



## Katie McLean

Program Manager, Clean Annapolis River Project

### Bio

Upon beginning a short-term contract with the Clean Annapolis River Project (CARP) in 2013, and subsequently falling in love with the Annapolis Valley, Katie became a resident of Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia. During her time with CARP she has been involved in a wide variety of projects, including wood turtle monitoring, striped bass monitoring and the development of the Youth Leading Environmental Change Program. Much of her current work focuses on supporting private landowners in wild species and biodiversity stewardship. Katie holds a Masters of Resource and Environmental Management from Dalhousie University and completed her Bachelor degrees at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



Canadian Forage & Grassland Association  
Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères

## CFGAA NATURE FUND PROJECT MEET THE PROS

### Role in CFGAA Nature Fund Project

Katie is working to support the development of the Nova Scotia version of the wild species module for the Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool. Much of her work involves working with experts in areas such as biodiversity conservation and agriculture, to ensure the information used to develop the module is based on the best current knowledge of native species and their habitats.

In her work with CARP, Katie leads the Private Landowner Stewardship Program. Through this program, CARP supports landowners/managers to identify biodiversity values, such as wild species, on their properties and then develops stewardship plans or recommendations based on these values. When possible, CARP works to secure funding to support the implementation of these recommendations through habitat restoration, enhancement or creation projects.

### Project description

The CFGAA Nature Fund Project provides the opportunity to put the best available conservation information into the hands of the land stewards who are working towards the preservation or enhancement of habitat for native species within Canada's agricultural landscape. The centerpiece of the project is the Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool, an online tool developed in Alberta that enables interested agricultural producers to integrate the needs of multiple native species in the management of their land.

The Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool provides an opportunity for landowners, farmers and livestock producers to access a broad list of management options based on their location and the habitat types present on their land. As an access point to information, it allows each user to review a range of management options that can help foster the



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persistence of native plants or animals, including those at risk, by maintaining or improving the quality of habitat on their agricultural land. In addition, the online tool provides confirmation of the positive effects that many current management practices have on the quality of habitat for local native species.

Under the leadership of the CFGA, the online tool is being adapted and customized for use in provinces across Canada as a source of conservation information for all of those interested in habitat stewardship. The project is scheduled for release in Nova Scotia in 2021.

### Link to forages and grasslands

Cultivated lands, particularly those near water, are often areas high in biological diversity. There are a number of species of conservation concern that are associated with agricultural landscapes in Nova Scotia, including several that require grassland habitats, such as hayfields and pastures, for nesting and foraging. This includes species such as the bobolink, short-eared owl, and common nighthawk, wood turtle and Savannah sparrow.

In many cases, agricultural producers are supporting biodiversity through their operations without even knowing it. The CFGA Nature Fund Project will help producers better understand their contributions to wild species stewardship by identifying the beneficial practices they are already undertaking and by providing information on additional practices that can be considered.

### Why is it important

There are over 60 species listed under the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act. While agricultural lands provide habitat for many of these species, certain agricultural activities can pose a direct threat to individuals or contribute to the degradation or loss of habitat. The agricultural sector plays a key role in provincial and national efforts to recover and conserve wild species and their habitats.

The Habitat and Biodiversity Assessment Tool will allow users to access data that is relevant to the specific habitats found on their property. The tool will streamline the delivery of information and provide producers with clear guidance on the most effective management options that can be undertaken on their lands.

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