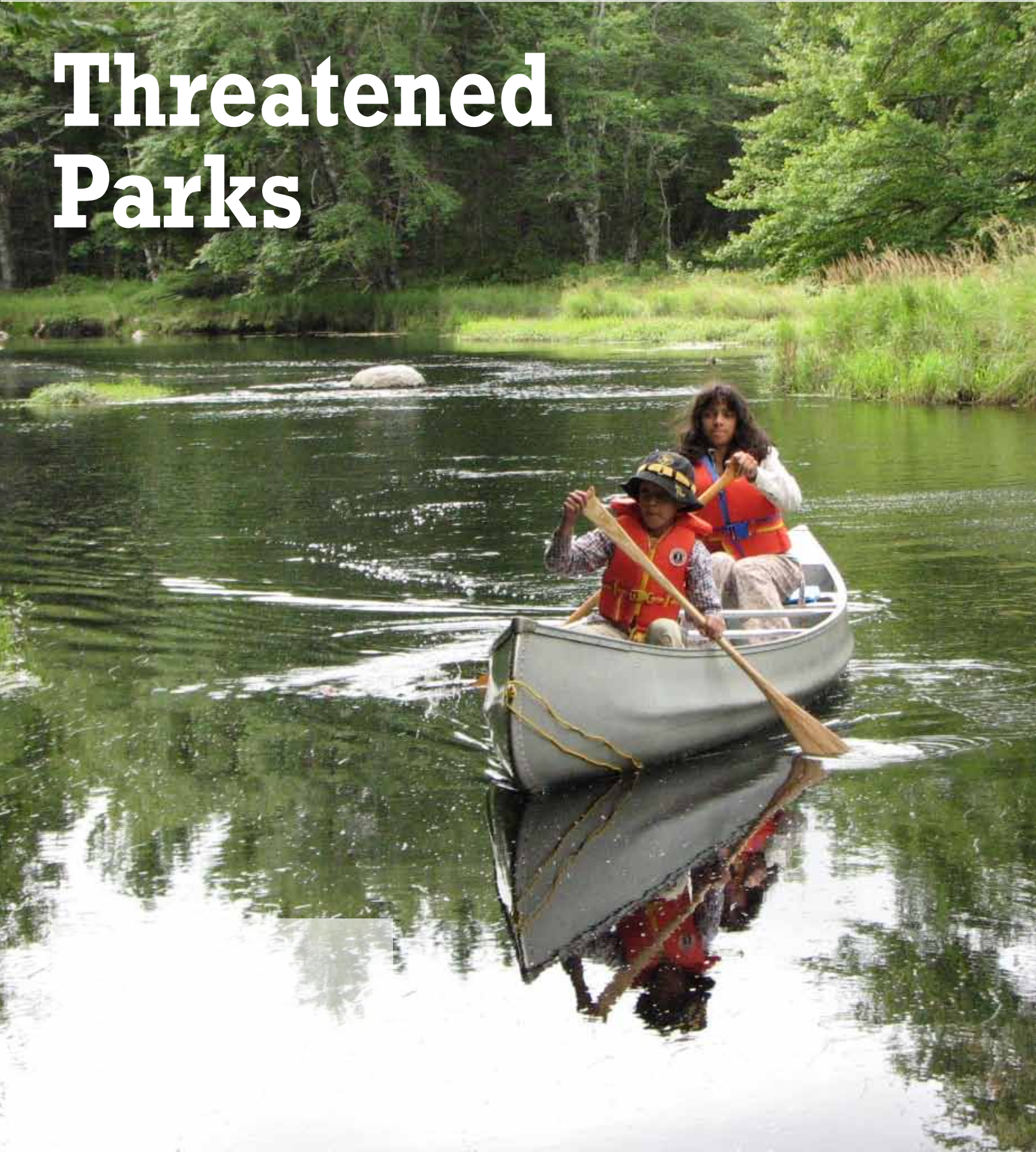
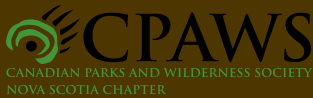


Threatened Parks





CPAWS is Canada's voice for wilderness. For over 45 years, we've played a lead role in creating over two-thirds of Canada's protected areas.

CPAWS Nova Scotia
5435 Portland Place, Suite 101
Halifax, NS, B3K 6R7
Tel: (902) 446-4155
Fax: (902) 446-4156
www.cpawsns.org

Chapter Board of Directors

Martin Willison, President
Soren Bondrup-Nielsen
Munju Ravindra
Sunetra Ekanayake
Rob Ferguson
Sally Ravindra
Heather Reed

National Staff

Chris Miller
National Conservation Biologist

Chapter Staff

Judith Cabrita
Financial Administrator

Jennifer Smith
Outreach Coordinator

Andrew Chow
Conservation Assistant

Editor and Layout

Chris Miller

Postmaster: send Canadian address changes to
CPAWS-NS, 5435 Portland Place, Suite 101
Halifax, NS, B3K 6R7

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Message from the Board

What a difference a few months can make. In the last issue of *WildEast* we were celebrating our national parks and 100 years of Parks Canada. We examined national parks in the Maritimes and discussed several projects targeted at improving the ecological integrity of parks. Now, with the recent cuts announced to Parks Canada, we have become very concerned about the future of our national parks.



Environmental charities in Canada have come under attack from the federal government, and Bill C-38, the omnibus Budget Implementation Bill not only cut environmental program funding, but also gutted the *Fisheries Act* and the *Environmental Assessment Act*, and weakened other environmental laws. CPAWS joined many other environmental organizations in 'Black Out Speak Out', a movement to respond to this criticism and to point out the benefits that accrue to Canadians from the work of environmental charities. CPAWS Nova Scotia is proud to have spoken out about the harm being done by cuts to Parks Canada's budget that have led to the planned closure of Kejimikujik National Park for much of the year. Even worse than this, many of the scientific staff have been declared 'surplus' and it is now doubtful that there will be capacity to know whether the ecological integrity of the park is actually being maintained, as required by law. CPAWS Nova Scotia considers that putting the park's integrity at risk is an unacceptable step backwards.

These events at the federal level contrast sharply with the conservation progress that is being made in Nova Scotia at the provincial level. CPAWS celebrated the creation of two new protected wilderness areas at Chignecto. Kelley River Wilderness Area will protect the large intact forests of Chignecto, while Raven Head Wilderness Area will protect a long stretch of wild Bay of Fundy coastline over 40 kilometres in length. Together, approximately 26,000 hectares of wilderness is now protected. CPAWS has worked very hard over many years to protect this important area. We want to thank everyone who worked on this project, especially Cumberland Wilderness. We also want to recognize Chris Miller for his dedication toward Chignecto and ensuring a successful conclusion to the conservation campaign.

The Nova Scotia Chapter of CPAWS held its Annual General Meeting recently and it was a useful time to reflect on the year gone by. Like many other non-profits, we have faced a challenging few years financially, but the hard work of our board, staff, and volunteers, together with support from our national organization, has brought us back on track with a leaner balanced budget. We specially thank Judith Cabrita for her quiet dedication in achieving this. We are now ready to embrace the next phase of our work with renewed spirit and purpose.

A new Board was elected at the AGM. Continuing members Soren Bondrup-Nielsen, Sunetra Ekanayake, Munju Ravindra and myself are pleased to welcome newcomers Rob Ferguson, Sally Ravindra and Heather Reed. We are grateful for the service of retiring members Jonathan Leard, Candace Stevenson, Jamie Simpson and Greg Heming. We are also very grateful to Rodrigo Menafra for his work as our Marine Coordinator until December 2011.

Martin Willison

About the cover

Nayani and Nilan enjoy a paddle at Kejimikujik
National Park (photo: Sunetra Ekanayake)





Irwin Barrett

“Eye of the forest”: A rich floodplain forest on the St. Mary’s River, Guysborough County

In this issue

Conservation

- Chignecto protected!
26,000 hectares and 40km of coastline • 4
- Bowater lands
What will happen to the half million acres? • 6
- Parks under threat
Cutbacks to Parks Canada • 10
- Landscape connectivity
Protecting the Chignecto Isthmus • 14

Updates

- 2 • Message from the Board
Chapter news
- 8 • 12x12 campaign
Progress report on MPAs
- 13 • Conservation updates
News from across Nova Scotia
- 17 • Making connections
Bioblitz on the Isthmus



Chignecto protected!!

Nova Scotia establishes largest new protected area in over a decade.

By: Chris Miller

After a long, hard fought campaign, the vast forests and coastline of Chignecto are finally protected!!! The Nova Scotia government has just announced it has officially completed the designation process for two new protected wilderness areas on public lands at Chignecto.

Kelley River Wilderness Area will protect the large intact forests of Chignecto, while Raven Head Wilderness Area will protect a long stretch of wild Bay of Fundy coastline over 40 kilometres in length. Together, approximately 26,000 hectares of wilderness are now protected at Chignecto.

The Kelley River Wilderness Area is the largest new protected area established in Nova Scotia in over a decade and will become the third largest provincial protected area in the province.

Above: A freshwater marsh near Maccan, Kelley River Wilderness Area (Photo: Irwin Barrett).

Right: Seastack and cove at Fitzgibbons Brook, Raven Head Wilderness Area (Photo: Irwin Barrett).

The protection of Chignecto represents a huge step forward for conservation in Nova Scotia. This is one of the few places remaining in Nova Scotia where a very large protected area could still be created and fills a very large hole in the protected areas system in that part of the province. CPAWS congratulates the Nova Scotia government for protecting this ecological treasure.

Chignecto is located in northern Nova Scotia between the Cobequid Mountains and the Bay of Fundy, near the communities of Joggins, River Hebert, Apple River, Parrsboro, and Advocate. It includes public lands within, and adjacent to, the Chignecto Game Sanctuary and represents one of the last big wilderness areas remaining in Nova Scotia.

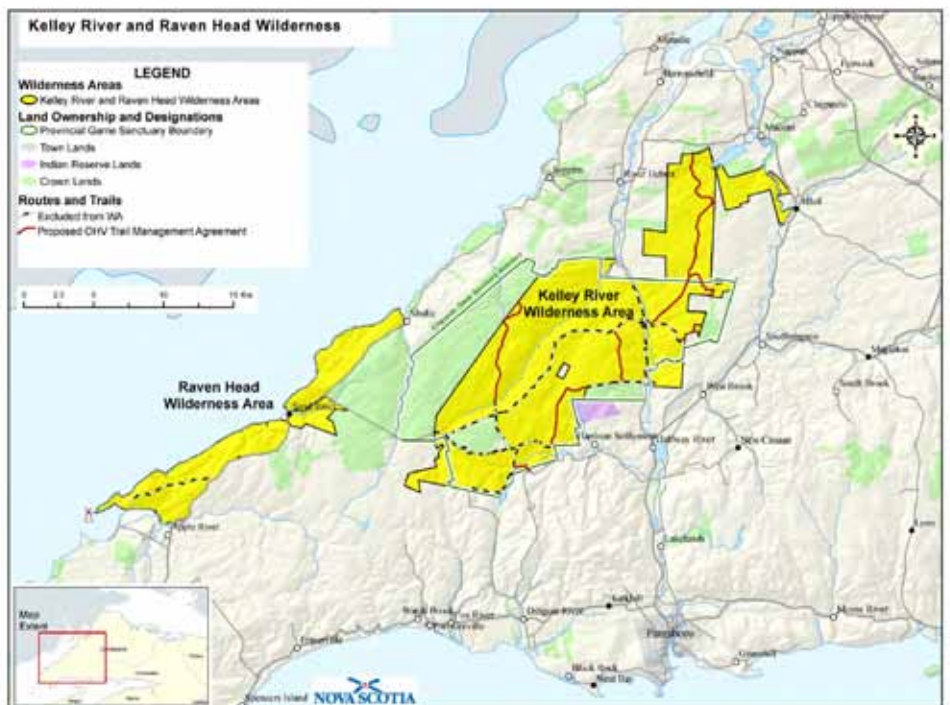
The new protected areas at Chignecto contain vast swaths of intact forest, entire watersheds, significant rivers and coastal wetlands, old-growth forest, and species-at-risk habitat for the endangered mainland moose and wood turtle.

Chignecto is teeming with wildlife. Last year, CPAWS undertook a bioblitz there with volunteers and recorded almost 100 different species of birds in a 48 hour period. On a separate field visit, a one day survey of the Kelley River watershed alone identified over 350 species of plants.

The Nova Scotia government first promised to establish a “large” protected area at Chignecto in 2009 and since that time has undertaken several rounds of public and stakeholder consultations. A candidate protected area boundary for the two wilderness areas was released in 2011.

Through the designation process, the final protected area boundary for Chignecto was made slightly larger than the candidate boundary proposed last year. Approximately 900 hectares of additional lands were added. CPAWS was pushing for several additions, at the headwaters of the Kelley River and Sand River, as well as properties near the Bay of Fundy coast. Several of these additions have been included in the final boundary.

So many people worked so hard to protect Chignecto. We particularly want to congratulate the hard-working folks at Cumberland Wilderness for their tireless efforts over many years to protect Chignecto. Without them, Chignecto would remain only a dream. They are true conservation leaders in Nova Scotia and we congratulate them on their hard fought campaign to protect Chignecto.



Two new protected areas established at Chignecto: 1) Raven Head Wilderness Area, and 2) Kelley River Wilderness Area (Map credit: NS Environment).



What will happen to the Bowater lands?

The largest landowner in Nova Scotia just placed all of its land up for sale...a half million acres in total.

The following article was published in The Chronicle-Herald on Wednesday, July 4, 2012.

By: Chris Miller

The forest industry in Nova Scotia is going through a difficult transition. With the closure of the Bowater mill and the struggle to restart the mill at Port Hawkesbury, many Nova Scotians find themselves in a very hard position, particularly mill workers, private woodlot owners, and local contractors.

It's clear that the current model of forestry in Nova Scotia is not working and, if there is to be any long-term future for the industry here, it must shift to a model that's more sustainable, more focused on value-added forest products, and relies more upon the skills of local communities and small businesses.

Using Acadian forests to make newsprint and tissue paper, or worse burning the forest biomass for electricity, is not the best use of this resource. It's not sustainable and it doesn't maximize the value of the natural resource. It's also extremely vulnerable to global market pressures and the overall downsizing that's occurring at the international scale.

Above: Fisher Lake, Annapolis County (Photo: Nova Scotia Environment)

The Acadian forest is capable of growing large trees that can produce excellent value-added products, so why not choose a path that focuses more on the quality of the wood products instead of the quantity of wood supply?

With the impacts of the global changes to the pulp and paper industry now reaching Nova Scotia in a very real way, the province is faced with a very important decision about what happens to Bowater's private land holdings.

At over a half million acres in six counties, Bowater is the largest landowner in Nova Scotia and with the company pulling up shop and leaving the province, all of these lands are now for sale.

Many people are wondering what will happen to the Bowater land holdings and are trying to figure out how to turn this crisis into a longer-term opportunity. Is it possible to shift the industry to something that's more sustainable, more focused on the local community, and less vulnerable to corporate decisions made in far away executive offices.

For many, the worst-case scenario would be a fly-by-night operation swooping in and snapping up the Bowater lands, flipping the best lands for development and liquidating the remainder with little benefit for local communities and devastating impacts on the environment.

This trend is happening in Northeastern United States and is starting to move across the border into the Maritimes.

When large forest companies close-up shop and move out, other companies move in to pick up the scraps. And, where the original company may have been managing the forests using sustainable harvesting rotations, the new companies often look more at short-term returns on their investment and start liquidating the assets and move on. That means lots of clearcuts and lots of raw product being shipped out and very few jobs being created.

Under this scenario, in only a few short years, not only could there still not be a viable forest industry in southwestern Nova Scotia, but there could also be a vastly depleted natural resource. This will make it that much harder to turn the corner and shift the industry toward something that's more sustainable and more focused on value-added products.

This worst-case scenario must be avoided, which is why the Nova Scotia government needs to step in and acquire all of the Bowater lands that are for sale. The government has surprisingly little control over preventing the liquidation of this forest resource by other means.

By acquiring all of the Bowater lands that are currently for sale, the Province has the ability to protect the most ecologically-significant ecosystems and lease out the remainder for local forestry interests.

This is even more significant, particularly because Nova Scotia has so little public land already. Only about 30% of Nova Scotia is publicly-owned, one of the lowest percentages across the country. We need to be expanding our public land base and creating opportunities for local forestry operations.

Earlier this year, the Nova Scotia government acquired 10,000 hectares of land from Bowater. This was a smart investment. Rather than handing the company a cash bailout, the province instead acquired an equal value of land and this includes some of the best real estate owned by the company.

All of the properties that were purchased are high conservation value lands and much of it contains old-growth Acadian forest and species-at-risk habitat, as well as significant frontage on lakes and waterways. Without these ecologically-significant lands being acquired, all would be for sale right now, and all of these prized natural areas would be threatened. Fortunately, these lands are now in public ownership.

Letting the remainder of the Bowater lands fall into the hands of a big company that promises jobs but liquidates the resource instead would be a travesty. The Nova Scotia government should seize the opportunity to acquire all of the Bowater lands now, while we still have an opportunity to define the future of the forest industry in southwestern Nova Scotia. It's time to think bigger, prepare a strategy for the long term, and trust smaller companies to get the job done.

We are clearly at a crossroads here. Let's hope the Nova Scotia government makes the sort of strategic investment that's needed to finally position the forest industry on a more sustainable footing and expand our public land base in the process.

DARE TO BE DEEP



It's been one year since CPAWS called on the federal government to create 12 new marine protected areas across the country by December 2012, including two sites in Nova Scotia. In a report released by CPAWS this spring - "Is Canada on track to create 12 new marine protected areas by December 2012?" - we assessed progress over the past year and identified areas of concern. We determined that progress is being made for some sites, but less so for others.

Out of the 12 marine areas CPAWS has identified for action by December 2012, CPAWS has observed movement by the federal and other levels of government towards designating three as protected areas, some progress in creating another six, and limited or no progress on the remaining three. Progress has been most significant for three sites off the coast of British Columbia - in the Southern Strait of Georgia, in Hecate Strait and surrounding the Scott Islands, as well as one in James Bay off the coast of Quebec, called Tawich.

Some progress towards designating new marine protected areas has been made in six more locations, one off Nova Scotia in St. Anns Bank, as well as in locations in New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nunavut, and Quebec. However, more significant steps are required to move them towards completion by December. In the Bay of Fundy, the South Coast Fjords off Newfoundland, and the "Big Eddy" off the west coast of Vancouver Island, no notable progress at all has been made towards protection.

Rare and important forms of sea life occur in all of the 12 areas CPAWS has highlighted across Canada. Species range from leatherback turtles, to dolphins, narwhal and other types of whales, birds including puffins and Cassins auklets, and fish including cod and Atlantic wolffish.

Canada still has a lot of catching up to do to meet its international commitment to establish networks of marine protected areas in its oceans. To make more headway towards permanent protection of these sites by December 2012, the pace of consultations and negotiations need to be maintained and enhanced, and the level of conservation measures for all need to be strengthened.

Bay of Fundy

Rating

Progress: Limited
Conservation Measures: Uncertain

Goal

Large National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) in the outer Bay of Fundy -- from Digby Neck & Islands/St. Mary's Bay, NS to Grand Manan Island/ Passamaquoddy Bay, NB.

Size of marine protected area

CPAWS recommendation is for an NMCA of 10,000-15,000 km²

Conservation significance

- Important concentration of whale species, including endangered North Atlantic right whale.
- Highly productive waters and upwelling zones.
- Coastal wetland and mudflat habitat that support over one million shorebirds.
- Diverse marine ecosystems

Status

Limited progress in the past year. Parks Canada has a long-standing commitment to establish a National Marine Conservation Area in the Bay of Fundy and has commissioned a scientific study, which was completed this year, to assess potential NMCA sites in the Bay. However, the study has not been formally released to the public and there is as yet, no process underway to proceed with an NMCA for the Bay of Fundy.



St. Anns Bank

Rating

Progress: Some
Conservation Measures: Uncertain

Goal

An *Oceans Act* Marine Protected Area (MPA) on St. Anns Bank off the east coast of Cape Breton, NS.

Size of marine protected area

Area of Interest is 5,100 km²

Conservation significance

- Leatherback sea turtle foraging area
- High diversity of fish species
- Atlantic wolffish population
- Corals and sponges
- Diverse marine ecosystems

Status

Some progress has been made over the past year. Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced St. Anns Bank as a formal *Oceans Act* MPA Area of Interest in June 2011. The government is planning to conclude stakeholder consultations by December 2012 although recent concerns about overlapping oil and gas leases may slow down the process.



Parks under threat



Sunetra Ekanayake

With the full extent of Federal cuts to Parks Canada still not fully understood, it's hard to know exactly how our national parks will be impacted. But steep cuts to science programs and the partial closure of Kejimikujik National Park may be a harbinger of things to come.

Sunetra Ekanayake takes a close look at how the cuts will impact her family's enjoyment of Keji and reflects upon what the cutbacks will mean for the long-term health and well-being of Nova Scotians and the environment.

Kejimkujik National Park is a very special place for my children and me. It is a magical place that makes us want to go there again and again to enjoy its tranquility, numerous beautiful lakes joined by flowing waters and rich forests.

Each season, Keji transforms itself into a different wonderful place, and we visit all year round to experience it all. During the summer, we load our canoe with enough food for several days and disappear into the wilderness through the same waterways that Mi'kmaw used for thousands of years.

As we paddle along, we often see deer grazing at the riverbank, porcupines climbing up a tree, an eagle or a hawk circling above our heads, painted turtles sunbathing on logs, and loons, beavers and muskrats playing hide-and seek in the water. Spotting an uncommon bird makes our day. I still remember the first time I saw a great-crested fly-catcher. It was right there in Keji, so close to us, yet carrying on with whatever it was doing. It perhaps could tell that we were not intruders. We let it be.

Night time is when Keji's rich array of sounds are at full display, with a loon's majestic call vibrating the forest air, owls hooting, and frogs and crickets letting us know of their presence. We often sit outside the tent in the dark, embedded in the night's sounds, watching the star-filled sky and the flickering lights of fireflies.

Autumn brings a wide spectrum of fall colors to Keji wilderness. At that time of year, my favourite time of the day to canoe in Keji lakes is early in the morning, when the fog is still swirling above the water, and fall colors are reflected in the still, mirror-like water surface. It feels like we are inside a painting.

As the weather slowly turns colder, we wait for a weekend with good snow to go winter camping, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. My children love the challenge of putting a tent up on deep snow and then spending a full day exploring the snow-laden wilderness on their skis, watching the deer camouflaged in the white and brown background, listening to a woodpecker, trying to identify various animal tracks on the snow.

Keji's warm-up shelters makes the winter camping even more fun. For the children, after a day of exploring, there is nothing quite like sitting by the wood fireplace, drinking hot chocolate, roasting marshmallows and warming up before retreating to the tent for the night.

Spring is Keji's bird-watching season, and it's at this time of year when we have experienced some of our most memorable sightings: black-throated blue warblers, blackburnian warblers, the elusive black-backed woodpecker

and great-crested flycatcher, yellow-bellied sap suckers, nesting loons, and American woodcocks. To top it off, we have listened to the amazing courtship display of two barred owls in the middle of the night; we were sure at first that it was a pack of coyotes.

My children have been visiting Keji every year since they were very young. It has shaped them to become environmentally-minded citizens who embrace nature and want to protect what we still have.

Needless to say, the news of Keji's partial closure due to recent budget cuts is alarming and very disheartening for us. Keji will now be closed for more than half the year, from early October to late May. Job cuts and inaccessibility during winter months will hamper park's conservation efforts.

Cont'd next page...

Below: Winter camping at Kejimkujik National Park (photo: Sunetra Ekanayake)



Sunetra Ekanayake

The park is home to a number of endangered or threatened plant and animal species such as water-pennywort, Blanding's turtle, Bicknell's thrush, and Southern flying squirrels. The loon population is also threatened by high mercury levels. Scientific research, species monitoring and other conservation efforts are key to the survival of these species in the long term and the reduction of these will be damaging.

For decades, Keji has been a well managed park, preserving the wilderness as well as Mi'kmaw artifacts and heritage while allowing people to enjoy the wilderness without compromising its ecological integrity. Installation of firewood shacks to provide dry wood and pulley-systems to keep camper's food safe from scavengers (and vice-versa) are some of the recent upgrades that reduce the human impact on Keji's wilderness and keep campers safe. In addition, two yurts were even installed last year as overnight shelters for skiers and hikers during winter months, which are now unfortunately futile.

Thanks to good park management, we have always felt safe being in Keji's wilderness, no matter which time of the year it is. However, proper management of the park will be affected by the budget cuts and park closure. Threats to conservation and park management are only one side of the story. Greatly reducing people's access to the park is the other side. In a digital age when we spend most of our time indoors, in front of computers and TVs, what we need is encouragement and more opportunities to be outdoors and physically active all year round.

Closing down the only national park in mainland Nova Scotia for most of the year will have a negative impact on the health and well-being of the people of Nova Scotia, my family included. I feel strongly that short term financial gains achieved by budget cuts to Parks Canada does not justify the compromise of long term health and well-being of people and our environment.



Andrew Chow

Parks and the Economy

We usually think of the value of parks and protected areas in terms of protecting wildlife, conserving nature, places for enjoyment and learning, providing ecosystem services, and so on. We don't usually count dollars and cents because that's not the way we think about them. But with budget cuts falling heavily on our national parks it is sobering to examine the costs and benefits in monetary terms.

A study published in 2011 by the Canadian Parks Council provides some surprising answers. Parks provide a huge benefit to the national Gross Domestic Product. Far from being a monetary drain, parks fill up the national coffers with real cash, and cutting back on parks funding may well hurt the bottom line.

In the fiscal year 2008/09 parks cost the federal and provincial governments across the country about \$800 million. That's a lot of money, but park visitors spent \$4,400 million, and the governments received \$300 million in directly related taxes, not including income taxes on those employed in this economic sector. The value to Canada's GDP was estimated to be \$4,600 million. In other words, parks are geese that lay golden eggs time and time again. Furthermore, comparative studies have shown that these eggs have been getting bigger from year to year.

Canada has a reputation in the world for beautiful parks and pristine wilderness. Who knew that they also make the nation's cash registers ring!

Read report: <http://bit.ly/NrUNNK>

Conservation notes

Wilderness area additions

The Nova Scotia government has added 23 parcels of land to nine existing protected wilderness areas in the province, expanding the total amount of protection by about 5,000 hectares.

CPAWS welcomes these important additions. Many of the properties contain important ecological values, including old growth forest, species-at-risk habitat, and frontage on significant lakes and waterways.

By expanding the size of existing protected areas, the ecosystems they contain are less susceptible to outside disturbances and are more resilient to long-term changes in the natural environment, such as climate change.

The following protected wilderness areas were expanded: Cloud Lake, McGill Lake, Tobeatic, Bonnet Lake Barrens, Ship Harbour Long Lake, Waverley – Salmon River Long Lake, Tangier Grand Lake, Lake Rossignol, and Tidney River.

Sable Island National Park Reserve

Parks Canada officially took control of Sable Island operations on April 1st of this year and the island is now effectively being managed as a national park reserve.

Legislation still needs to be introduced on Parliament Hill to make the national park reserve designation official, but having Parks Canada take over control of the island is a positive step forward for managing the island for ecological integrity, as required by the National Parks Act.

Once the park is officially established, the next major step will be for Parks Canada to develop a park management plan. CPAWS is pushing for a limit on the number of visitors allowed to the island each year, with the focus instead being on providing off-island visitor experiences. Better to bring Sable Island to the people than people to Sable Island.

Pipeline proposal threatens proposed protected areas

A proposal to build a natural gas pipeline near Stewiacke could threaten two proposed protected areas: one at St. Andrews River and the other along the Stewiacke River. The proposed undertaking is currently going through an environmental review by the Nova Scotia government and the Minister of Environment will be making a decision on the project in the near future.

CPAWS is asking the Nova Scotia government to select an alternate route for the pipeline that will go around the proposed protected areas. Pipeline development is not an activity that would normally be allowed to occur in a protected wilderness area.

The environmental assessment documents submitted by the proponent state that the proposed protected area wasn't identified until 2011. In actuality, the site was purchased for protection in 2010 and was an area of interest for protection in the final report of the Colin Stewart Forest Forum submitted to government in 2009. The proposed protected area clearly predates this undertaking, not the other way around.

Connectivity across the Isthmus

Ensuring a natural landscape connection remains between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick



By: Chris Miller

The Chignecto Isthmus is the narrow land bridge that connects North America to Nova Scotia. Only 17km in width at its narrowest point, this landscape connection provides important habitat for wildlife moving between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

To the west is the Bay of Fundy and to the east is the Northumberland Strait. In between, occurs a mixture of freshwater wetlands, hardwood forests, and mixedwood uplands. The rich ecosystem diversity in an otherwise highly fragmented region of the province makes this site a high priority for conservation in its own right, but combined with its importance for landscape connectivity, it becomes even more so.

The significance of the landscape connection at Chignecto Isthmus is perhaps best illustrated by the example of the moose, which is quite abundant on the New Brunswick side of the border but is an endangered species in mainland Nova Scotia. The Chignecto Isthmus is the only way moose can naturally enter Nova Scotia and provide a much needed influx of animals to the locally depleted population.

Many other species rely on this landscape connection as well. CPAWS organized a two-day bioblitz on the Chignecto Isthmus earlier this spring to identify which bird species are using the area, and we counted 72 species in total, including several rare ones. During those two days, we also encountered an endangered mainland moose and detected all sorts of mammal footprints, including black bears and bobcat.

Threatened by Development

Unfortunately, the important landscape connection at Chignecto Isthmus is at risk of being closed off by development. This is most apparent on the New Brunswick side of the border, in the Moncton to Shediac corridor on Highway #15, where development is spreading along the road and threatens to close off the landscape linkage entirely. Closer to the NB-NS border, development is also spreading along the Trans-Canada highway between Aulac and the Confederation Bridge, though not at the same pace.

On both sides of the border, clearcutting remains a problem and the cumulative impacts of habitat fragmentation in this broader region are severe. Moose that do manage to wander into Nova Scotia from New Brunswick don't seem to penetrate very far. They seem to run out of suitable habitat quite quickly and are forced to stay mostly in areas least impacted by human disturbance.

To ensure this landscape connection always remains open for wildlife movements, a system of inter-connected protected areas is badly needed across the NS-NB border. On the Nova Scotia side, this needs to link-up with a more extensive system of protected areas in the intact forests of the the Cobequid Mountains. Ensuring that this system of inter-connected protected sites becomes established is a priority for CPAWS and is something we have been working on for many years.

Some Progress

In 2008, the Nova Scotia government created the Chignecto Isthmus Wilderness Area on Municipal lands owned by the Town of Amherst. This was done at the request of the town, to add a layer of protection to its drinking water supply area while at the same time protecting biodiversity. Win-win.

Con'td next page...



Right: The Chignecto Isthmus contains a vast network of wetlands and forested islands and uplands.

Nova Scotia Environment

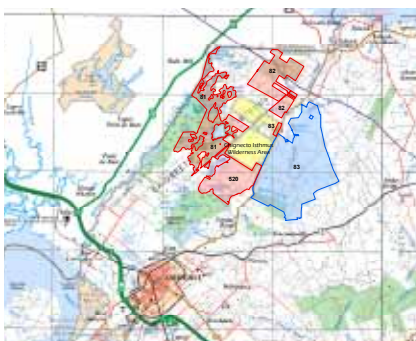
As a result, nine hundred hectares of land were protected in total, including an important groundwater recharge area for the Town's water supply. The Town of Amherst has exhibited clear leadership in setting up this protected site.

And, more is happening on the conservation front. The Nova Scotia government is considering adding several thousand hectares of protected land on the Isthmus, right at the Nova Scotia – New Brunswick border as part of its plan to legally-protect 12% of Nova Scotia's landmass by 2015.

At the moment, four sites are being considered for protection in what would likely be an expansion to the existing Chignecto Isthmus Wilderness Area. Three of these sites occur on public lands. The fourth occurs on private lands owned by J.D. Irving Ltd. that would need to be acquired by the Nova Scotia government before it could be protected.

CPAWS encourages the Nova Scotia government to continue its important work to protect the Chignecto Isthmus and we look forward to an expansion of the system of protected areas at this critical landscape linkage.

Let's hope that moose, and other wildlife, are always able to walk between our two provinces.

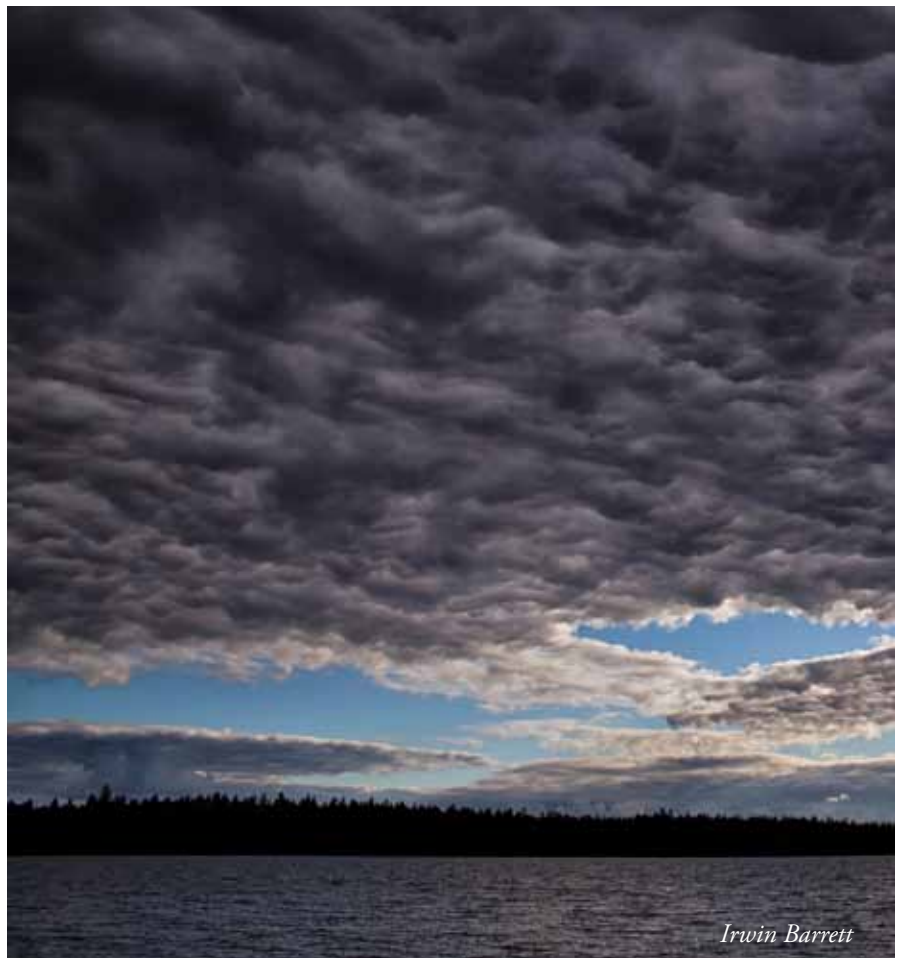


Did you know?

The Nova Scotia government owns a large tract of land on the New Brunswick side of the provincial border. These public lands, owned by the people of Nova Scotia, run along a large portion of the provincial border and were acquired to help protect the ecosystems of the Tantramar Marshes.

It is somewhat unusual for one province to own land in another province, but in this case it actually creates quite the opportunity for the Nova Scotia government to ensure that the lands on both sides of the border remain forever wild. CPAWS encourages the Nova Scotia government to protect these public lands and to work collaboratively with the New Brunswick government to make this happen.

The intended use for these lands has been for conservation, so what better outcome than to create an inter-provincial protected area that helps ensure landscape connectivity between the two provinces.



Irwin Barrett

Chignecto Isthmus bioblitz

This spring, CPAWS organized a two-day bioblitz on the Chignecto Isthmus. Volunteers fanned out across the Isthmus to identify the rich biodiversity that occurs at this important landscape connection. Our focus was primarily bird species, but we also found plenty of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and butterflies too.

By: Jennifer Smith

It's first thing in the morning, and I am surrounded by a chorus of birds. "Free beer!" said the alder flycatcher, to which the white-throated sparrow replied, "Dear sweet Canada, Canada, Canada." I hadn't even put my bug spray on yet.

It's Day 1 of the CPAWS Bioblitz on the Chignecto Isthmus. We're birding to gather species data and conservation information about this important ecological corridor between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Within a couple hours, we had our first rare species, the olive-sided flycatcher, who proudly announced, "Quick, three beers!" We were off to a good start.

When asked to organize this event, I jumped at the chance. Not only was it a great opportunity to work to protect a biologically significant area, but I would also get to meet and learn from some great people who are experts in their field and brush up on my very rusty birding skills. It was win-win-win.

Our experts were from the conservation, scientific, and government communities. It was an amazing group of people. We had individuals who were involved in moving forward conservation in the local community through Cumberland Wilderness, as well as naturalists, whose fascination with and knowledge of nature I can only hope to emulate.

Several of the volunteers were instrumental in creating the Chignecto Isthmus Wilderness Area on municipal lands in the drinking water supply area for the Town of Amherst. We also had scientists from the New Brunswick side, who were a wealth of knowledge on the area and all things species-related.



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Wildlife was clearly using the Isthmus as a thoroughfare in and out Nova Scotia. We saw footprints for many species, including black bear, fisher, porcupine, bobcat, and mainland moose up and down the roads and trails in the area.

In fact, we actually got a nice glimpse of one of these species. I was distracted as I often am, taking a close-up picture of a plant, when the tone of the group seemed to change. I could hear excited murmurs and someone pointed down the road in the distance. It was a moose! Our group ducked into the woods hoping it would come closer. I was able to snap a bunch of shots of it in the distance before it turned around and headed back the way it came.

Mainland moose is endangered in Nova Scotia, and the Chignecto Isthmus is the only way into the province. This sighting made our day and brought home to me the importance of this area and of events like our bioblitz. The Chignecto Isthmus needs to be protected in order to ensure connectivity to the mainland so that species like the mainland moose can continue to persist in Nova Scotia.

On Day 2, we had an even earlier start. Not being a morning person, my groggy sense of hearing had difficulty distinguishing the individual species in the multitude of voices in the bird chorus. Within an hour, we were approaching the same number of species we had counted the day before. Our early start had paid off.

Several volunteers also devoted the day to identifying butterflies and moths. The rest of us would have to pay close attention in order to duck when one of the bug nets went swinging. They caught and identified a number of species, including a hobomok skipper, tiger swallowtail, and a little wood satyr.

Highlights of the second day for me included a tree full of cedar waxwings (they are so pretty!), coming across a black-backed woodpecker, which I had never seen before.

After two whole days of birding, we had identified a total of 72 species of birds, including two threatened species, the olive-sided flycatcher and the common nighthawk. This data will be used to help assess the conservation significance of the protected area candidates on the Chignecto Isthmus. An area just over 5000 hectares in the narrow land bridge between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick could potentially be protected, and it is only through the hard work of people like our amazing group of volunteers that makes such protection possible.

A big thank you to our volunteers: Bob, Wendy, Vicki, Kathleen, Dave, Ron, John, Sarah, Irwin, and Darin!!





Above: Chignecto Isthmus bioblitz participants (left to right): Ron, Dave, Kathleen, Vicki, Darin, Jennifer, and Andrew (and Mickey the dog).

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CPAWS Nova Scotia is always looking for volunteers to help out with our conservation work. Several volunteer positions are available. If you're interested, please drop us a line or send us an email. We'd love to hear from you (outreach@cpawsns.org ; 902-446-4155).

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