

## Backgrounder on the Nature Trust's Six New Protected Areas

### Little Charles Island 24 acres (purchase)

- Was one of the last remaining unprotected islands within the 100 Wild Islands archipelago, the majority having been protected through the Nature Trust's 100 wild islands campaign and the provincial government's eastern shore islands WA
  - Ecologically diverse and significant island, at the heart of the 100 Wild Islands.
  - features mossy forest (technically rainforest), stunning pocket beaches, a prominent wetland, and dramatic headlands and rock formations.
  - Connected to the Nature Trust's 530-acre Borgles Island by a vast white sand beach bordered on both sides by beautiful turquoise bays.
  - The island's protection helps secure the integrity of the archipelago by reducing potential development and associated disturbances to this wild coastal archipelago
  - The highly scenic island faced risk of development (especially in recent real estate market) – development that would be devastating not only for the ecological integrity of the island itself, but for the entire globally unique wilderness archipelago.
  - The islands and coastal headlands, including nearby Owls Head, function as one interconnected and evolving ecosystem. The island group protects rich coastal biodiversity and helps to mitigate climate change impacts.
  - Beyond its important environmental and conservation values, the island's protection is important for people too. Wilderness paddlers, sailors, and local families alike have been enjoying the island for generations, and privatization and development would put future public access and enjoyment at risk.
- An addition to the 4500 acres of coastal wilderness protected in the **Mabou Highlands** (on the West coast of Cape Breton)
    - 50 acres (donated)
    - Adds to the existing Mabou Highlands conservation lands assemblage (almost 3000 acres)
    - Increases landscape connectivity amongst Nature Trust conservation lands and the provincially designated Cape Mabou Wilderness Area (3600).
    - Altogether over 6600 acres of protected coastal wilderness
    - Mature to old growth hardwood forests and associated watercourses which provide habitat for a number of species of interest, including moose and multiple bird species of conservation concern.
  - New protected urban wilderness in the **Purcells Cove** backlands (Kjipuktuk-Halifax)
    - 5.5 acres (purchase)
    - adjoins 50 acres of NT conservation lands and 45 acres of HRM land, totally 100 acres now secured around Purcells Pond and Flat Lake
    - Part of the extensive Halifax backlands, protected by the Nature Trust, NCC, HRM, with an extensive hiking and biking trail network managed by the MacIntosh Run Watershed Association
  - Critical habitat for endangered plants on **Ponhook Lake** (Kespukwitk-southwest Nova Scotia)
    - 136 acres (purchase)

- Ponhook a priority lake for ACPF—a group of plants that includes 12 species at risk, several globally rare, with only populations in Canada on a few lakes in NS
  - Redroot—federally and provincially listed (special concern Canada/vulnerable in NS)
    - highly disjunct Atlantic Coastal Plain species restricted in Canada mainly to two connected, extensive, lakeshore populations in southern Nova Scotia
  - Adjacent to NT conservation lands, and close to Ponhook Lake NR.
- More protected habitat for at-risk birds and rare eastern white cedar in the growing **Hectanooga** conservation land assemblage (Kespukwitk-Southwest Nova Scotia)
    - 20 acres (purchase)
    - Adds to 230 acres of NT conservation lands and over 250 acres now protected as provincial nature reserve
    - The Hectanooga cedar swamp is a damp but amazing place with unique populations of a rare Eastern white cedar.
    - Supports breeding habitat for the nationally threatened Canada Warbler.
    - The special microclimate of this cedar swamp and surrounding wet forests also host rare lichens, which take decades to grow to the sizes seen here, under just the right conditions. The rare species found here have had their global populations decimated in recent decades by habitat loss
    - The Nature Trust conservation lands support the largest remaining eastern white cedar population in Nova Scotia with over 4,000 trees, some 200 years old!
    - Conserving the property is important for other species at risk, including birds and lichens.
  - **Blanche Island** (Kespukwitk-Southwest Nova Scotia)
    - 36 acres (purchase)
    - Important area for breeding and migrating marine birds
    - Known to host hundreds of nesting gulls, terns, cormorants and eiders
    - A variety of shorebirds use the island during their migration along the Atlantic Flyway
    - Critical for many bird species facing significant population declines

**Total Acreage Protected:** 271.5 acres

*Due to the nature of landownership in Nova Scotia (over 65% privately owned including 85% of the coast), and the disproportionate ecological significance of those lands, the Nature Trust's private land conservation work is essential to protect Nova Scotia's full complement of biodiversity. Private lands are typically small in acreage, so while land trust conservation wins are not always large in scale, they protect many of the most unique, biodiverse and threatened natural areas in the province, and provide a critical complement to the large protected areas that can be achieved on Crown lands.*

**Total cost** to secure and ensure these areas are protected, forever:      \$1,052,000

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|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust              | \$341,000 |
| Government of Canada funding programs for biodiversity | \$300,000 |
| Community donations                                    | \$411,000 |