



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Nova Scotia Nature Trust announces ambitious campaign to protect twice as much wild space by 2023

September 21 (HALIFAX) - This morning the Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced a bold new campaign to double the amount of land it protects and stewards across the province by 2023.

There is much to feel discouraged about right now, from raging fires and unprecedented biodiversity loss to the continuing pandemic. But there has been one, unexpected shining light in these troubling times—and that is nature.

“Nature has been the antidote to the stress, anxiety, and isolation of COVID-19 and other tragedies,” said Bonnie Sutherland, Executive Director of the Nature Trust. “People are rediscovering the joy that nature brings and appreciating being outdoors like never before. So what better time to take action to double our space for nature?”

12-year-old Nature Trust volunteer Maeve Boyne agrees. Recounting a recent trip to the 100 Wild Islands, one of the Nature Trust’s signature protected lands, she recalled, “It was so beautiful, peaceful and quiet, and we were the only ones there. We could only hear ourselves talking, and the birds singing. It was so amazing! We need to save more places just like that.”

But our wild spaces and treasured species are threatened. Recent reports herald yet another urgent alarm for global biodiversity, showing almost 70% declines in wildlife populations over the last 46 years. Here in Nova Scotia, many of our most important and treasured natural areas are privately owned and at risk of development.

While the Nature Trust has been successfully conserving land in Nova Scotia for more than 25 years, this new campaign recognizes the need to move much faster to save wild places - before it’s too late. The Nature Trust aims to duplicate what they protected in their first 25 years, in just a few years—15,000 more acres by 2023.

Fortunately, major partners are also stepping up to support these efforts. The Government made an ambitious commitment to protect 17% of Canada’s lands by 2020 and 25% by 2025, and is working towards 30% by 2030. To get there, they have made the single-largest investment in nature conservation in Canadian history—an historic \$1.3 billion investment in biodiversity. That includes the Canada Nature Fund—a program to encourage land trusts, Indigenous groups, and other community partners to be a big part of the solution.

The Nature Trust applauded the Government of Canada for its leadership and acknowledged significant federal funding already committed towards the Nature Trust's efforts.

Sutherland noted, "The Nature Trust could not have contemplated such a big target without the vision, action and generous support of the Government of Canada."

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, recognized the Nature Trust's contributions by video message. "I would like to congratulate the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and their partners on their conservation work in Nova Scotia. The East Coast is a beautiful part of the country, and the land and waters are important to the wildlife found there. By working together, on projects such as 100 Wild Islands, we are making progress toward our goal of protecting and enhancing biodiversity by conserving a quarter of the land and a quarter of the oceans in Canada by 2025."

To accomplish their bold target of doubling protected areas, the Nature Trust announced a twenty million dollar fundraising campaign. They aim to raise four million from the public and leverage sixteen million in matching funds from major partners including the Government of Canada and the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust.

Every donation will be matched 4:1, meaning a gift of \$100 unlocks \$400 more.

Areas targeted for protection include expanding signature land projects in the Mabou highlands, Wentworth Valley, St. Mary's River, 100 Wild Islands and urban wildlands including the beloved Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes. The campaign will also add brand new protected areas, including coastal habitats and islands critical for birds, rare gypsum and old growth forest sites, and habitat for endangered wildlife. The targeted lands are not only ecologically important and diverse, but provide space for people to explore and enjoy the outdoors.

"It feels so good to be outside, to get out in nature," said Boyne. "But it also feels good knowing that we're sharing these places with wildlife and doing our part to keep the plants and animals safe."

This campaign was announced this morning in Halifax at a live-streamed event hosted by A for Adventure. The announcement is available to watch at <https://nsnt.ca/> and <https://www.facebook.com/novascotianaturetrust/>.

"We've been getting out to the beaches, trails and parks, enjoying nature now more than ever," noted Sutherland. "Imagine doubling our wild spaces - twice the hiking, paddling and fishing! We hope Nova Scotians will step up to help double our protected nature in Nova Scotia."

For more information or to donate to double protected nature in Nova Scotia, visit www.nsnt.ca or call (902) 425-5263.

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Backgrounder, photos and b-roll available at <http://nsnt.ca/media>

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