

Small Acts of Conservation

Climate Communications Case Story



Behavioural Contracts and Goal Setting



Intrinsic Value Framing



Social Norms and Prompts



Positive Framing

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Project Title: Small Acts of Conservation

Location: Canada

Project Partners: Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)

Date: Launched in 2017

Climate Issue: Loss of wildlife and habitat
Action Area: Community education and conservation

Behavioural Theme(s): Behavioural Contracts and Goal Setting, Intrinsic Value Framing, Positive Framing, Social Norms & Prompts

Audience: Nature enthusiasts, urban residents, homeowners and gardeners

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As nature enthusiasts, we have a responsibility to protect and conserve our natural world.

— Jack Scher, NCC Blog²⁷



IMPACT STORY

The Small Acts of Conservation campaign is a nationwide effort that encourages Canadians to take small practical steps to protect wildlife and their habitats. From planting native shrubs for birds to creating pollinator gardens or slowing down for animals on the road, people are invited to voluntarily sign up to challenges that are simple yet impactful. Within each challenge, participants can choose actions that fit their lives, share updates on social media, and join a growing community working to protect Canada's biodiversity one small act at a time.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES INCLUDE...

- Fostering connections with local biodiversity while highlighting its significance; and,
- Inspiring participants to take small, everyday actions to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat.

COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

- **Email:** After sign up, participants receive regular email reminders and updates to keep them motivated and engaged with their chosen challenges.
- **Online Blogs:** NCC's blogs provide helpful resources and real-life examples for participants, making it easier to dive into challenges and stay inspired.
- **Social Media Contest:** Using hashtags like #MySmallAct, participants can share their progress and inspire others to take action, creating a sense of community online.
- **Videos:** Short, engaging videos accompany some of the challenges, offering tips and motivation to help participants succeed.
- **Website:** Participants can explore and join any of the 12 challenges on NCC's website, where each challenge includes step-by-step instructions.

BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES & TAKEAWAYS

- **Behavioural Contracts & Goal Setting:** When participants sign up for a challenge, they commit to a clear, actionable goal. Regular email reminders help keep them on track, creating a sense of accountability and making it easier to stay engaged and follow through with the challenge.
- **Intrinsic Value Framing:** By showcasing the beauty and importance of wildlife and our responsibility to protect and conserve the natural world, the campaign inspires individuals to protect wildlife and wildlife habitats based on values and a sense of responsibility.
- **Positive Framing:** The campaign focuses on small, achievable steps that have a real, positive impact, making participation feel rewarding and attainable.
- **Social Norms & Prompts:** Sharing milestones on social media with hashtags encourages participants to showcase their progress, serving as a prompt to emphasize social responsibility. This creates a ripple effect, inspiring others and reinforcing positive behaviour.

SOURCES

Nature Conservancy of Canada. (n.d.). Small acts of conservation. https://secure.natureconservancy.ca/site/SPageServer?pagename=SmallActs_2024

Scher, J. (2023, October 20). Embracing small acts of conservation: A guide to help nature with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. *Nature Conservancy of Canada*. <https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/blog/embracing-small-acts-of.html>

CONCLUSION

The Small Acts of Conservation campaign highlights how small, simple actions can make a real difference in protecting Canada's wildlife habitat and biodiversity. By setting clear goals, sharing inspiring stories, and offering continuous support, the campaign not only raises awareness but also inspires lasting, positive changes in everyday behaviours.

MORE CASE STORIES AND RESOURCES ONLINE

This case story was developed by ICLEI Canada through the Ontario Resource Centre for Climate Adaptation (ORCCA) as part of a Climate Communications Toolkit. Find more case stories and additional climate communications resources online at icleicanada.org/project/climate-communications-toolkit

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CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

