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## Guidelines and Procedures for NHCP-LTCF Communications

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The Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a public-private partnership designed to advance privately protected areas in some of the country's most cherished landscapes. The Government of Canada is investing a further \$80 million to their initial \$100 million investment (2019-2023) in the Natural Heritage Conservation Program (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026) as a continuation of the Budget 2018's Nature Legacy initiative. This funding will be shared by conservation partners including the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Canada's community and regional land trusts. As an outcome of this investment, Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC) in consultation with the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts (ACLT) has launched the Natural Heritage Conservation Program – Land Trusts Conservation Fund (NHCP-LTCF). Up to \$5.08 million per year, over the next three years will be made available to support eligible projects under the NHCP-LTCF program.

### **Celebrating your successes**

Congratulations on your successful funding application! Now let's celebrate. The NHCP and the LTCF are designed to elevate and support priority private conservation projects across the country. Acknowledgement of this support also provides a platform to promote the important work that your organization does in your region and in local communities.

Please read **Section 10** of your **NHCP-LTCF Funding Agreement**. It sets out some of the communications expectations and requirements of the Program.

Additional guidelines and procedures to support your communications activities can be found in the following few pages:

- [What are communications activities?](#)
- [Who does what?](#)
- [Planning in advance and the process](#)
- [Recognizing the NHCP](#)
- [Planning an Event](#)
- [Preparing a News Release](#)
- [Designing Property Recognition Signage](#)
- [What needs to be translated?](#)
- [Promoting via social media](#)
- [Final notes](#)
- [Questions and WHC Contact](#)

### APPENDICES

- 1) [General approval process for communications process](#)
- 2) [Event Plan Template](#)
- 3) [News Release Template](#)
- 4) [Property Recognition Signage Template](#)

**NOTE:** Templates and logos can also be found in the Communications TOOLKIT provided with award notification.

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### What are communications activities?

Communications activities are the various ways to celebrate the success of your project, announce funding, and to recognize the support of the NHCP and other donors. Activities fall into the following three general categories (click on the links for detailed information):

- ❖ [Events](#)
- ❖ [News Releases](#)
- ❖ [Property Recognition Signage](#)

### Who does what?

It takes a team effort to pull off effective communications while meeting the requirements found in the agreement. Constant collaboration among land trusts, WHC, and ECCC is key. Here are the general roles and responsibilities among the players:

**Land Trusts:** Draft accurate and effective communications materials and host events to announce projects, and recognize supporters and sources of funding, including NHCP

**WHC:** Provides support to land trusts in the form of helpful advice and timely review of draft communications materials. WHC will work with ECCC to ensure that communication materials are approved in a timely manner. WHC will also work with staff from ECCC to ensure that communications opportunities are leveraged to build awareness of the Program and the important role that land trusts play in Canada's conservation movement. This work also ensures that communications materials contain accurate information and are distributed in a timely manner.

### Getting Started:

There are several things you should consider when working on your communications products to ensure that they are effective, accurate and meet expectations.

#### Planning in advance and the process

In order to properly prepare to communications materials, the [process](#) needs to start as early as possible.

Please let WHC know as soon as possible if you would like to proceed with an announcement of your project (i.e., [event](#), [news release](#), [web](#), etc.). [Property recognition signs](#) are required on fee-simple properties, please see the process under Communications Activities, section C for more details.

#### Recognizing the NHCP:

Donor support, large and small, is critical to the support for any private conservation project so it is important to recognize your donors, including the Government of Canada. ECCC has established clear methods for organizations to consistently recognize its support:

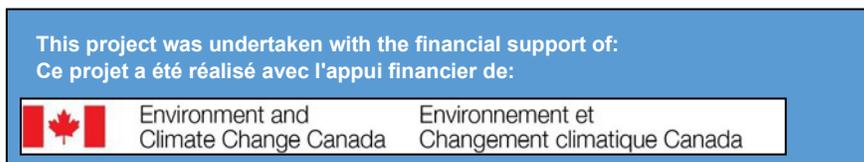
- **Boilerplate:** This is a paragraph that appears in the 'About' section at the end of a news release or elsewhere in other written materials to promote the project and program.

The following is the approved boilerplate in English and French. It should never be altered.

*The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique partnership that supports the creation and recognition of protected and conserved areas through the acquisition of private land and private interest in land. To date, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$440 million in the Program, which has been matched with more than \$870 million in contributions raised by Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trust community leading to the protection and conservation of more than 700,000 hectares of ecologically sensitive lands.*

*Le Programme de conservation du patrimoine naturel (PCPN) du gouvernement du Canada est un partenariat unique qui soutient la création et la reconnaissance de nouvelles aires protégées et de conservation par l'acquisition de terres privées et de droits sur celles-ci. À ce jour, le gouvernement du Canada a investi plus de 440 millions de dollars dans le Programme, auxquels se sont ajoutés plus de 870 millions de dollars recueillis par Conservation de la nature Canada, Canards Illimités Canada et la communauté des organismes de conservation du pays, ce qui a permis de protéger et de conserver plus de 700 000 hectares de terres écologiquement fragiles.*

- **Logos:** The logo below must appear on all property recognition signage, ads and visual elements created for events - basically anywhere other partner logos appear.



### Communications Activities

#### a) Planning an Event

Events typically, but not necessarily, involve land trust leadership, staff, donors, volunteers, VIPs including a representative from the Government of Canada, usually a Member of Parliament (MP), and media.

If a land trust is planning on holding an event to announce and celebrate their project, advanced notice must be given to ECCC via WHC.

At the event, it is a nice gesture to acknowledge NHCP support verbally. The event **usually coincides with a news release**. To allow a reasonable amount of time for partners to assist in finalizing your communications materials, it is critical that you **provide WHC with as much advanced notice as possible (at least 3 months)**.

#### i) Formal Events

**Advanced notice required: 3 months**

A formal event may be in-person or virtual and typically involve invitations, a venue, guest speakers, and media opportunities in addition to a news release and background information. An example is an event to celebrate the securing of a project that received funding from the NHCP-LTCF.

**Planning Process:**

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## Guidelines and Procedures for NHCP-LTCF Communications

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- Please let WHC know that you are planning an event as soon as possible (minimum 3 months).
- Use the [event plan template](#) to help you organize your event. This will need to be submitted and approved by ECCC.
- If the property is in a government held riding, inviting the local MP may be appropriate. Please check with WHC.
- Please contact WHC before inviting representatives from any level of government.
- ECCC must approve the date of the event. Review and approvals process to be completed via WHC. Invitations should not be distributed until approval is received.

### ii) **Informal Events**

#### **Advanced notice required: 1 month**

An informal event may be in-person or virtual and is typically a smaller scale event with fewer invitees. Examples include photo opportunities, walking tours, media tours and sign unveilings that celebrate the securing of a project that received funding from the NHCP-LTCF.

#### **Planning Process:**

- Please let WHC know that you are planning an event as soon as possible (minimum 6 weeks).
- If the property is in a government held riding, inviting the MP may be appropriate. Please check with WHC.
- ECCC must approve the date of the event. Review and approvals process to be completed via WHC. Invitations should not be distributed until approval is received.

### b) **Preparing a News Release**

#### **Advanced notice required: 6 weeks**

A news release on its own is an effective way to promote the success of your project, your organization and the NHCP. An effective news release is built around a compelling narrative and contains accurate information about the property, associated species at risk and project partners. News releases need to be reviewed and approved by project partners, so it is important to start the process early (minimum 6 weeks in advance of the release date).

Often it is appropriate to announce a project with only a news release. If a land trust is planning to distribute a news release, they should let WHC know as soon as possible.

Land trusts are also encouraged to frame the success of their project around a compelling narrative (a story about people or the history of the property, etc.). Stories about donated land are especially compelling and effective.

#### ECCC requires that news releases contain the following information:

- The general location of the property. Sometimes it is important not to signal the precise location of the property for privacy reasons.
- The size of the property in hectares followed by acres [e.g., 95 hectares (234 acres)]
- The species at risk associated with the property. Species mentions should include their SARA status (i.e., special concern, threatened, etc.). Please refer to [ECCC's online database](#) to verify a species' status.
- Mentions of NHCP and other associated Government of Canada programs (i.e., EcoGift) including language used in the [NHCP news release template](#).

### ***c) Designing Property Recognition Signage***

#### **Advanced notice required: 1 month**

Property signs make local residents and passers-by aware that the property is protected and promotes those who helped make it possible.

All fee-simple properties require an approved property recognition sign. Other property types do not require a sign, but one may be placed if partners agree.

The NHCP should be recognized and appropriate logos should appear on the sign. The size and design of all signs can vary. An [electronic template](#) is available for your use.

#### Considerations for Property Recognition Signage:

- The Government of Canada logo must appear prominently on the sign and appear no smaller than the other partner logos.
- A customizable sign template is available however land trusts may choose to use their own unique design. This will require approval from ECCC.

### **What needs to be translated?**

Please note that wide scale news releases (i.e., national or provincial distribution) about projects secured under the NHCP-LTCF Program must be available in both English and French. In cases where communications documents are being prepared for local distribution only, unilingual materials may be acceptable. Land trusts are responsible for ensuring their materials are translated. Please see Section of your NHCP-LTCF Agreement with WHC.

### **Promoting via Social Media**

Land trusts are encouraged to promote their events/news releases on social media. ECCC may do the same. Amplifying ECCC's messages on your own platforms is strongly encouraged.

In support of the program, land trusts are further encouraged to include mention of the "Natural Heritage Conservation Program" and the "Land Trust Conservation Program" in social media posts about their project(s). When posting to Twitter please consider multi-part tweets to acknowledge these programs in their full names and not simply their acronyms.

Please consult WHC for current details about messaging and tagging.

### **Reporting Communications Activities**

At Final Reporting, awarded land trusts will be required to report on completed communications activities for their project(s) in the following categories:

- Formal and Informal Events – the number of ECCC-approved formal and informal events held to celebrate the project that included acknowledgement of the NHCP-LTCF.
- News Releases – the number of ECCC-approved news releases that were issued regarding the project.
- Property Recognition Signage – the number of ECCC-approved property recognition signs that have been installed (or produced to be installed) on the project property. For example, a project may have 4 of the same property recognition sign placed on the project property; in this case, the awardee would report 4 property recognition signs in the Final Report. A copy of the ECCC-approved sign design, or a photo of the installed sign, must also be uploaded.

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## Guidelines and Procedures for NHCP-LTCF Communications

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- Website posts – the number of website posts by the awardee regarding the project. Only posts that include acknowledgement of the NHCP-LTCF should be reported.
- Social Media posts – the number of individual posts by the awardee regarding the project. Only individual social media posts that include acknowledgement of the NHCP-LTCF should be reported.
- Other Communications Activities - other publications by the awardee, or in earned media, that include acknowledgement of the NHCP-LTCF. Examples: annual report, donor newsletter, newspaper article or announcement, etc.

The awardee will also be asked to indicate the number of upcoming communications activities (in the same categories as above) that are planned but that have not yet taken place.

### **Final Notes:**

Before any communications materials (excluding social media posts) are released:

1. You must receive express written approval from WHC for any media materials related to the NHCP and any references to WHC and ECCC;
2. You must receive a confirmed release date for communications materials relating to a NHCP- LTCF project, and adhere to that date; and,
3. News releases and signs will be produced in both official languages as per the translation guidelines above.

### **Questions and WHC Contact**

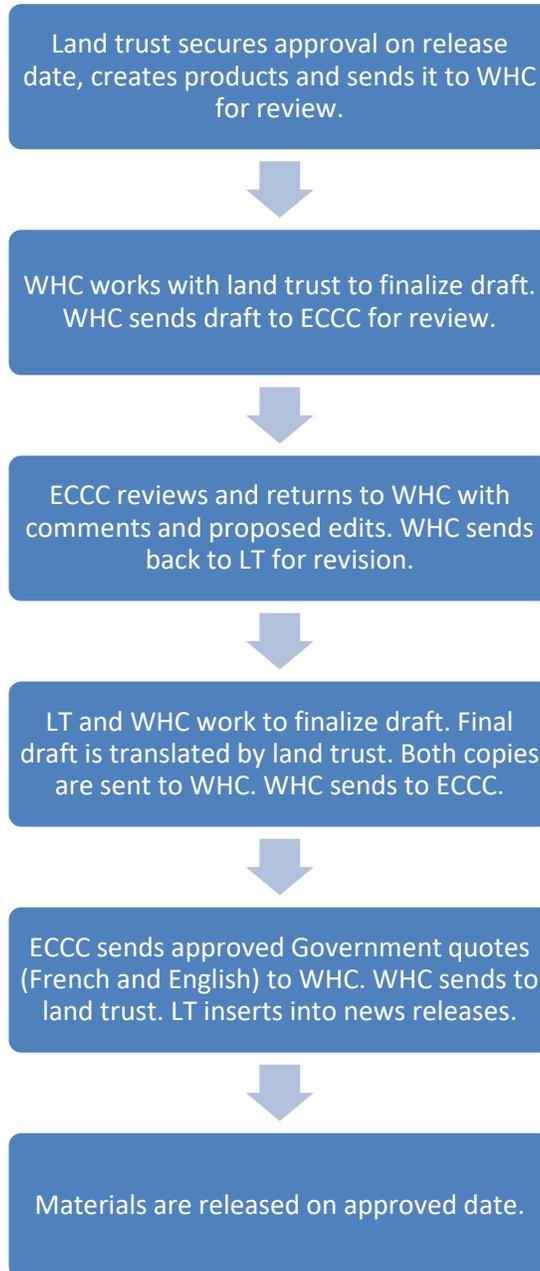
For any specific questions with regards to public acknowledgement and communications under the NHCP-LTCF Program, or to submit communications materials, please contact WHC directly:

- ❖ Sonia Blanchard, Project Manager, NHCP-LTCF Program, [sblanchard@whc.org](mailto:sblanchard@whc.org)

*For more information, please visit [www.whc.org/lpcf](http://www.whc.org/lpcf).*

APPENDICES

1) General approval process for communications product



2) Event Plan Template

(Insert your logo here)

**LTCF - Natural Heritage Conservation Program  
Event Plan**

<b>1. PROJECT SUMMARY</b>	
Organization Name:	
Project name:	
Public name (if different from project name):	
Natural Area:	
Municipality (Province): ( )	
Federal riding:	
Size of project: Hectares (Acres)	Securement Type:
Key natural features (in point form): •	Species at risk observed: •
<b>2. PROJECT FUNDING</b>	
Total project budget: \$	
Federal funding under the Natural Heritage Conservation Program: \$	
Other federal programs (i.e. Ecogift, HSP): •	
Provincial funding (indicate Yes/No):	
Provincial funding program:	
US Fish & Wildlife Service NAWCA funding (indicate Yes/No):	
Other major donors (indicate name): •	
<b>3. EVENT PROPOSAL</b>	
Proposed event date:	Date flexible (indicate Yes or No):
Event description (in point form) •	Expected event participants (name, affiliation): •
<b>VENUE 1</b>	<b>VENUE 2</b>
Venue name:	Venue name:
Civic address:	Civic address:
Municipality:	Municipality:
URL for venue:	URL for venue:
Venue features: •	Venue features: •
Capacity: people	Capacity: people
<b>4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/ADDITIONAL NOTES</b>	
•	

Prepared by:

Date:

## Guidelines and Procedures for NHCP-LTCF Communications

### 3) News Release Template

(Insert your logo)

For Immediate Release

<TITLE>

<SUBTITLE>

MONTH DAY, YEAR, CITY, PROVINCE – <lede>

<Body>

This project was made possible by the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund.

A portion of this project was donated to the (insert your org's name) under the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. This program provides enhanced tax incentives for individuals or corporations who donate ecologically significant land.

#### QUOTES:

<Quotes from ECCC first>  
<then other partners/donors>

#### FACTS:

- <Interesting facts about your announcement>.

#### ABOUT:

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique partnership that supports the creation and recognition of protected and conserved areas through the acquisition of private land and private interest in land. To date, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$440 million in the Program, which has been matched with more than \$870 million in contributions raised by Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trust community leading to the protection and conservation of more than 700,000 hectares of ecologically sensitive lands.

To learn more about the Ecological Gifts Program, please visit <http://www.ec.gc.ca/pde-egp/>.

#### LEARN MORE:

Visit: (insert your website)  
Follow us on Twitter: (insert link to your Twitter webpage)  
Become a fan on Facebook: (insert link to your Facebook webpage)

#### VIDEO AND IMAGES:

<Insert links for downloadable images/videos if applicable>

#### CONTACT:

(insert contact info)

**Commented [JT1]:** This statement or something similar must be included in the body of the release. It is appropriate to include other donors as well.

**Commented [JT2]:** This line needs to be included if there is an EcoGift component. Please remove if an EcoGift is not included in the project being announced.

**Commented [JT3]:** Approved boilerplate

**Commented [JT4]:** Must be included for projects with EcoGift component.

#### 4) Property Recognition Signage Template

