

Forever wild

2018/2019 GRATITUDE REPORT



OUR MANDATE

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust works to protect Nova Scotia's outstanding natural legacy through private land conservation.

protecting over 3,000 acres—as much land as it took our first 13 years to protect! We also co-lead a ground-breaking biodiversity planning and conservation collaboration that aims to identify, prioritize and protect Nova Scotia's most ecologically rich and imperilled natural areas.

Unprecedented public support for our “Lasting Landscapes” campaign clearly demonstrated to us that Nova Scotians are concerned about what they see happening to the landscapes around them, and are eager to step up and make a difference.

Buoyed by these unparalleled conservation gains, federal government commitment to biodiversity conservation, and impassioned supporters, friends and partners, we look to the coming year with optimism and hope. We see unique opportunities and major conservation gains for Nova Scotia. With new faces, innovative partnerships, hopeful funding prospects and your continued support, we are set to apply a fresh, creative focus in achieving the key solution to our most urgent biodiversity conservation issues in Nova Scotia: advancing permanent protection for priority conservation lands, and ensuring effective long-term care and stewardship for the lands entrusted to our care. The time is now!

Thank you for all you do to help us meet our mission of ensuring that the special places we love and that are critical to the survival of our native biodiversity remain “forever wild”. For nature and for people too. Now and into the future.

Sincerely,

Message from our

Executive Director

This was the most exciting and successful year for conservation achievements in the Nature Trust's 25 year history.

And these successes are welcome encouragement in the face of the dire warnings from the planet's top scientists about the declining state of global biodiversity. The landmark United Nations biodiversity report issued this spring was deeply alarming. Nature is in more trouble now than in any other time in human history. Up to one million species face extinction within our lifetime, and most “have insufficient habitat for long-term survival.” Experts consider this the strongest call to date to reverse the loss of nature. And habitat protection is key. The time to act is now.

Thanks to the faithful support of our incredible donors, volunteers, landowners and conservation partners, we are making excellent progress in stemming the tide of biodiversity loss. We take solace in the federal government's bold commitment to protect at least 17 percent of Canada's land and inland waters by 2020—effectively doubling the amount of protected nature across the country. As you will read in this report, we seized this historic opportunity to increase the pace and scale of land conservation in Nova Scotia this past year—



Conservation Impact Made Possible

Founded in 1994, the Nature Trust is dedicated to protecting Nova Scotia's unique natural legacy. Our community-based, private land conservation work is a critical complement to what governments can achieve, especially with over 65% of the province (85% of the coast), in private ownership.

Your generous support for conservation action achieved unprecedented, inspiring biodiversity gains for Nova Scotia this year through permanent, legal protection of some of Nova Scotia's most ecologically rich and important wild spaces.

KEY CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018/19

Saving the wild

- Saved 19 new Conservation Lands
- Leveraged over \$5 million to protect 3,200 acres of high priority lands across the province in less than six months through our historic Lasting Landscapes campaign. It took us 13 years to conserve our first 3,000 acres!
- Launched the Urban Wildlands program to protect greenspace and provide opportunities to explore nature close home
- Conducted targeted landowner education with the owners of Nova Scotia's most ecologically rich, important and imperilled natural areas to encourage formal land protection
- Completed conservation analyses and site assessments for hundreds of land donation or purchase inquiries

Collaboration and Conservation Planning

- Co-led a ground-breaking province-wide collaboration with experts from land trust, government, scientific, academic and Mi'kmaw partners aiming to significantly and strategically advance biodiversity conservation

- Led consultations with experts to identify key barriers and opportunities to accelerate and grow private and Indigenous land conservation
- Initiated a renewed science-based planning and prioritization of conservation opportunities for Nature Trust focus
- Created a plan for a targeted outreach program with the top priority landowners
- Advanced work on multiple conservation sites to be secured in 2019/20
- Participated in the Kespukwitek Conservation Collaborative (Southwest Nova) aimed at conservation planning, stewardship and integrating Indigenous conservation perspectives
- Participated in consultations and collaborative planning around national and provincial conservation policies, research and programs
- Participated on a leadership team shaping a new national conservation program for land trusts under the Canada Nature Fund to launch in 2019



Chris Hawlow



Lasting Landscapes Campaign – An Historic Win for Biodiversity in Nova Scotia

In response to the growing biodiversity crisis, the Government of Canada has committed to protecting 17% of our lands for biodiversity by 2020. To meet this ambitious target, the Government made the largest investment in biodiversity in Canadian history – \$1.3 billion. The Government chose a few key conservation leaders across the country to deliver “quick wins” for Canada by March 2019—significant, immediate biodiversity conservation gains to build momentum for their new biodiversity vision. The Nature Trust was one of the leaders selected.

We seized this chance for unprecedented federal biodiversity investment to embark on the most ambitious land conservation (and associated fundraising) challenge in our 25 year history: the Lasting Landscapes Campaign.

Thanks to an incredible outpouring of public support, this historic campaign surpassed its targets! We were able to leverage over \$5 million to protect 3,200 acres of high priority lands, advancing our signature conservation projects all across the province in less than six months.



Donations to the campaign were matched at a rate of 4 to 1 by the Government of Canada and the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust.

As part of this initiative, we also co-led efforts to bring together conservation experts from land trusts, government, scientific and Mi'kmaw communities across the province to explore opportunities for synergies, collaboration and strategic biodiversity conservation planning and action. It has been an unparalleled and truly encouraging collaboration.

Great things are on the horizon for nature in Nova Scotia.

19
new conservation
lands – over 3,800
acres saved
this year

114
conservation
lands in total

14,600
acres
protected
forever

25
years of inspiring
conservation
action

Celebrating 25 Years of Conservation Success

As we look back on a quarter century of land conservation action, the story is truly inspiring. Twenty five years ago a small group of concerned citizens came together, worried about what they saw happening on the land around them, and recognizing the huge challenge of protecting nature in a landscape so fragmented, subdivided and largely privately owned. They envisioned a charitable organization, a land trust, which could solve the urgent challenges and need for private land conservation in Nova Scotia. They envisioned an organization which could educate, engage, inspire and collaborate with landowners, local communities, countless volunteers and conservation partners to protect Nova Scotia's unique natural legacy—through private land conservation.

Fast forward 25 years and we see that vision fulfilled. We see tangible, lasting land conservation results. Our growing network of conservation lands now encompasses 114 protected areas safeguarding over 14,500 acres of Nova Scotia's best natural areas. We



have been able to significantly advance conservation of priority landscapes, habitats and wildlife all across the province, and build a trusted, respected and deeply valued conservation ally for Nova Scotians.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this exciting conservation journey.



29

species at risk
protected by
Nature Trust
properties



98

landowners/
families who
have protected
land with the
Nature Trust

How We Save Land

Donation /Conservation Easement
71 sites, 8500 acres

Purchase
43 sites, 6100 acres



What Our Conservation Lands Protect

- **56** conservation lands protecting species at risk (over 6,400 acres)
- **61** conservation lands providing freshwater habitat (over 8,700 acres)
- **59** conservation lands protecting important coastal habitats (over 7,830 acres)
- **21** conservation lands safeguarding old and unique forests (over 3,600 acres)



New Conservation Lands



A - SEAL ISLAND

The renowned Seal Island, on the outermost extreme of Southwest Nova Scotia, is an important sanctuary for bird life along the Atlantic Flyway. Over 330 species of birds have been recorded there, including a wide variety of at-risk and rare migrant species. The island is a critical stopover for migratory birds and year-round home for many others. With bird populations in alarming decline, protecting 600 acres of Seal Island provides much-needed habitat and hope for bird conservation and recovery.



B - BELLIVEAU LAKE

Generously donated by Mary Guptill and Delbé Comeau, La Grande Isle, on Belliveau Lake, Digby County, is home to rare plants including the Sweet Pepperbush. It is one of only two protected habitats in Canada for this rare plant. The island's beautiful mature hardwood forests and undisturbed lakeshore add to its conservation values.



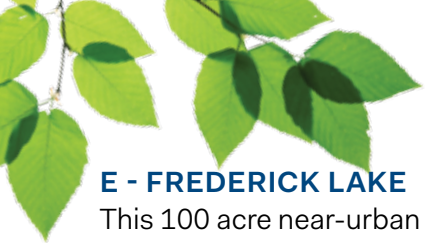
C - BARREN MEADOW TURTLE SANCTUARY

An 'inholding' of private land within a 4500 acre Nature Reserve (designation pending) provides critical freshwater habitat for endangered Blanding's Turtle and threatened Eastern Ribbonsnake. The new lands ensure a wildlife corridor connecting nesting, overwintering, feeding and basking habitat for some of Canada's rarest reptiles.



D - PENNANT RIVER

Three hundred acres of beautiful, accessible wildlands on the Pennant River are just 20 minutes from downtown Halifax. These conservation lands near Sambro include "The Brook," a treasured swimming spot, fishing hole and hiking trail. These lands encompass both sides of the river, lakeshore, coastal forests and barrens adjacent to the Terrance Bay Wilderness Area. The lands were entrusted to our care through an anonymous land donation.



E - FREDERICK LAKE

This 100 acre near-urban wildland is surrounded by the Five Bridge Lakes Wilderness Area, a vast, wild landscape of rugged, rocky barrens, unique forests and lakes, home to endangered mainland moose and rare plants, birds and lichens. The shoreline property forms part of the well-known and loved scenic vista viewed from the Bluff Wilderness Trail's Mi'kmaw Hill Loop Lookoff.



F - COBEQUID HILLS

A vast forest and freshwater wilderness, home to endangered mainland moose, turtles, birds, rare old growth forests, ravines, wetlands, bogs, and the headwaters of one of the province's healthiest rivers. The new site builds on existing protected lands, together preserving 5000 contiguous acres of forested wilderness.



G - 100 WILD ISLANDS

One of North America's last great ecologically rich and wild coastal island archipelagos, the islands support every coastal habitat in the province, from pristine sand beaches and dunes to vast barrens, bogs, wetlands and coastal rainforests. This new conservation site on Gerard Island brings even more of the wild islands—a natural treasure and wilderness recreation mecca—under protection.



H - ST. MARY'S RIVER

Four new properties add to a growing wilderness corridor on the iconic St. Mary's: over 1,300 acres and 21 kilometers of shoreline. Together with crown lands slated for protection, a 9000 acre, 50 kilometer "ribbon of green" will protect towering old growth forests, rare floodplains, endangered turtles, birds and Atlantic Salmon.

I - MABOU HIGHLANDS

A major assemblage of 11 contiguous properties preserves a spectacular coastal wilderness of hardwood forests, brooks and ravines, rugged seashore and popular hiking trails. Together with the adjacent Wilderness Area (pending designation), we will be protecting over 5800 acres of Cape Breton wildlands.



J - BADDECK RIVER WILDERNESS

Securing an "inholding" of private land in the provincial Baddeck River Wilderness Area removes a major biodiversity threat and creates a critical landscape link. Its protection ensures the future of a 6200 acre Cape Breton wilderness of old growth forests and river habitats, home to endangered Lynx and Pine Marten.





Looking After Forever—Thanks to Your Support

Stewardship: Caring for Lands we Protect

Saving land is only the beginning for effective, lasting conservation. When lands are entrusted to our care, we commit to protecting them, forever.

You help us to meet this promise by maintaining an active land stewardship program, including management planning, field research, property monitoring, enforcement of conservation restrictions, and habitat stewardship and restoration. Ongoing community outreach helps to reduce threats, engage more Nova Scotians in hands-on conservation, and identify potential conservation allies. With a growing conservation lands network and growing pressures and threats facing these lands, increasing our capacity to monitor, manage and care for our conservation lands is an urgent priority.

Your support helped us to build our land stewardship team and expertise this year. We also conducted a major program review and researched best practices for land stewardship in the land trust community.

We rely on the expertise and volunteer energy of many conservation friends, including scientists, community partners, neighbouring landowners and volunteers, particularly, our incredible “Property Guardians” who act as our eyes and ears on the ground and as valued ambassadors in the community. You helped us build on these relationships and partnerships this year.

KEY STEWARDSHIP ACHIEVEMENTS

- Carried out monitoring and on-the-ground stewardship for our growing conservation lands network (114 sites and counting!)
- Completed site assessments and baseline studies for our new conservation lands
- Created long-term property management plans to ensure we can keep nature thriving, forever
- Continued building a joint management strategy with the Province to guide conservation and stewardship of the vast and complex 100 Wild Islands coastal wilderness
- Introduced new technologies to enhance our stewardship efforts, from trail cameras to field tablets, and aerial drone surveys
- Implemented an Engagement Organizing Model for our Property Guardians program to increase its power and impact by significantly growing community engagement, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency. We are piloting this new approach on the St. Mary's River and 100 Wild Islands
- Identified priority regions/conservation sites for Property Guardian recruitment and initiated new volunteer recruitment strategies
- Grew our Property Guardians program by 90% with the help of our new, dedicated Volunteer Coordinator
- Birds Eye View volunteers contributed 270 birding hours, helping to guide our stewardship work

Volunteers in Action

We simply could not achieve such conservation results without the incredible talent and dedication of hundreds of volunteers. They help out in diverse ways from running special events to providing expertise, helping on committees, taking photos, writing articles and helping in the office.



Corey Isenor

Volunteers maintained trails and removed graffiti, litter and fire rings as part of stewardship efforts at our new Pennant River Conservation Lands.



One of our valuable business partners, Nature's Way Canada, not only provides important multi-year funding but also dedicates volunteer time and energy to the cause. Twenty-four Nature's Way team members spent a day in the woods with us, gaining first-hand experience in land stewardship



VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Kim McCallum and her children Johanna and Ben were thrilled when their beloved West Pennant River came into the care of the Nature Trust. They knew that this much loved-local fishing, hiking and swimming spot would remain a haven of wild nature, and that they'd continue to have access to it.

Now Kim, Johanna and Ben are pleased to be Guardians of the River, walking it regularly, cleaning up trash, reporting and removing fire pits, and providing on-going updates on the land, trail and wildlife sightings. Even the family dogs enjoy their rambles and the smells of people and wildlife they find there. For Johanna, swimming is a favourite summertime activity. Ben loves to explore in the shallows for rocks, marbles and other treasures that wash up. Kim loves the solitude and the wild nature she finds there. Enjoying the West Pennant River is truly a family affair which young Ben urges us all to "not take for granted".

We are grateful for all who generously dedicate time, talent and energy to advancing land conservation in Nova Scotia! Thank you!

To join our volunteer team today, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Ryan MacLean (ryan@nsnt.ca) or visit nsnt.ca/volunteer



Education & Outreach

The educational programming you support provides Nova Scotians, young and old, with the opportunity to explore and learn about nature right in nature's classroom. Unique hands-on educational experiences help to build awareness and support for land conservation to reduce threats to wild spaces and species. Our programs also provide citizens with the knowledge, skills and training they need to take an active role in saving and stewarding the places they love.

Connecting With Nature Event Series

This year, through your generosity, we hosted another well-attended series of guided educational hikes, paddling excursions and boat tours.

In the Community

We held community events educating local residents about our conservation work and celebrating new protected areas at Mitchell's Pool on the St. Mary's River as well as the Pennant River Conservation Lands, just outside of downtown Halifax.

Students from Acadia's Community Development Program lead a community engagement initiative in the Pennant River area, helping to build awareness and support for our new Urban Wildlands.



Photos top left to bottom right: Partnered with the Clean Foundation to advance coastal habitat restoration; "Bioblitz" in the Wentworth Valley; Birds Eye View volunteers documenting birds and bird habitat; Guided hike participants on the St. Mary's River; 100 Wild Islands adventure; Inaugural nature excursion to the new Pennant River Conservation Lands.

Ecuador Expedition for the Earth

On September 22, 2018, a group of dedicated adventurers travelled to Ecuador on the Nature Trust's third Expedition for the Earth. Participants explore and learn about protected areas around the world on a guided adventure trek and raise funds and awareness for conservation here at home.

Ecuador is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and the team spent seven days exploring the cloud forests and upper amazon basin, fascinating crater lakes and dormant volcanoes. The trek was expertly guided by Berg Adventures International.

Henry Fuller was the first person to sign up for this year's Expedition and celebrated his 72nd birthday on the trip, as well as his 20-year anniversary of volunteering on the Nature Trust Board.



"The chance to help protect special places in Nova Scotia while visiting a part of the world that has always been on my bucket list is an opportunity I would not have missed," said Henry.

Participants cover their own expenses and commit to raising a minimum of \$2,500 for the Nature Trust. To date, Expeditions to Patagonia (2013), Iceland (2016), and Ecuador (2018) have raised over \$100,000 for land conservation in Nova Scotia.

Annual Dinner



Our 21st Annual Dinner & Auction was a great success, thanks to the generous support of nearly 500 guests – our highest attendance ever!



We honoured Paul and Marsha Sobey, David and Faye Sobey and their families with the Nature Trust 2018 Conservation Award for their outstanding commitment to and leadership in conservation on the St. Mary's River

Mark Your Calendar!

Conservation Showcase **June 18**
100 Wild Islands Hike/Paddle **July 20**
Mabou Highlands Celebration **July 27**

Urban Wildlands Hike **September 7**
Nature Trust Annual Dinner **October 17**
See more at nsnt.ca/events

To receive regular updates by email, call (902) 425-5263 or visit nsnt.ca

Our Supporters

Our conservation achievements are only possible because of the dedicated support and generosity of our donors, advisors, land donors, conservation partners and volunteers. Thank you! You are creating a tangible and lasting legacy, keeping Nova Scotia forever wild.

LEGACY CIRCLE

Our legacy circle members have generously given a gift of land, conservation easement or other planned gift (such as naming us as the beneficiary of a bequest, life insurance policy or RRSP)

LAND/CONSERVATION EASEMENT DONORS

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F. Towne & the late Tucke
(Tara) Allen
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A Stephens, B Stephens,
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GUARDIANS OF THE LAND

The Guardians of the Land are faithful supporters who commit to a multi-year, unrestricted gift. Guardians invest significantly in Nova Scotia's natural legacy and help shape the future of land conservation.



PLANNED GIFT DONORS

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Nancy Margeson – Nature as the Beneficiary

As a retired professional fundraiser in the healthcare sector, Nancy Margeson knows a thing or two about options for people looking to support a favoured cause. So when she chose to make a planned gift to the Nature Trust, she knew exactly why this was the right choice for her.

For Nancy, life is about memories, and that's a big part of her motivation to support the Nature Trust. "There's something about preserving childhood memories, saving what we remember from our youth. It just feels so good to be able to protect those memories for others to enjoy, forever."

Like many people of her generation, Nancy grew up with the natural world as her playground. She spent summers swimming in the wild Atlantic with family trips to breathtaking beaches like Taylor's Head, Clam Harbour and Martinique. Winters were spent tobogganing and skating on the West River.

"As a board member, I got to really understand and appreciate the Nature Trust – the simplicity of the organization's mandate and the quiet efficiency was such a breath of fresh air."

When it came to planning her legacy, Nancy chose to take out a life insurance policy naming the Nature Trust named as beneficiary. "I don't have the capital to leave a bequest, but this way I can leave a substantial sum, and the cumulative tax deduction from my yearly premiums will help offset any duties on my estate." Nancy elected to leave her gift unencumbered – meaning she is leaving it up to the Nature Trust to decide how her gift should be used.

Nancy's eyes well up with emotion as she explains her rationale. "It makes me feel so good to be able to do this. If you can do something that affects the whole province, and feel so good personally, why wouldn't you do it?"
(contributed by Andrew Robinson)



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"A promising trend this year was the increase in long-time supporters becoming monthly donors. Monthly donors help once at the time the gift is made, and then again by saving the Nature Trust the costs of postage, paper and administration. Knowing those donations are there each month really helps with planning, budgeting and being agile and responsive to emerging conservation opportunities."

(Barbara Haley, Philanthropy Director)



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Helga Guderley and John Himmelman: Active Guardians of the Land

After successful careers teaching and doing research at Université Laval, Quebec City, John Himmelman and Helga Guderley are happy to tend their gardens and enjoy the views from their home in Boutiliers Point, overlooking the beautiful waters of St Margaret's Bay. But retirement for this couple does not simply mean sitting back and enjoying the fruits of a successful life – both are active in many ways with various conservation groups, including the Nature Trust.



conservation work we do, as well as the importance of providing unrestricted funds to ensure we are able to address the areas of greatest need. As Guardians, they can choose whether to make a pledge over a three, four or five year term.

For Helga and John their decision to support organizations like the Nature Trust is simple. "If we are to

preserve our environment, we have to be active," says Helga. "We need to speak up, but we also need to take action. The Nature Trust has created an excellent model for others to follow, working with so many diverse groups to bring their mission to fruition." *(Contributed by Andrew Robinson)*

John and Helga recently became Guardians of the Land - a program designed as a tangible way for our most loyal and dedicated supporters to invest in protecting our natural legacy. Guardians recognize both the need for ongoing and significant support to enable us to plan for the future and to guarantee the sustainability of the

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Create a Natural Legacy



When you name the Nova Scotia Nature Trust as a beneficiary in your will, you are creating a natural legacy that will endure forever. Your gift, no matter what size, will save and protect important wild places for nature and for people too, for now and for generations to come.



To learn more about leaving a gift in your will:

Visit: nsnt.ca/giving/leave-a-legacy Call: 1-877-434-5263 Email: barbara@nsnt.ca

Financials

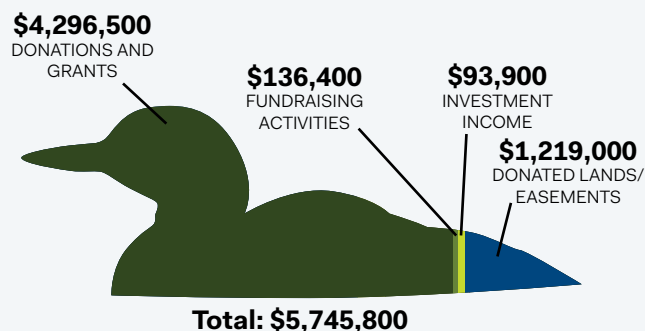
In 2018/19 we invested \$5.29 million (92% of expenses) in our charitable programs including land conservation, stewardship, education and engagement. We maintained a healthy balance sheet, with no long-term debt, \$16.9 million in conservation lands and \$5.88 million in endowment funds – a testament to our commitment to organizational sustainability and meeting our long-term land stewardship commitments. Our financial statements are audited annually by an external auditor.

Investments are managed by investment professionals Connor, Clark and Lunn, overseen by our Investment Committee, and subject to our updated investment policy.

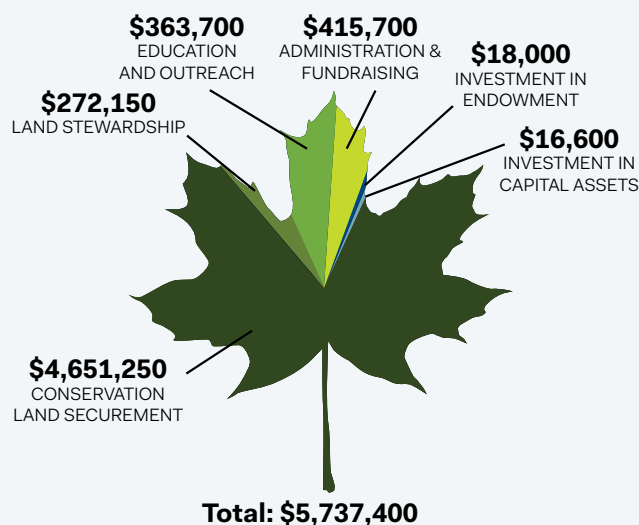
NATURE'S HOUSE

We continued to phase 2 of converting our building to "Nature's House," bringing our nature conservation mission into the city by enhancing and showcasing native biodiversity, water and energy conservation. This summer big changes will be happening as the project continues!

Income



Expenses



Invest in Nature

Another incredible year of conservation gains lies ahead, with exciting new land campaigns, innovations in land stewardship, a province-wide volunteer drive and new philanthropic opportunities.

Your support makes all the difference. Please give generously to keep Nova Scotia wild, forever.

Donate today.

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The Nature Trust is operated by a skilled professional staff under the guidance of a volunteer Board of Directors.