



**Cut
and
Run**





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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Message from the Board

How time flies ... it is hard to believe that Fall is already here! The summer has been a whirlwind of activity for CPAWS Nova Scotia. Enhanced protection for Chignecto is on track and the designation of Sable Island as a national park is nearing completion. We continue to await a commitment from the Province on reining-in clearcutting. We are also waiting on the Parks Canada study on the Bay of Fundy and are sure that this will represent a positive step toward marine conservation in Nova Scotia. Continue reading to learn more about these important topics!



We will be holding our "Dare to be Deep" event celebrating the creation of the Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area on November 9, 2010 at the Scotiabank Auditorium at Dalhousie University (see pg. 13 for details). Come join us to celebrate this landmark in marine conservation in Canada, and learn more about marine conservation efforts taking place right here in Nova Scotia.

There were a number of new faces around CPAWS-NS this summer. Summer students Erin Mutrie, Sophie Prayal-Brown, Lauren Kay, and Amber Stroeder joined us, and we thank them for their hard work. We also have a number of new faces on the board of directors. Jennifer Ross, Elizabeth De Santo, Tracy Horsman, Nancy Shackell, and Anna Magera all joined the board at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). They bring strong and varied backgrounds to the board of directors, and we welcome them to the team! Jen Graham stepped down from the board of directors after this year's AGM. We want to thank her for her tireless work, particularly on human resources and board development. We know she will remain involved as a volunteer!

Thanks again to those of you who attended this year's AGM on June 30th, where we learned about the great conservation work our staff has been doing, and heard an interesting talk from Dr. Hugh Broders of Saint Mary's University on his work with bats.

CPAWS-Nova Scotia continues to rely on the support of our many donors and volunteers that make all of our good work possible, and for that we thank you. If you are looking for a way to continue your valued support of CPAWS-NS, please visit our website to donate or volunteer.

Yours Truly,

Derek Simon, President
CPAWS Nova Scotia



About the cover

A huge clearcut from Caribou Mines, near the Musquidoboit Valley. Biomass harvesting will have a huge impact on Nova Scotia's landscape. Strong regulations to control clearcutting are urgently needed (*photo: Chris Miller*).



Irwin Barrett

Light snowfall in autumn on the forested slopes of the Margaree Valley, Cape Breton

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Help stop clearcutting



Clearcutting Nova Scotia's forests

By: Chris Miller

Forest companies in Nova Scotia are in a race to the bottom, fighting proposed new rules to control clearcutting. Will the government buckle under industry pressure or will they finally tackle a huge ecological problem that most Nova Scotians want fixed?

Anybody who has flown over Nova Scotia knows we have a problem. Our forests are being absolutely devastated from clearcutting and the problem is getting worse. Virtually all of the forest harvesting done in Nova Scotia today – upwards of 95% - is carried out using clearcuts. It's an addiction that industry can't seem to shake. It's killing our forests, ruining our landscape, and jeopardizing a transition to more sustainable forestry practices.

A report recently completed by Global Forest Watch Canada revealed that Nova Scotia's forests are being harvested at rates twice that of other parts of Canada, including Northern Ontario and the inland temperate forests of British Columbia. Using satellite imagery, the organization showed that over a half-million hectares of forest have been felled in Nova Scotia between 1990 and 2007, or roughly 15% of the province's forests. Rates of disturbance were highest in central Nova Scotia. Over that time period, 27% of the forests of Colchester County were cut down and 20% of Pictou County. Clearly, rates like these are not sustainable.

The Nova Scotia government has promised action to rein-in the problem of clearcutting but there is a big push-back from the forest industry advocating for their continued right to harvest using clearcuts unabated. At the same time, the industry is also looking at doing even more intensive forms of clearcutting for biomass harvests, removing tiny trees and in some cases shrubs and understory vegetation to be ground-up and burned to produce “green” electricity.

We are clearly at a fork in the logging road, *per se*, where the decisions made today will greatly impact our forests for a very long time to come. The choice is between a forest industry that relies on clearcuts and strives to rake the forest floor clean for burning biomass down one path, or a forest industry that steps away from reliance on clearcutting and tries to grow better and older trees that can generate more value-added products with fewer impacts on the forest down the other. Which path is chosen remains to be seen.

At the epicentre

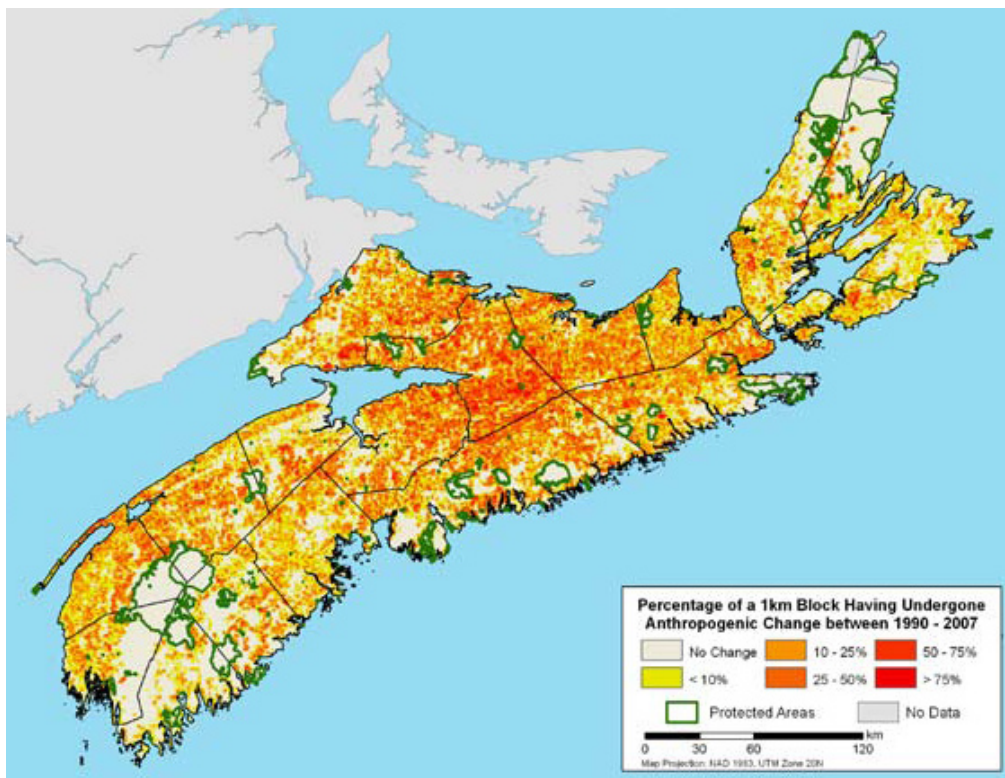
Last year, I travelled to the community of Caribou Mines along the Eastern Shore, not too far from the Musquodoboit Valley, to witness the problem of biomass harvesting first-hand. There, I was greeted by a number of friendly residents and members of the recently formed group, Save Caribou, who invited me to their community. The group was established in response to rampant and atrocious clearcutting that was taking place all around Caribou Mines.

Walking out onto the barren and scarred landscape, where only weeks prior had been intact stands of spruce typical of the Eastern Shore, I was struck not just by the devastation, but also by the fact that this sort of harvesting can still take place in Nova Scotia. Not only was the forest removed by clearcutting, even the smallest and tiniest trees were pulled to the roadside and chipped for biomass. Huge piles of chips, over 10 feet high and almost 50 feet long, were lined along the logging road. The clearcut was covered in huge ruts from vehicles driving back and forth across the clearcut to drag the wood and biomass material out to the road. Walking up the ruts, our feet sank deep into the mud that used to be the forest floor.

Off in the distance you could hear the sound of heavy machinery, but not the normal machinery you usually hear on logging sites. Long gone are the sounds of a chainsaw working the forests. Even the high-pitched whirr of a feller-buncher cutting trees with rapidly turning blades wasn't heard. The sound was quite different. It was from a bulldozer, a grinding machine, and a grappling hook – the future of forestry in Nova Scotia as some see it. We went to investigate. The grappling hook picked up huge piles of shrubs, branches, and small trees and placed it on a conveyor belt that brought the material into the grinding machine. Out the other end flung ground up biomass material that formed a large pile that a bulldozer was working on,



Right: Extensive clearcuts and biomass harvesting at Caribou Mines, Nova Scotia



Human disturbance to Nova Scotia's forests between 1990 and 2007, standardized as percent change per one square kilometre block (Source: Global Forest Watch Canada)

pushing the biomass into a larger pile further from the grinding machine. Left in the wake; almost nothing. A lifeless, barren, and muddy landscape scarred by ruts and devoid of trees, shrubs, and flowers.

Caribou Mines is clearly at the epicentre of bad forest policy in Nova Scotia. Here, the forests have suffered the worst-of-the-worst forest harvesting in recent years. But, this might just be the tip of the iceberg of what's to come.

Many in the forest industry view biomass as a solution to a sharp downturn in the industry that has hit right across the country; grinding up branches, small trees, shrubs, and sometimes even roots, then trucking this material hundreds of kilometres to the mills where it is burned to produce steam and electricity.

This is the absolute cheapest product that our forests can produce – biomass to be burned, never-mind the damage to the forests or the problem of regeneration on badly damaged sites afterwards. Forget value-added forest products producing good-paying jobs for rural communities over the long-term. Some see the forests for only pennies-a-hectare to be burned.

The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board has just approved an application for the construction of a new co-generation facility at a mill that would feed electricity to Nova Scotia Power under the guise of “green” energy. This proposal may actually generate more greenhouse gas emissions than it reduces and will greatly increase the amount of forest harvesting in eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.

Lighting a fire that has to be fed for 40 years in a province as small as Nova Scotia with forests already at the breaking-point is not a smart idea. And, this is likely the first of several new proposals to burn our forests to produce power. Tests are underway to burn biomass in coal-fired generation plants as well. At that fork in the logging road, we've already started down the wrong path. It's time to turn around and choose the other one.

Glimmer of hope

The Nova Scotia Minister of Natural Resources, John MacDonell, has made some encouraging statements about needing to get a handle on the clearcutting problem in this province. He has walked some of the clearcuts in Caribou Mines, referred to clearcutting forests as creating “moonscapes”, and has said the “status quo” for the forest industry in Nova Scotia is not an option.

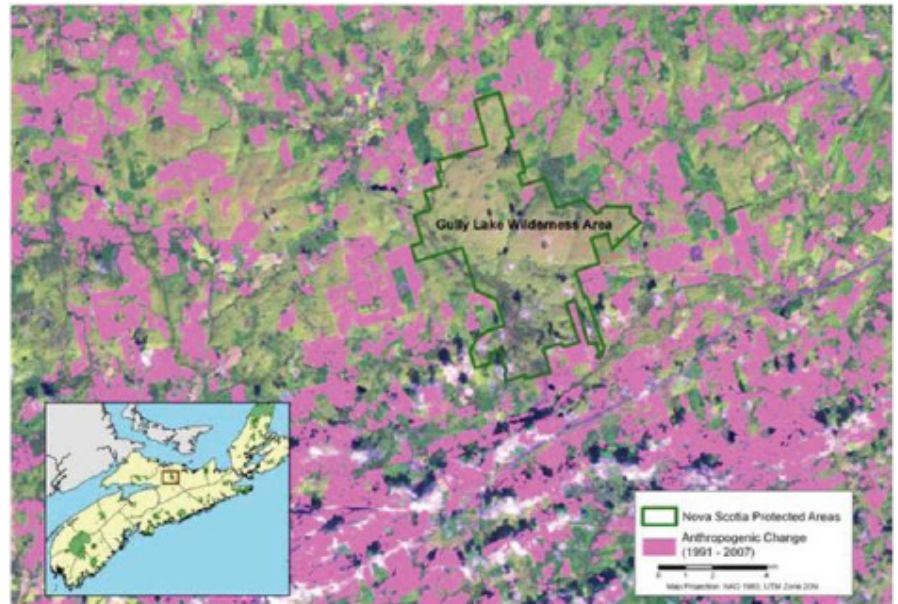
The Minister has also said that a policy announcement is just around the corner about limiting the amount of clearcutting that can occur in Nova Scotia and has directed staff in the department to investigate options for operationalizing such a policy. A team from the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources also recently travelled to New England to examine how jurisdictions there have managed to rein-in clearcutting in recent years, albeit from a starting point of much less clearcutting than in Nova Scotia.

Industry fear-mongering against even the prospect of controlling clearcutting is rampant and the Minister is clearly the target, but he seems to be looking at the facts and seems determined to bring about the necessary changes. Let's hope so.

The Nova Scotia government will be releasing a revised Natural Resources Strategy by the end of the year that will set necessary direction on how the province manages forests, minerals, biodiversity, and parks. Key to success or failure of this plan clearly rests in how the province addresses the problem of clearcutting. A weak-kneed policy on forestry that skirts the important issue of controlling clearcutting will sink the entire plan. The government needs the resolve to make the necessary reforms and set us on the path to a more sustainable future for how we manage our natural resources. In the consultations for revamping the natural resources strategy, the public overwhelmingly stated that the problem of clearcutting needs to be addressed. Residents from across Nova Scotia filled legions, fire halls, and church basements to make their voices heard.

In the subsequent follow-up expert analysis, however, a clear split in the future of forestry in Nova Scotia was clearly on display. Three experts on the panel could not agree on what direction was needed, so they ultimately submitted two separate reports to the panel overseeing the review of the natural resources strategy. Bob Bancroft and Donna Crossland submitted a report that would send Nova Scotia on a more sustainable future, with less reliance on clearcutting and more attention on value-added products from our forests. Jon Porter, who works with Abitibi-Bowater Inc. submitted a very different report that many have said will result in simply the status quo of too many clearcuts and failed forest policy.

The Minister has received both reports, with the Porter report clearly heading down one fork in that logging road and the Bancroft-Crossland report the other. Let's hope the Minister chooses wisely. Stay tuned.



*Clearcutting near Gully Lake Wilderness Area between 1991 and 2007 shown in pink
(Source: Global Forest Watch Canada)*

What needs to happen

- Clear government policy on reducing and phasing-out clearcutting
- Shift in silviculture funding toward better forestry practices, particularly uneven-aged forest management
- Legislated regulations to control the size and extent of clearcuts
- Overall reduction in the amount of wood being harvested provincially
- Ban herbicide applications for forest management
- Protected areas for high conservation value forests immediately, including the implementation of the Colin Stewart Forest Forum recommendations for protected areas
- New stand-alone *Forest Conservation Act* that legislates reductions in clearcutting and restrictions on biomass harvesting.
- Amendment to the *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* to enshrine new targets and timelines in law for reducing clearcuts and improving forestry practices
- An open and transparent process for measuring progress in reducing clearcutting with annual progress reports and independent arm's-length assessments

Bay of Fundy needs stronger protection

By: Chris Miller and Rodrigo Menafrá

Chris Miller

The Bay of Fundy, with its high tides and abundance of wildlife, is a global treasure. There's no doubt about that. We support the efforts by the Nova Scotia government to advocate for the Bay of Fundy to be included as one of the new seven natural wonders of the world in the global competition currently underway.

But, in asking the world to declare the Bay of Fundy one of the seven natural wonders, our government needs to make sure that it is treating the bay that way, and takes the necessary steps to properly protect its important ecology and ecosystems from degradation. Unquestionably, there's more that the governments of Nova Scotia and Canada could be doing.

The Bay of Fundy lacks a system of marine protected areas to protect its important and unique natural features, particularly areas where globally significant concentrations of whales occur. This, despite existing commitments from the federal government to establish representative marine protected areas in all regions of the country. There are some small sites protected as whale sanctuaries, but these designations have relatively weak legal teeth.

The province also lacks a comprehensive coastal policy to adequately protect our shorelines, including those along the Bay of Fundy. Some progress has been made in recent years towards developing this policy, but without changes in our coastal land-use policies and help for the municipalities, we'll continue to see beaches and wetlands being destroyed, and houses built along the shore where they shouldn't be.

Above: A humpback whale plunges into the Bay of Fundy off Digby Neck and Islands.

Incompatible industrial development proposals for the Bay of Fundy also pop up from time to time, and some have come within a hair's breadth of being approved. A few years ago, a proposal surfaced to establish a huge mega-quarry and marine terminal on the shores of Digby Neck to provide aggregate to the northeastern United States. Fortunately, that proposal never received the required environmental approvals, but since then, the Nova Scotia government has failed to develop policies to prioritize our coastline into areas where development makes sense, and areas where it doesn't. Without better policies in place, coastal mega-quarry proposals for the Bay of Fundy will continue to pop up near important whale areas, and aquaculture sites near important fishing grounds.

The province also does not yet have a final "no net loss" policy for wetlands to prohibit any development from occurring on the tidal salt marshes of the Bay of Fundy. Only a fraction of these important salt marshes remain to support the large populations of migratory birds travelling up and down the Atlantic flyway. A clear policy is needed from the government that will ensure the tidal salt marshes along the bay will be protected and restored.

Not all is doom and gloom. Some important steps have been made recently to protect the ecology of the Bay of Fundy and there's definitely some world-class research and conservation efforts taking place there. The movement of the shipping lanes in the bay seems to be helping to protect the endangered right whales from ship collisions; Parks Canada is conducting a comprehensive study of the Bay of Fundy to identify important marine areas for conservation; and the Nova Scotia government recently acquired long stretches of coastline along the bay for conservation, between Apple Head and Joggins.

These are encouraging steps, but our government needs to do more, and soon. To start, let's get a system of marine protected areas in place, a coastal land-use plan that protects the shoreline of the Bay of Fundy, and a wetland policy that safeguards its tidal salt marshes. If the Bay of Fundy truly is the global treasure we're saying it is, let's treat it that way and show the world that we stand behind our call to have it declared one of the new seven natural wonders of the world.

The above article originally appeared in the Chronicle-Herald on Wednesday, August 25, 2010

Conservation Notes

Marine Protected Areas

During the summer, CPAWS-NS conducted a survey in the region of Digby Neck & Islands and Bear River to better understand the community's perspective on marine protected areas (MPAs). The goal of the survey was to better understand how people perceive the marine environment in their region and to learn how they feel about the potential establishment of an MPA. Over 120 survey submissions were received! Thank you to everyone who participated!

A few preliminary results show that two thirds of respondents said their livelihood was dependant on the marine environment. The decline of fish stocks was the greatest environmental concern identified, followed by endangered species, water quality, and industrial development. Close to 80% of respondents showed some level of support towards the establishment of an MPA in the Digby Neck & Islands region. Finally, two thirds of respondents thought that it would be "very important" for the local communities to be involved in the planning and management of an MPA. Survey responses are still being processed and final results will soon be shared back with the communities and made publicly available.

Vote Fundy!

Please take a moment to support the Bay of Fundy as Canada's only entry in the global competition to select the new seven natural wonders of the world.

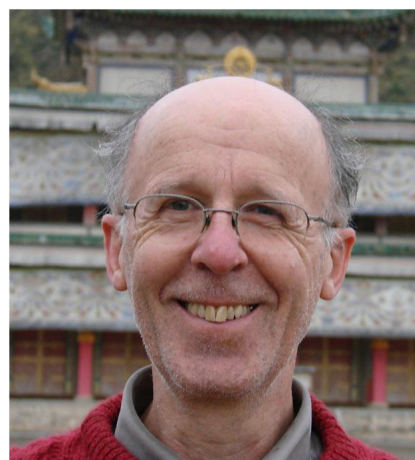
www.votemyfundy.com

If you'd like to see stronger conservation measures applied to the Bay of Fundy, please take a moment to contact the Premier of Nova Scotia

Premier Darrell Dexter
Office of the Premier
P.O. Box 726
Halifax, NS, B3J 2T3
premier@gov.ns.ca

Let the wild be wild

This being the International Year of Biodiversity, the founder of CPAWS-Nova Scotia shares his views on why conservation matters



By: Martin Willison

The natural world is an intrinsic part of the glory of Canada, and Canadians take that fact seriously. For example, our national parks are among the most potent statements of the national identity of Canada, and maintaining the “ecological integrity” of these parks over-rides all other responsibilities of Parks Canada.

While ecological integrity has many aspects, the ultimate indicator of it is whether biological diversity is maintained. If ecological integrity declines, we will start to lose the very essence of life: its diversity. It’s worth understanding this in a fundamental sense.

Life is a complex thing, with many characteristics. As a biologist, I used to spend a lot of time looking inside living cells, and movement was usually the most evident thing about them. Life is dynamic. As well as being changeable, life is diverse. No two cells are the same, no two living beings are the same, and no two ecological communities are the same.

In light of this complexity, it’s not easy for Parks Canada to carry out the essential mandate of maintaining “ecological integrity”. To do so requires that ecological processes be maintained, most notably those processes that involve change at all temporal and spatial scales. The only way to do that is to interfere as little as possible, except when there are trans-boundary effects to address, such as invasive species and river pollution.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, the boundaries of protected areas are permeable. To conserve these natural gems, we have to look not only within their boundaries but also beyond their boundaries too.

But why should we care so much?

For me, the answer lies not in the here and now, but in the future. In essence, however selfless we would like to be philosophically, we are all fundamentally selfish in a sense. We would like our progeny to flourish; and if not our progeny, then our ideas; and if not our ideas, then at least our own longevity.

That means we need to maintain the fundamental health of the life system of which we are a part.

This is no different than Parks Canada's mandate to maintain the ecological integrity of the national parks; our own futures and the futures of our parks are inextricably linked.

Healthy living systems require diversity and dynamism: complexity and change. Conservation is about living within a system that is healthy in an ecological sense. It's not about keeping something that is perfect, like a gem in its case, but about letting the wild be wild and free.

For me, at least, conservation matters because I cannot dream about the future unless I can be sure that the life system of which I am now a part will be there in the future, with all its complexity, diversity and dynamism.

And at the bottom of it all, I love all those fascinating critters.



Martin Willison is a biology professor at Dalhousie University. He was born in England and moved to Canada in 1974. His research includes nature conservation and the role of non-government organizations in environmental management. Martin is one of the founders of the Nova Scotia Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and is currently on the board of directors. He has received several national and international awards for his conservation work, including the Gulf of Maine Visionary Award (2002), the Canadian Environment Silver Award (2003), the Don McAllister Medal (2004), and Nature Canada's Volunteer Award (2004).

Conservation Notes

Sable Island update

The designation of Sable Island as a national park is progressing well. Parks Canada has just wrapped-up public and stakeholder consultations and the creation of the national park could occur in the next few months. CPAWS has been advocating strict conservation measures be applied to the management of the national park to ensure this very sensitive island ecosystem is not inadvertently damaged by visitors to the park. We are advocating for limiting visitation to the island, limiting new infrastructure, and developing off-island visitor experiences. Sable Island is an iconic Canadian landmark that needs to be afforded the highest level of ecosystem protection, which brings us to the issue of oil and gas development.

In reviewing the details associated with the creation of the new national park, CPAWS and other conservation organizations have identified a potential issue related to offshore oil and gas development that needs to be addressed ahead of the formal designation of the island. Careful examination of existing legislation at both the federal and provincial level reveals an unusual situation where the existing offshore petroleum acts prevail over the National Parks Act where conflicts arise between these two pieces of legislation. What this means, in theory, is that oil and gas development could still occur beneath Sable Island irrespective of the national park designation. This is a potential precedent that CPAWS is very concerned about not just for Sable Island, but for all new national parks and national marine conservation areas established across the country in the future.

To be clear, no companies are actively pursuing oil and gas development beneath Sable Island at the moment, and there are existing policies in place at the Offshore Petroleum Board to prevent drilling on Sable Island, though not underneath. But drilling has happened on Sable Island before. There are six abandoned well-heads on Sable Island from previous oil and gas exploration activities carried out in decades past. To avoid the unacceptable precedent of industrial activity being allowed in a national park, both the federal and provincial governments need to amend the offshore petroleum acts to make it explicit that there shall be no drilling for oil and gas on or beneath Sable Island. And, companies maintaining pre-existing rights and Significant Discovery Licenses for Sable Island that pre-date even the offshore petroleum acts need to do the right thing and voluntarily relinquish the portion of their licenses occurring on and beneath the island.

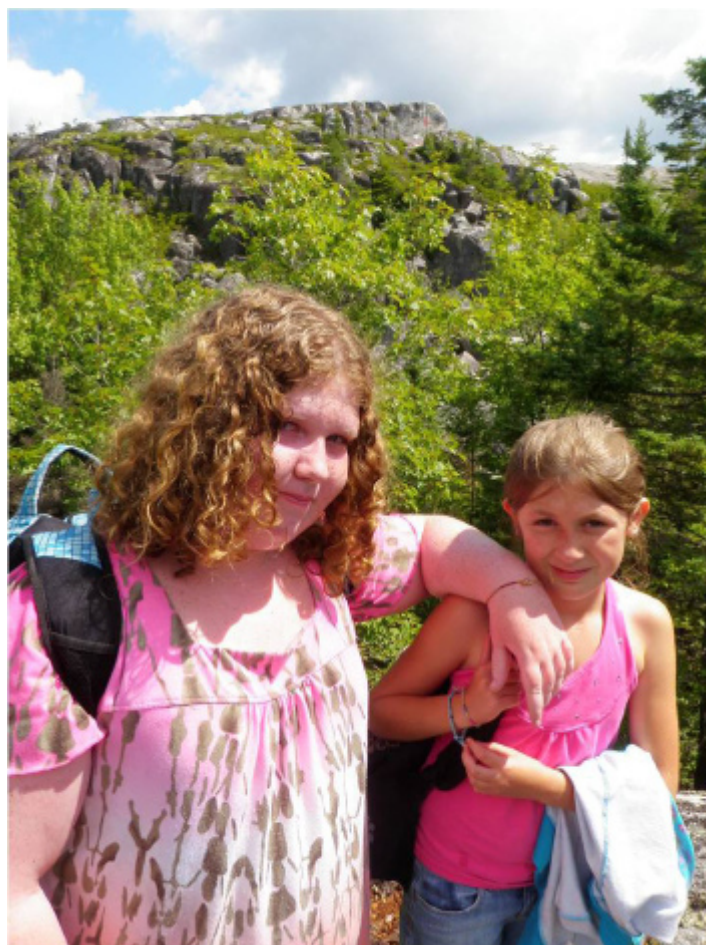
Bridging the ages

By: Rodrigo Menafrá

Throughout the summer, youth groups from across Halifax Regional Municipality and Digby County participated in numerous outdoor activities with CPAWS-NS as part of our “Bridging the Ages” project. The goal was to develop a better understanding and appreciation of nature among youth and raise awareness about the need to protect Nova Scotia’s natural areas. Outdoor activities were led by mentors who shared their outdoor knowledge and skills with the youth.

Some of the activities with the youth included hikes in Labrador Castle, Waverley - Salmon River Long Lake Wilderness Area, and Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area, exploring the history of McNab’s Island, sailing in Mahone Bay, bird watching in Kejimkujik Seaside, a seashore excursion on Long Island, and a walk at Toymaker’s Marsh in Digby.

This project was possible because of the participation of youth groups and coordinators from Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Greater Halifax Area, Boys and Girls clubs of East Dartmouth and Spryfield, youth from Digby Neck and Islands, and the Young Field Naturalists Society of Halifax. Thanks to everyone who helped out.



Above: Harley and Rebecca of the East Dartmouth Boys and Girls Club on a hike to Labrador Castle for Bridging the Ages

Below: Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Greater Halifax Area explore Kejimkujik Seaside National Park



DARE TO BE DEEP



Cross-Canada tour!

Come help us celebrate the long-awaited creation of Canada's first deep sea National Marine Conservation Area in B.C.'s much revered Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve waters

Halifax November 9th, 2010

Location: Dalhousie University
 Scotiabank Auditorium, Marion McCain Arts & Social Sciences Building

Time: 6:30pm

Tickets: \$10 (tickets on sale at door; MEC store 421-2667; Marine Affairs 494-3555)

Help from across the pond



By: Chris Miller

There's talk of Nova Scotia's wilderness over tea in England. Then my phone rang at CPAWS. On the other end was a keen person from across the pond wanting to volunteer with us. It's not every day CPAWS Nova Scotia receives such an offer, especially from so far away. Even less common for someone to spend their own money to come here to volunteer with us as part of their vacation. But, that's exactly what happened this year.

Mell Alkiviades, a volunteer from Surrey, England, recently travelled to Nova Scotia to help CPAWS protect wilderness. Within only a few hours of arriving, we disappeared into the deep forests of the Eastern Shore, checking out high-priority sites for conservation. We also travelled to a remote stretch of coastal wilderness with tidal salt marshes, headlands, and an undisturbed beach, to check on its conservation significance as well. Mell also helped us reach out to our supporters and did an interview with the Chronicle-Herald.

It was interesting talking to Mell and seeing Nova Scotia's wilderness through her eyes. She impressed upon everyone at CPAWS how lucky we are to still have the opportunity to experience remote wilderness here. In England, there are beautiful places but the forests were cut down long ago and the landscape has mostly been carved up for agriculture and settlement.

Mell was only here a week, but in that time she helped us speak-up for Nova Scotia's wilderness. She's also planning to organize a fundraiser for CPAWS overseas and we greatly appreciate the support from our friends in Europe. We wish Mell all the best and extend an open invitation for her to return to Nova Scotia to help us keep up the fight to protect wilderness here. There's certainly lots of work left to do.

Above: The Alkiviades family in London, England (left to right) Lisa, Nin, Amelia, Sophia, Mell, Chris, and John.

Make your voice heard

Clearcutting is a huge problem in Nova Scotia. It's devastating our forests and fragmenting our landscape. Virtually all forest harvesting done in Nova Scotia today is done using clearcuts.

The Minister of Natural Resources has promised to introduce regulations to control the amount of clearcutting occurring in Nova Scotia but the government is under pressure from industry to step back from its previous commitments.

If controlling the problem of clearcutting is important to you, please take a minute to write the Premier of Nova Scotia and Minister of Natural Resources to let them know how you feel.

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Chris Miller

A photograph of a narrow stream flowing through a dense forest. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding greenery. The banks are lined with vibrant green ferns and tall grasses. The background shows a thick stand of trees with light-colored trunks.

CPAWS

**Nova Scotia's
Voice for Wilderness**

Please help us protect nature

Donate today (cpawsns.org)