



For Immediate Release

Nature Trust Brings “Hope for the Coast” with Extraordinary Coastal Conservation Wins

Significant Island Saved; Vast Coastline Poised for Protection

SEPTEMBER 3, 2024, HALIFAX, NS – Today, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced the largest acquisition of privately owned coastline in the province’s history. They celebrated both the successful purchase of Cape Negro Island, one of the province’s largest coastal islands, and a deal to acquire the adjacent Blanche Peninsula, one of the best remaining coastal wilderness opportunities of its size in the province. In all, the Nature Trust will add nearly 1,034 hectares (2,556 acres) to Nova Scotia’s coastal legacy. With a September 30 deadline to raise the required funds, they urge Nova Scotians to help, and to give ***Hope for the Coast***.

Cape Negro Island Saved

The first remarkable and much-needed win for coastal conservation is Cape Negro Island, one of the province’s largest coastal islands at 317 hectares (784 acres), located at the southwest tip of Nova Scotia. This scale of undeveloped, intact coastal habitats is rare, and beyond size, the island is highly significant ecologically. Comprised of two markedly different landscapes linked by a sand bar, the island provides important habitat for a diversity of birds, including many migratory, nesting and overwintering species. The island also holds historic and cultural value, once supporting a year-round community including dozens of homes, a church and school, still evident in the remnant foundations, rock walls, roads and cemeteries. Local community members on the mainland have expressed their happiness that the island, privately-owned and at risk of development, is now protected forever, and available for future generations to enjoy and to help steward.

The Nature Trust is supporting renaming of Cape Negro Island, through a provincial derogatory placename process. The protected area will be known by the new island name.

Cape Negro Island’s protection was made possible by the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program (Land Trust Conservation Fund), the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, and generous community donations.

QUOTE:

“Through programs like the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, the Government of Canada is making progress toward its goal of conserving 30 percent of land and water in Canada by 2030. By working with partners such as the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, we are helping to protect the natural environment in Nova Scotia and across the country. Protecting coastal ecosystems and migratory bird habitats plays a vital role in helping to halt and

reverse biodiversity loss and contributes to the recovery of species at risk. Only by engaging in a whole-of-society approach, working together, can we meet our conservation goals.”
– **The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change**

Blanche Peninsula: An Irreplaceable Coastal Conservation Opportunity

In even more exciting news for the coast, the Nature Trust secured a deal to acquire the adjacent Blanche Peninsula—a one-of-a-kind coastal gem of very high ecological priority. At almost 717 hectares (1772 acres), 10 times the size of Point Pleasant Park, the peninsula is one of the last highly biodiverse and intact coastal lands of its size in Nova Scotia. It supports over fourteen kilometers of pristine coastline, and diverse habitats including extensive coastal barrens, bogs, forests, wetlands, beaches and barachois ponds. Recognized in the scientific community as one of the most important coastal peninsulas in the province for bird conservation and recovery, it supports crucial stopover sites for migratory birds, and habitat for overwintering and nesting birds, including species at risk such as Barn Swallow, Bobolink, Canada Warbler and Piping Plover. Preliminary field research identified 174 bird species, as well as endangered lichens.

The two properties add to a growing assemblage of land trust and government coastal protected areas on the south shore, part of an area recognized as conservation priority nationally and even globally. They preserve essential ecological connectivity, linking together critical migratory stopovers, and providing important nature-based solutions to climate change impacts along our coast.

Saving Blanche Peninsula is the Nature Trust’s most ambitious conservation project in the group’s 30-year history—protecting nearly 1800 acres of incredible coastline and requiring over four and a half million dollars to achieve. But according to Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland, the Nature Trust felt compelled to act.

“With only 5% of our coast protected, over 85% privately owned and facing unprecedented threats, and the urgent global call to action in saving land, particularly the coast, we simply had to act. Blanche Peninsula is likely the last chance to protect intact coastal habitat at this scale anywhere in Nova Scotia.”

The deadline to save Blanche is less than five weeks away, but hopes are high for success.

The Nature Trust’s government partners have already stepped up, with \$4.45 million in potential funds including federal and provincial grants. The Nature Trust now needs just \$150,000 in community support to unlock these funds and save Blanche Peninsula.

“We are incredibly grateful to our government partners for their generous support, and confident the community will do their part for the coast. Coastal protection and public access to the coast are a huge concern for Nova Scotians, and here is a chance for people to step up, to take action that makes an important, tangible and lasting impact in saving the coast they love,” added Sutherland.

Both coastal conservation acquisitions are part of the Nature Trust's **Hope for the Coast** campaign, an effort to secure at least 5,000 acres of critical coastal habitat. With so much bad news for nature and impacts of not protecting our coast more evident every day, the Nature Trust's boundless passion and conservation ambition does indeed provide much-needed **Hope for the Coast**.

Tax-receipted charitable donations can be made to save Blanche Peninsula and to give [Hope for the Coast](https://nsnt.ca) at nsnt.ca.

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ABOUT:

Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP)

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique partnership that supports the creation and recognition of protected and conserved areas through the acquisition of private land and private interest in land. To date, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$440 million in the Program, which has been matched with more than \$870 million in contributions raised by Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trust community leading to the protection and conservation of more than 700,000 hectares of ecologically sensitive lands.

Hope for the Coast

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust's Hope for the Coast fundraising initiative is an urgent and targeted effort to save 5,000 acres of Nova Scotia's most ecologically significant coastal lands. Funds raised help to secure priority coastal lands through land donations, conservation agreements or purchases and ensure they are protected, forever.

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