



Bayne: Intention is for the town and the nature trust to work together to protect the property, Kirk Staratt

Wolfville, Nature Trust work toward conservation easement

By Kirk Staratt
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The Town of Wolfville and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust have partnered to protect a large piece of property owned by the town and located in the County of Kings.

Wolfville Mayor Bob Stead and Nova Scotia Nature Trust representative Duncan Bayne made a presentation recently to Kings County council's committee of the whole about the proposed Wolfville Watershed Nature Preserve.

Stead said the 605-acre property has been secured since the 1930s and was used as the town's water source before it moved to a groundwater supply in 1994. He said the town has funded a lot of work with the property, including the consolidation of deeds, and would construct a small parking lot for the site.

"This would be the first agreement between a municipality and the nature trust," he said.

Bayne said 75 per cent of the land in Nova Scotia is owned privately, the largest percentage in Canada aside from PEI, and 95 per cent of our coastal property is owned privately. T

his means that a lot of our surviving old growth forest is in private ownership.

The nature trust is a charitable organization that works with private landowners to protect land through purchases, easements and donations.

He said Wolfville's 605-acre property has significant wildlife features, including old growth hemlock

and climax forest. It borders on 22 other properties. Less than 0.01 per cent of Nova Scotia's forests are classified as old growth. Bayne said one reason why the old growth on the Wolfville property survived is that it's located on a steep slope.

The forest features deadwood and dead standing trees, important habitat for some species.

There are two major brooks running through the property and a wetland. There is a number of rare plant species.

Bayne said the intention is for the town and the nature trust to work together to protect the property through a conservation easement. Under the legal agreement, the town would eliminate development rights on the property, but would maintain ownership.

The agreement would be registered with the Registry of Deeds and would continue even if the land were sold. The nature trust will hold the easement, monitor the land and enforce the conditions of the easement.

He said that, eventually, the old growth forest would spread throughout the remainder of the property.

Following the presentation, Acadia University graduate student Janice Flynn presented a summary of the Wolfville Watershed Property Preliminary Report she submitted to the Town of Wolfville.

Her presentation included a history of land use on the property and an ecological description of the