



CANFORNAV

demonstrates leadership in

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

BY JULIE GEDEON

Canfornav's M/V Blacky in the
Port of Montreal.
Le M/V Blacky de Canfornav au
Port de Montréal.



Photo: Wikipedia



Photo: Launi.com





MICHAEL HAGN

Committed to action

Un engagement envers l'action

Canadian Forest Navigation Co. Ltd. is demonstrating the company's "less talk and more action" resolve when it comes to the environment. Canfornav – as it's better known – has donated \$400,000 to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) to conserve two ecologically significant wetland regions along the St. Lawrence River.

The support is the direct result of CEO Michael Hagn's commitment to DUC's mission for wildlife and people. An avid conservationist who decided to name Canfornav's fleet after various duck species, Mr. Hagn saw this contribution as an ideal way to give something back to the St. Lawrence ecosystem that has buoyed his company's operations.

"We're committed to action and proud to support DUC's wetland conservation efforts along the Seaway where our ships frequently travel and our captains and crews will be able to see how we're protecting the environment," Mr. Hagn said. "The maritime industry has to support these kinds of projects if it wants the public to believe that we're environmental stewards."

MATCHED FUNDING

DUC is using \$250,000 of the donation, along with matched government funding, to buy critical wetlands on Battures aux Loups Marins (Seal Island), downstream from Quebec City. These large rocky flats in the middle of the St. Lawrence River and south of Baie St-Paul are recognized as an Important Bird Area, which means it that provides essential habitat but is not legally protected.

"Canfornav has made an enormously important donation that will allow us to secure this property from its American ownership and make it a protected Canadian area in perpetuity," said Bernard Filion, director of Canards Illimités – DUC's Quebec operations.

These shale reef islands support the largest concentration of Semipalmated Sandpipers along the St. Lawrence. More than 30,000 of these birds – about one per cent of the estimated world population – have been recorded at this site

during fall migrations. The Ruddy Turnstone, Black-Crowned Night-Heron, the Great Blue Heron, Common Eiders and Greater Snow Goose are among the thousands of other birds that stay or migrate here.

Canfornav's other \$150,000, along with government funding, will facilitate DUC's wetland restoration project at Cooper Marsh, near Cornwall, Ont. The large riverine marsh complex is located directly along the Lake St. Francis portion of the St. Lawrence.



Canfornav is helping to facilitate Ducks Unlimited Canada's wetland restoration project at Cooper Marsh, near Cornwall, Ont. Canfornav collabore au projet de restauration des milieux humides de Canards Illimités Canada au marais Cooper, près de Cornwall, en Ontario.





SEAWAY HISTORY

Before the Seaway was built, this area was a dry meadow. The Seaway's higher water levels made it too wet to farm but too dry to be attractive marsh habitat. In 1984, DUC entered into a long-term agreement with the land's proprietors (the Raisin Region Conservation Authority and two private landowners) to build an earthen dike with a control structure and pumping station to better manage the water levels in an area encompassing 56.3 hectares.

Cooper Marsh is now one of the few remaining coastal wetlands on the Ontario side of the St. Lawrence River. "It's one of the largest stopover sites for migratory birds – especially waterfowl – in southern Ontario," said James Brennan, DUC's manager of provincial operations in Ontario. "The marsh is a vital nesting area for the Least Bittern, King Rail and other birds at risk, as well as the home of other species of concern, such as the Snapping Turtle."

Over time, water had eroded the dike, while muskrats and other creatures had tunneled into it. Canfornav's donation has enabled DUC working with

the Raisin Region Conservation Authority, which now exclusively owns the property, to refurbish the dike and replace two control structures that manager the water levels.

"Restoration involved moving a lot of earth to rebuild the dike to its original design standard, and installing beaver bafflers to maintain control over the water levels," Mr. Brennan said. "We also had to replace two aging half-water control structures with a more modern plate-steel design that has a longer life expectancy, and refurbish the existing water pumping station crucial for maintaining the water levels that make Cooper Marsh so attractive to wildlife."

The work ensures the long-term existence of the Cooper Marsh at a time when the loss of marsh habitat has become a serious concern.

VAST DECLINE

"Since European settlement began, Ontario has lost about 72 per cent of its original wetland base, with that loss being up to 90 per cent along some populated areas," Mr. Brennan said.

The American Black Duck is among the many species of waterfowl – dabblers and divers – that inhabit both Cooper Marsh and Battures aux Loups Marins, which made Mr. Filion all the more delighted to go aboard Canfornav's M/V Blacky to meet the captain and raise a flag symbolizing this unprecedented co-operation.

"It's a win-win situation," he said. "I hope other companies will follow Canfornav's lead because it's by working together in these kinds of symbiotic relationships that we'll be able to conserve the resources that keep ships in business."

Mr. Brennan couldn't agree more. "It's only through these kinds of synergistic efforts that we're going to succeed in saving the environment for future generations," he emphasized. "We have to work together to find solutions." ■

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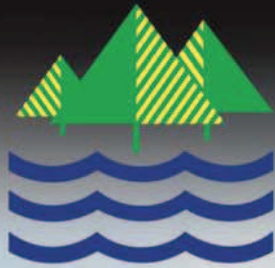
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