



## Nature Trust announces bold conservation campaign

*100 Wild Islands: Protecting One of North America's last great coastal island wildernesses*

**HALIFAX, NS (June 25, 2014):** The Nova Scotia Nature Trust (Nature Trust) is embarking on one of the most significant coastal conservation campaigns in Nova Scotia's history. The campaign's ambitious goal is to protect, forever, a vast archipelago of over one hundred wild coastal islands.

This island wilderness, nestled between Clam Harbour beach and Mushaboom Harbour, is one of the province's least known, yet greatest natural treasures. The islands' diverse habitats, from sand beaches, idyllic lagoons, forests, bogs and barrens, and 350 acres of saltmarsh and wetlands have gone largely undisturbed by humans for more than 10,000 years. They support a rich diversity of wildlife, including over 100 species of birds, from eagles and osprey to seabirds and songbirds.



Stretching 30 kilometres along the coast and encompassing over 250 kilometres of pristine shoreline, the Nature Trust's proposed "Bay of Islands Coastal Wilderness" is truly a natural wonder worth protecting. There are increasingly few opportunities to protect island wilderness of this scale and ecological richness anywhere in the world.

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To fund this ambitious conservation effort, the Nature Trust has undertaken a \$7 million capital campaign. In just over a year, the Nature Trust has raised an impressive \$4 million through foundations, businesses and individual donors.

Bonnie Sutherland, Executive Director of the Nature Trust, is confident the community will step up in support. "We love our coast, and here is a chance for everyone to be part of protecting our coastal legacy, on a scale we didn't even realize still existed anywhere. We have a globally significant 100 island coastal wilderness, right in our own backyard and it's ours to protect."

Major supporters include an anonymous lead donor, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, TD Bank Group, Environment Canada's Eco-Action Community Funding Program, Mountain Equipment Co-op, David Wilson and family, Jim Lawley and Eric Thomson, O'Regan's, Paul Scott, and the RBC Foundation.



"TD is thrilled to support this incredible campaign as it focuses on the importance of protecting and preserving coastal habitats," said Anna Iacobelli, Senior Vice President, Atlantic Region, TD Bank Group. "Not only will this help provide a refuge for Canada's natural wilderness, but also maintain these valuable areas for generations to come."

At an event in Halifax this evening, the Nature Trust launched its public "100 Wild Islands Campaign" to raise the remaining funds required to protect the entire "Bay of Islands Coastal Wilderness". Through the generous



gesture of an anonymous donor, every new dollar donated will be matched one-to-one. The Nature Trust needs \$1.5 million in donations, which will be matched by the anonymous donor for a total of \$3 million, to achieve their campaign goal.

While the fundraising goal is ambitious, the campaign is a bargain. Including the value of donated lands, easements and the leveraged protection of the government-owned islands, the campaign will ultimately protect over 100

islands (over 7000 acres of land), valued at well over 15 million dollars—all for the price of just one or two islands in many parts of the world.



Little was known by scientists about the islands before the Nature Trust's research began three years ago, and discoveries since then have been fascinating. Scientists, for example, have discovered the presence of temperate rainforests, "old process" forests undisturbed by humans since the last ice age, rare freshwater lakes, high potential for globally rare plants and lichens, colonies of nesting seabirds unknown for this area, and the presence of species of high

conservation concern including Common Eiders and endangered Harlequin Ducks. Researchers are excited about all remains to be discovered in this vast, ecologically rich and unspoiled wilderness.

Dr. Martin Willison, Professor of Environmental Studies at Dalhousie University, noted that the area is especially valuable because extensive areas of its coastal ecosystems remain virtually pristine.

"These benchmark ecosystems are potentially of global ecological significance," said Dr. Willison.

Success in protecting the entire "Bay of Islands Coastal Wilderness" depends on an unprecedented level of partnership and cooperation since island ownership is partly private and partly Crown-owned. Through this conservation campaign, the Nature Trust will protect 3000 acres of land with over 30 private island owners, in cooperation with the local families who have stewarded and enjoyed the islands for generations. It is reaching out to partner with government to protect the remaining 4,000 acres of Crown islands. With all parties on board, the entire wilderness can be protected, forever.

Progress to date has been significant. The Nature Trust announced its first achievement, protection of the archipelago's flagship island, the 530 acre Borgles Island, in October 2013, adding to the Nature Trust's existing Shelter Cove and Ship Rock Conservation Lands. Many island owners, from fifth generation fishing families to summer residents, have already come forward agreeing to protect their land, either through conservation easements, donations of land, or agreeing to sell the land to become part of the wilderness.



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Complementing Nature Trust's vision, the Province of Nova Scotia intends to designate all the Crown islands within the Bay of Islands archipelago, 4,000 acres of land, as part of the Our Parks and Protected Areas plan. With private and public lands combined, the campaign has already achieved commitments that will protect more than 75% of the islands.



The Nature Trust is now inviting the public to support this effort through sharing the message and making a pledge. Every dollar donated will be matched to protect Nova Scotia's greatest coastal treasure.

For more information, visit [www.100wildislands.ca](http://www.100wildislands.ca).



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