

## BACKGROUND

### ***Nature Trust Announcement***

- The spectacular 2000 acre Mabou Highlands conservation lands were protected through the conservation vision and generosity of a group of American families and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust
- The new protected area encompasses a vast area of coastline between Mabou and Inverness, in western Cape Breton
- It features ecologically significant habitats including rich hardwood forests, brooks and ravines, coastal cliffs, caves and meadows, and a rich diversity of wildlife
- The coastal lands adjoin another large area of Crown land on the mountain plateau, lands pending designation as the Cape Mabou Wilderness Area
- Altogether, the combined provincial and Nature Trust protected areas will encompass over 5800 acres of contiguous habitat, from the sea to the top of the plateau
- The conservation success was part the Nature Trust's historic "Lasting Landscapes" campaign, an ambitious land conservation campaign launched last year in an effort to help stem the massive loss in biodiversity across the planet
- The campaign was funded in part of the Government of Canada's Nature Fund, part of a national commitment to protect 17% of Canada's lands for biodiversity by 2020, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, and generous donors from across the province and beyond who supported the campaign
- Charitable donations can be made to support the protection of additional properties in the Mabou Highlands, and to ensure the long-term stewardship and management of this new Nova Scotia wilderness
- To donate, volunteer, join the celebration, or find out more, visit [nsnt.ca](https://nsnt.ca) or telephone the Nature Trust at (902) 425-LAND

### ***Mabou Highlands Conservation Lands—conservation values***

- The new conservation lands support a rich diversity of important habitats including stands of rich, old-growth tolerant hardwood forest, brooks and steep forested ravines, rugged coastline with mountain-cove ecosystems and beaches
- The shoreline is characterized by high cliffs where the uncommon Black Guillemot nest, scree slopes and inaccessible cobble beaches that provide some foraging opportunity for shorebirds and occasionally a resting place for seals
- The cliffs also provide habitat for birds that nest in burrows, like bank swallow and belted kingfisher.
- The Mabou Highlands is a natural landscape unique to the western coast of Cape Breton between Mabou and Inverness, reaching from the coastline up to the highland plateau
- The vast expanses of old forests provide important habitat to a rich diversity of wildlife:
  - Several landbird species at risk (on Canada's endangered species list) are found in the area including Olive-sided Flycatcher, Canada Warbler and Eastern Wood-Pewee
  - These forests provide habitat for a number of provincially uncommon and sensitive birds such as Northern Goshawk, Gray Jay and Boreal Chickadee

- This region is a hotspot for large mammals including abundant moose populations, black bear, deer, and coyote as well as numerous small mammals
- The protected area offers some of the only unroaded coastline remaining in Cape Breton (the original coastal road is now a hiking trail)
- Together with the adjacent Crown lands, pending designation by the Province as the Cape Mabou Wilderness Area, over 5800 acres of contiguous Cape Breton wildlands will be preserved. Large, intact wilderness with landscape level connectivity is essential for longterm viability of natural systems
- The property is located within the Mabou Hills (Landscape 60 under the NS Parks and Protected Areas Classification) and the Cape Breton Hills (Ecodistrict 310 under the Ecological Landscape Classification)
- A key protected areas goal is to have “representation” of each of Nova Scotia’s 80 unique natural areas in the province, and there is no Crown land, only private land on the coast within this landscape. The Nature Trust’s new protected area provides an irreplaceable contribution to provincial protected areas goals.

### ***Mabou Highlands Conservation Lands—other values***

- Beyond the nationally significant conservation win, the protected area is welcome news for Cape Bretoners and visitors too
- Many locals have been visiting and enjoying these lands for generations, both for the scenic beauty and the historic and cultural values reflected in the foundations and remnants of fields from the early Scottish immigrants who farmed along the shore
- A spectacular network of hiking trails meander along historic cart tracks, giving visitors a unique opportunity to experience both the exceptionally scenic, natural, as well as cultural heritage of the area
- Tourists who provide valuable income for the local community come for the rugged wild beauty of the trails
- The Cape Mabou Trail Club maintains an extensive network of trails throughout the area, with the agreement and support of the landowners
- The Nature Trust will now support the Trail Club and collaborate to inspire and sustain a volunteer program to both steward the lands and maintain the trails

### ***History of Protection--The Landowner Story***

- The Nature Trust credits this incredible conservation win for Nova Scotia to four generations of American landowners who long ago recognized these lands as truly special, and irreplaceable
- The properties were acquired by American summer residents, beginning in the 1920s
- Many of the families were associated with the Putney School, Seeing the pace and scale of urbanization, privatization and development escalating back at home in the U.S. and changing the landscape forever, they recognized the irreplaceable opportunity to preserve such a scenic, ecologically and culturally rich area
- The story began with the late Carmelita Hinton, founder and head of the Putney School, a progressive, independent high school in Vermont. She began bringing her family and students to Cape Breton during the war year, and fell in love with the area. She acquired a property for the Putney School and founded the Sight Point Camp, regularly bringing students from Vermont for summer camp
- She and later her daughter, the late Jean Rosner, worked to find other conservation-minded landowners to buy properties along the coastline to prevent them from being developed

- In the late 90's, Jean discovered that Nova Scotia now had a land trust, and she reached out to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, and together they began planning for how to bring the long-held conservation vision for the area to fruition. Jean encouraged her neighbours to protect their land through conservation easement agreements with the Nature Trust
- Jean passed away in 2002 before getting her own lands into protection, but the work she had begun would continue
- The late Bob and Mary-Lou Treat and their children, protected their two Sight Point properties (at the Inverness end of the wilderness), totalling 275 acres, in 2002.
- The late Wilbur and Vivian Walworth, their children and their co-owners, the Learnard family, protected their 180 acres at Sight Point in 2011
- In 2013 Bob and Lee-Ann Kinzer donated a conservation easement protecting 205 acres of land at the Mabou Mines end of the wilderness area
- Last year, another of the Mabou Highlands landowners, David Rumsey, revived his interest in placing a conservation easement on his MacKinnon's Brook lands with his wife Abby
- David also offered to reach out to his fellow American landowners to see if he could reignite the bold conservation vision for the Mabou Highlands with his neighbours
- He inspired many of the landowners to sell their lands to the Nature Trust as part of the charity's ambitious

### ***Lasting Landscapes Campaign***

- He also generously donated over \$500,000, which together with other funds donated by campaign supporters across the Province, helped the Nature Trust leverage matching funds needed to acquire over 1500 acres of adjacent parcels of land
- Over the past few months, Jean Rosner's children, Peter, Marni and Sarah, and Jean's grandchildren, who inherited the family lands, the Putney School, the Hall and Crafton families, as well as a local family, the MacNeils, all agreed to sell their lands for inclusion in the protected area.
- In all, David's efforts helped the Nature Trust piece together 11 additional properties encompassing 1500 acres of land
- All totalled, the Nature Trust now protects over 2000 acres in the Mabou Highlands.
- Timeline of land protection:
  1. 2002 - 275 acres - Conservation Easement\*
  2. 2011 – 180 acres - Conservation Easement\*
  3. 2013 – 205 acres - Conservation Easement\*
  4. 2019 – Rumsey Properties – 280 acres - Conservation Easement\* and land purchases of 10 properties\*, including the lands formerly of Jean Rosner, totalling over 1200 acres

### ***\*Conservation Easements***

- Lands with a Conservation Easement are owned by individual landowners but the Nature Trust holds a conservation easement on the properties.
- An easement is a legal agreement developed in partnership with the Nature Trust, which permanently protects the land's significant ecological features by restricting some land uses and the type and scope of development that can take place on the property
- The easement is registered with the property deed, and its restrictions apply to all future landowners. This gives landowners the freedom to sell the land or pass it on to their heirs, confident that its natural features will remain protected. An easement is especially well suited to a diverse property that can benefit from different levels of protection
- An easement can be placed on an entire property, or just part of it. For example, if there is sensitive wildlife habitat on the same property as a house, the conservation easement can allow

for one level of use around the home, and another (more restrictive) level on the portion of land that is ecologically sensitive

- The holder of the easement (the Nature Trust) assumes permanent responsibility for ensuring that all owners of the land (current and future) abide by the terms that were set out in the agreement. The easement holder is a trusted partner in the conservation of land. If the easement is not respected the Nature Trust will act to correct the violation and protect the ecological integrity of the land

### ***The Future of the Mabou Highlands***

- The 2000 conservation lands will be left intact as a protected area, conserving the ecological diversity of the vast coastal wilderness in perpetuity
- The Nature Trust will maintain an active program of land stewardship, ensuring the natural values of the lands are sustained, and that human use is managed to protect these values
- The public will be able to continue to enjoy the lands, and hike the trail network, as they have for generations
- Volunteers will be recruited and trained as “property guardians” to help in the long-term care, monitoring and stewardship of the lands
- The Nature Trust will continue its landowner outreach program to work towards protecting additional parcels of important habitat in the Mabou Highlands

### ***The Nova Scotia Nature Trust***

- The Nature Trust is Nova Scotia’s leading private land conservation organization, active in protecting our natural legacy since 1994
- The organization protects ecologically significant natural areas through private land conservation, offering a unique solution for a significant conservation challenge. Unlike most of Canada, over 65% of Nova Scotia is privately owned, not government land. Land Trusts provide landowners with a non-government community based option for protecting their land
- Private lands include many of most ecologically important areas, yet face unprecedented development pressures.
- Through permanent conservation easement agreements, we help families to protect, forever, their treasured and ecologically important family lands. We also accept land donations and bequests of land, and in exceptional cases, we purchase outstanding and threatened natural areas.
- All conservation lands entrusted to our care become part of the land legacy that we safeguard for all Nova Scotians. Our commitment is to protect those lands, forever through ongoing monitoring, stewardship and management.
- An active program of volunteer “property guardians” help to care for this growing network of protected areas
- Our innovative, community-based educational initiatives are helping to build understanding and appreciation for the natural world. We give Nova Scotians the knowledge and tools they need to take an active part in protecting the places they love and ensuring that the legacy is passed on to future generations.
- The Nature Trust is an active partner and collaborator in conservation with all levels of government, with other non-profits and local communities
- Over the last 25 years, the Nature Trust has successfully and permanently protected over 14,000 acres of significant natural areas, including 114 conservation properties across Nova Scotia, protected for nature, and for future generations of Nova Scotians

### ***The Lasting Landscapes Campaign***

- Thanks to major support from the Government of Canada's Nature Fund, the Nature Trust launched an ambitious land conservation campaign.
- The campaign aimed to protect 17 biodiversity hotspots protecting over 1215 hectares (3000) acres of priority conservation lands within e signature conservation projects across the province.
- For every dollar raised in its public campaign, the Nature Trust could leverage another \$4 to save land. To meet its goal, the Nature Trust had to raise \$850,000 in less than three months, by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019 to leverage over \$3.5 million in funding from the Nature Fund and Nova Scotia's Crown Share Land Legacy Trust.
- Thanks to an incredible outpouring of public support, the historic Lasting Landscapes campaign surpassed its targets, leveraging over \$5 million to protect 3,200 acres across 17 new conservation sites.
- This was the largest federal investment ever in protecting Nova Scotia's biodiversity

### ***Canada Nature Fund***

- In response to the growing global biodiversity crisis and international commitments to address the crisis, the Government of Canada has committed to doubling its protected areas by 2020, and setting aside 17% of Canada's land and inland waters for conservation
- They have committed \$1.3 billion to biodiversity conservation over five years, the largest such investment in Canadian history
- The Canada Nature Fund is a \$500 million program to support biodiversity conservation efforts of non-government and other non-federal government partners whose commitment is critical to achieving success in nature conservation
- Canada Nature Fund contributions are matched by philanthropic foundations, corporations, not-for-profits, provinces, territories and other partners, raising a total of \$1 billion for conservation action.
- The Fund supports the establishment of a coordinated network of protected and conserved areas and helps with the conservation of species at risk and their habitats
- To launch the program, the Government invested the first \$15 million with key conservation leaders across Canada through the Quick Start program
- Quick Start was designed to support projects which had a short timeline, and would quickly add to Canada's total protected and conserved lands.
- The Nature Trust was chosen as one of a small number of partners selected to receive funding in 2018/19 to deliver quick wins for Canada's biodiversity. The Nature Trust received \$1.8 million towards private land conservation directly benefitting the 17% by 2020 goal.
- Additional Nature Fund programs will launch in the summer/fall of 2019

### ***The Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust***

- The Land Legacy Trust is a \$23 million fund established up by the Province in 2008 to support private land conservation in Nova Scotia. It was funded from Crown Share Payments
- This provincial investment has been a 'game changer' in Nova Scotia, significantly advancing the scale and pace of private land conservation
- It has supported the protection of almost 100 properties that total 7,775 hectares
- Funding committed to date, just over \$10 million, has leveraged the securement of conservation efforts worth over \$32 million

- It has provided vital funding for the Nature Trust, including work that initiated many of the major land assemblages proposed in the Lasting Landscapes Campaign