

Dave and Seely Alder: Wilderness Enthusiasts and Property Guardians

By Andy Robinson, Nature Trust Volunteer Writer



Dave and Seely Alder recently spoke with me about their volunteer work as Property Guardians for the Nature Trust. I asked Dave what inspires their passion:

“We both thrive in nature; it inspires and revitalizes us. We touch base with nature every day of the year. It can be a blizzard out and we go snow shoeing out our back door into 50 acres of our neighbour’s property. In the summer, we can kayak right off our front yard and enjoy the magic of the loons and a visiting eagle. Nature gives us so much, we just have to give something back. That’s why we got involved with the Nature Trust as donors and volunteers.”

Neither are native Nova Scotians. Dave is originally from Northern Ontario, and Seely is from New Brunswick. They met in Halifax after Dave was posted here when he was in the Navy (ironically, they met at the YMCA!), and their shared passion for the outdoors soon saw their relationship blossom. Today they enjoy an active retirement in Mount Uniacke.

“Because we are outdoors so much, mountain biking, hiking, kayaking and canoeing, we decided to channel some of that energy into giving back to nature. We chose to become Property Guardians for the Devil’s Jaw and the Herbert River Conservation Lands, about 5km from home as the crow flies, but half a day by kayak from the south end of Herbert River to the Devil’s Jaw rapids.”

“You can count on a full day of fun, but exhausting work to see the property,” said Dave. “We’ve also found a few other novel ways to get into different points and over it. We’ve hiked and mountain biked in from the Villages of Long Lake community, I have used an off-road motorcycle, and I’ve flown from one end to the other in a small two-seater bush plane, and covered the whole property up and back in 10 minutes.”

Dave and Seely are certainly an inspirational couple, welcoming and passionate about life, nature and adventure. Seely’s cross-Canada cycle ride is a perfect example: *“In 2017, I cycled 6100kms between Halifax NS and Victoria BC to raise money for the Alzheimer Society, and for the sheer adventure. Dave carried a spare bike on the back of our small Honda Fit full of gear. We were on the road for 123 days out and back. We camped in a small tent, stayed in Mom and Pop motels, and visited family and friends along the way. It was a fun, slow way to savour Canada and all her diversity.”*

The couple became aware of the Nature Trust through the 100 Wild Island campaign. As regular visitors to Murphy’s campground, they were very familiar with the area, and so they decided to donate to the cause. They also met some of the Nature Trust team while kayaking in the area, and that sealed their decision to become more involved.

“We thrive in Nature, and we want to protect it and use it wisely,” said Dave. If we protect nature, nature will protect and provide for us. We are always talking about the Nature Trust to people we meet. The organisation does an outstanding job and we feel they deserve all the publicity they can get. I am surprised and saddened at the number of Nova Scotians who know nothing about the Nature Trust.

I do believe the Connecting with Nature events are very important to help educate people about nature and the role of the Nature Trust. People will protect that which they understand and care about.”