

PRESS RELEASE

**A year-end win for biodiversity in Nova Scotia:
Six new conservation lands protected by the Nature Trust**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HALIFAX, DEC. 21, 2022 – The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is announcing six new protected areas across the province today, from Cape Breton to the south shore. On the heels of the recent COP15 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, halting biodiversity loss has never felt more urgent, with world leaders now aligned on a global target to protect 30 per cent of the planet by 2030. Today's announcement is a timely step toward that ambitious goal.

This win for nature was possible through the combined efforts of the Nature Trust, government investments in biodiversity conservation and the generosity of many Nova Scotians.

The Nature Trust's newest protected areas include:

- **Little Charles Island** at the heart of the 100 Wild Islands archipelago (Eastern Shore)
- An addition to the 4,500 acres of coastal wilderness protected in the **Mabou Highlands** (Cape Breton)
- New protected urban wilderness in the **Purcells Cove** backlands (Kjipuktuk-Halifax)
- Critical habitat for endangered plants on **Ponhook Lake** (Kespukwitk-southwest Nova Scotia)
- More protected habitat for at-risk birds and rare eastern white cedar in the growing **Hectanooga** conservation land assemblage (Kespukwitk-Southwest Nova Scotia)
- And **Blanche Island**, another important link on the Atlantic migratory flyway, critical for many bird species facing significant population declines (Kespukwitk-Southwest Nova Scotia)

The properties protect a diversity of rare and endangered plants, wildlife, habitats and landscapes, and are part of the Nature Trust's [Twice the Wild](#) campaign, aiming to double the amount of protected land in their care by 2025.

All six new protected areas were secured with support from Environment and Climate Change Canada's conservation funding programs: The Canada Nature Fund Target 1 Challenge (Little Charles Island, Mabou Highlands and Purcells Cove), the Priority Place--Species at Risk program (Ponhook Lake and Hectanooga) and the Nature Smart Climate Solutions program (Blanche Island).

"Expanding conserved and protected natural areas plays a vital role in restoring healthy, resilient ecosystems and contributes to the recovery of species at risk," says the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change. "It is one of the most important actions that we can take to tackle climate change and reverse biodiversity loss. By combining our efforts and working with partners we can achieve better outcomes and reach our goal of protecting 30 per cent of lands and waters in Canada by 2030."

"We have been able to put our generous government partners' historic investments in biodiversity to work locally, saving irreplaceable natural areas that will be here for generations to

come,” says Bonnie Sutherland, the Nature Trust’s executive director. “Their funding is creating real, tangible impacts for our province’s natural legacy, and we are deeply thankful.”

A second key funding partner was the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust. According to the Nature Trust, this provincial funding has been game-changing for private land conservation in the province.

“Land conservation is essential for Nova Scotia’s quality of life, to protect ecosystems, halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and to fight climate change, which is why the Province of Nova Scotia has committed to protecting 20 per cent of our land and water by 2030,” says the Honourable Timothy Halman, Minister, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change. “We cannot achieve this goal on our own – the invaluable work and leadership of organizations like the Nature Trust will help to lead us forward. Together, we will help ensure a sustainable and healthy future for our province, our people and our economy.”

The remaining funds required to acquire and provide the long-term care and stewardship of the new protected areas were raised through public donations.

While this win is a reason for celebration, the Nature Trust is already looking ahead, with high hopes. Canada has committed to protecting 30 per cent by 2030, with an interim goal of 25 by 2025. The provincial commitment is 20 per cent by 2030.

Last week both the federal and provincial governments announced more funding to advance private land conservation, a critical key to success, and the Nature Trust already has more threatened ecological gems in its sights. But they need more community support, as both provincial and federal grants require matching funds from the community.

“Nova Scotians heartened and inspired by the momentum to save biodiversity—globally, nationally and right here at home—can play an important part too. Everyone can help the wild places they love by supporting the Nature Trust’s [Twice the Wild](#) campaign,” Sutherland urges.

Charitable donations can be made online at nsnt.ca.

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Photos and video available at nsnt.ca/media.

Media Contact:

Bonnie Sutherland, NSNT Executive Director, welcomes the opportunity for interviews and can be contacted directly at 902-233-4224 or bonnie@nsnt.ca.

About Twice the Wild

The Nature Trust’s Twice the Wild Campaign is an ambitious campaign to double the Nature Trust’s protected areas – from 15,000 to 30,000 acres – by 2025. The campaign contributes directly to the federal government’s commitment to protect 30 per cent of Canada’s lands by 2030, and answers the global call for urgent action to address the biodiversity and climate change crises. Launched in September 2020, the Nature Trust set an aspirational goal to raise \$4 million in public donations, which could unlock four times that amount in matching grants from generous federal government partners and the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, for a total of \$20 million to save nature across Nova Scotia. The \$4 million initial public

fundraising goal was met in just 14 months and together with matching funds, has led to 43 new protected areas to date. The momentum continues to grow, with many more outstanding wild places in the Nature Trust's sights. Public support is needed to help save even more of Nova Scotia's best and most beloved wild spaces, before it's too late. TwiceTheWild.ca