



Connecting with Nature series invites nature lovers to celebrate the great outdoors

May 1, 2019 (Dartmouth, NS) - The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is pleased to announce their 2019 Connecting with Nature event series, sponsored by East Coast Credit Union, Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline, and Stewart McKelvey. This year offers eight different opportunities to Connect with Nature, from guided hikes and kayak trips to stewardship excursions and property celebrations. The series provides hands-on educational experiences exploring lands protected by the Nature Trust across the province.

For those looking for an exceptionally unique opportunity, this year the Nature Trust and partners at Acadia University are offering an exclusive overnight stewardship excursion to Bon Portage Island over the weekend of June 7 to 9. Once home to lighthouse keepers, Evelyn and Morrill Richardson, the island was donated to Acadia University in 1964 for island conservation and the study of natural history, ecology and wildlife management. In 2012, the University signed a conservation easement with the Nature Trust to ensure the protection of the island and its bird populations in perpetuity. The easement allows the University to continue to use the island for research and education, while protecting its natural values from the possibility of future development and other negative environmental impacts.

A three kilometre journey by boat will bring participants to the island, where they will help with stewardship activities like trail maintenance that supports access needed for research and monitoring of the island's seabird colonies. Bon Portage Island is home to over 50 species of breeding birds, including the largest breeding colony of Leach's storm-petrel south of Newfoundland. Participants will have the opportunity to visit and stay at the Evelyn and Morrill Richardson Field Station in Biology and learn about conservation and research efforts there from Nature Trust staff and Acadia researchers. With a limited number of spaces available, this will be a rare chance to visit this special and remote island off Nova Scotia's south shore—a perfect trip for adventurers, as well as nature and bird enthusiasts alike who are keen to volunteer in support of nature conservation.

With the success of the recent Lasting Landscapes Campaign, in which 17 new properties were protected by the Nature Trust in early 2019, there is much to celebrate this year. A number of the project areas will be featured, starting with a guided hike on the St. Mary's River coming up on May 25th. Later, on July 27th, a guided hike in the Mabou Highlands and celebration in the town of Mabou, Cape Breton will mark the protection of over 2000 acres of coastal cliffs, forested ravines and breathtaking hiking trails. One of our most popular events, the 100 Wild Islands Hike and Paddle will take place on July 20th, offering participants a chance to kayak around the rugged Eastern Shore coastline and visit the white sand double crescent beach of the Shelter Cove Wilderness Sanctuary.

"These events are a great way to get outdoors, experience these precious natural places, discover why they are so special and learn about how we protect them," says David Hodd, Stewardship Manager for the Nature Trust. "Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors, we are able to offer these

opportunities to connect with nature, through which people will better appreciate and value some of Nova Scotia's most beautiful wild places."

With the popularity of the events increasing each year, the Nature Trust has looked to corporate partners to help keep costs to both the organization and participants low. Those partnerships with Nova Scotia's business community have increased this year, with three companies taking on lead partnership roles.

Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline continues its partnership with the Nature Trust, returning for its fourth year as a Connecting with Nature sponsor. "Even though Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline is an energy company and the Nature Trust is a conservation organization, we still have a lot in common," says Steve Rankin, Director of External Relations. "We both value environmental protection and place a high importance on long-term relationships when it comes to shared land use. As a company, we understand the importance of environmental stewardship and work hard to minimize our impact. We're very pleased to support Connecting with Nature, which reflects these shared values and encourages us to become involved in the natural world that surrounds this beautiful place."

Another returning partner, East Coast Credit Union, renewed for their third year as a program sponsor.

"East Coast Credit Union is very happy to support the Connecting with Nature Series," says Sally van de Wiel, VP Operations. "In an age of artificial intelligence, climate change and constant demands in technology, we are pleased to be a part of supporting an organization that provides opportunities for our community members to connect with nature. We especially appreciate all the work the Nature Trust is doing for residents of Nova Scotia by protecting unique areas in Nova Scotia to enjoy for generations."

The newest partner for the Connecting with Nature series is first-time sponsor Stewart McKelvey, the Atlantic Canadian law firm.

"We are thrilled to partner with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust on the Connecting with Nature event series as a way to preserve and protect our beautiful lands in Nova Scotia," says Stewart McKelvey CEO and Managing Partner Lydia Bugden. "The Connecting with Nature series aligns with our firm's wellness initiative to encourage employees to lead healthy lifestyles inside and outside of the office, and we look forward to enjoying the unique health and wellness opportunities offered by the series."

Connecting with Nature events are open to everyone, however registration is limited to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all. For the full event schedule, updates and registration information, please visit nsnt.ca/events.

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Events calendar available at www.nsnt.ca/media

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