enhance wetlands in cooperation with private and corporate landowners, communities, interest groups and government departments and agencies.

One of the greatest threats currently facing wetlands is siltation as a result of soil erosion. The effects of sedimentation are not limited to the point of entry and have the potential to affect the entire system downstream of the entry location. For this reason, our estuaries and salt marshes can suffer considerable damage even if they appear to be well protected. Soil erosion is a universal problem and must be dealt with as such.

Urban wetlands are of tremendous value for wildlife and have excellent potential for recreational use by community residents. The village of West Royalty and City of Charlottetown have combined their efforts at Ellen's Creek Wildlife Management Area. They first cleaned up the area and then proceeded to develop an