

2017/2018  
GRATITUDE REPORT

# *Forever Wild*



Scott Munn

[nsnt.ca](http://nsnt.ca)





## OUR MANDATE

*The Nova Scotia Nature Trust works to protect Nova Scotia's outstanding natural legacy through private land conservation.*

Nick Hawkins

How do we ensure that the Nature Trust will still be here in 100 years, to fulfil our stewardship promise? These are the challenges addressed by our ambitious strategic plan, "Forever Wild."

Thanks to your support, we've begun moving this plan forward. We have advanced strategic conservation planning in 2017, identifying the most critical and strategic opportunities for land conservation. We've created new conservation partnerships and explored new approaches to caring for, and managing our growing network of conservation lands and increasingly complex land stewardship challenges.

We are spending time with our inspiring supporters, exploring how to better connect their passion and philanthropic interests with powerful opportunities for conservation impact. And we are investigating creative new revenue streams, from legacy gifts to business partnerships, and recruiting energetic leaders and volunteers to help build reliable, sustaining funding for the future.

It is your passion, dedication, generous support and adventurous spirit that propel us forward, that allow us to dream big, and to achieve even bigger! For that, we are truly grateful.

Thank you.

*Message from our*

## Executive Director

Protecting the wild is a mission that continues to grow in urgency and significance. The incredible places you help us to save, and the stories of good news for nature that you make possible, provide a welcome refuge in a world of growing turmoil and environmental crisis. Together, we are making a tangible and lasting difference for nature, and for people too.

New protected areas bring our conservation network to almost 100 conservation sites, and over 11,000 acres of Nova Scotia's most significant and irreplaceable natural areas. As we move towards a quarter century of saving land, many more exciting opportunities lie just ahead. Yet how do we win the race against biodiversity loss, while ensuring that our growing legacy of conservation lands is truly protected, forever?

Homes for  
endangered species  
protected

18



95

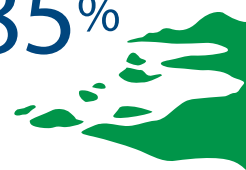


of Nova Scotia's most  
special wild places  
protected, forever

346

acres saved in 2017/18:  
11,000 acres total  
protected in Nova Scotia

85%



of the 100 Wild Islands  
archipelago protected—  
a 7000 acre coastal  
wilderness, stretching  
30km along the coast

# Impact of Your Support

## LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM: SAVING THE WILD

Through science-based conservation planning, in collaboration with government, academic and other conservation experts, we determine strategic conservation opportunities and priority landscapes, and habitats, then prioritize specific private land parcels to target for protection. We reach out to these landowners to build awareness of the land's conservation significance and options for conservation, and to inspire conservation action. Technical support and guidance is provided to landowners keen to move forward. We then proceed with permanent, legal land protection including such necessary steps as ecological and boundary surveys, appraisals, legal work and stewardship planning. This is why even land donations come with significant costs. Stewardship endowment funds must also be raised to cover the costs of managing and protecting conservation lands, forever. **You make all of this possible.**

### Key Conservation Achievements in 2017/18

- Saved six new Conservation Lands that include:
  - » More critical habitat for migratory shorebirds, seabirds and forest birds
  - » 285 acres of freshwater habitat critical for endangered species
  - » Rare and imperilled coastal and old forest habitats
- Protected over 11,000 acres of land and nearly 100 conservation sites to date. Over 85% of the 100 Wild Islands archipelago is protected, forever
- Advanced conservation work on new sites to be secured in 2018/19 (including Cape Breton and Cobequid Highlands, Bras d'Or, St. Mary's, Barren Meadow and Halifax)
- Planned a new Urban Wildlands Program to protect greenspace, to provide opportunities to explore nature close to metropolitan

neighbourhoods and to build our stewardship and volunteer capacity

- Created an online interactive map for our 32 sites protecting endangered species
- Completed Nova Scotia's first prioritization for shorebird and seabird habitat (using Dalhousie research, Geographic Information Systems modelling and expert review) creating an exciting tool to guide future bird conservation
- Conducted targeted landowner outreach with owners of critical habitat for endangered plants and animals and key conservation sites on the St. Mary's River, 100 Wild Islands, Mabou Highlands, Hog Lake, Herbert River and the Purcells Cove Backlands. From these seeds grow our land conservation successes
- Completed conservation analyses for hundreds of land donation/sale inquiries
- Birds Eye View volunteers completed 47 bird lists for 27 sites, helping to prioritize new lands for protection and to guide land management decisions
- Participated on scientific recovery teams for nationally endangered species, collaborating on species recovery and stewardship
- Participated in consultations on national and provincial conservation policies, legislation and programs
- Collaborated with diverse partners in the Kespukwilt Conservation Collaborative (Southwest Nova Scotia)--conservation planning, stewardship and exploring/integrating Indigenous conservation perspectives
- Created a best practice guide for conservation easements in Atlantic Canada, with colleagues in NB and PEI



# Conservation Achievements

## YOU'VE MADE POSSIBLE

Scott Leslie

### OUR CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS

Saving Endangered Species  
Conserving Critical Habitat for Birds  
Protecting our Natural Legacy  
Safeguarding our Natural Resources  
Preserving our Natural Treasures

#### BARREN MEADOW TURTLE SANCTUARY

*Generously donated by Gail Freeman*

This new 112 acre property supports riverside fens, brooks, meadows and rocky outcrops vital for endangered Blanding's turtles' foraging, nesting and over-wintering. The site adds to the growing assemblage of contiguous habitat at Barren Meadow, now encompassing over 4500 acres of Nature Trust lands and government-owned land proposed as Nature Reserve. The turtle sanctuary provides hope for the future of these imperilled turtles, with interconnected freshwater and forest habitats, safe from the threats of roads, cars and cottage development.



Blanding's Turtle, Barren Meadow

#### PORT JOLI CONSERVATION LANDS

*Generously donated by the Nova Scotia Bird Society*

With many bird populations in alarming global decline, these new south shore conservation lands are great news for birds and bird conservation. The site adds to a growing network of protected areas around Port Joli Harbour, a globally recognized Important Bird Area. The property's estuary, tidally influenced lagoon and tidal flats provide ideal feeding grounds for migratory birds travelling the "Atlantic Flyway." Thousands of American Black Ducks and Green-winged Teal, shorebirds and songbirds depend on this area to refuel during their incredible migratory journeys. Endangered Piping Plovers nest on nearby beaches and a diversity of diving ducks and 4000 to 5000 Canada Geese overwinter in the warm estuaries and protected inlets.



Least Sandpiper, Port Joli



Gerard Island, 100 Wild Islands

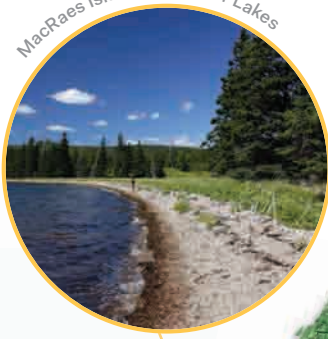
#### GERARD ISLAND

Gerard Island, the largest island in the 100 Wild Islands, is ecologically rich and diverse, encompassing vast undisturbed coastal forests, bogs, barrens, cobble beaches, wetlands, eelgrass meadows and saltmarsh flats. The adjacent rock-strewn bay, "the Bawleen", provides a refuge for terns and eiders, endangered Harlequin Ducks and many curious seals. New conservation lands acquired on the island bring over 85% of the island, and 85% of the entire 100 Wild Islands, into protected status.





MacRaes Island, Bras d'Or Lakes



Forest on Marble Mountain, Lime Hill



Mitchells Pool, St. Mary's River



## MACRAES ISLAND CONSERVATION LANDS

*Generously donated by Alastair Saunders & Chris Corston*

Located in one of the world's largest inland seas, MacRaes Island comprises 80 acres of beautiful forest and wetlands, ringed with pebble beaches. One of the few islands in the Bras d'Or Lake, the site protects significant habitats for a diversity of birds and other wildlife. The island and nearby Lime Hill Conservation lands add to a growing network of lands in the Bras d'Or watershed protected by the Nature Trust, the Province and other conservation partners.

## LIME HILL CONSERVATION LANDS

*Generously donated by Alastair Saunders & Chris Corston*

Advancing our conservation focus on unique forests, and large, interconnected wilderness areas, the new Lime Hill Conservation Lands extend from the shoreline of Bras d'Or Lake, up Marble Mountain to the proposed North Mountain Wilderness Area. This property encompasses 100 acres of old growth forests, brooks and marshes, providing an important ecological corridor connecting the lake to the inland mountain wilderness. These new conservation lands and MacRaes Island are part of the internationally recognized Bras d'Or UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

## MITCHELLS POOL CONSERVATION LANDS

*Generously donated by David & Faye Sobey*

Just north of Sherbrooke, this legacy gift protects 30 acres of beautiful floodplain forest, a rare ecosystem that is highly important for watershed health. Its large oaks, maples, and birch provide shade and control runoff, keeping the river cool, clear and deep which is essential for the river's aquatic life. The intact riparian forests, stillwaters, brooks, swamps and islands are home to a diversity of wildlife, from ducks and endangered forest birds to amphibians and reptiles, including endangered Wood Turtles. Our 9<sup>th</sup> conservation site on the St. Mary's, Mitchells Pool brings the total protected river corridor to 800 acres.



**“***The property is in good hands with the Nature Trust. They are committed to looking after it, forever.*

David Sobey, land donor and supporter (with son Paul)

Photo credits (clockwise from Turtle-Brennan Caverhill, NS Nature Trust, Scott Munn, Scott Leslie, Simon d'Entremont)

# Thanks to Your Support

Mabou Highlands Site Monitoring



“  
*Our conservation lands network has grown significantly, especially in the last few years. These lands face increasing threats from climate change, habitat destruction and recreational demands. So now, more than ever, we need volunteers to help monitor and steward these special places.*

Ross Firth  
Director of Conservation

## STEWARDSHIP: CARING FOR THE LANDS WE PROTECT

When land is entrusted to our care, we commit to protecting it, forever. **You help us to meet this promise** by maintaining an active land stewardship program, including conservation and management planning, field research, property monitoring, enforcement of conservation restrictions, and habitat stewardship and restoration. Ongoing community outreach helps to reduce threats and to identify potential conservation allies.

We rely on the expertise and volunteer energy of many conservation friends, including scientists, conservation partners, neighbouring landowners and volunteers, in particular our incredible volunteer “Property Guardians” who act as our eyes and ears on the ground and ambassadors in the community.

Exponential growth of our conservation lands over the past 24 years is great news for biodiversity conservation! But with success comes increasing land stewardship challenges. We’ve begun planning an exciting new stewardship program for effectively managing the growing network of land entrusted to our care, and the increasingly complex management challenges we face—both now and well into the future. Your support makes all this possible.

## Key Achievements in 2017/18:

- Carried out monitoring and on-the-ground stewardship for our growing conservation lands network (nearly 100 sites!)
- Completed site assessments, baseline studies and management plans for our new conservation lands
- Recruited, trained and coordinated 70 Property Guardians who are actively helping to care for 62 conservation lands
- Began reviewing best practices in land stewardship and management to scale-up our capacity, technology, expertise and resources to meet growing stewardship demands
- Initiated planning for a major Property Guardian recruitment drive
- Initiated a joint management strategy with the Province to guide conservation and stewardship of the vast and complex 100 Wild Islands
- Began exploring options to improve and expand the trail network at Purcells Cove and in the 100 Wild Islands
- Participated in the Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership, guiding environmentally-sensitive and sustainable research, education, recreation and ecotourism for the eastern shore

Beach Cleanup at Hemeons Head





- Created a management plan for Hemeons Head, incorporating community outreach, open houses, and a special project with Acadia Environmental and Sustainability Studies' students. Initiated experimental habitat restoration to remove an invasive plant species
- Launched a new project with Acadia and the Town of Wolfville reviewing management approaches to the Wolfville Watershed Nature Preserve

## EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Our unique educational experiences help to build awareness of land conservation issues and opportunities, to increase support for land conservation, and to reduce threats to wild spaces and species.

The educational efforts you support also provide Nova Scotians, young and old, with the opportunity to experience, explore and learn about nature right in nature's classroom. Our education program provides citizens with the knowledge, skills and training they need to take an active role in saving and stewarding the places they love.

## CONNECTING WITH NATURE EVENT SERIES

Our popular "Connecting with Nature" series provides exciting opportunities for Nova Scotians to experience some of the best wild spaces in the province, while learning first-hand about nature and our work protecting natural areas. This year, through your generosity, we hosted a well-attended series of guided hikes, paddling excursions and boat tours. We also held community events celebrating new protected areas in Pleasant River and on the St. Mary's River.



# 56

media stories  
(tv, radio, newspaper & online)



# 3.1

 million

estimated reach of  
media stories



# 21



educational events and guided excursions exploring and celebrating our conservation lands, and helping over 850 Nova Scotians learn about nature and nature conservation.

“

*We were greeted by a magnificent sunset and breathtaking view. As the evening light faded, we headed into the forest for some owl scouting and star gazing and were not disappointed. It was a delightful and informative experience of exploration and discovery that I hope to repeat next winter.*

Susan Foshay, snowshoe hike participant, Expedition for the Earth team member and supporter

## STAY IN TOUCH!

Join our e-list today!

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Follow us for the latest news:



# Our Supporters

**Our conservation achievements are only possible because of the dedicated support and generosity of our donors, advisors, land donors, conservation partners and volunteers. Thank you! You are creating a tangible and lasting legacy, keeping Nova Scotia forever wild!**

## LEGACY CIRCLE

Our legacy circle members have generously given a gift of land, conservation easement or other planned gift (such as naming us as the beneficiary of a bequest, life insurance policy or RRSP)

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The late Gertrud  
Waseem  
Jim Wolford  
& Patricia Hawes



Anne Campbell and John Lindsay were our first Guardians of the Land, and not only that, they came up with the concept themselves. During our landmark 100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign, Anne and John decided to give the gift of unrestricted and multi-year funding to the Nature Trust, rather than donating a gift restricted to the Islands.

They knew that support is more easily raised for a specific project (especially saving land), and felt it was vital instead to provide funding to sustain the organization--funding that was flexible, and could be used more strategically. We quickly adopted the idea, and thanks to their leadership, we now have more than 25 Guardians of the Land, and counting. Such unrestricted, ongoing funding provides certainty and the ability to plan ahead and to be more strategic in our work.

# Our Supporters

Nick Hawkins

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Every donation makes a difference and even the smallest gift helps to  
build the solid foundation that makes all our work possible!



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## A NATURAL LEADER

For the past 12 years, Nature's Way of Canada (formerly Ascenta Health), has been a valued partner through the 1% for the Planet program, contributing nearly \$280,000 to our conservation efforts. Through this global program, founded in 2002 by Nature Trust supporter Yvon Chouinard (founder of Patagonia), participating companies donate

1% of sales annually to protect the planet. Nature's Way, headquartered in Dartmouth, is committed to "striving to provide health and healing through the power of nature" and is achieving this in more ways than one thanks to their generous support of our work.



“

*When we first saw Nova Scotia, we knew this beautiful province would be our new home in Canada. Volunteering with the Nature Trust lets me play a small part in preserving the wild places that make this province so magnificent - and it doesn't hurt that the team I get to work with are such awesome and welcoming people.*

Andy Robinson, volunteer



## VOLUNTEERS

Hundreds of volunteers make the success of the Nature Trust possible, helping out in diverse ways from undertaking field work and running special events to providing expert advice and guidance, participating on committees, taking photographs and videos, writing articles as well as countless tasks in the office.

We are grateful for all of you who dedicate your time, talent and energy to advancing conservation in Nova Scotia!

To join our volunteer team today, visit: [nsnt.ca](http://nsnt.ca).

Stay tuned for exciting plans to expand our volunteer program.

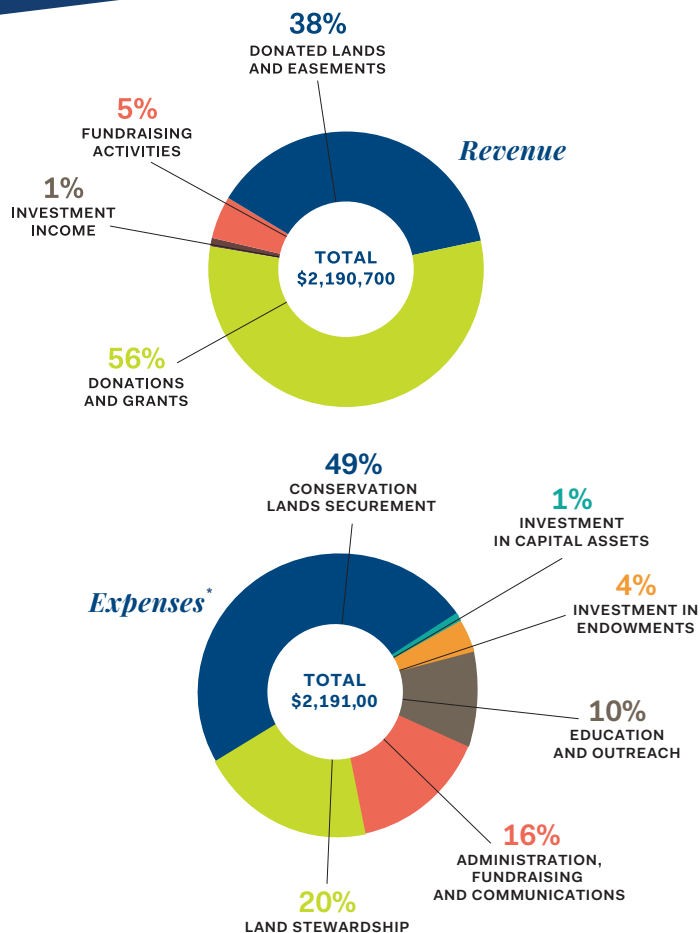
# Financials

In 2017/18, we invested \$1.7 million in our charitable programs (land conservation, stewardship, education and engagement). We maintained a healthy balance sheet, with no long-term debt, \$13 million in conservation lands and \$4.4 million in endowment funds – a testament to our commitment to organizational sustainability and meeting our long-term land stewardship commitments. Our financial statements are audited annually by an external auditor.

Investments are managed by investment professionals Connor, Clark and Lunn, overseen by our Investment Committee, and subject to our updated investment policy.

## NATURE'S HOUSE

Acquiring our own building reduced operating costs significantly, advancing long-term sustainability goals. Plans to convert the 100-year-old property to "Nature's House" will bring our nature conservation mission into the city, enhancing native biodiversity, water and energy conservation.



\*Includes investments in endowments and capital assets

## INVEST IN NATURE

Another incredible year of conservation gains lies ahead, with exciting new land campaigns, innovations in land stewardship, a province-wide volunteer drive and new philanthropic opportunities.

Your support makes all the difference. Please give generously to keep Nova Scotia wild, forever.

**Donate today.**

**nsnt.ca or 902-425-5263**

The Nature Trust is operated by a skilled professional staff under the guidance of a volunteer Board of Directors.

### BOARD MEMBERS (2017/2018)

Rick Emberley (Chair)  
Gregor Wilson (Vice Chair)  
Byron Corner (Treasurer)  
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Honorary Director: Alice Reed

### STAFF (2017/18)

Bonnie Sutherland (Executive Director)  
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