



NOVA SCOTIA  
**Nature  
Trust**



# *Forever wild*

2019/2020 GRATITUDE REPORT

[nsnt.ca](http://nsnt.ca)





# Why I ♥ Nature



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## Message from our Executive Director

**L**ike many of you, I've recently been rediscovering the joy nature brings, and feeling grateful for how nature heals and rejuvenates. It has been a rough few months, but nature has been there—for all of us. So it is especially heart-warming to reflect on the gains we've made in protecting treasured wild spaces and species, ensuring nature's future.

Thanks to your kind support, we've expanded our spectacular coastal wilderness in Cape Breton and freshwater legacy on the St. Mary's River. We saved islands crucial for our beloved birds, and sanctuaries for endangered plants and turtles. We are making real progress in protecting Nova Scotia's most important natural spaces, forever—places we can all enjoy and where nature can thrive.

It's inspiring too, to see more Nova Scotians taking action for nature. Through your generosity, over 350 volunteers are helping to keep our wild areas protected, and our education and outreach initiatives are growing.

We've built collaborations with conservation partners across the province and with land trusts across the country, creating synergies and capacity for even bigger nature conservation wins ahead.

We are so grateful to all of you—the donors, sponsors, volunteers, landowners and conservation partners who make these important conservation achievements possible.

Looking ahead, the urgency to protect habitat, and to reverse biodiversity loss, continues to grow. Fortunately, opportunity for action is growing too. With bold global and national commitments to protect 30% of the landscape by

### OUR MANDATE

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

2030, historic investments in biodiversity conservation and a renewed passion for nature in our communities, a window has opened.

While pandemic-related challenges will continue, our path is clear. Emboldened by your faithful support, our plans are ambitious. We commit to DOUBLING our protected areas network by 2023. That means protecting more land in four years than we have saved in our first quarter century. Because nature matters. And nature needs us now, more than ever.

Bonnie Sutherland

# Big Wins for Nature

## Protected, Forever

CONSERVATION  
LANDS SAVED **125**

ACRES  
PROTECTED **15,868**

ACHIEVED IN  
2019 / 2020 **1,130**

Landowners  
we've helped  
leave a legacy **85**



## Saving the Species We Love

NUMBER OF  
SPECIES AT RISK  
PROTECTED **30**

NUMBER OF  
SANCTUARIES SAVED

FOR  
ENDANGERED  
TURTLES **25**

FOR  
MAINLAND  
MOOSE **27**

FOR  
RARE PLANTS  
AND LICHEN **18**

FOR  
SPECIES AT  
RISK BIRDS **23**



## ACRES OF IRREPLACEABLE HABITATS SAVED

Habitat for species at risk **7400**

Freshwater habitat **9200**

Coastal habitat **8200**

Old and unique forests **4300**

Karst habitat  
(gypsum cliffs and caves) **375**





**320**

ACRES SAVED

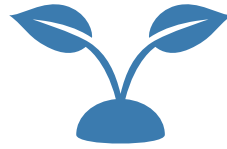
1994-1998



**2,300**

ACRES SAVED

1999-2004



**4,900**

ACRES SAVED

2005-2009



**9,900**

ACRES SAVED

2010-2014



**15,800**

ACRES SAVED

2015-2019

## ST. MARY'S RIVER LEGACY

A growing 'ribbon of green' on the renowned St. Mary's protects old growth forests, endangered turtles and birds and Atlantic salmon.

**13 conservation lands**  
**1530 acres**  
**23 kilometers of shoreline**



## FOR THE BIRDS—TUSKET ISLANDS SANCTUARY

Peases Island adds to a growing network of Nature Trust protected islands in "the Tuskets," a chain of islands globally significant for bird recovery and conservation.

**1000 acres saved**



## BLANDING'S TURTLE—A TURTLE IN TROUBLE

Blanding's turtles are easy to spot with their bright yellow neck and great big smile. But things aren't actually cheery for these turtles—they are at risk of extinction across Canada. And they need our help.

**12 Blanding's turtle sanctuaries**

**825 acres of turtle habitat**

## SAVING CANADA'S RARE PLANTS

Nova Scotia is home to a very unique group of plants known as Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora. Eleven species are at risk of extinction and are found nowhere else in Canada. Our work is critical to their survival.

**15 protected sites**  
**1340 acres**





# The Special Places You've Saved

*Thanks to you, more of Nova Scotia's unique natural legacy is protected, forever. For nature, and for people, too.*



## A - BEVIS POINT & LONG HILL

On the shores of the beautiful Bras d'Or lies a dramatic landscape of towering trees, mossy mounds, sinkholes, caves and underground streams, carved from the soft gypsum rock beneath. Such 'karst' habitat, sheltering old growth forests, rare plants and endangered bats, is globally rare. With less than 1% of Nova Scotia's karst protected, saving three new sites (340 acres) is great news for nature. Special thanks to Jack MacKillop for so generously donating his land.



## B - MABOU HIGHLANDS

The majestic beauty and stunning trails of Cape Breton's Mabou Highlands are treasured by outdoor lovers across Nova Scotia and beyond. After two decades of work, an incredible conservation vision has come to fruition. We added 230 acres this year, now linking together over 5000 acres of spectacular protected coastal wilderness.



## C - NORTH MOUNTAIN RIDGE

We continue to fill critical conservation gaps on North Mountain. Two new sites protect important wildlife corridors, connecting the Bras d'Or lakeshore, steep slopes and mountain plateau. They also link existing land trust and provincial protected areas, ensuring landscape connectivity essential for biodiversity to thrive. The 180 acres of hardwood forests and wetlands are home to rare and endangered birds, from Tree Swallows and Eastern Wood-Pewee to Rusty Blackbirds.





## D - GILLFILLAN LAKE

Gillfillan Lake is one of just a few Nova Scotian lakes suited to the rare and beautiful Plymouth Gentian. A new protected area meets the unique habitat conditions this endangered plants need to survive and thrive. The site adds to a growing assemblage of connected habitat on Gillfillan and nearby lakes.

## E - MEDWAY RIVER

Another win for Canada's endangered Blanding's Turtle! A 245 acre site on the Medway River helps link together a wildlife corridor essential for Blanding's and Snapping Turtles, rare birds and plants. The site builds on existing Nature Trust conservation lands, the Medway River and Katowe'katik (formerly McGowan Lake) Wilderness Areas.



Larry Peyton - Nô Ka 'Oi Drone Guys

## F - PEASES ISLAND

This small, treeless and windswept isle has remarkably big significance for birds. Its coastal barrens, beach, cliffs, salt marsh and lagoons support a surprising diversity and number of birds, all year long. It provides an essential resting and feeding stopover for migratory birds, excellent overwintering and nesting habitat too, for endangered species like Roseate Terns.



Nick McInnis

## G - ST. MARY'S RIVER

The St Mary's is a provincial jewel and hub of conservation focus. It features some of Nova Scotia's best remaining Acadian floodplain forests, old growth forests, and critical habitat for endangered Wood Turtle, moose, rare forest birds, and Atlantic Salmon. A new protected area adds 137 acres to our significant and growing conservation corridor, a living ribbon of green, on this beloved river.

*Our sincere thanks to all the landowners who made these conservation achievements possible.*





# Conservation Highlights

## COLLABORATION AND CONNECTIVITY

**T**wo emerging themes in our conservation efforts are collaboration—building creative, synergistic partnerships to advance land conservation and stewardship, and connectivity—protecting and linking biodiversity on the landscape scale.



### CONSERVATION POWER THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

As part of Canada's commitment to protect 25% of lands by 2025 and 30% by 2030, we've launched an ambitious four-year biodiversity conservation drive in collaboration with land trusts, governments and Indigenous partners.

- Making major land conservation gains
- Planning a comprehensive, interconnected protected areas network for Nova Scotia
- Supporting Nova Scotia's first Mi'kmaw Protected and Conserved Areas
- Building capacity and removing barriers to biodiversity conservation and stewardship



Alix d'Entremont

### COASTAL ISLANDS COLLABORATION

We are leading an innovative partnership that brings together the brightest minds and shared passions for saving and stewarding birds and coastal islands.

- Prioritizing Nova Scotia's coastal islands for protection and stewardship action
- Linking bird research with on-the-ground stewardship action
- Piloting a collaborative island stewardship model, engaging government and non-government conservation partners, academics/researchers, local communities and citizens

## CONNECTIVITY

**A** growing conservation focus globally and here at home is assembling large, contiguous protected areas, linked by natural corridors. Such connectivity ensures wildlife can roam and biodiversity can thrive over time and through climate change. Your support is helping us to create landscape connectivity all across the province, from the 100 Wild Islands to the urban wildlands of the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes.



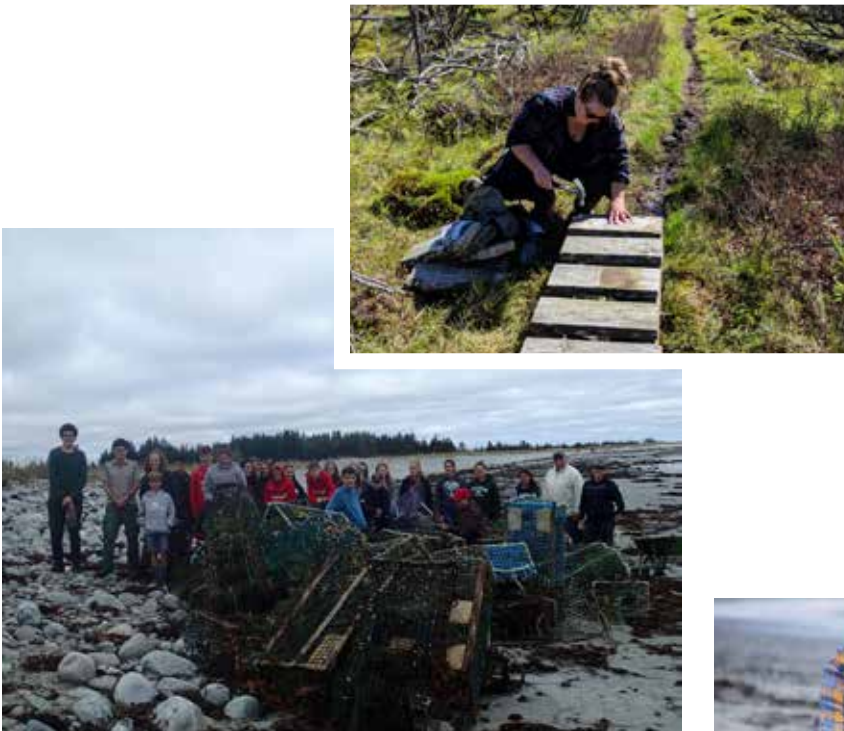
Len Wagg





# Safeguarding our Natural Legacy

**W**e have now saved over 15,000 acres of magnificent Nova Scotia nature. Ensuring these special places are protected, forever, requires a robust and active land stewardship program. You've helped to build our capacity and capability this year, ensuring we can meet increasing stewardship demands for a rapidly growing protected areas network.



## STEWARDSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- Completed 40 baseline reports for conservation sites—double our previous annual achievement
- Worked alongside local fishing families to plan stewardship of the renowned Seal Island
- Identified potential new trails for the 100 Wild Islands
- Created a new model for trail and recreational planning, balancing conservation with growing interest in access to nature
- Completed exciting work to grow our “Property Guardians” program—empowering volunteers to do what they love—caring for these beautiful wild places
- Restored a dump site at Barren Meadow with a team of enthusiastic volunteers, ensuring safety for its resident Blanding’s Turtles
- Partnered with the Nature Conservancy and Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy to repair hurricane damage at Gaff Point





# Volunteer Program Highlights

- 350 volunteers. 75 new recruits this year!
- 54 new Property Guardians trained—three times more than last year
- Volunteers completed 88 visits to Nature Trust conservation lands
- Launched pilot volunteer 'hubs' on the St Mary's River and 100 Wild Islands, a community-led volunteer engagement model we will expand across the province
- Successfully piloted a popular new group stewardship event series
- Joined with partner organizations to create the Southwest Nova Scotia Volunteer Engagement Strategy, working to increase engagement in stewardship and citizen science across the region

## OUR FABULOUS VOLUNTEERS

**W**e know time is precious, and life gets ever busier. We know too that conservation success depends on active volunteers. We are so thankful to all who give the gift of time, energy and expertise to our cause.



**Dave and Seely Alder,**  
Property Guardians for Devil's Jaw and  
Herbert River Conservation Lands

*"We thrive in nature; it inspires and revitalizes us. We touch base with nature every day of the year. Even in a blizzard, we will head out for a snowshoe. In the summer, we kayak right off our yard and enjoy the magic of loons and a visiting eagle. Nature gives us so much. Because we love exploring the outdoors we decided to channel some of our energy to give back to nature. If we protect nature, nature will protect and provide for us."*



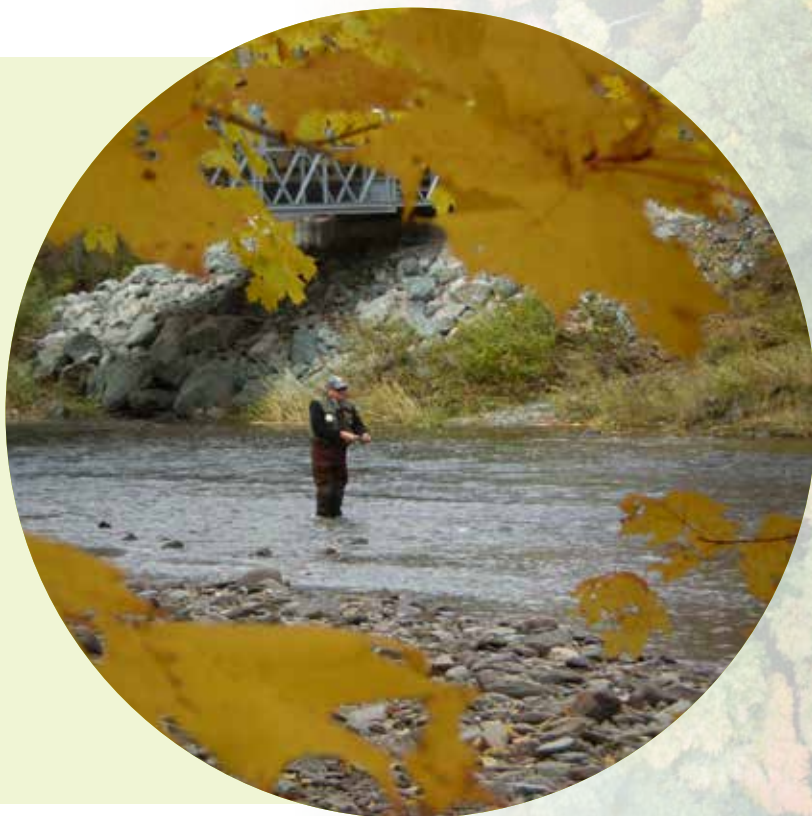


**Alix d'Entremont** is a long-time Bird's Eye View volunteer and serious bird enthusiast from Middle West Pubnico.

*"The sea has always been an important part of my life. Outside of work, my world is virtually nothing but birds. I am definitely at my happiest when I am on my boat, hopping from island to island to gather information on our breeding and migrant birds for the Nature Trust."*

**Roy Parker** feels a love and respect for the eastern shore lands he stewards as a Property Guardian. He spent summers as a child on his grandparents' farm and fly fishing in the Musquodoboit Valley and now has a cabin close to the Tangier River Conservation Lands.

*"With the help of friends and Nature Trust staff, we've cleaned up the property, added signage, marked abandoned mining survey pits, and cleared trails. It is rewarding to be active, knowing that what you are doing is helping other people enjoy nature, and helping protect this land for the future."*



Enjoy more stories on our fantastic volunteers at [nsnt.ca/volunteer/volunteer-stories/](https://nsnt.ca/volunteer/volunteer-stories/)  
Or share your own volunteering story with us at [volunteer@nsnt.ca](mailto:volunteer@nsnt.ca)





## Events and Outreach

### CONNECTING WITH NATURE EVENTS

**O**ur popular Connecting with Nature events bring opportunities to explore, discover and connect with nature on our conservation lands across the province. Participants learn about our wild places and imperiled species, and help celebrate conservation successes.



*On a Bon Portage Island adventure, volunteers joined Nature Trust staff and Acadia University researchers, learning about Leach's Storm-Petrels and restoring the island's trails to minimize impacts on nest burrows.*



*An enthusiastic crowd helped celebrate a record number of new conservation lands achieved through the Lasting Landscapes campaign at the 2019 Conservation Showcase.*

### LANDOWNER OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

**O**ur conservation team was active all across the province, meeting with priority landowners, providing education and inspiration to encourage conservation action, and technical support and guidance for landowners ready to protect land.



*After nearly 20 years in the making, we celebrated 2000 acres protected in the Mabou Highlands with a community celebration and hike with the Cape Mabou Trail Club.*



*Students and staff from Barrington High joined Nature Trust staff and volunteers for a beach clean-up, collecting 150 lobster traps and 35 bags of garbage, keeping the beach safe for Piping Plovers and people too.*



*Paddlers and hikers explored the magical coastal wilderness of the 100 Wild Islands on a popular guided nature tour.*







*The transformation continues at Nature's House, with new gardens of generously donated wildlife-friendly, low water, native Nova Scotian plants, including Black Ash provided by our friends at the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq!*



*The annual Guardians of the Land field trip gave this special group of donors (who provide critical, multi-year unrestricted funds) a behind-the-scenes look at our conservation work, spending time with conservation staff and visiting potential conservation lands.*



*Legacy Circle members gathered for a special celebration, welcoming new inductees and honouring all for their legacy gifts. Please let us know if you have included the Nature Trust in your estate plans (a gift of land or bequest) so we can welcome you to our Legacy Circle!*



*A record crowd of friends old and new helped celebrate 25 years of conservation wins at our Silver Anniversary Dinner. Thank you to our event sponsors, conservation table sponsors, auction donors, emcee Jayson Baxter, musical guest Jenn Grant, and to all our guests for your generous support and enthusiastic endorsement of the cause.*



Cooked Photography



# Thank you to our Conservation Heroes

**T**hanks to your generous support, the Nature Trust is a driving force for land conservation in Nova Scotia. You've made inspiring, important conservation achievements possible. Whether your gift was large or small, it has made a difference and we thank you!  
You are all conservation heroes.

## YOUR STORIES

**David Rumsey** *was honoured with the 2019 Nature Trust Conservation Award, recognizing his extraordinary contributions and leadership that brought an incredible coastal wilderness legacy to fruition.*

**O**ver 20 years ago David Rumsey helped to seed a vision of protecting a vast and beautiful, unspoiled coastal wilderness in the Mabou Highlands. The complex multi-landowner project met many obstacles over the years and progress waned. But in 2018, with development pressures mounting, David saw an urgent

need for action. He and his wife Abby first donated a conservation easement on their own lands. He then offered to reach out to all of his neighbours. With his enthusiasm, passion, and by leading by example, he inspired them all to protect their land. And he didn't stop there. Retired from a successful career as a developer (and artist, map collector and many other fascinating things), he expertly negotiated and shepherded every property deal. It was a volunteer effort beyond anything we've seen in 25 years of conservation. We then just needed the funding to make it all happen. With one final hurdle to overcome, David and Abby stepped up, generously donating over \$650,000 and leveraging the remaining funds needed. The

2,000 acre Mabou Highlands Coastal Wilderness is now protected, forever—one of Nova Scotia's most treasured natural, cultural and historic landscapes.

David's passion, determination, leadership, and volunteer contributions are truly inspirational. Enjoy David's full story on our blog [www.nsnt.ca/blog](http://www.nsnt.ca/blog).







For over 30 years, **Dick Henry** owned and stewarded Peases Island, continuing a multi-generational passion and concern for birds.

*"I grew up banding birds on the Tusket Islands with my mother, the late Marie Curnen Henry. She was a devoted bird watcher who passed on her love of birds and these islands to me and to her grandchildren. When the opportunity arose to acquire Peases Island I didn't hesitate. After 30 years of stewarding the island, it means a lot to me and my family to entrust the island to the Nature Trust, and to know it will always be there, as a safe refuge for the birds."*



**Ellen Gordon** is a Nova Scotian by birth and at heart, but like many Bluenosers, has spent much of her life away.

*"I developed my love of nature at our summer cabin on Ponhook Lake. I would listen for my favourite Hermit Thrush in the woods, and that song has made me feel at home in other places too. My parents loved to take us on picnics by rivers and lakes wherever we were living. It was always easy to access such spots. But it has become progressively more difficult, with so much land in private hands. My heart will always be in Nova Scotia. Knowing I am doing my part with monthly support gives me a sense of belonging to my heartland, even when I'm over a thousand kilometers away."*

Originally from the US, **Eugene Lebwohl** and his wife **Ruth Matthew** spend summers on the Bras d'Or. Both value nature deeply and feel it is a privilege to be helping save Nova Scotia's natural legacy through a gift in their wills.

*"While backpacking here, I found that Nova Scotia, and especially Cape Breton, got into my bones, and anchored in my consciousness. We will leave this life with a substantial gift that will, over time, protect that unique and still relatively unspoiled piece of the world that is Nova Scotia. It will create change that will last beyond the immediate ripple of our lives. It's our way to say thank you to a place that has given us joy, offering to future generations what the generosity of past contributors has given us."*







**Judy Robertson** and her daughters Stephanie and Marine are all active environmentalists. With both daughters now engaged in the outdoors and natural sciences, dinner conversations often turn to the environment and the need to protect our fragile resources. Judy, an active volunteer and board member, became a Guardian of the Land this year, donating on behalf of herself and her daughters.

*"I wanted to recognize my daughters' passion for environmental protection, and to reinforce the message that the work of the Nature Trust is for future generations. Becoming Guardians of the Land made all of this possible."*

**Rene Scrutton**, a long-time volunteer and supporter, wanted to do something special to help save nature. She also wanted to honour her late father, Laurie Rhydwen. She was able to achieve both with a gift to the Nature Trust's endowment fund.

*"What I really like about the endowment fund is knowing that Dad's money will continue to support the Nature Trust, year after year, forever. I can see every day how Dad's legacy is supporting the vital conservation work, helping in ways large and small to preserve the wild places of our beautiful province."*



Enjoy more inspiring donor stories at [nsnt.ca/giving/donor-stories/](https://nsnt.ca/giving/donor-stories/)  
Or share your story with us at [donorstories@nsnt.ca](mailto:donorstories@nsnt.ca)



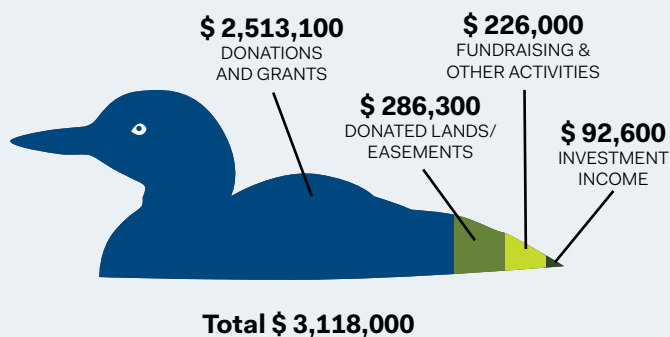
# Financial Accountability

This year (April 2019-March 2020) we invested 2.68 million dollars (89% of expenses) in our charitable programs. These funds supported land conservation, stewardship, education and engagement.

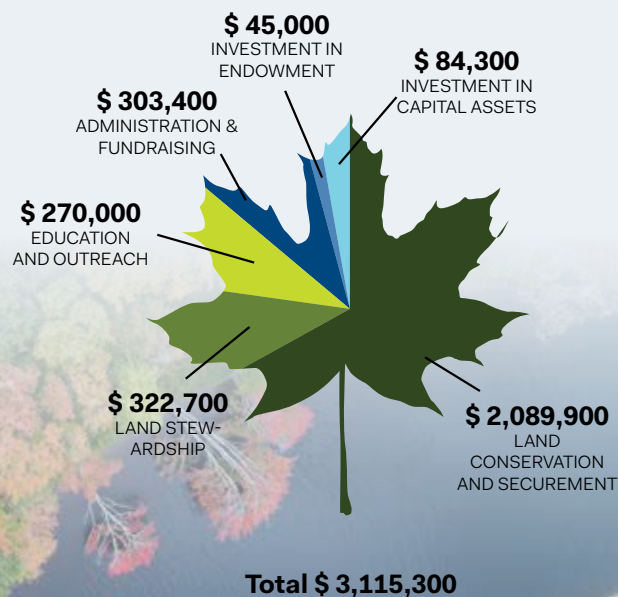
We maintained a healthy balance sheet, with no long-term debt and \$18.1 million in conservation lands. We have secured \$7.56 million in endowment funds – a testament to our commitment to organizational sustainability and meeting our long-term land stewardship commitment to the lands entrusted to our care.

Our financial statements are audited annually by an external auditor. Investments are managed by investment professionals Connor, Clark and Lunn, overseen by an Investment Committee and subject to our investment policy.

## Income



## Expenses



## YOUR DEVOTED BOARD AND STAFF TEAM (2019/2020)

### BOARD MEMBERS

Hari Balasubramanian  
Rick Emberley (Chair)  
Henry Fuller  
Keith MacIntyre (Treasurer)  
Rochelle Owen  
Peter Porteous  
Judy Robertson  
Lara Ryan  
Paul Scott  
Dale Smith  
Whipple Smith  
Chris Wilson (Vice Chair/Secretary)

### STAFF

Jessica Bradford  
Fiona Brooks  
Ross Firth  
Barbara Haley  
David Hodd  
Hannah Kienzie  
Rich LaPaix  
Allan MacDonald  
Ryan MacLean  
Christina Nunn  
Joanna Skomorowski  
Bonnie Sutherland  
Allison Thorne  
Nick Wilkinson







## Special Thanks

**THANK YOU** to everyone who donates gifts large and small or volunteers time and talent. Every contribution makes a difference for nature. Special thanks to our major supporters:

### Land and Conservation Easement Donors

Jack MacKillop

### Annual Dinner Sponsors

Freeman Group Private  
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### Connecting with Nature Sponsors

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### Guardians of the Land

Jane Allen  
& Rochelle Owen  
Nathan Brett  
& Anne Gillies  
Anne Campbell  
& John Lindsay  
Fred & Nancy Chipman  
Byron Corner &  
Patricia Robertson-Corner  
Corinne & Jack Duffy  
Rick & Mary Emberley  
Chris & Hiya Field  
Henry W. Fuller  
Helga Guderley  
Verna J. Higgins  
John H. Himmelman  
Klaus & Joan Jensen  
Keith & Dany MacIntyre  
Bob &  
Peggy (Colthart) McCalla  
Bob & Wendy McDonald  
Judy Robertson & Daughters

Jason Roth &  
Cheryl Steadman-Roth  
Alastair Saunders  
& Chris Corston  
Paul & Susan Scott  
Susan Sherwin  
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& Jim Kanellakos  
Rick & Janet Whitman  
Gregor Wilson  
& Erica van Vulpen  
Anonymous donors

### Major Supporters--Organizations

Bonnell Cove Foundation  
Clearwater Seafoods and the  
Hansen-MacDonald Family  
Davis Conservation  
Foundation  
Donner Canadian  
Foundation  
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Change Canada  
ExxonMobil  
Five Bridges Wilderness  
Heritage Trust  
Grant Thornton Foundation  
Nature's Way  
of Canada Ltd  
Nova Scotia Crown Share  
Land Legacy Trust  
O'Regan's  
Automotive Group  
Parts for Trucks  
William P. Wharton Trust

### Other Major Supporters

Larry & Alison Bogan

Yvon & Malinda Chouinard  
Geoffrey Clark  
& Martha Fuller Clark  
W. Hardy  
& Barbara Eshbaugh  
Gerald & the late  
Mary Freeman  
David & Diane Freeman  
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David Sawatzky  
Graham & Susan Smith  
David & Faye Sobey  
Dusan Soudek  
Valerie MacDonald  
& Jim Spatz  
Darlene Stone  
Lorraine Williston

### New Bequest/Legacy Gift Donors

Louisa Jones  
John & Patricia Kearney  
Helen Louisy  
Scott Mullin  
Gerald Porter  
The late Victor (Ray)  
Titterington

### New Monthly Donors

David & Seely Alder  
Brenda & Geordie Bell  
Michael & Debbie Blaesing  
Carolyn & Donald Bolivar  
Joe F. Burke  
Katie & Maurice Cloughley  
Peter Craig  
Christian Croft  
Gisele D'Entremont  
Peter Fillmore  
William Hanley  
& Toni Laidlaw  
Joan Harbison  
& George Perry  
New Monthly Donors

### Major "In Kind" Supporters

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And **THANK YOU** to our many other greatly valued donors, too numerous to mention by name, whose support makes big wins for nature possible!

Please see our online Gratitude Report at [nsnt.ca/gratitude](http://nsnt.ca/gratitude) for additional donors.



*If you're feeling extra  
thankful for  
nature these days,  
show your love!*



Become a monthly donor. Adopt a turtle! Raise funds for nature. Give a tax savvy gift of stock or mutual funds. Leave a legacy gift.

Most important, share your love for nature with friends and family.  
Your passion makes all the difference.

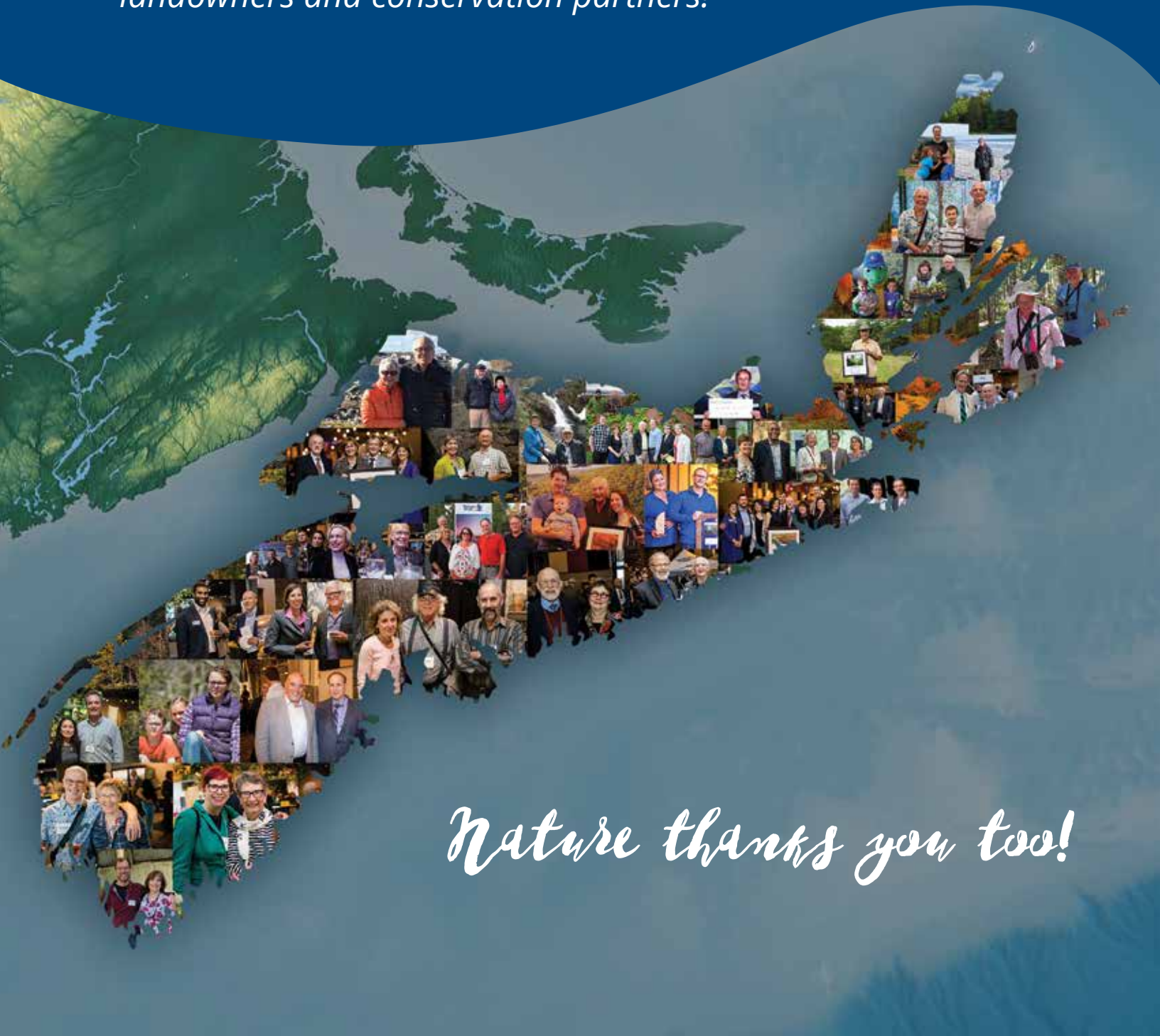
**Take action to save nature today.**  
**[nsnt.ca](http://nsnt.ca) or (902) 425-5263**





# *Thank you!*

*to all our generous supporters, volunteers,  
landowners and conservation partners!*



*Nature thanks you too!*