



December 20, 2022

Patrick Brennan
Executive Director, Ganawenim Meshkiki
295 Pickerel River Road
French River Reserve No. 13
Pickerel, ON P0G 1J0

Dear Mr. Brennan,

Thank you, Ganawenim Meshkiki and the Eastern Georgian Bay Initiative!

Re: Contribution Agreement 2021-05: Protecting and Enhancing SAR Habitat on Manitoulin Island

As we finish up the last year of this two-year grant, we would like to thank you for your generous commitment to support the Nature Conservancy of Canada's work to protect the Vidal Bay Forests and Shoreline property on Manitoulin Island forever. We're delighted to share this Year 2 (2022) Final Report with you. As you know, with GMI's help we were successful in protecting the 18,800-acre Vidal Bay property on Manitoulin Island for current and future generations! In January 2022 we completed the baseline inventory and property management plan for the property and are reporting back on an excellent 2022 field season. We simply could not have done it without your commitment.

Our achievements over the past year:

- *Invasive phragmites control:*
 - NCC staff undertook surveys for invasive phragmites at 8 inland lakes and wetlands throughout the Vidal Bay property, in addition to 8 km of North Channel shoreline. Multiple patches of phragmites were identified at 5 sites (both inland and north channel) and samples were submitted for genetic testing to differentiate between native and invasive populations where appropriate to inform future control efforts.
 - NCC staff controlled approximately 0.15 hectares of invasive phragmites in a coastal wetland at Creasor Bight within the Vidal Bay property, an otherwise pristine stretch of Lake Huron's North Channel shoreline and habitat for Blanding's turtle.
- *Species at Risk surveys and habitat assessments:*
 - NCC staff undertook both opportunistic and targeted surveys for Blanding's turtle, Spotted turtle and Massasauga in appropriate habitat throughout the field season. Blanding's turtle have been confirmed to be using the Beaver Meadow Lakes wetland complex within the property and we anticipate that they are using other wetlands on the property as well. Spotted turtle and Massasauga have not been found on site to date.
 - NCC staff developed a survey protocol and identified sites for further targeted surveys for Blanding's turtle and Spotted turtle within the Vidal Bay property in 2023 and beyond.
 - Using desktop analysis and selective ground truthing, NCC staff identified potential Kirtland's Warbler habitat within the Vidal Bay property and developed a survey plan to further ground truth these areas and conduct surveys to determine presence/absence of Kirtland's Warbler in 2023 and beyond. This work will help inform potential habitat restoration/creation plans on the property into the future.
 - To prevent provincial highway contractors from forcing the drainage of a wetland confirmed to be used by Blanding's turtles within the Vidal Bay property, NCC staff installed and monitored a drainage system in a beaver dam to maintain an acceptable water level at the road infrastructure.
 - Beyond the target species for Ganawenim Meshkiki, NCC staff were also able to confirm the presence of Eastern Whip-poor-will, Common Nighthawk and Midland Painted turtle at the Vidal Bay property while undertaking the above- and below-noted funded activities



- *Trail mapping, monitoring and planning:*
 - NCC staff mapped and/or monitored more than 50 km of trails within the Vidal Bay property. This mapping helps inform ongoing trail management, including decisions to close/restrict trails in proximity to sensitive species/habitat features.
- *Outreach to Indigenous communities:*
 - NCC staff continued to engage with Zhiibaahaasing First Nation, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, and United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising regarding community access for harvesting, invasive species and species at risk.
- *Public outreach*
 - NCC staff supported the Dawson Citizen's Improvement Association fundraising ATV ride through the Vidal Bay property in May 2022. NCC staff were able to engage with the more than 100 participants about conservation on Manitoulin Island, including protection of species at risk like Blanding's turtle.
 - NCC staff are supporting a fledgling, island-wide turtle conservation group spearheaded by the Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory Species at Risk Program. This group is focused on identifying hot spots and mitigation measures for nesting and road mortality, and citizen education and engagement.

Once again, thank you for your commitment to this work. .

Sincerely,

Jill Murray-Dimic
Senior Development Officer
Nature Conservancy of Canada – Ontario
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Attachment: Year 2 Final Report (table)