

## Guardian of the Land Introductory Series: Gregor Wilson and Erica van Vulpen

### A conversation with Gregor Wilson, Nova Scotia Nature Trust Board Vice Chair and one of our Guardians of the Land.

*By Andrew Robinson*

Gregor Wilson can trace his family connection to Nova Scotia back to some of the earliest days of European settlement. It's fair to say his roots run deep, and it is this depth that, in part, inspired him to engage with the Nature Trust when he returned home after several years in BC.



“I’ve always loved being outdoors,” he recalls. “As a child, many of my fondest memories are from lakes, beaches and mountains in Northern Nova Scotia. When not at the cottage in summer, family trips along the Parrsboro Shore were always fun for exploring.”

“When I graduated I decided the outdoors would steer my life. I initially worked in the ski industry, but after being inspired by a Coastal Adventures slide show of the area that would later become the 100 Wild Islands, I began kayak guiding. Skiing and kayaking allowed me to work in places like Banff, Tofino, Haida

Gwaii and Japan, and inspired me to operate my outdoor adventure business among the islands of Nova Scotia’s Eastern Shore.”

Gregor explained how his passion for the outdoors led to his work with, and support for, the Nature Trust.

“When I returned full time to Nova Scotia I was ready to get involved in protecting our natural environment. I have a deeply held belief that nature should be left wild. I wanted to work with an organization that shared my values about the environment, and the Nature Trust felt like home. That was in 2003. I see myself as a ‘Lifer’ now,” he laughs.

Gregor believes we should all do our bit to preserve our natural legacy. “There’s no more land,” he observed, “and the wild places we have are disappearing.”

Gregor feels we have to do what we can to preserve the wild places that remain. “We can all play our part,” he says, “Some people help in the field, some support the office administration, and others might be skilled fundraisers or able to donate to the Nature Trust.”

As with many people, Gregor and his wife Erica van Vulpen, first became donors to a campaign that was near and dear to their hearts. Gregor’s grandmother grew up down the shore from Partridge Island. Known as heaven or Wa’so’q by the Mi’kmaq, Partridge Island now protects rare and threatened species, a wonderful hiking trail and renowned geology. Gregor was also a donor and campaign team member for the 100 Wild Islands Campaign.

“Many people like to donate to save a property,” Gregor notes, “And that is absolutely fantastic, but we also need to fundraise for the hum drum, the daily expenses, and the long-term costs associated with stewardship. This is why Erica and I now decided to become Guardians of the Land. By making an undesignated, multi-year pledge, we can help the Nature Trust create a robust plan, safe in the knowledge that the essential funds to operate are available.”