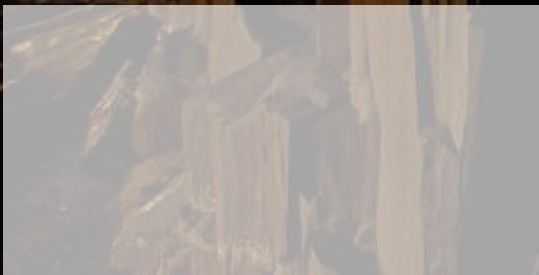
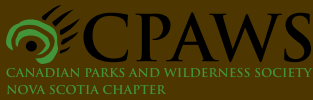


Wild Nova Scotia





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.

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President's Message

As the New Year begins, we are looking forward to another year of conservation progress in Nova Scotia. The previous year proved to be a two-steps-forward-one-step-back kind of year.

On the positive side of things, the Nova Scotia government is on track to greatly expand the amount of protection in the province, by setting aside at least 12% of the provincial landmass as protected areas (IUCN levels 1 and 2). This kind of commitment is central to the CPAWS vision of responsible stewardship of nature and natural resources.



Similarly, the purchase of the 'Bowater lands' by the provincial government and the development of new community-based forestry initiatives are truly heartening. We particularly want to thank Chris Miller for his hard work over the years to advance more protected areas in Nova Scotia and congratulate him on earning a Diamond Jubilee medal. Read more about CPAWS' conservation work in this current issue of WildEast!

With regard to a step backwards, we remain very concerned about the status of existing protected areas, and in particular, what's happening to our National Parks. Kejimikujik is now closed for the season, which sends entirely the wrong message to Canadians about valuing a relationship with nature. We are also worried that progress in protecting marine species and habitats has stalled and it is taking far too long to create marine protected areas. While we know that the wheels of government turn slowly, and some progress is being made to create a marine protected area off Cape Breton at St. Anns Bank, the present rate of movement on marine protection has become imperceptible.

CPAWS is a relatively small organization in Nova Scotia that has been described as 'hitting above its weight class'. We are very grateful for the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of our volunteers who put so much into protecting Nova Scotia's wilderness. Our office management, for example, is done by a dedicated volunteer, Judith Cabrita: If not for her indomitable spirit, guidance and professionalism the organization would be far behind where we are today.

All the best to you, our supporters, in the New Year

Yours sincerely,

Martin Willison
CPAWS Nova Scotia, President



About the cover

Storm light at Green Head, Brier Island, on the shores of the Bay of Fundy. (photo: Irwin Barrett)



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Irwin Barrett

“Rogue’s Roost and Prospect Village”

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CPAWS biologist receives medal



This land is your land...

The Nova Scotia government has stepped in to acquire the Bowater lands: a half million acres in total. These wilderness lands are now in public ownership, meaning Nova Scotians will be deciding what happens there, not a foreign multi-national company.

Hooray!! The Nova Scotia government has just acquired a half million acres of wilderness with the recent purchase of the Bowater land holdings. This brings a total of 220,000 hectares of wilderness in southwestern Nova Scotia into public ownership, an area equivalent in size to twice that of Cape Breton Highlands National Park and more than four times the size of Kejimikujik National Park. The land transaction was the largest ever undertaken in the province, totalling about 4% of Nova Scotia's entire landmass.

CPAWS encouraged the Nova Scotia government to acquire the Bowater lands. When Resolute Forest Products shut the Bowater mill in June 2012 and left the province, the company placed all of its assets up for sale, including the extensive land holdings. Many were concerned that a foreign multi-national company would swoop in to acquire the lands, flipping the best properties along lakes and rivers for development, and then liquidating the natural resource on the remaining lands to recoup the cost of the land purchase. This trend is quite apparent in New England and has started to creep across the border into the Maritimes in recent years.

Above: Sand Lake, Shelburne County (Photo: Nova Scotia Environment)

If this worst-case scenario had played out on the Bowater lands, the result would have been ecological ruin on some of the most important forest lands in the province, with very few jobs being created as a result. The Bowater lands contain some of the best Acadian forest remaining anywhere on the planet, including precious species-at-risk habitat for coastal plain flora, Blanding's turtle, and the endangered mainland moose. With the provincial government stepping in to acquire the Bowater land holdings, valued at \$117.7 million, thankfully that worst-case scenario has now been avoided. We applaud the government for taking this important initiative and ensuring that Nova Scotians can choose our own destiny for these lands.

The provincial government has committed to protecting at least 20,000 hectares of the Bowater lands for conservation, in addition to approximately 10,000 hectares that were acquired from the company back in January 2012, ahead of the major land purchase. A grassroots coalition, called *Buy Back the Mersey*, is calling on the provincial government to legally-protect about a third of the Bowater land holdings for conservation. CPAWS has identified about 50,000 hectares of land that contain high conservation values, including large intact forests, species-at-risk habitat, significant wetlands and waterways, important landscape connectivity zones, and sites adjacent to existing protected areas.

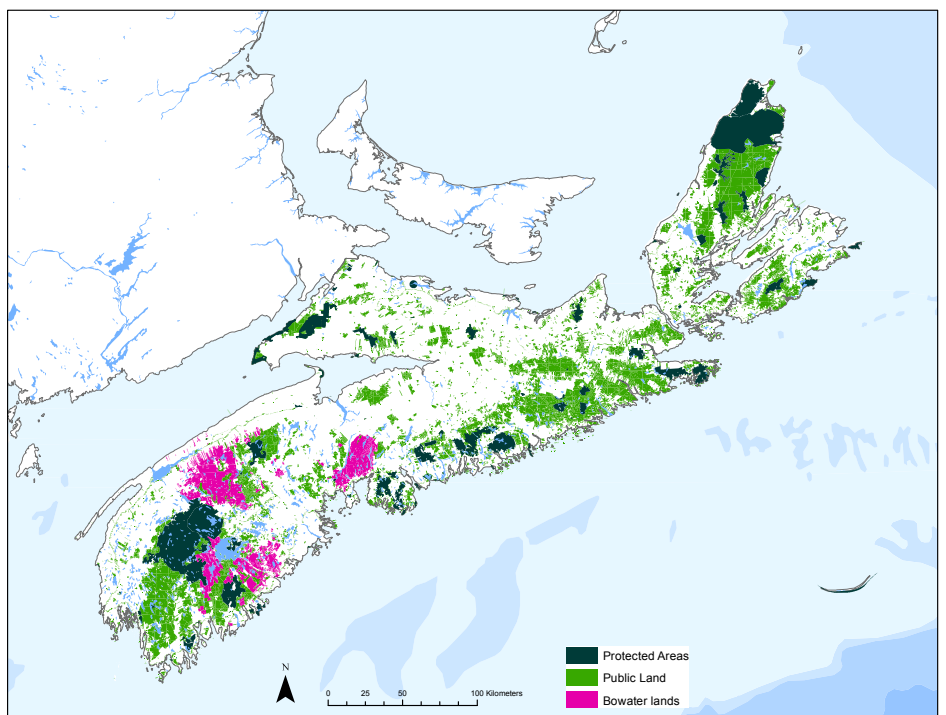
Above right: CPAWS' Chris Miller (right) celebrates the Bowater land purchase with Premier Darrell Dexter (centre) and Charlie Parker, Minister of Natural Resources (left).

Below right: The Bowater lands (shown in pink) cover 220,000 hectares of wilderness in three districts in southwestern Nova Scotia, totalling about 4% of the provincial landmass (Map: Global Forest Watch Canada).

The conservation lands that we have identified include all of the existing proposed protected areas identified by the provincial government (*See article, pg. 8*), as well as a large core zone in the Medway district between Alma Lakes and Fisher Lake and a similar large core zone in the St. Margaret's Bay district.

CPAWS would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took the time to contact the Premier's

Office and the Minister of Natural Resources, in support of acquiring the Bowater lands. The groundswell of public support so visible from St. Margaret's Bay to Brooklyn; Caledonia to New Ross; and Bear River to Annapolis Royal, and communities in between, made it possible for this historic land purchase to take place. Our voices were heard loud and clear and these important lands now belong to ALL Nova Scotians.





Protecting the Birch Cove Lakes

Will Halifax rise to the challenge and protect this near-urban wilderness gem, or will it do nothing and let the Birch Cove Lakes become just another piece of suburbia?

A modified version of the following article was published in the Halifax weekly, The Coast, on November 29, 2012.

By: Chris Miller

When I completed my graduate studies a few years ago, I moved back to Halifax because I love it here. The City is just so jammed full of interesting people, interesting places, and interesting things to do.

There's also a certain level of grit and realness to Halifax that's hard to describe, but comes in part from being an old port city with a very deep culture and style all its own.

Perhaps it's also the blend of the old and the new, or the universities here that bring in fresh, creative minds every year and house leading thinkers in the world on a wide range of issues.

Above: Big Snow Pines, Susies Lake (credit: Irwin Barrett)

After living away for a few years and coming home, you also realize very quickly that some of the stuff we see here as normal almost every day is not so normal in other places. And, I like that. It's a big part of why I moved home. But there's another reason too.

I love to spend time outdoors, in the wilderness, paddling on lakes and hiking in the deep woods. And, Halifax has plenty of wilderness close by.

I'm not talking about Point Pleasant Park or Shubie, which are fantastic urban parks. I'm talking about the bigger wilderness areas, just on the edge of the city. Places where you can go for a multi-day hike or overnight canoe trips, without having to drive for hours and hours just to get there.

In Canada, there's a lot of wilderness. But, in Halifax, it's so close you can reach it by public transit.

One of my favourite places is the Birch Cove Lakes. This amazing wilderness contains over a dozen undeveloped lakes, vast tracts of forest, clean rivers and streams, and plenty of wildlife, including over 150 species of birds. And, it's only 10km from downtown Halifax, and actually within the boundaries of the old city limits of Halifax. That's pretty amazing.

Here, you can go for a cool swim in the summer, or a long paddle in the fall, or cross-country ski on the lakes in winter. It's like the best of both worlds. In Halifax, you have the urban city with all its flair and you also have the near-urban wilderness too.

Wilderness still exists on the edge of the city, not by design or sound urban planning, but because a lot of that land is pretty rugged so hasn't been developed, and more importantly because it is largely in public ownership, so belongs to all of us.

And, it's been the Nova Scotia government, not the Municipality, that's been listening to residents of HRM and steadily making progress toward protecting these wilderness lands. Places like Blue Mountain and Five Bridge Lakes have been protected by the province in recent years and will remain forever wild.

The City, meanwhile, has done practically nothing to protect our wilderness doorstep. Don't get me wrong, they say all the right things about controlling sprawl and creating parks, and have lots of great maps and functional plans. But, turning those plans and good intentions into action is a real problem in this city.

The Birch Cove Lakes, for instance, that mini-Keji in the old city boundaries of Halifax is flagged as a future regional park in the HRM regional plan for the benefit and enjoyment of all the citizens of this great city.

That plan was officially approved by City Hall in 2006. Great! Since then, however, the plan is already up for review and not a single hectare of land has been acquired for the Birch Cove Lakes park. Not so great.

There's always plenty of money for nearby things like the Larry Uteck Interchange, or the Washmill Underpass, it would seem, but nothing for the Birch Cove Lakes regional park. And that's a real shame.

Because, each year, as I did, all sorts of young people take a deep breath – students who have come here from away, or Haligonians who are away and thinking about coming home – and then decide just what they should do next and where they should go.

And, for Halifax, if we want to be in the running each year when those key decisions are being made by young creative people, that means we must hold onto the things that make this city great: The interesting people, the interesting places, and the interesting things to do. It also means protecting places like the Birch Cove Lakes and not letting suburban sprawl spill out onto the landscape and hollow out the centre.

The Birch Cove Lakes will be an important litmus test for the new Council and Mayor, to see if they can respond effectively, and in real ways, to citizen calls to make this city more livable. Let's hope they're listening.



Chris Miller is the National Conservation Biologist for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society. He works to create new protected areas across Canada and enjoys nothing more than spending time in Nova Scotia's wilderness. You can follow him: @NSwilderness

Wild Nova Scotia!!

Several hundred new protected areas could soon be established in Nova Scotia. This will help protect some of the best remaining wilderness in the province and give nature a fighting chance at survival.



By: Chris Miller

Andrew Chow

Nova Scotia is a pretty spectacular place!! Large parts of the province still exist as remote wilderness, with lots of hidden lakes, cool flowing rivers, large intact forests, and long stretches of rugged coastline. There are also pockets of rich biodiversity scattered around, including remnant stands of old-growth Acadian forest hundreds of years old, breeding colonies for seabirds, highly productive estuaries and tidal salt marshes, and critical habitat for several species-at-risk found nowhere else in Canada.

This richness is an important part of our heritage and it must be protected. That's why CPAWS works so hard every single day to speak up for nature and ensure that our spectacular wilderness remains that way. There's certainly no lack of threats to our natural environment, from extensive clearcutting to onshore oil and gas exploration, and from spidery networks of logging roads to residential development creeping into our last intact wilderness.

Indeed, much of Nova Scotia's wilderness has been lost already. The forests of today don't look much like the forests of yesteryear. The wild rivers that used to teem with Atlantic salmon aren't like that anymore. And, the coast that so defines this province and its connection with the sea is becoming increasingly developed and tamed. And, that's too bad. Because, as we lose wilderness in this province we also lose a piece of our own identity, while pushing ecosystems closer toward the tipping point and threatening the most imperiled species with extinction. A course correction that benefits nature is urgently needed.

12% protection policy

Fortunately, the Nova Scotia government is working on a plan to protect more of our natural heritage, including some of the best remaining wilderness areas in the province. The provincial government has set a target of protecting at least twelve percent of Nova Scotia's landmass by the year 2015.

In practical terms, this means that at least an additional 168,000 hectares of land will be protected in the next few years. At the moment, only about 9.4% of Nova Scotia's landmass is considered to be legally-protected.

With the creation of several new protected areas over the past few years and plans for many more, Nova Scotia is emerging as a leader in Canada for creating networks of protected areas. And, when the province finally achieves the 12% protected areas target, this will move Nova Scotia toward the front of the pack in Canada for the total percentage of land set

aside for conservation, and well ahead of its counterparts elsewhere in Atlantic Canada (PEI 2.5%, NB 3%, Nfld 4.5%). This will be particularly noteworthy for Nova Scotia, since only about a third of the province is publicly-owned. In Nova Scotia, many of the most ecologically significant areas occur on private land, making it much more challenging, and expensive, to achieve the 12% protected areas target.

Over the past few years, however, the Nova Scotia government has been steadily investing in land purchases and acquiring vast tracts of private land held by forest companies, expanding the public land base by about 300,000 hectares in total, or about 5% of Nova Scotia's landmass. Most recently, the province made an extraordinary land purchase of 220,000 hectares from Resolute Forest Products, after the company shut its mill in southwestern Nova Scotia and placed all of its land holdings up for sale (*See Bowater lands, pg. 4*).

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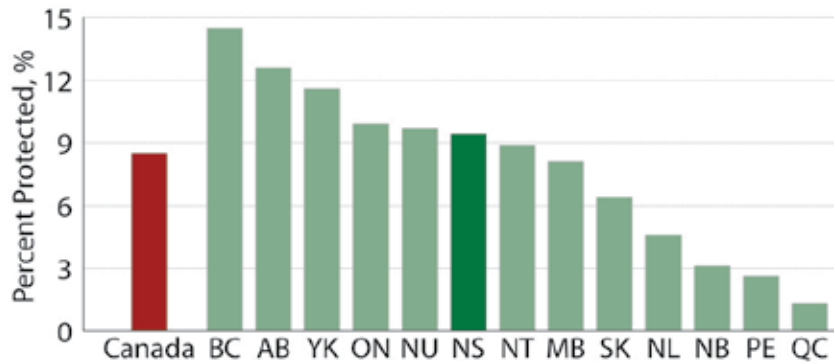
Chris Miller

In total, the Nova Scotia government has allocated several hundred million dollars for land purchases over the past five years. This is an exceptional figure for a small province, and makes it possible for the government to achieve its 12% protected areas target despite the overall low percentage of public lands in the province. No other province in Canada comes even close to matching the sorts of investments Nova Scotia has made toward acquiring ecologically significant lands and expanding the public land base.

How we got here

Nova Scotia's commitment to protect twelve percent of the provincial landmass by the year 2015 was first established in legislation back in 2007. That's when the government passed the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, which established a wide range of targets for environmental issues, ranging from a wetlands policy to greenhouse gas emissions reductions to wastewater treatments and green building codes. CPAWS welcomed the commitment to increase the amount of protected land in the province as an interim target to be achieved, and then surpassed.

Protected areas are an incredibly valuable tool for protecting nature. They provide a line-in-the-sand, so to speak, where nature comes first; where trees are allowed to fall down and rot and turn into valuable habitat and rich soil; where wildlife can just go about doing what wildlife does, with minimal contact or interference from humans; where ocean waves can crash against a rugged shoreline and erode the coast and provide sediments to beaches and dunes without being cutoff by coastal seawalls built to protect roads and houses.



Information source: *Global Forest Watch Canada. Lee, P. and R. Cheng. Canada's terrestrial protected areas status report 2010: Number, area, and naturalness.*

Inside the boundaries of protected areas, nature comes first, providing “lifeboats” on the landscape, where habitat and wildlife are left alone.

Even before the twelve percent protected areas target was placed in legislation, a number of people and organizations were quietly working away to expand the protected areas system in Nova Scotia. In 2005, negotiations got underway between environmental groups and several large forest companies to work through difficult discussions about land management.

These discussions, known as the Colin Stewart Forest Forum, were a key catalyst toward creating more protected areas in Nova Scotia, as well as initiating the large land purchase program and enabling the provincial government to confidently establish the twelve percent protected areas target in legislation.

The Colin Stewart Forest Forum negotiations took several years to complete, with a final report submitted to government in 2009 containing key joint recommendations from environmental groups and forest companies on how the province could substantially increase the amount of

protected areas in the province, while reducing potential impacts on the forest industry, mostly through better silviculture prescriptions on lands outside of protected areas. This sort of pragmatic approach, of which CPAWS is proud to have played a key role, is helping to bring about the many new protected areas being established in Nova Scotia, with more to come soon.

Two years after receiving the final report, the Nova Scotia government released its initial plan to achieve its twelve percent protected areas target, with the significant majority of sites recommended for protection being specifically those identified by the Colin Stewart Forest Forum. Since then, several rounds of public and stakeholder consultations have taken place and the Nova Scotia government is poised to unveil its final protected areas proposal very soon.

CPAWS welcomes the important steps the Nova Scotia government is taking to create new protected areas in the province. The province appears to be on track to achieve its land protection target fairly soon, and that's something that is quite significant and worthy of a good ol' Nova Scotian celebration.

Not just a number

With all the talk of a twelve percent protected areas target, however, it's easy to think of this commitment as just a number. It's so much more than that. To achieve this target, the sites that have been identified for protection are some of the most ecologically-significant areas remaining in the province. It's the best-of-the-best and includes some absolutely spectacular places rich in biodiversity, with plenty of wilderness. Several hundred sites have been identified as proposed protected areas (*See map, next page*).

The areas proposed for protection include large intact forests, significant wetlands and waterways, species-at-risk habitat, areas important for landscape representation and connectivity, karst regions, sites adjacent to existing protected areas, and coastal ecosystems including beaches, dunes, marshes, and coastal islands, among other conservation values.

These are real places, not just hectares-on-the-ground needed to achieve a target. They are places like the St. Mary's River in Guysborough County, which contains some of the best remaining old-growth floodplain forests in the province and important habitat for wood turtle, Atlantic salmon, and all sorts of other species. They include sites like the Eastern Shore Islands, an extensive island archipelago with seabird colonies and thick coastal fog forests.

They include landmark sites like Kelly's Mountain in Cape Breton, and less well known sites that are absolutely critical for conservation, like the proposed protected area at French River that connects two existing protected areas to create one of the largest continuous conservation zones in the province. They also include near-urban wilderness sites, such as an expansion to the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area near Halifax and old-growth forests in the Pockwock watershed where the city receives its drinking water (*See site descriptions, pg 18-21*).

Cont'd on page 14...



Chris Miller

Protected areas in Nova Scotia

2012

- Kelley River Wilderness Area
- Raven Head Wilderness Area
- Nine wilderness areas expanded

2011

- Sable Island National Park Reserve
- Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area
- Mary Harper Nature Reserve

2009

- Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area
- Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area
- Shelburne River Wilderness Area

2008

- Chignecto Isthmus Wilderness Area
- Five new nature reserves

2007

- Blandford Nature Reserve

2006

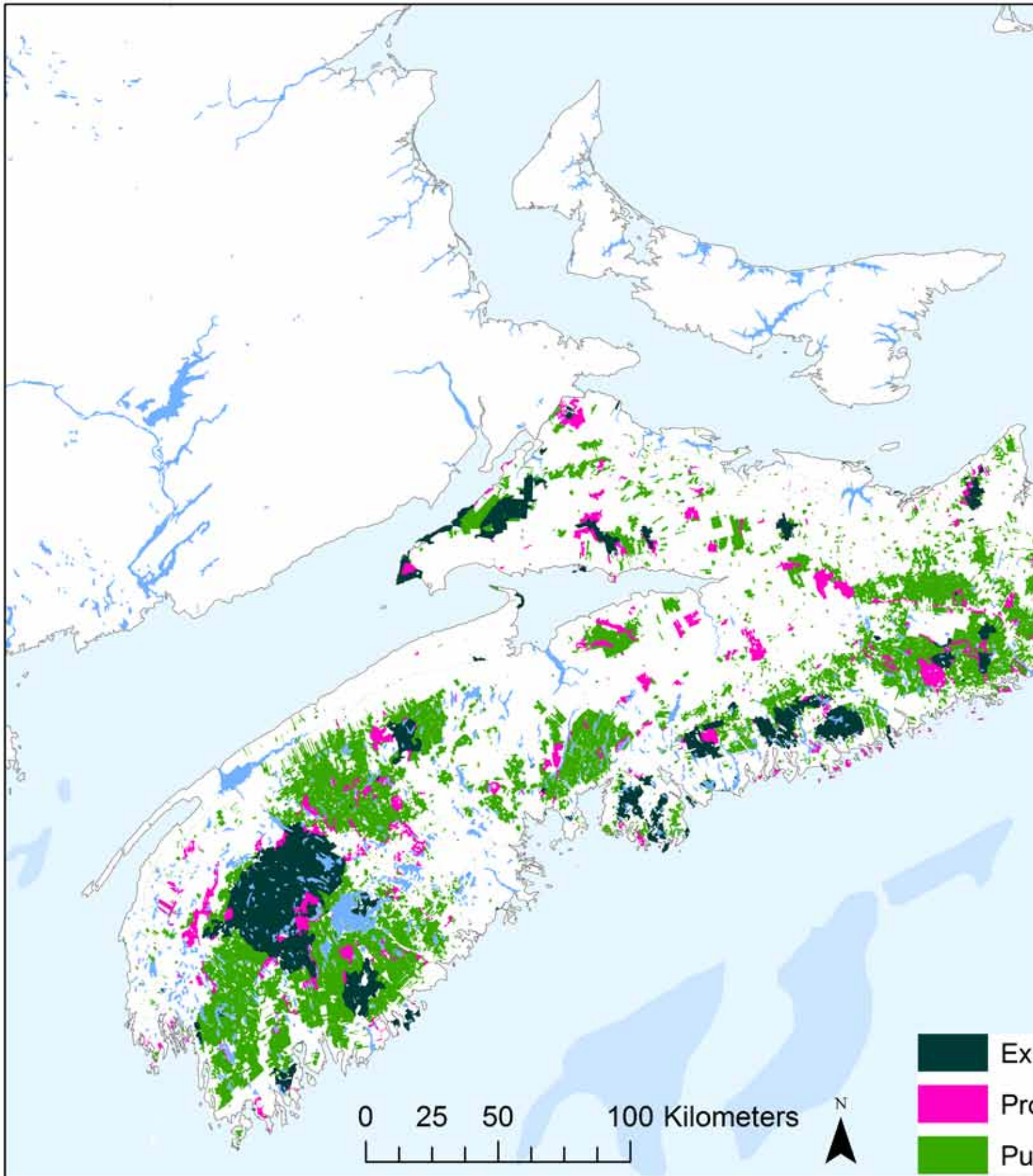
- Five new nature reserves

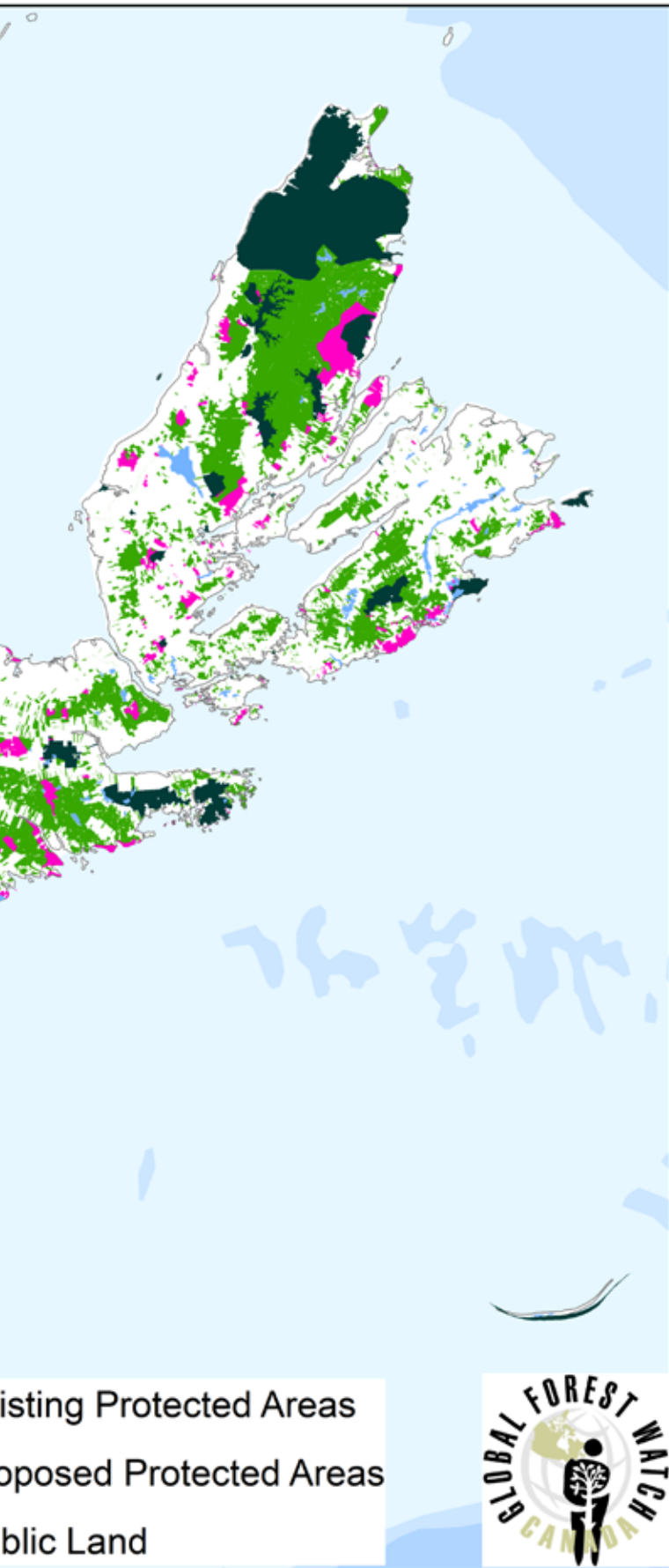
2005

- Eigg Mountain - James River Wilderness Area
- Gully Lake Wilderness Area

1998

- Original 31 wilderness areas





Proposed new protected areas in Nova Scotia

Data source: Nova Scotia government.

Map: Global Forest Watch Canada

Bumps along the way

The process to expand Nova Scotia's system of protected areas has been progressing very well, but it hasn't been without a few bumps along the way. One of the biggest criticisms is that the entire process is taking too long. Between the time the 12% target was established in legislation until the time it is expected to be completed in 2015 will be a period of eight years. That's a very long time to advance the protection of these candidate sites, particularly since most occur on public land and can be designated quite quickly once final decisions are made.

The counter argument, of course, is that the province is taking the time to get things right and it certainly appears that the analysis to identify final sites has been robust and founded in conservation biology principles, that the public and stakeholder consultations already undertaken have been meaningful and thoughtful, and that the province is diligently working through the various competing interests between government departments with different mandates.

As we approach the final stage in the designation process for the new protected areas, however, the province should seriously consider accelerating the overall process and move quickly to make the protected areas official. A lot of the hard work has already been done, including the detailed scientific analyses to identify candidate sites including extensive fieldwork, negotiations between environmental groups and the forest companies over which lands should be protected, significant land purchases by the Nova Scotia government of high conservation value lands, and extensive public and stakeholder consultations. Accelerating the process is something that can be done, and should be done, to ensure Nova Scotia's wilderness is properly protected and soon.

Another major bump along the way occurred in the written agreement between the provincial government and Port Hawkesbury Paper Ltd., the forest company that took over operations from the NewPage mill several months ago. That license agreement, which gives the company harvesting rights on approximately 600,000 hectares of public land in eastern

mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, failed to exclude the proposed protected areas in that part of the province from the harvest agreement itself.

This does not mean these areas will necessarily be cut down, since the government has also placed a moratorium on these lands and wrote a clause into the agreement that allows these lands to be pulled out at a later date so that they can be designated as protected areas. It does, however, inject some uncertainty into the whole designation process for these proposed protected areas and unnecessarily gives the company certain rights to these public lands, despite being on the verge of legal protection.

That all seems a bit strange to us, which is why CPAWS argued that a cleaner approach would have been to just exclude the proposed protected areas from the agreement with the forestry company altogether. The province maintains that it still has the right to extract the proposed protected areas from the license agreement with the company.



Irwin Barrett

Fair enough, but why wait? The government should remove the proposed protected areas from the license agreement without delay instead of waiting for the last possible moment to do so. There are too many ecologically-significant areas in eastern mainland Nova Scotia and Cape Breton to risk having these sites dropped from the final protected areas plan.

Successes along the way

When the 12% protected areas target was established in legislation back in 2007, only about 8% of Nova Scotia's landmass was legally-protected. Since then, about 65,000 hectares of land have been added to the protected areas system, raising the overall level of protection in the province to 9.4% and creating seven new protected wilderness areas in the process. Over that same time period, the public land base has also increased by about 300,000 hectares, raising the percentage of public land in the province from about a quarter of the provincial landmass to about a third.

In 2009, the Nova Scotia government established the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area near Halifax, creating a world class near-urban wilderness park, twenty times the size of Point Pleasant Park, that can be reached even today by public transit.

Also in 2009, the province protected the vast intact forests of Ship Harbour Long Lake along the Eastern Shore, connecting two existing protected areas and in the process creating a large conservation zone equivalent in size to Kejimikujik National Park. The province has also established a protected wilderness area along the famed Shelburne River, also designated as a Canadian Heritage River, and on municipal lands owned by the Town of Amherst near the NS-NB border on the Chignecto Isthmus, absolutely critical for landscape connectivity.

More recently, the provincial government established the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area in 2011 and stepped in to officially protect the

vast forests of Chignecto in 2012 with two new protected areas. Through the creation of the Kelley River Wilderness Area, almost 21,000 hectares of large intact forest and entire watersheds were protected at Chignecto, creating the largest new protected area in Nova Scotia since the 1990's. The concurrent designation of nearby Raven Head Wilderness Area resulted in the protection one of the longest stretches of wilderness coastline remaining in the province, totaling 41km along the Bay of Fundy.

Significant progress has also been made protecting private lands. In addition to the substantial land holdings acquired from forestry companies, the Nova Scotia government has also set up a land acquisition fund using offshore oil and gas revenues. This fund, known as the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, provides matching funding to land trusts like the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and Nature Conservancy of Canada for the purchase and protection of some of the most ecologically significant private lands in the province.

Cont'd next page...



Irwin Barrett



Irwin Barrett

How much is enough?

Reaching the 12% target will be an important achievement, but it won't be enough in and of itself to protect biodiversity in Nova Scotia. More land needs to be protected than that to accomplish that goal, and better management is urgently needed on the working landscape between protected sites. It's also important to recognize that the 12% protected areas target is not a scientific target. It's quite the opposite, actually.

Twelve percent was a negotiated target, established by the international community at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 that reflected the situation at the time, where a drastic improvement in the amount of protected areas on the planet was needed. The target sought to triple the amount of protected lands from the very low level of 4% that existed at the time to 12% and was never intended to be an end target for protection. Rather, it was an interim target that was to be met and exceeded.

Since the Rio Summit, the international target for terrestrial protected areas has risen to 17%, as we now have a much better understanding of the biodiversity crisis, the need for large scale habitat protection, and the imperils of impending climate change. The new international target was set at the Nagoya Biodiversity Summit in Japan in 2010. It has been endorsed by the Canadian government and will require progress across all provinces and territories to achieve the target by 2020.

Nova Scotia should not shy away from this new protected areas target, having already shown international leadership on several environmental issues over the years including, for example, in the field of solid waste management and, more recently, strong commitments to increase the amount of renewable energy generated in the province. There's no reason why Nova Scotia couldn't also become an international leader on the conservation front as well. We're already off to a good start.

Precious lands

As the Nova Scotia government makes its final preparations for expanding the protected areas system and achieving the 12% protected areas target, CPAWS looks forward to the legal protection of some of the most ecologically-significant areas in the province. This will be a significant step. To add over 150,000 hectares of new conservation lands to the existing system of protected areas is a big achievement, but particularly so for a relatively small province with a long history of human settlement and industrial activity.

The decisions being made today will determine what Nova Scotia's wilderness will look like in the future. So, it's imperative that we think big and put nature at the forefront of our decision-making. Only then will we have a chance at really protecting Nova Scotia's rich natural heritage and in ensuring future generations of Nova Scotians will have the same opportunity to experience wilderness as we do today, or more so.

On a hike into a wilderness area near Halifax a few years ago with a group of schoolchildren, CPAWS asked the students why they felt conservation was important. Kids just have a way of cutting through all the clutter and getting straight to the point of what really matters. A whole bunch of hands shot up in the air and one young lad piped up an answer, "Because animals need homes too". Yes they do. They absolutely do.



A fine looking bunch

Say hello to some of Nova Scotia's proposed new protected areas

The Nova Scotia government is in the final stages of evaluating several hundred proposed protected areas for official designation. A final protected areas proposal will be released very soon and that plan will include some of the most important and ecologically-significant areas remaining in the province. It will include large intact forests, species-at-risk habitat, coastal ecosystems, old forests, and important wetlands and waterways, among other conservation values, as the Nova Scotia government looks to meet, and exceed, its twelve percent protected areas target. Take a look for yourself at some of the many spectacular places that could soon be protected.



Irwin Barrett

St. Mary's River

The St. Mary's River, in Guysborough County, contains some of the best remaining floodplain forests in Nova Scotia, and provides critical habitat for Atlantic salmon and wood turtle. The proposed protected areas, mostly along the more remote West Branch, will protect over 50km of spectacular river frontage. Vast tracts of old-growth Acadian forest occur here, on the river's edge and further inland, with impressive red oak-white ash-sugar maple forests and hemlock-red spruce-white pine forests.



Irwin Barrett

Fourchu coastline

The coastline of eastern Cape Breton contains miles and miles of rugged shoreline, from Capelin Cove to Gabarus, nearly 30km in total. There are spectacular beaches, windswept headlands, drumlin cliffs, and coastal forests. Near Fourchu, a rich tidal estuary with extensive tidal salt marshes provides habitat and forage for many coastal shorebirds. Further inland, there is a disjunct population of rare coastal plain flora and occurrences of the endangered boreal felt lichen.



Nova Scotia Environment

Tobeatic additions

The Tobeatic is one of the largest remaining wilderness areas in the Maritimes, containing important habitat for the endangered mainland moose and containing the headwaters for many of the river systems in southwestern Nova Scotia. Additions to the existing protected area will conserve large intact forests, significant wetlands, remote lakes, and an extensive section of the Jordan River. This is Nova Scotia's "Big Wild".



Irwin Barrett

Birch Cove Lakes

Several years ago, the Nova Scotia government established the Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area near Halifax. Now, the province wants to make it even bigger, proposing to add several hundred hectares of lakes and forest to the western side of the protected area to eventually link up with Cox Lake near Tantallon. The Birch Cove Lakes is a world class near-urban wilderness only a few kilometres from downtown Halifax, with a spectacular system of lakes and waterways.



Irwin Barrett

Kelly's Mountain

Kelly's Mountain is a landmark in Cape Breton, overlooking St. Anns Bay on one side and the channel to Great Bras d'Or on the other. It is an extremely important location for the Mi'qmaq people. The proposed protected area contains rugged coastline, steep ravines, pockets of old-growth forest, and extensive talus slope habitat. It is also important for landscape representation and will provide real protection for a place many Nova Scotians think already is protected.



Irwin Barrett

Liscomb River

The Liscomb River is one of the few major rivers in Nova Scotia that's almost entirely undeveloped from ocean to headwater, containing important riparian habitat and extensive aquatic ecosystems. Located along the Eastern Shore, the proposed protected area is almost 50km in length and includes the entire river system and associated lakes and ponds. From a conservation perspective, few opportunities like this remain in Nova Scotia, to secure the protection of the whole length of a major river.



Andrew Chow

Carter's Beach

Carter's Beach is a scenic little gem on the South Shore, near Port Mouton in Queens County, which once graced the cover of Nova Scotia's *Doers and Dreamers* guide. The proposed protected area includes several pocket beaches that are quite popular in the summer time, and contain several small islands and large rock outcrops overlooking the sea. This part of Nova Scotia also contains some of the most extensive sand dune ecosystems on the Atlantic coast of the province and provides habitat for the endangered piping plover.



Irwin Barrett

Chignecto Isthmus

The Chignecto Isthmus is an important landscape connection that links North America with Nova Scotia. At its narrowest point, it is only 17km wide. The proposed protected area at the Chignecto Isthmus contains critical habitat for the endangered mainland moose and extensive freshwater marshes for migratory birds. Over 100 species of birds occur in this area, as well as several rare plant species. The area is also important for drinking water, with the Town of Amherst drawing its water supply from the Chignecto Isthmus.



Irwin Barrett

Prospect

The coastal barren ecosystems near Prospect, just outside Halifax, are like Peggy's Cove but without all the tourists. They contain extensive barren ecosystems with fragile plant communities. The proposed protected area is several hundred hectares in size and contains an assemblage of small rocky islands with rich intertidal zones and lots of small inlets and passageways. The area supports lots of coastal shorebirds and the famous perch at Rogue's Roost is not to be missed.



Andrew Chow

Humes River

The forests of Humes River, Cape Breton, are the largest remaining expanse of intact wilderness in the Bras d'Or Lakes watershed, containing several thousand hectares of old hardwood forest on the steep slopes. The area supports species-at-risk, including the rare American marten, which has suffered steep declines in abundance over the past few decades. With nearby Trout Brook Wilderness Area, there is an opportunity to establish a large conservation zone in this part of Nova Scotia.



Irwin Barrett

Country Harbour

The entire western side of Country Harbour, in Guysborough County, is undeveloped and contains extensive forest and a rich intertidal zone. Moving inland, there are several large waterfalls and a vast backcountry of lakes, rivers, and wetlands. The proposed protected area contains over 20km of coastline, including Country Harbour Head and the rich tidal salt marshes and estuaries of Fishermen's Harbour. The coastal wilderness at Country Harbour is an important foraging area for shorebirds, including the endangered roseate tern.



Irwin Barrett

Lake O'Law

Lake O'Law is located in the Cape Breton Highlands near the Margaree Valley. A small provincial park has existed here for many years, but the extensive forests and steep slopes on the far side of the lake have never been protected, including "The Three Sisters". The proposed new protected area will protect a large tract of old-growth hardwood forest and effectively expand protection of nearby Middle River Wilderness Area creating a large conservation zone. It's quintessential Cape Breton Highlands at its best.



Andrew Chow

Port Bickerton

The proposed protected area near Port Bickerton includes a long sandy beach that stretches all the way to a remote headland at the mouth of Fishermen's Harbour. This site also contains extensive tidal salt marsh systems in the sheltered inlets, as well as backbarrier lakes and ponds. The coast zone is rich in sea-life, attracting lots of terns and other shorebirds to feed in the nearshore waters. Go for a walk here and you just might feel like the first person to step foot in Nova Scotia!!



Peter Green

Eastern Shore Islands

The Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia contains the largest cluster of islands in eastern North America, creating a diverse habitat for shorebirds and coastal biodiversity. This area also receives some of the highest rainfall in the province, creating dense coastal forests that are arguably genuine temperate rainforests. The islands contain bird colonies, pocket beaches, coastal peatlands, protected inlets, rich intertidal zones, and salt marshes. The area also has a rich cultural history and a deep connection to Nova Scotia's seafaring history.

Well done, jolly ol' chap!!

CPAWS' National Conservation Biologist receives Diamond Jubilee medal

CPAWS would like to take this opportunity to congratulate one of our own. Dr. Chris Miller, our National Conservation Biologist, has received a Diamond Jubilee medal for his work to protect wilderness in Nova Scotia, and across Canada. The medal was presented to Chris at a ceremony with Geoff Regan, MP for Halifax West, on November 12th, 2012.

“It is wonderful that Chris’ work to protect Nova Scotia’s beautiful wilderness has been recognized in this way,” says Prof. Martin Willison, Nova Scotia Chapter President. “He has done this work both as a tireless volunteer and as a dedicated professional scientist.”

Chris Miller has worked with CPAWS since 2005 and has been a leading advocate for the creation of many new protected areas, including the protection of Birch Cove Lakes and Chignecto in Nova Scotia. He has also championed a large expansion of Nova Scotia’s system of protected areas and encouraged the Nova Scotia government to acquire large tracts of private land for conservation. As National Conservation Biologist, Chris also works to protect boreal caribou habitat and advance protected area negotiations across the country.

CPAWS wishes to congratulate Chris and wish him much continued success with his conservation work.



Chris Miller (right) receives his Diamond Jubilee medal from Geoff Regan (left), MP Halifax West, in November 2012.





Above: CPAWS at the Birch Cove Lakes with students from the Saint Mary's University Environment Society (SMUES) for the fourth annual WildernessAid hike in support of nature conservation in Nova Scotia (Photo credit: Andrew Chow).

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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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