



Nova Scotia Environmental Network

Connecting for a Sustainable Future

2022 Directors' Report

June 2022



Summary

The past year (April 2021 through March 2022) was the most active one NSEN has had in many years. Thanks to a number of full-time staff grants, we were able to host three 8-week summer jobs and four 6-month internships for over 3,700 total staff hours, compared to 500 hours in the previous year. This tremendous boost in capacity allowed NSEN to engage and expand our membership, establish two new caucuses, organize 12 educational webinars, and launch a new platform to connect our member groups with local volunteers. This report summarizes an exciting year of progress and growth for NSEN.

Funding from governments

- In summer 2021, NSEN was awarded a \$5,000 HRM Community Grant to support the NSEN History Project. This project was initiated to document NSEN's 30+ years of history and produce a documentary to share with the public. The funds were used to purchase equipment for in-person interviews with past NSEN leaders and pay contractors to edit the acquired footage.
- In spring 2021, NSEN was accepted for Nova Scotia's Job Creation Partnership program. This allowed us to hire Dylan Yates full-time for a 6-month period spanning April through September, following a 4-month period without any staff.
- In spring 2021, NSEN was also awarded three full-time 8-week Canada Summer Job positions spanning May through September. These staff focused primarily on communications, webinars, and supporting Dylan Yates as the lead staff.

Funding and support from Sustainable Capacity Solutions

- Sustainable Capacity Solutions is a collection of five Ontario-based organizations established to provide funding and support to Canadian environmental non-profits:
 - Capacity Building Institute (provides training and education)
 - Sustainable Capacity Foundation (provides grants)
 - Eco Internships (provides staff)
 - Eco Executive Director (provides administrative support)
 - GreenBooks (provides bookkeeping services)
- The Canadian Environmental Network introduced NSEN to Sustainable Capacity Solutions in summer 2021, and this was a turning point for NSEN's growth.
- Eco Internships helped NSEN secure three 6-month staff positions through ECO Canada and Colleges and Institutes Canada. Two of these internships were 100% funded while one required a 20% (about \$4,000) contribution from NSEN. This allowed NSEN to keep Dylan Yates on staff for the whole year and also provided additional staff to focus on fundraising as well as the NSEN History Project.
- Sustainable Capacity Foundation provided NSEN with two \$1,000 grants to help NSEN purchase insurance and meet the required 20% staff grant contribution.
- Capacity Building Institute provided NSEN with a free training program including group workshops and 1-on-1 mentoring sessions focused on the various aspects of running a non-profit organization.
- GreenBooks is providing NSEN with free bookkeeping and payroll services.

Members & caucuses

- With our added staff capacity, the NSEN team was able to engage with our current member organizations through 1-on-1 meetings and conduct outreach to potential new members across the province.
- Thanks to staff efforts, NSEN's membership increased by 50% between August 2021 and March 2022, with 14 new organizations joining the network. There are currently 40 active organizations in NSEN's membership.
- 25 individual members joined NSEN this past year as well.
- In fall 2021, NSEN staff worked with NSEN members to establish a Water Caucus and a Climate Change Caucus. NSEN now has a total of three caucuses, including the Environmental and Sustainability Education Caucus.

Volunteer connections

- In fall 2021, NSEN launched its [Volunteer Hub](#) to help our member organizations connect with local volunteers looking to contribute to the environmental movement. In its first 5 months, the Volunteer Hub helped to place 20 volunteers with NSEN members.
- In fall 2021 and winter 2022, NSEN participated in the Student Service Learning program offered by Saint Mary's University. We hosted a total of 6 student volunteers who contributed to various communications roles including blogs and webinars.
- In spring 2022, we hosted the Student Service Learning program administrators for an information session with NSEN member groups on how they can access the program.

Public education

- This past year, NSEN staff organized and facilitated 12 public webinars to promote the work of our member organizations and educate the public on a variety of environmental subjects. This was a significant increase from the 5 webinars NSEN hosted in the previous year when this initiative began. All NSEN webinars are recorded and publicly available on our [website](#).
- With ongoing pandemic restrictions, NSEN staff organized "[Eco Evenings](#)" in October 2021 in lieu of an in-person gathering. This event consisted of three special webinars held on three consecutive evenings, featuring experts from within our network. A full report can be found [here](#).

NSEN History Project

- In fall 2021 and winter 2022, NSEN staff worked diligently to document NSEN's 30 years of history and produce video content to share our story with the public. The project included a thorough review of old NSEN photos and documents, as well as a series of on-camera interviews with 9 individuals who contributed to NSEN's success since its founding in 1991.
- The project has produced a 1-hour documentary as well as an interactive web-based timeline detailing NSEN's history. Both the documentary and timeline are currently in the final stages of revision and will be published in summer 2022.

Annual meeting with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change (NSECC)

- The NSEN team worked with NSECC staff to organize a 90-minute online meeting on March 3, 2022. The meeting was attended by Minister Tim Halman, all NSECC executives, 14 NSEN member organizations, and all three NSEN caucuses.
- The meeting provided Minister Halman with an opportunity to get to know some of Nova Scotia's environmental organizations and discuss common priorities. Minister Halman was enthusiastic about the great work being done by NSEN members and encouraged all in attendance to schedule follow-up meetings for continued discussions.
- The detailed proceedings of the meeting can be found [here](#).

Finances

- Thanks to staff efforts towards new/renewed memberships and donations, NSEN's core revenues increased to \$4,967 from \$2,410 in the previous year.
- NSEN's core expenses increased to \$3,713 from \$1,875 in the previous year.
- NSEN's largest core expense is our data management software, Neon One. This was our first full year of subscription to this software, which cost a total of \$1,551. The software has been highly beneficial in streamlining data management for memberships, renewals, donations, events, emails, newsletters, web pages, and volunteers.
- With \$5,303 in existing savings, an additional \$1,254 surplus, and an additional \$2,000 in grants from Sustainable Capacity Foundation, NSEN was able to contribute \$4,069 (20%) to a staff grant to retain our lead staff, Dylan Yates.
- As of March 31, 2022, NSEN's core savings stand at \$4,488.

Future directives

- After a year of exciting progress and growth, the NSEN team is focused on maintaining our momentum. We have identified the following priorities:
 - Securing funds to sustain our staff capacity, ideally led by an executive director.
 - Developing new ways to connect and support our members.
 - Continuing to recruit new members from across the province.
 - Organizing an annual in-person gathering for NSEN members.
 - Supporting our current caucuses and establishing multiple new caucuses.
 - Building and promoting an online "Eco Hub" where NSEN members can post job openings, volunteer roles, events, calls to action, collaboration opportunities, etc.
- We foresee NSEN continuing to grow into an essential hub for Nova Scotia's environmental community, with 100+ member organizations, a physical office space, a full-time executive director, and numerous strategic partnerships.

A sincere thank you to all NSEN members for your participation and support!



Chris White

Chair, NSEN Board of Directors