



Irwin Barrett



Irwin Barrett



Irwin Barrett



Claire Z.

**Crown Share  
Announcement**

**Coastal Marine  
Protected Areas**

**Youth “vision” for  
Natural Resources**

*In this issue*

Page 2...  
• President's Message

Page 3...  
• Wilderness Areas Update

Page 4...  
• Crown Share  
• Progress Towards 12%

Page 5...  
• Digby Neck NMCA

Page 6...  
• Marine Protected Areas

Page 7...  
• Youth Vision

Page 8...  
• Nature Calls!  
• More FSC in NS?

Page 9...  
• Chignecto

Page 10...  
• St. Mary's River  
• Chignecto cont'd.

Page 11...  
• Horse Mussel Reefs

Page 12...  
• The Big Wild

Page 13...  
• The Big Wild Challenge

Page 14...  
• Profiles in Conservation

Page 15...  
• Updates, cont'd  
• Membership forms

Page 16...  
• Want to Volunteer?



**President's Message**



CPAWS-NS continues to roll as 2008 draws nearer to a close. The past 6 months have seen exciting and significant advancements in our campaigns for increased protection of Nova Scotia's marine and terrestrial environments, our education program is flourishing like never before and the release of a new CPAWS-MEC partnership, The Big Wild, which has conservationists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts uniting to help save Canada's most wild places.

On the ground, the CPAWS-NS office was quite a beehive this summer with three staff members and two conservation interns going full out. Aimee Gromack joined the chapter to identify opportunities and challenges for marine protected areas in Nova Scotia, while Lindsay Notzl joined the chapter to continue the important task of working towards Wilderness Area designation for public lands in the Chignecto region. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank them for their valuable work in recent months.

There are quite a few new faces around CPAWS-NS this year. Former Marine Conservation Coordinator Laura Hussey has moved on to pursue marine protection from a government post. Laura was a vital member of CPAWS-NS for some time and we will miss her dearly. In turn, we are very pleased to welcome Ashley Sprague to the Marine Conservation file. Ashley has a diverse background highlighted by MSc research on sandpiper feeding habits and implications for conservation. As well, Ashley recently spent a year in Madagascar working with community driven efforts to establish a marine protected area. Welcome aboard!

Sadly, some longstanding board members have also moved on, including Clare Robinson, Rob Miedema

and Robert Sharkie. The board wishes to acknowledge their tremendous commitment of time and energy over the years and wishes them all the best in future endeavours. We also want to thank Judith Cabrita who has stepped down from the board to take on the role of part-time administrator for the chapter. A loss at the board level is a gain at the staff level! We are very thankful to be keeping Judith around.

The upside of turnover on the board is that we welcome some fresh, new faces. We are pleased to welcome Tricia Barry, Derek Simon and Aimee Pelletier to the board. Tricia is a lawyer with Stewart McKelvey, Derek is also a lawyer and works for Patterson Law while Aimee is currently completing a Master's program at Dalhousie. We welcome them and look forward to putting their valuable skills to use!

The Board has an ambitious agenda this fall as we work towards an update of both the chapter's structure of governance and its strategic plan. Look for an update on this process in our next newsletter.

A combination of hardworking committed staff and a renewed, committed Board of Directors give me great confidence that CPAWS-NS will continue to push the bar higher for wilderness conservation in Nova Scotia. However, we cannot continue to do it without your support. Remember to renew your membership and keep in touch with chapter activities. CPAWS is Canada's grassroots voice for wilderness, and you folks are the roots of that grass!

*CSR* Yours in Conservation,  
Craig Smith

*Dear WildEast reader*

You may have noticed a new look to our publication this fall. We've added some new things including a section titled "profiles in conservation", launched with an article by long time champion Martin Willison. In subsequent issues of WildEast, this section will highlight a different local conservation topic by a notable expert. We've also added a Big Wild section that spotlights challenges taken right here in Nova Scotia. Tell us about your challenge and it might wind up in the next WildEast! We've really packed this issue full and we hope you enjoy reading the stories as much as we enjoyed making them.

- CPAWS-NS

*About the cover*

Salt marsh and old spruce forest at Sand River, Cumberland County; part of the proposed Chignecto Wilderness Area. Photo credit: Irwin Barrett. Left to right: Tributary to the St. Mary's River, Guysborough County, photo credit: Irwin Barrett. Coastline, Guysborough County, photo credit: Irwin Barrett. "My vision of Nova Scotia's forests", Claire Z. Age 16, HRM. Photo of painting: GPI Atlantic.

**We get results!**

**Three new wilderness areas approach designation**

*By Chris Miller, National Manager, Wilderness Conservation and Climate Change*

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society continues to be on the frontlines of wilderness conservation in Nova Scotia and we pledge to continue pressing the government for substantive expansions to the province's system of protected areas. Along those lines, there are now several protected area proposals making their way through government and we are working hard to ensure that these important natural areas receive full protection from the many industrial threats facing Nova Scotia's woodlands.

**Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area**

The provincial government is moving full-speed ahead to designate 1,450 hectares of public lands at Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes, near Halifax, as a legally-protected wilderness area. A public review period has just wrapped-up and CPAWS looks forward to the expeditious designation of these lands in the very near future. The provincial government announced their intention to designate a wilderness area at Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes in October of last year.

This near-urban wilderness area, located just outside the communities of Rockingham, Clayton Park, Fairview, and Timberlea, contains an impressive system of inter-connected lakes with some of the best backcountry wilderness recreation opportunities near the city. It also contains the highest point of land on the Chebucto Peninsula, over 150 different species of birds, habitat for several rare species, including the endangered mainland moose, pockets of old red spruce and red oak forest, numerous wetlands and granite barrens, and the headwaters for the Kearney Lake and Paper Mill Lake systems downstream.

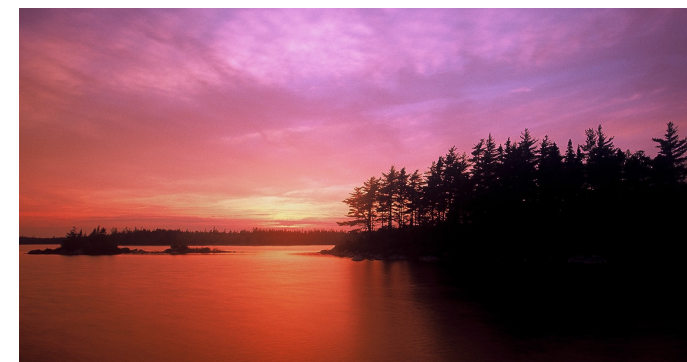
The designation of Blue Mountain – Birch Cove Lakes will culminate a five year campaign led by a coalition of groups including the Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Society, CPAWS, Ecology Action Centre, Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia, Halifax Field Naturalists, and Halifax North West Trails Association. This campaign saw thousands of people from the Halifax Regional Municipality, and across Nova Scotia, stand up in the face of development and demand that these magnificent lands near the city be protected forever, for everyone.

**Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area**

Public consultations are currently underway by the provincial government to designate a large new protected wilderness area on public lands along the Eastern Shore, at Ship Harbour Long Lake. The new protected area will be over 14,000 hectares in size and will link two existing protected wilderness areas; White Lake Wilderness Area and Tangier Grand Lake Wilderness Area. This designation will help retain much needed connectivity on the landscape in a province that is otherwise highly fragmented with roads, clearcuts, and development.

The Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area contains one of the largest remaining intact forests in mainland Nova Scotia, important populations of endangered mainland moose, a system of over 50 lakes and wetlands, endangered lichens and other species-at-risk, and impressive stands of old-growth Acadian forest. It also contains exceptional backcountry wilderness recreation opportunities, including a backcountry canoe route along the Fish River system from the headwaters at Scraggy Lake through to Ship Harbour Long Lake and Lake Charlotte.

A coalition of non-governmental organizations is working hard to ensure that the boundaries of the candidate wilderness area are expanded during the public consultation process. This coalition includes Ecology Action Centre, Eastern Shore Forest Watch, and CPAWS. There is mounting pressure from the mining sector and certain areas within government, to remove substantial areas of the protected area ahead of its official designation. We won't let that happen, nor will we let the designation process drag on. CPAWS has a signed agreement with the Department of Environment and the Department of Natural Resources that says Ship Harbour Long Lake will be officially protected within one-year of the announcement of the area's candidate protected area status, which occurred last year on December 7th. Stay tuned.



*Susie's Lake.*  
Photo Credit: Irwin Barrett



*Ship Harbour Long Lake.*  
Photo Credit: NSE

## Crown Jewel of the Crown Share \$23.4 million for land conservation

By Chris Miller, National Manager, Wilderness Conservation and Climate Change

The Nova Scotian government has announced it will invest \$23.4 million in the purchase and protection of ecologically-significant properties in the province.

These funds will come from the recently settled Crown Share dispute between the provincial and federal governments, which will see a portion of the offshore oil and gas revenues generated from the Sable Gas Project flowing toward land conservation projects.

Earlier in the year, before the final dollar figure of the Crown Share agreement was settled, Premier Rodney MacDonald announced that he intended to direct 10% of the Crown Share agreement toward land conservation initiatives, up to a maximum of \$25 million. This announcement was well-received by CPAWS and other conservation organizations in the province.

An additional 10% of the Crown Share settlement would be ear-marked for university infrastructure improvements and an additional 10% reinvested in offshore research. The remainder would be directed toward the Nova Scotian debt.

*"This is an historic day for the people of Nova Scotia. Today we are taking a major step toward achieving our goal of sustainable prosperity."*

*- Nova Scotia Premier Rodney MacDonald*

be directed toward land conservation. At the announcement, the Premier indicated that future revenues from these funds would be entirely dedicated toward the Provincial debt.

Although the details of the land conservation program have not yet been released, it's clear that the funds will be directed toward a Legacy Fund, and administered by an arm's length board of trustees with experience in land conservation.

Independent land conservation trusts, such as the Nova Scotia Nature Trust or the Nature Conservancy of Canada, will be able to apply for these funds provided that they find matching funds for the purchase and protection of these properties. This means that the actual amount of funds for land conservation in Nova Scotia as a result of the Crown Share agreement will ultimately exceed the \$23.4 million in seed funding provided by the provincial government.

For land trusts to qualify for the funds, they must demonstrate among other things that the properties being put forward for purchase and protection meet strict environmental criteria, so that the funds are only spent on purchasing high conservation value properties.

The \$23.4 million in funds for the Crown Share Land Legacy Funds, announced in July, comes on the heels of the decision last year by the provincial government to acquire \$27 million worth of ecologically- and culturally-significant properties from the forestry company Abitibi-Bo-water Inc. in southwestern Nova Scotia for the creation of thirty new protected areas.

The provincial government and the Premier are to be congratulated for the significant financial investment they have made in private land conservation efforts in Nova Scotia in recent years. CPAWS looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with government to ensure that the ecological benefit enabled by the Crown Share Land Legacy Funds are maximized and that a permanent land acquisition fund with a dedicated revenue stream is established for the province.



*Signing the Crown Share Agreement. Left to right: Michael Baker, NS Minister of Finance; Rodney MacDonald, Premier; Peter MacKay, Minister of Defence; Gerald Keddy, MP. Photo Credit: Provincial Government.*

In July, the final agreement for the Crown Share was announced, resulting in \$234 million of funds held by the federal government being returned to the province from offshore oil and gas revenues. CPAWS was pleased to be invited to this official announcement as a key stakeholder. Future revenues from the Crown Share Agreement will not necessarily

## Progress toward 12% protected area target

By Chris Miller, National Manager, Wilderness Conservation and Climate Change

Last year the provincial government enshrined in law a goal of protecting twelve percent of the provincial landmass by the year 2015. Currently, only 8.2% of the province is protected as National Parks, Wilderness Areas, or Nature Reserves. To achieve this goal, CPAWS is working collaboratively with other non-government organizations, industry, and government to ensure that the best sites are selected for protection.

We are also working to ensure that annual progress is made toward the 12% target, which means that the provincial government must designate as protected nearly 25,000 hectares of new lands each year. Of concern to CPAWS, is the apparent absence of a new protected area candidate in the pipeline for designation following the creation of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, Ship Harbour Long Lake and Shelburne River Wilderness Areas. To that end, the Province needs to be taking decisive steps right now to ensure that places like the proposed Chignecto Wilderness Area in Cumberland County are protected before they are destroyed (See article by Lindsay Notzl, pg. 9).

## Digby Neck and Islands: time for protection

By Ashley Sprague, Marine Conservation Coordinator



*Grand Passage, Long Island. Photo Credit: Jon Feldgajer*

This spectacular region at the mouth of the Bay of Fundy offers breathtaking scenery, a diversity of coastal and marine habitats, and has long been known to wildlife enthusiasts as one of Nova Scotia's best sites for whale watching and bird viewing. Not only do tourists know how special this area is, the locals also deeply value the cultural character of the region and have worked hard to preserve their lands and livelihoods which largely depend on the sea. In the face of declining fish populations, the local fishermen are opting for sustainable fishing gear such as lobster traps and herring weirs, as opposed to trawls which would impact the remaining inshore fisheries. The communities, with the help of several ENGOs including CPAWS-NS, successfully fought to reject a proposal for a mega-quarry which would have had devastating environmental impacts to the area. Although the communities were successful with this battle, additional proposals for large scale industrial development are sure to come in the future. In order to preserve this magnificent area, CPAWS-NS believes that Digby Neck and Islands and the surrounding marine waters need to be legally protected before it is too late.

CPAWS-NS is working with the communities in the region and government decision-makers to promote the area as a candidate site for a National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) for the Bay of Fundy. NMCAs are established by Parks Canada and have numerous benefits for the environment and local communities, such as protecting the marine environment for future generations, allowing for the recovery of marine species and their habitats, increasing fish catches and promoting ecotourism. CPAWS-NS has begun community visits to build understanding and support for marine conservation. Initial discussions with several fishermen, tourism operators, and the general public have been met with a very positive response. Communities on Digby Neck and Islands are searching for new options for sustainable development and ways to increase local fisheries and ecotourism. An NMCA offers a solution that would mesh with community values and provide economic diversification that struggling fishing communities need to survive.

Our organization recently gave a presentation senior government employees of Parks Canada's marine program in Ottawa on the ecological significance of the Digby Neck and Islands area. As Parks Canada currently has no marine staff based in the Maritimes, the need for a marine expert based in Nova Scotia was emphasized as an important first step in establishing NMCAs in our region. CPAWS-NS will continue to build the case for protection of this outstanding marine region by increasing outreach efforts with various stakeholders and local school groups, gathering ecological data on the marine and coastal environment, and working to ensure Parks Canada expands its marine efforts in Nova Scotia.



*Working waterfront of Westport, Brier Island. Photo Credit: Ashley Sprague.*



*Looking for ducks and seals. Photo Credit: Aimee Gromack.*

## Raising the profile of coastal marine protected areas in Nova Scotia

By Aimee Gromack, Conservation Assistant

Marine protected areas (MPAs) are important conservation tools that safeguard marine species and their habitats from environmental impacts. MPAs are legally designated areas which provide long-term protection of marine ecosystems, processes, habitats, and species including marine biodiversity, and can contribute to the restoration and replenishment of resources.

The federal government is obligated under international law and Canada's *Oceans Act* to establish a national network of MPAs by 2012. Time is running out, especially for Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia and Manitoba are the only coastal provinces in Canada that lack a core federal MPA designated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), Parks Canada, or Environment Canada. The marine environment is the lifeblood of Nova Scotia; failure to protect the resources provided by the ocean will have negative short and long-term impacts on the environmental, social, and economic well-being of the province.



Oceans Act MPAs and Areas of Interest. NS = 0 MPAs, 0 near shore AOIs  
Credit: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Nova Scotia's inshore areas have been overlooked by provincial and federal governments. Research was conducted over the summer to determine the challenges and opportunities for federal-provincial collaboration for MPAs in Nova Scotia through a series of interviews with federal and provincial employees and a legislative review. This analysis showed that the Nova Scotia government has an important role to play in designating provincial MPAs. The provincial government has several legislative tools which can be used to designate MPAs. Despite MPA-enabling provincial legislation, the provincial government is not utilizing its full range of tools for marine protection. The *Special Places Protection Act* is the strongest yet unutilized legislation in the marine environment. The *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* makes little mention of the marine environment, which prevents the goal to "achieve international recognition for having one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by the year 2020" from being realized, as it does not take in the interconnectedness of the terrestrial and marine ecosystems. It is imperative that the provincial government, particularly the Nova Scotia Department of Environment, takes an interest in the marine environment to ensure the well-being of Nova Scotians.

There are several estuarine habitats and features that represent important linkages of marine and terrestrial environments of Nova Scotia. Complementary provincial and federal protection is necessary to ensure conservation of these important habitats. CPAWS-NS has a critical role in generating support for coastal MPAs in NS and to initiate federal-provincial collaboration to work towards achieving set targets to designate MPAs in an efficient timeframe. We are building on the results of government interviews which not only indicated broad political interest for MPAs, but also gave an indication that there is interest in exploring the potential for a coastal MPA in Nova Scotia. The location of a coastal MPA will depend on the ecological and biological significance of the area and support generated by ENGOs, communities, and other stakeholders.



Pond Cove, Brier Island.  
Photo Credit: Ashley Sprague



Coastal salt marsh, Port Joli Harbour.  
Photo Credit: Aimee Gromack

CPAWS-NS has taken this strategic opportunity to ensure optimal sites are selected. We are currently conducting a study to identify several coastal areas along the Scotian Shelf which demonstrate biological significance and community support for marine conservation. This work will aid in advancing coastal MPAs in Nova Scotia both federally and provincially, as it will be presented to both levels of government. CPAWS-NS will proceed to build a strong campaign advocating for the protection of these sites and others in coastal Nova Scotia with the goal of establishing a provincial network of MPAs.

There is opportunity to change Nova Scotia's reputation from one of marine conservation shortfalls to one of innovation and advancement in implementing effective, collaborative management for its coastal and marine environment through legal protection. As coastal and marine resources face increasing human threats, the Nova Scotia government and the federal government must take immediate action to protect our coasts, using tools such as MPAs to provide legislated protection.

## Youth "vision" for Nova Scotia looks bright green!

We asked and heard from all across the province, "Save our forest, save our species, and save our shores!"

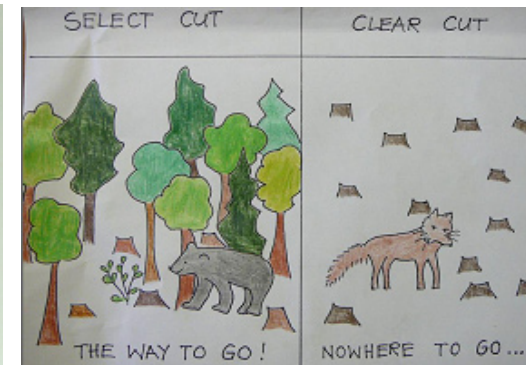
By Jon Feldgajer, Education Coordinator

From May to July 2008, Voluntary Planning was tasked with hearing Nova Scotians' "vision" for the future of the province's natural resources, including parks, forests, minerals, and biodiversity. Voluntary Planning, a committee of volunteers from the public with Natural Resources expertise and selected by the Province, held community meetings in 26 locations and invited the public to come out and speak up. They also received written, phone, and electronic submissions from Nova Scotians for the report examining the state of our natural resources.

With the support of D250 - 'Make Your Mark' and the Sage Environment Program, CPAWS-NS directly engaged youth from across Nova Scotia to participate in this process through the "share your vision" contest. By July 31st, CPAWS-NS received over 80 creative submissions that included artwork, poetry, stories, songs, and letters. All replies received by CPAWS-NS were shared with Voluntary Planning. CPAWS-NS hopes that the voice of youth will be heard through these submissions and complement the public consultation process underway.



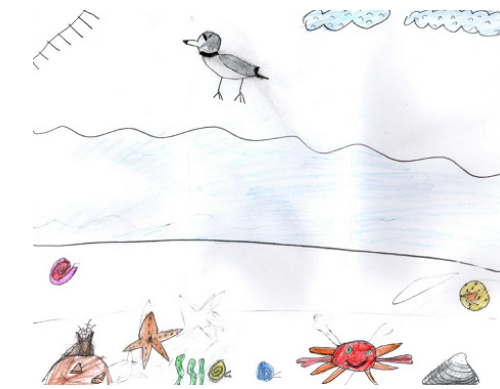
By Dahlia C., Age 16



John Z., Age 11



By Allyson, Age 14



By Maria, Age 6

Based on the success of this youth engagement project, CPAWS-NS will continue to engage Nova Scotia's youth in conservation policy-making through our education program. Further opportunities to involve youth will include the upcoming Coastal Management Framework and future Wilderness Area consultations happening province-wide as Nova Scotia works towards meeting its 12% protection goal (See article by Chris Miller, page 4).

Youth submissions to Voluntary Planning can be viewed on-line at <http://vp.gov.ns.ca/node/318>

(way hii yii yii way hii yii way hii yii yaa way hii yo) Repeat 2X

Verse 1:

i am mikmaq from the land  
put on earth to hold her hand  
she desperately needs all our love  
and all our prayers from up above  
mother earth is our domain  
we have got to keep it plain  
she needs our help to heal our pain  
she needs our help to create the rain

Chorus:

i come out here as a soldier  
in this place we all call home  
i stand outside the shadows  
in the dark most all alone  
i ask that you come out with me  
to show them how much we love  
how much we love our land we live  
from prayers from up above

Verse 2:

now that i have your attention  
i want to make it clear  
our earth is slowly dying  
and we yet to shed one tear  
she longs for your respect  
she waits for all your peace  
we ask for her forgiveness  
as our love has to increase

Repeat Chorus:

(Instrumental/Chanting, Maybe Drum.)

Repeat Verse 1:

i am mikmaq from the land  
put on earth to hold her hand  
she desperately needs all our love  
and all our prayers from up above...

Eddie D., Age 18

## Nature Calls and we answer

By Jon Feldgajer, Education Coordinator

Over the summer of 2008, CPAWS-NS piloted a new partnership for Nature Calls, our wilderness experience program for youth. In collaboration with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Halifax Region, and thanks to the great work of dedicated volunteers, CPAWS-NS led outings to four areas of high conservation value all around HRM. Once a month, a new group of “Bigs and Littles” had the chance to see what gets us so excited about conservation in the first place.



Reaching the shores of Susie's Lake. Photo Credit: CPAWS-NS

This year we visited the Herring Cove Backlands through the Captain Arnell Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) property, and Susie's Lake, in the soon-to-be designated Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area. On these trips we learned about urban sprawl, nature conservation, and Leave-No-Trace wilderness ethics. We also visited Long Lake Provincial Park and saw that conservation does not end when an area is legally protected, but requires proper park management too.



Geocaching at Long Lake Provincial Park. Photo Credit: Laura Simms

Outings also gave kids the chance to enjoy fun outdoor activities such as hiking, plant and bird-identification, nature photography, and even geocaching! Through these activities, many of the urban youth participants got to do something they rarely get a chance to do. In fact, some of the Bigs and Littles liked the trips so much that they took the time to share their thoughts with the Protected Areas Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Environment.

## Abitibi-Bowater to pursue FSC certification in Nova Scotia

By Chris Miller, National Manager,  
Wilderness Conservation and Climate Change



Photo Credit: www.wikipedia.org

In a press release sent out from their head office in Montreal on September 3rd, forestry giant Abitibi-Bowater announced their intentions to seek FSC certification for three of their management units in Canada, including their operation here in Nova Scotia. This amounts to approximately 3.2 million hectares of woodlands in total across the country.

FSC is the gold standard for environmental certifications of forestry operations, and requires strict environmental requirements around protected areas, high conservation value forests, plantations, and herbicide applications, among others. NewPage Port Hawkesbury Ltd. (formerly Stora-Enso) received FSC certification earlier this year for its operations on over 600,000 hectares of Crown lands on Cape Breton Island and eastern mainland Nova Scotia.

The local operation of Abitibi-Bowater, based on the South Shore at Brooklyn, maintains extensive swaths of privately-owned forest in southwestern Nova Scotia totaling over 230,000 hectares in size. If Abitibi-Bowater is successful in its attempt to achieve FSC certification in Nova Scotia, this will mean that nearly 20% of the province will be under FSC forestry management.

Through the review of the Natural Resources Strategy, the provincial government should take the necessary steps to require all forestry operations undertaken on Crown lands in the province to be FSC certified. Only then will the out-dated forestry practices that rely heavily on clearcuts begin to be phased out in Nova Scotia. We have a long way to go.



## Chignecto Wilderness Area: It's about time!

By Lindsay Notzl, Conservation Assistant



Welton Lake at sunrise. Photo credit: Irwin Barrett

The time has come to designate the public lands in and around the Chignecto Game Sanctuary as a legally-protected wilderness area. Events of this past spring and summer have demonstrated that the need is more urgent now than ever.

Despite the apparent mandate of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to protect Nova Scotia's natural environment, in May of this year, department staff gave a presentation to the Municipality of Cumberland county that defended the status quo for the Game Sanctuary.

Originally established in 1938 to conserve the now endangered Mainland moose, it's clear that game sanctuary status alone has proven powerless to protect critical wildlife habitat. Despite placing limits on hunting and trapping, this designation offers no protection from activities such as logging, mining, or development.

Aside from having a limited mandate to engage in protected areas planning, and no mandate for planning wilderness areas and nature reserves, DNR's proposal was flawed in many aspects, pretending to offer "protection" for certain old forests and riparian zones around major watercourses, while leaving the vast majority of the game sanctuary with no legal or administrative means for protecting habitat. The DNR presentation caused much confusion and heated debate in the public, and spurred CPAWS to re-energize the campaign to protect public lands in and around the Chignecto Game Sanctuary.

To this end, CPAWS-NS has joined forces with the local community advocacy group, Cumberland Wilderness, to advance a wilderness area proposal for the Chignecto Game Sanctuary and adjacent public lands. Together, we spent the summer studying Chignecto's forests and ecosystems and documenting significant ecological values.

On one of the guided hikes in June, led by naturalist and writer Harry

Thurston and renowned nature photographer Dale Wilson, we uncovered trees that were marked with bright pink flagging tape, emblazoned with the word "cutblock". CPAWS and Cumberland Wilderness were on the phone right away with DNR staff, demanding an explanation as to why cutting was proposed on public lands in areas of high conservation value. As a direct result of our actions, the "cutblock" tape was promptly removed and CPAWS was given written assurances that no cutting is imminent or otherwise planned on public lands within the Game Sanctuary boundary.

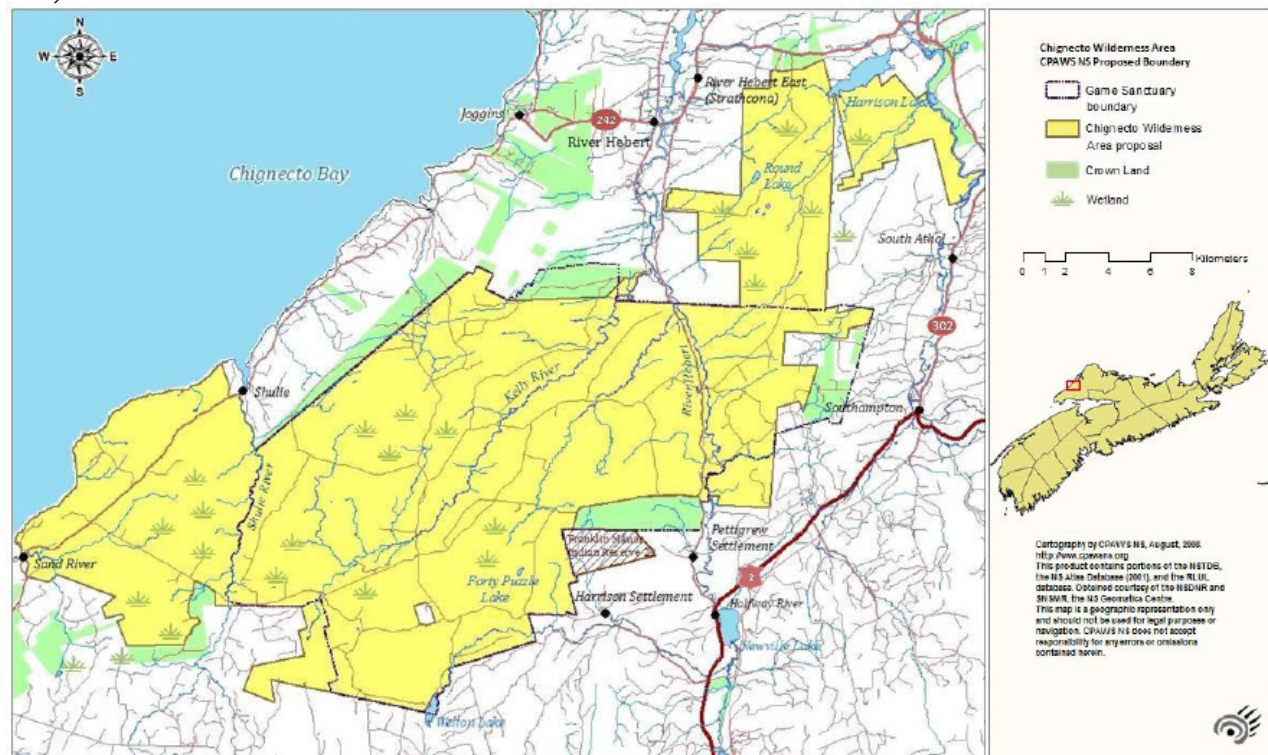
This incident combined with the fallout from the DNR presentation to the Municipality of Cumberland County, has propelled the Chignecto Wilderness Area campaign to the next level. DNR's plan was deeply flawed and it's now up to us to set things right.

Simply put, the proposed Chignecto Wilderness Area represents the last, best opportunity to protect big wilderness in Cumberland County. CPAWS is advocating for a firm commitment from government to protect this area under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* immediately. Chignecto's important habitats can no longer be adequately protected by the Game Sanctuary designation alone, which still permits all sorts of resource extraction activities.

### Summer site visit highlights:

- Nesting female goshawk in maple-birch-beech forest
- Red maple floodplain forest along Kelly River
- Gaspereau spawning at Welton Lake with bald eagle above
- Mature white ash and ironwood grove
- Tall northern bog and club-spur orchids
- A rich diversity of forest-dwelling songbirds

Chignecto, cont'd.



At over 34,000 hectares in size, the Chignecto Wilderness Area will permanently protect varied habitats at the scale required for wide-ranging, large animals like the endangered mainland moose to breed successfully. By conserving large patches of old forest, wetland complexes, and intact floodplain corridors, the Chignecto Wilderness Area will provide

permanent protection to critical habitats for species such as the northern goshawk, the vulnerable wood turtle, and the endangered inner Bay of Fundy atlantic salmon. Only then, will this 'sanctuary' become the wildlife refuge originally envisioned at its inauguration in 1938. It's time to make things right.

A new Nature Reserve for the St. Mary's River

By Chris Miller, National Manager, Wilderness Conservation and Climate Change

In April, the provincial government announced its intention to create an impressive new nature reserve on the St. Mary's River, in Guysborough County. The designation would apply to a property that was recently acquired by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and transferred to the province. This property contains some of the best remaining old-growth forest in Nova Scotia, including towering stands of old-growth red spruce and eastern hemlock forest, a twenty foot high waterfall, habitat for the threatened wood turtle population, and nearly two and a half kilometers of shoreline on the western branch of the St. Mary's River.

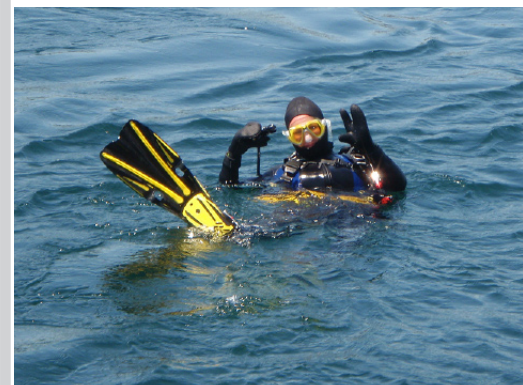
Left out of the Earth Day announcement, however, was a clear statement from the provincial government that the nature reserve designation would be applied to the adjacent Crown lands as well. This was a big disappointment, since the adjacent public lands contain the same stretch of impressive old-growth forest and wood turtle habitat as the property that was acquired by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. CPAWS will continue to press the government to rightfully extend protection to a much wider section of the St. Mary's River watershed, which contains a world-renowned population of Atlantic salmon among many other ecologically-significant features.



Old-growth hemlock forest. Photo Credit: Chris Miller

In search of Horse Mussel reefs, an underwater journey

By Ashley Sprague, Marine Conservation Coordinator



Ready to go under. Photo Credit: CPAWS-NS

For the past two years, CPAWS-NS has been advocating for the protection of globally-rare horse mussel reefs in the Bay of Fundy. The extensive horse mussel reefs play an important role in nutrient exchange and secondary production in the Bay, but are threatened by activities such as bottom-trawling. Gathering data on the reefs is extremely difficult and costly because they mostly occur at depths of over 100m in the middle of the Bay of Fundy. In this regard, several knowledge gaps exist when it comes to understanding the age, growth rate, and ecological significance of the reefs.

Through conversations with SCUBA divers in the Bay of Fundy, CPAWS-NS learned the locations of smaller, more accessible mussel reefs that were previously unknown in the waters off Brier Island. These reefs are described as sand dune like structures with distinct waves and troughs that are found in strong currents at depths between 20-30m. They are approximately 3 m high, 50 m long, and 20 m wide. The discovery of these near shore reefs presented a unique research opportunity for CPAWS-NS to gather data on the size, age structure, recruitment, and biodiversity associations of the horse mussel reefs.

Never ones to shy away from a challenge, the CPAWS-NS marine team suited up and entered the cold, swiftly flowing waters off Brier Island in search of the horse mussel reefs. Led by local diver Laurie McGowan, we attempted to find and capture on video the horse mussel reefs. We descended upon extensive beds of large horse mussels, but were ultimately unsuccessful in locating the reef structures. However, diving was not in vain as CPAWS-NS was able to compile a species list of benthic life found amongst the mussel beds which included several crab, sea star, polychaete, and kelp species as well as flounder and pollock. This information adds to the scientific data that our chapter has collected to help us conserve the horse mussel reefs.

Although we were not able to collect video footage or data directly related to the mussel reef structures on this trip, we feel these data can be collected on future dive trips. The results of our research will be presented to DFO in order to build the knowledge base and further support ongoing efforts to protect the larger reefs in the middle of the Bay of Fundy. There will be more underwater adventures to come and hopefully the next issue of Wild East will include fascinating pictures of the mussel mounds!



Holding on in strong currents. Photo Credit: CPAWS-NS



Aimee Gromack (left) and Ashley Sprague (right) back on the boat Photo Credit: CPAWS-NS

LESS THAN 10% OF CANADA'S GREAT WILDERNESS IS PROTECTED.

WE NEED TO DO MORE TO PRESERVE OUR ECOSYSTEMS.

thebigwild.org

## The Big Wild: Are you ready to take the challenge?

By Jonathan Feldgajer, Education Coordinator

The Big Wild has been a big hit across Nova Scotia this summer, thanks to the hard work of CPAWS-NS and Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) staff, volunteers, and members across the province that have signed up as supporters or taken a "Big Wild challenge". Launched earlier this year, this collaboration between MEC and CPAWS aims to raise awareness for protecting half of Canada's remaining wild places. To reach this goal, the Big Wild is asking Canadians to dedicate their next wilderness adventure to conservation. By visiting [www.thebigwild.org](http://www.thebigwild.org), supporters can create a profile and post stories of their outdoor adventures, along with pictures, videos, and comments on a fully interactive website. Upcoming trips, or "challenges", can set a fundraising goal, and this season MEC will match funds raised dollar for dollar. In short, the Big Wild helps Canadians show their support for wilderness conservation by "doing something small, to save something big".



Paddling down Citadel Hill, Halifax. Photo Credit: Christine Krochak

The Big Wild kicked off in early May as CPAWS-NS and MEC staff went "wild in the streets" of Halifax. After portaging canoes and kayaks through downtown, we set up our tents and basecamp on Spring Garden Road and chatted with fellow Haligonians. Not only did we manage to make the Big Wild the word on the street that day, we also received an invite for a Big Wild introduction to the evening weather forecast on the CBC.

In late May CPAWS-NS invited the conservation community including ENGOS, provincial and federal government staff to become Big Wild ambassadors and spread the Big Wild message through their network of contacts. Held at the Garrison Brewery, the launch event was an intimate evening of presentations, live music and food. MC'd by Jayson Baxter of CTV's Breakfast Television, music by Alan Jeffries and featuring presentations by Kermit DeGooyer of the Ecology Action Centre (EAC), Peter Labor of Nova Scotia Department of Environment and renowned photographer Lenn Wagg, the night was a great mixture of information, networking and enthusiastic support.

Thanks to the efforts of our Big Wild ambassadors, this word-of-mouth revolution is now spreading across Nova Scotia.

CPAWS-NS and the Big Wild found more than just an ambassador that night in Jayson Baxter, we got a real champion of wilderness conservation in Nova Scotia. In early July, Jay invited CPAWS and MEC to join him on air and introduce the Big Wild to maritime audiences, and Chris Miller presented what's at stake. As well, the EAC joined on a second day along to speak about the Ship Harbour Long Lake Candidate Wilderness Area. Chris' appearance on Breakfast Television is a prelude to an upcoming Big Wild challenge to Ship Harbour Long Lake. This fall CPAWS, MEC, EAC and Breakfast Television will visit this important piece of wilderness along Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore to discuss the Big Wild in Halifax's own backyard.

From here in Nova Scotia to all across Canada, the Big Wild is becoming big news. In just a few short months since launching, over 11,000 supporters from coast to coast have signed up. Are you one of them? If not, please visit [www.thebigwild.org](http://www.thebigwild.org) and add your name.



"We have a global responsibility to look after our ecosystems", says Dr. Chris Miller while discussing the Big Wild on Breakfast Television. Credit: CTV Watch it on-line at [www.youtube.com/cpawsns](http://www.youtube.com/cpawsns)

## Port Joli Carbon Free! a Big Wild challenge diary

By Hamish Longbottom

date: August 4, 2008

I am a 24 year old Australian, here visiting Nova Scotia for a few months. I am thrilled to be a part of the Big Wild Challenge. I will be undertaking a multi-activity adventure involving sea kayaking, paddling on a surfboard, hiking, canoeing and cycling. My journey will take me around the peninsula of land between Port Joli and Port l'Hebert Harbors. I will be passing through and touching down on several significant protected areas in the region including: Thomas Raddall Provincial Park, Kejimikujik Seaside National Park, Canadian Wildlife Service Migratory Waterfowl Sanctuary and Abitibi-Bowater Port l'Hebert Pocket Wilderness. One of the aims of my adventure is to be as carbon neutral as possible. My journey begins at my doorstep- no need to drive anywhere! I will be eating raw, local and organically grown food- no need to burn wood or other fuel. All equipment for the challenge has been generously donated by local people and will not be driven to or from any of the checkpoints. The other aims of my challenge are; to discover the natural beauty of the area by compiling a photographic journal (which will be available to all sponsors after completion of the challenge) and to complete the circuit in less than 48 hours (August 15-16, 2008).

date: August 16, 2008

### Big Wild Challenge Leg 1.

After seeing the swell was too big for sea kayaking, the initial plan was altered and it was decided to leave the kayaking till last (Saturday morning). Seeing as nature had provided this awesome swell and offshore winds some surfing was in order! And so the 1st leg of my challenge became the surf paddling leg!

### Big Wild Challenge Leg 2.

After finishing up in the surf I geared up and headed out for the hike, with approx 13kgs in my back it was a long haul over unstable rocky shore. I had done this hike almost to entirety previously but with less than 2kgs in my small daypack. The sun was out, the waves were crashing, the seals looked on and were probably thinking "What is this crazy Aussie up to??" I had to ask myself the same question after almost 5 hours!

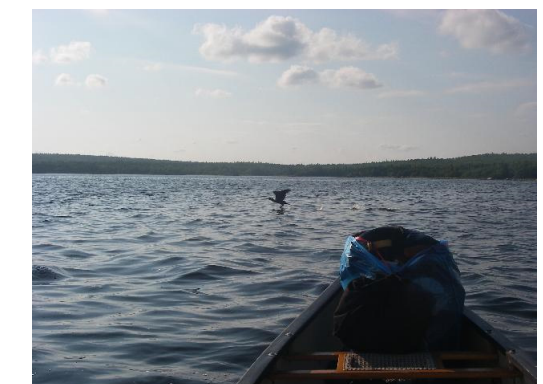
### Big Wild Challenge Leg 3.

After a 5 hour walk you think I would have been tired... and I was! But this was meant to be a challenge! With a friendly incoming tide and a not so friendly cross harbor wind I set off on a generously donated canoe from the Simon family. With the sun beating down and the constant push to one side of the harbor, I was soon discovered how difficult canoeing can be when you are on your own. But soon the Pocket Wilderness was in sight and the next leg of my challenge was completed!

### Big Wild Challenge Leg 4.

The Pocket Wilderness was beautiful...then I realized I wasn't alone! Every mosquito in Nova Scotia seemed to be on me sucking my sweet Australian blood! After losing probably a few pints of blood I stacked everything onto my bike and headed off for Thomas Raddall Provincial Park. The weight of my pack was slowing me down a lot and the few hills felt like mountains. What seemed like hours (but was only around one) went by and I arrived in Thomas Raddall, the sight of the beach was a welcome relief, time to camp for the night! The mosquitoes gave me one last draining as I set up my tent and made dinner. Within half an hour of getting in bed I was asleep...

ZZZZZ.....ZZZZZ.....ZZZZZ.



All photos, credit: Hamish Longbottom

To find out what happened next to this wild Aussie, visit [www.thebigwild.org](http://www.thebigwild.org).

Tell us about your next challenge, it may get showcased next issue!

write:  
[cpawsns@cpawsns.org](mailto:cpawsns@cpawsns.org)





## Want to volunteer with CPAWS-NS?

There are plenty of ways for someone passionate about conservation to get involved with us including:

- Join the Atlantic Ocean Committee
- Plan a Nature Calls activity
- Work at a CPAWS-NS display booth
- Host a fundraiser
- Graphic/Web/Newsletter Design

For more ideas, information, and ways to get involved visit

[www.cpawsns.org/volunteer](http://www.cpawsns.org/volunteer)



CPAWS-NS volunteers at Paddlefest, July 2008  
 Photo Credit: Marc Richard

## Stay informed!

Receive conservation news as it happens. Sign up for e-delivery of newsletters and campaign updates by emailing [cpawsns@cpawsns.org](mailto:cpawsns@cpawsns.org)

CPAWS-NS would like to thank our individual supporters and the following funding organizations for their generous contributions to our success over the past year.



### Executive Officers

Craig Smith, *President*  
 Cheyenne Dickinson, *Vice President*  
 Karen Potter, *Treasurer*  
 Aimee Pelletier, *Secretary*

### Directors

Martin Willison  
 Amanda Lavers  
 Graham Smith  
 Neal Livingston  
 James Sullivan  
 John Glynn-Morris  
 Tricia Barry  
 Derek Simon

### Chapter Staff

Chris Miller, *National Manager, Wilderness Conservation and Climate Change*  
 Ashley Sprague, *Marine Conservation Coordinator*  
 Jon Feldgajer, *Education Coordinator*  
 Aimee Gromack, *Conservation Assistant*  
 Lindsay Notzl, *Conservation Assistant*  
 Judith Cabrita, *Administrator*

**Postmaster:** send Canadian address changes to Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Nova Scotia Chapter  
 1099 Marginal Road, Suite 201  
 Halifax, Nova Scotia  
 B3H 4P7. Tel: (902) 446-4155, Fax: (902) 446-4156, Email: [cpawsns@cpawsns.org](mailto:cpawsns@cpawsns.org)

WildEast is a biannual publication of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Nova Scotia chapter (charity #10686 5272 RR0001). Editors, Jon Feldgajer and Chris Miller; Newsletter layout and design by Jon Feldgajer; review thanks to Ashley Sprague, Aimee Gromack, and Lindsay Notzl. Send comments and suggestions to [cpawsns@cpawsns.org](mailto:cpawsns@cpawsns.org). ©2008 Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Nova Scotia Chapter. No part of this publication may be reproduced without express permission in writing from CPAWS-NS.

WildEast is printed by Fusion Print and Imaging in Halifax, NS on FSC certified, 100% recycled material.

