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President's Message

CPAWS NS has been hard at work on many projects and initiatives this past summer and fall. In September, a group of CPAWS volunteers guided 11 adventurous urban youth to Kejimikujik National Park for a weekend of camping. In addition to the formal request for a moratorium on logging and road building in all provincial Game Sanctuaries, the Game Sanctuary Campaign has continued to address the need for increased levels of protection, such as Nature Reserve and Wilderness Area designations, for three Game Sanctuaries. In October, the Ocean Committee hosted a 'brainstorming' event with marine experts to identify unique and vulnerable marine areas in need of protection.

On behalf of our members I would like to extend a warm welcome to Graham Smith, Clare Robinson, Munju Ravindra, Andrea Flowers and Rob Sharkie, all of whom are new additions to the Board of Directors. Victoria Sheppard, the spring interim President for Holly Palen, is now in Nairobi, Kenya on a 6-month internship. Best wishes to both Victoria and Holly – their efforts with CPAWS NS were truly appreciated. I would also like to thank Justin Ellis, past chair of the ParkWatch committee, and Cheyenne Lawrie, our summer conservation intern, for their dedication to our chapter.

Enjoy fall's stunning colours and we hope to see you all at the *Nahanni Forever* event!

Carolyn Hedley
President, CPAWS NS

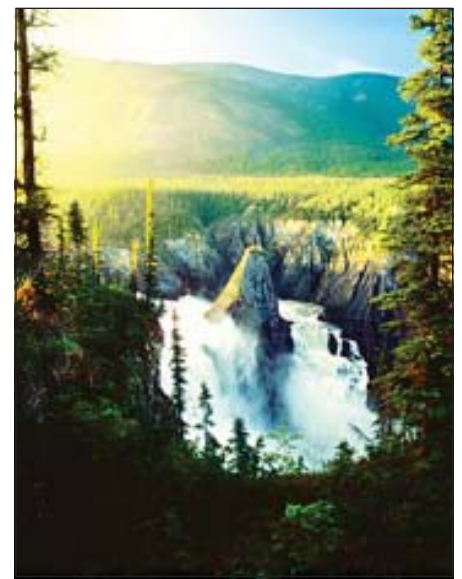
Nahanni Forever Comes to Halifax!

By Alexander MacDonald, Outreach Coordinator

The first time I saw the image of Virginia Falls, the focal point of the South Nahanni River, I couldn't believe such a place existed within Canada's borders. I was happy to know that the river's watershed was at least partially protected as a national park reserve. Sadly, I've discovered over time that mining proposals threaten the Nahanni region, and may preclude any opportunity for me – or anyone else – to see this vast boreal wilderness in its natural, unblemished state.

Nevertheless, I'm proud to report that CPAWS is and has been working hard to save this truly Canadian wild space, and I'm happy to have an opportunity to share that pride with you on the night of November 29th, when the *Nahanni Forever* national tour will make a stop in Halifax...

Join CPAWS NS and special guests at 7pm on **November 29th** for the Halifax *Nahanni Forever* event, which will showcase CPAWS' latest efforts to protect Canada's boreal wilderness one precious piece at a time. The event will provide an inspirational opportunity for you to learn about CPAWS' efforts to expand the Nahanni National Park Reserve to protect the magnificent South Nahanni watershed from mining and other developments. You will enjoy an evening of dramatic images, great music and thought-provoking scientific and cultural insights provided by Dr. Derek Ford, world-renowned limestone geologist, and Harvey Locke, CPAWS' National Conservation Advisor. This unique event is not to be missed and is sure to inspire wilderness enthusiasts from coast-to-coast-to-coast! The event will begin at 7pm in the McInnes Room of the Dalhousie Students' Union Building at 6136 University Ave., Halifax. Tickets are \$10 each, and are available at Mountain Equipment Co-op (1550 Granville St.), Bookmark (5686 Spring Garden Rd.), P'lovers (Park Lane Mall, Spring Garden Rd.), or by request at 902-446-4155 or conservation@cpawsns.org.



Virginia Falls, S. Nahanni River
Image: Bill Mason Productions

Proposed Highway 113 Threatens Wilderness Hotspot

By Chris Miller, Terrestrial Committee

Just outside Halifax lies a magnificent natural area known as the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes wilderness. This ecological jewel, a mere 15 minute drive from the downtown, contains 22 undeveloped lakeshores, numerous wetlands, old-growth forest, rare arctic-alpine plants, and metro's highest point of land (Blue Mountain Hill). It also contains a small population of Nova Scotia's endangered mainland moose and is a popular spot for wilderness recreation, particularly backcountry hiking and canoeing. But, the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes is imminently threatened.



Susies Lake in the Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes wilderness. Photo by Irwin Barrett

Plans are currently in the works by the Provincial government to build a 4-lane highway through the middle of this important natural area. The purpose of this project, dubbed Unlucky Highway 113, is to save a mere 8 minutes of driving time for traffic traveling between Bedford and Hubley. And, at a cost of \$100 million dollars, it's also an extremely expensive project too.

What's worse, the Provincial government plans to avoid carrying out a full environmental assessment for this project, preferring instead to conduct a quicker in-house environmental review with limited opportunities for public input. New 4-lane highways in Nova Scotia longer than 10km in length are required to undergo full environmental assessments. Highway 113 was designed to be 9.9km in length. Sound suspicious? We think so too.

That's why CPAWS-NS has been pushing for a full environmental assessment for the Highway 113 project. We've been lobbying the government to be more transparent with regards to the Highway 113 portfolio and we will continue to push for the abandonment of this ill-conceived project.

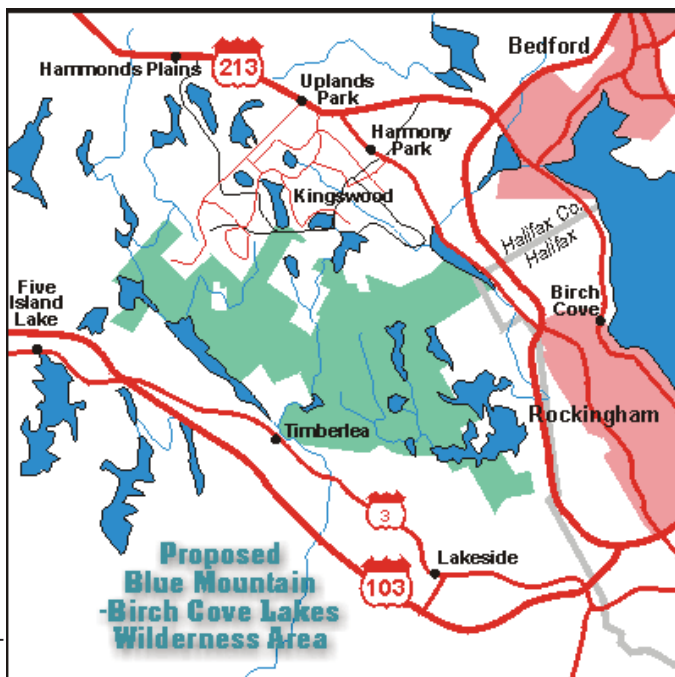
The proposed highway will cross six wetlands and come within 100 metres of at least a dozen others. It will also create a huge barrier to the movements of the endangered mainland moose and could open-up the very heart of the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes wilderness to development, strip-malls, and more roads and subdivisions. The plan also proposes to blast away the very top of Blue Mountain Hill, to provide aggregate for roadbed construction. Apparently, a lot of rock is needed when so many wetlands are to be infilled.

Needless to say, Highway 113 poses a serious and looming threat to the environment and could ruin one of the best kept secrets in Halifax; the backcountry experience of the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes wilderness. It must be stopped.

Progress is being made. The Halifax Regional Municipality is poised to designate a portion of the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes as a regional park later this year, and will declare the entire area as a wilderness corridor. Such designations will help slow the rate at which the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes is being chipped away by development. But, what's really needed is for the province to abandon its plans to build Highway 113 and to immediately declare this magnificent area a legally-protected wilderness area.

That will require a little more time and a lot more work, but we're up to the challenge.

If you'd like more information about Highway 113 or the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes, please send an email to birch-covelakes@yahoo.ca



Nature Calls! Kejimikujik Wilderness Weekend a success

by Cheyenne Lawrie, CPAWS Conservation Intern

On September 10th and 11th, five wilderness-worthy CPAWS volunteers introduced a group of eleven youth from the Halifax-Dartmouth area to the beauty and wonder of Kejimikujik National Park. The experience was a lifetime first for most of the participants, and their excitement showed.

After checking in and learning about the park at the interpretive centre, our group headed off to set up camp in the Jim Charles Loop. The campers worked together to put up tents and figure out sleeping arrangements, and in no time we were eating lunch and on our way to take in an interpretive hike along the shore of Merrymakedge Beach, headed by park interpreter Duncan Smith. The event was followed by a fun and educational Leave No Trace session by Master Educator Justin Ellis.



A camper discovers the "cool" carnivorous sundew plant on the shore of Kejimikujik Lake

The post-dinner climate was a little chilly, and dark was falling fast, so our swim session had to be postponed. However, the campers got to hike down to the lakeshore and play a few games, followed by a roaring campfire. Many marshmallows and spider dogs later, we all turned in. Surprisingly, none of the campers were disturbed by our midnight visitor, a chubby raccoon that was looking for our supper leftovers.

The following morning, we broke down camp en masse and enjoyed a two-hour paddle along the Mersey River in a Voyageur canoe that cozily seated eighteen. After lunch and some free time, we ended our trip with a relaxing afternoon of swimming and lounging on Merrymakedge Beach, and headed back to the city.

Though only together for a short time, our group bonded well and had a fantastic time together. The awe and joy that the campers expressed for nature let us know that we were successful in our goal of raising wilderness awareness. Many campers told us that the trip was one of the greatest things they'd ever done, an experience they won't soon forget. We hope it was just one step in a life-long process of wilderness education and appreciation.



• All photos on this page by CPAWS NS staff and volunteers



If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to love the Earth before we ask them to save it. Perhaps this is what Thoreau had in mind when he said, "the more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think the same is true of human beings."

- David Sobel, Environmental Educator

CPAWS wishes to thank Nature Canada's *Parks and People* program for the financial support of this project.

From the Depths of the Woods: Game Sanctuary Campaign Update

by Alexander MacDonald, Outreach Coordinator



The hardwood forests in the Chignecto Game Sanctuary are a spectacle of autumn colours
photo by Dale Wilson

Since the spring 2005 edition of *Wild East* a number of developments have taken place with respect to our Game Sanctuary Campaign. The campaign is managed by CPAWS NS and is driven by the grassroots efforts of concerned citizens, the Kaizer Meadow Brook Preservation Group, the Friends of Nature, the South Shore Naturalists and the Bay of Island Centre for Sustainable Development, in addition to work by the Ecology Action Centre through the Nova Scotia Public Lands Coalition. The goal of the campaign is to seek Wilderness Area designations for the Chignecto and Liscombe Game Sanctuaries and a Nature Reserve designation for the Blandford Game Sanctuary.

To show our progress during the last few months, here's a short timeline:

- March 2005 Press release highlighting the Chignecto Game Sanctuary as the only option left for a Wilderness Area designation in Cumberland County.
- April 2005 First visit by CPAWS to the Chignecto Game Sanctuary to develop a sense of the scale and state of the place.
- May 2005 Grassroots groups involved in the campaign visit the provincial legislature to request that the Department of Natural Resources' not de-list any of the 26 game sanctuaries under review; the Department subsequently announces that none of the sanctuaries will be de-listed.
- June 2005 CPAWS and the other groups involved in the campaign formally request that the government impose an immediate moratorium on logging and road-building activities in all 26 existing game sanctuaries around the province; no response to this specific request was received; CPAWS holds the first official meeting of all groups involved in the campaign to discuss next steps.
- July 2005 General research into conservation opportunities continues;
- Aug. 2005 Second visit to the Chignecto Game Sanctuary to explore key areas that appear to have high conservation potential; general research continues.
- Sept. 2005 CPAWS reconvenes groups again for a session to discuss next steps in the campaign; Dalhousie Law Pro-bono students begin research on legal options surrounding protection for the three game sanctuaries.
- Oct. 2005 CPAWS begins meetings with representatives of each political party to discuss the campaign and convey our goals; work begins on developing a stand-alone website for the campaign.
- Nov. 2005 CPAWS and other groups continue to build momentum for the campaign over time.

We are still focused on our goal of seeking protected area designations for each of the three sanctuaries identified. By meeting with provincial politicians, we hope to make the case for the government to allow the NS Department of Environment and Labour to study the three sanctuaries to determine their suitability as protected areas; in addition, we hope to gain a better sense of what the Department of Natural Resources heard from the public about game sanctuaries during last spring's review process. Stay tuned for more updates and more news as we begin to focus on the Liscombe Game Sanctuary more closely.

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CPAWS staff, volunteers and campaign stakeholders were very impressed during our August trip to the Chignecto Game Sanctuary. In fact, we (literally) stumbled across mainland moose footprints on one of the roadsides within the sanctuary. We also saw a number of majestic wild spaces, including wide spruce plateaus, a beautifully intact wooded lakeshore and a gorgeous old growth stand of red spruce that was identified as unique to the area by the International Biological Programme (see photos below). Sadly, only a small portion of the old growth stand remains due to previous logging activity that razed half of its original area. This site is truly a remarkable area and should be preserved and restored for future generations of humans and wild creatures to enjoy.



The endangered Mainland Moose, photographed in October 2005 in the Chignecto Game Sanctuary. Photo by Dale Wilson



The intact natural shoreline of Freeman Lake, Chignecto Game Sanctuary. Photo by Alexander MacDonald



A mossy black spruce stand that sits above the Hebert River, which transects the eastern side of the sanctuary. Photo by Alexander MacDonald



A majestic Red Spruce forest stand in the Chignecto Game Sanctuary. Photo by Karen Potter



One of the many woods roads that traverse the Chignecto Game Sanctuary. Photo by Alexander MacDonald

Off-Highway Vehicles (OHV) Action Plan

by Graham Smith, Vice President, Board of Directors

Although our press release expressed “sceptical optimism” about the Nova Scotia government’s Off-highway Vehicle (OHV) Action Plan, released October 12th, it also noted that the plan misses the opportunity to resolve crucial, long-standing issues relating to irresponsible OHV use, especially where wilderness protection and sensitive ecosystems are concerned.

It was decided to reconvene the Citizens for Responsible ATV Use (CRATVU) that held a press conference at Wolfville last year and hold another conference in Halifax, on Nov-02, to express disappointment with the government’s dilution of the Task Force recommendations, and call for improvement. The entire public consultation process is undermined by the self-serving nature of the Government’s plan.

The basic alternative to this choice of direct confrontation would be to recognise that at least we have something to work with in the Government plan, and place our emphasis on quick enactment of the legislation (the Government has already indicated a 2-year time-frame, and of course this would be even longer if there were a change of government). However the consensus is that there is not sufficient environmental protection that we can support in the government package.

CPAWS will continue to work to ensure that the voice of wilderness is heard on this issue.

To view the OHV Action Plan, visit <http://www.gov.ns.ca/natr/publications/ohv.htm>



All-terrain vehicle use threatens the ecological integrity of wilderness areas. This photo was taken in the Terence Bay Wilderness Area. Photo by Ian Smith

CPAWS-NS gets a taste of BC!

by Laura Bennett, Atlantic Ocean Committee Chair

On September 17, the Atlantic Ocean Committee welcomed Sabine Jessen, Conservation Director with CPAWS-BC, to our province. Although the weather was less than cooperative, we enjoyed a lovely tour of the Mahone Bay and St. Margaret’s Bay, a site of interest for the CPAWS-NS National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCA) campaign. After stops in Mahone Bay and Chester, we visited with Rudy and Micky Haase, who gave us an interesting view of the area. Despite the rain, Sabine was able to see the natural beauty of the area and the attributes which make it a great spot for a NMCA.

Sabine has served as an Advisor to the BC Parks Department, the former BC Commission on Resources and Environment, and the Economic Council of Canada. She was recently appointed to the Minister’s Advisory Council on Oceans, and was previously a member of Fisheries and Oceans Canada’s Science Advisory Council. Sabine’s vast expertise with marine protected areas in Canada has made a valuable contribution to our own NMCA campaign. Her visit provided us with a unique opportunity for collaboration on our NMCA campaign, and also gave us a chance to show off the beautiful Nova Scotia coastline. Thanks Sabine!

Keeping our Eye on the Issues

by Karen Potter, Chapter Coordinator

• CPAWS-NS is expanding our marine conservation efforts to the Bay of Fundy. We have been recently granted funds by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency to review the Environmental Impact Statement for the Whites Point Quarry and Marine Terminal Project proposed for Digby Neck. We are specifically looking at the impact the quarry and terminal would have on the potential for a National Marine Conservation Area in the Bay of Fundy. CPAWS will share its findings in the next issue of *Wild East*.

• CPAWS-NS applauds Parks Canada for its wise decision not to spray the insecticide BtK in Kejimikujik National Park and Historic site this spring. An outbreak of a native insect, the Pale-wing Gray moth, has resulted in defoliation of about one-third of the hemlocks in Jeremy’s Bay campground in the Park. Parks Canada did consider the option to conduct an aerial insecticide spray of the campground to control for further damage. CPAWS-NS does not support the use of insecticides to control for a native species within a national park. Congratulations to Parks Canada for putting ecological integrity first in parks management on this issue!

Wilderness Perspectives from Prince Edward Island

By Rob Sharkie, Board Member

This spring, Parks Canada held an open house to illustrate the new management plan for Prince Edward Island National Park that has been in the works for the past number of years. I attended, and to my dismay, found that not only was there no presentation of any new vision or direction, the material presented was in some cases the same material that has been recycled over the past 10 to 20 years. It is important that citizens and conservation groups participate in these limited opportunities for public input. To date there has been little response from Parks Canada regarding comments from ecologically-minded stakeholders in P.E.I.



Cavendish Beach, an icon of the coastal landscape of P.E.I.

Photo by Robbie Johnston

Later on, the P.E.I. National Park purchased the Rainbow Valley amusement park property in Cavendish for the hefty price tag of 2.7 million dollars. Their rationale for spending such an amount seem plausible on the surface: acquiring 30 acres of ecologically sensitive land to add to the Park, and having a parking place to take pressure away from sensitive dune systems. The problem is that the land in question has been heavily disturbed by human activity (like much of PEI, and the rest of the Park land). Some conservation minded groups feel that the amount of money spent to purchase the land and the amount that will be required to construct the proposed facilities (an extra 2 million for parking, trails, etc.) would have been much better spent restoring existing Park land. My experience in the area (2 field seasons with Island Nature Trust as a field botanist in the National Park) allowed me to see there is very little forest restoration conducted on Park land. A fraction of that money would have made a significant difference in some of the disturbed woodland of the Park and surrounding Crown properties. In addition, land for parking area could be purchased at a fraction of the price. The community itself was also strongly against this move, as Rainbow Valley was a valued vacation destination.

Later in the year, conservation groups responded to Parks Canada's treatment of a (so-called) nuisance species issue. Several families of red fox have been frequenting the Brackley section of the National Park, sitting on roadsides and accepting food from tourists. Parks Canada suggested that the foxes were a danger to humans, and that they may have to be shot.

Of course, many people were opposed to this, and soon after it was decided that the foxes would be relocated. First, Parks needs to be far more proactive in preventing problems of this type. Tourists must be informed of the problems surrounding the feeding of wild animals. Second, it is in Parks Canada's mandate to ensure that wildlife is protected. As with the forestry example above, we see very little effort to maintain or improve quality of habitat for wildlife.

I would like to end on a positive note: lately on PEI there has been some talk of introducing Wild Turkeys into the province. Groups such as the Environmental Coalition of PEI are opposed, of course, but it seems that those in favour regard any such concerns as inconsequential. Parks Canada's response was excellent, however, citing the precautionary principle and pointing out the problems exotic species can cause.

Another positive development is the province's verbal commitment to allow the Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project to manage 2,000 acres of public land. Although not official as yet, the plan is to allow the Macphail project to conduct forest management in accordance with sustainable principles, including the reestablishment of native species.

(Note: Although our name indicates otherwise, CPAWS-NS also works on parks and wilderness issues in P.E.I.)



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2005-2006

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Visit us on the web:

www.cpawsns.org

Since CPAWS was founded in western Canada in 1963, we have helped to protect over 40 million hectares of Canada's most treasured wild places - an area nearly seven times the size of Nova Scotia!

Volunteers at the Core

by Alexander MacDonald

Volunteers are the key to our success as an organization. The contributions of volunteers allow us to strike action committees to address wilderness issues on land and sea; to attend many different meetings and conferences relative to our mandate; to develop and implement fresh ideas to achieve our goals; and, to maintain momentum on wilderness issues over time.



CPAWS volunteer Justin Ellis explores the natural wonders of Kejimikujik National Park with a *Nature Calls!* camper. (CPAWS NS photo)

In an effort to repopulate our action committees for the future, we'd like to reach out to our members to identify and develop new, long-term volunteer relationships. We'd like to work with you to keep the core of our organization strong - to help ensure CPAWS' success over time.

In October alone, more than 20 volunteers offered more than 55 hours of their time to help make CPAWS Nova Scotia successful! As a result of these contributions, CPAWS NS was able to plan the Halifax *Nahanni Forever* event, respond to the government's Off-highway Vehicle Action Plan, hold a dinner for marine scientists to identify vulnerable marine features in need of protection, and take part in a stakeholders' panel for Parks Canada. With every volunteer opportunity, the staff members at CPAWS NS work hard to ensure that the experience is fun, engaging and rewarding for everyone involved.

Are you interested in volunteering with CPAWS NS but don't know how to become involved? Call Alexander at 902-446-4155 or visit <http://www.cpawsns.org/volunteer>. We look for volunteers with diverse backgrounds and skills, so don't worry about having experience or training relevant to our mandate. The most important quality we seek is your commitment to being a voice for wilderness!

The success of the Nova Scotia Chapter depends on the contributions of our members. Please become a member or renew your membership by completing this form, making a donation, and mailing it to the above address. CPAWS is a registered charity, and donations are tax deductible. We appreciate your support!

Yes! I want to be a member of CPAWS!

Here is my donation of:

\$15___ \$30___ \$50___ \$75___ \$100___ Other___

Cheque___ Visa___ Mastercard___

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