

For Immediate Release

Spectacular Coastal Conservation Lands to Build on Beloved Owls Head

Nature Trust raising final funds to protect unique Eastern Shore coastline

(HALIFAX, NS – April 6, 2023) The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is set to protect another iconic coastal gem. Adjacent to the beloved Owls Head, the Little Harbour Conservation Lands encompass 450 acres of ecologically rich coastal habitats on Nova Scotia's eastern shore. The announcement is heartening and timely in light of growing public concern and urgency to protect Nova Scotia's coast.

The Little Harbour property has been on the Nature Trust's conservation wish-list for over two decades. The non-resident owners had planned intensive development on the site, one of the last ecologically significant, intact coastal properties of its size in the province.

Encompassing a remarkable five kilometers of undisturbed shoreline, the property supports a diversity of coastal ecosystems including extensive, ecologically important saltmarsh, tidal flats, coastal forest, rocky shore, beaches, bogs and coastal barrens. It harbours important breeding and overwintering habitat as well as a migratory stopover for birds, including many species of conservation concern such as Harlequin ducks, Purple sandpipers, Boreal songbirds, eiders, terns and raptors. The dramatic, exposed bedrock ridges host Broom Crowberry, a globally rare plant species, and its vast saltmarsh and eelgrass beds contribute to highly productive marine ecosystems and fish habitat.

The new conservation lands are an important addition to the Nature Trust's 100 Wild Islands, coined one of "Nova Scotia's most significant yet least-known natural treasures." The archipelago includes over 280 beautiful, unspoiled coastal islands nestled between Clam Harbour Beach and Taylor Head, just over an hour from downtown Halifax. The new protected area also complements the Eastern Shore Islands Wilderness Area, federal land being designated as part of the Atlantic Archipelago National Wildlife Area. Perhaps most notably, it builds on the neighbouring 657-acre Owl's Head Provincial Park, a site whose potential development caused significant public outcry and demand for its protection.

The Nature Trust's acquisition and long-term stewardship of the property ensures Little Harbour's significant biodiversity and natural systems are protected, forever. The land will never be privatized, commercialized or developed, instead left intact for nature to thrive, and for future generations to continue to enjoy.

"The Nature Trust is thrilled to be protecting this spectacular coastal gem at Little Harbour, bringing much-needed good news for coastal conservation. We are also delighted to provide an opportunity for Nova Scotians to take positive, tangible action to save the coast they love" says Bonnie Sutherland, Executive Director of the Nature Trust.

With just \$700,000 left to raise, the Nature Trust hopes Nova Scotians will turn their concern for the coast into real and lasting conservation wins by donating today.

Over 70% of the funds needed to secure and ensure the long-term protection of Little Harbour have been raised through the generous support of the Canada Nature Fund Target 1 Challenge and the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust.

With only five percent of Nova Scotia's coast protected to date, and over eighty percent of the coast in private ownership, heavily fragmented and facing unprecedented threats, the urgency protect the coast continues to grow. The Nature Trust is leading that charge.

"We're thankful to be able to seize this rare opportunity to protect such a large, intact, and ecologically significant piece of our coast, but we're not finished yet! More urgent action to save the coast is on the way," Sutherland noted.

The Nature Trust has a major announcement planned in the coming weeks that it says will make even bigger strides forward in protecting our coast.

"There is much more work ahead to save our coast and we're asking Nova Scotians to show their love for the coast by donating today."

Twice the Wild is an ambitious campaign launched by the Nature Trust in 2020 aiming to double the organization's protected space for nature by 2025. To help protect Little Harbour and other coastal treasures, charitable donations can be made to *Twice the Wild* at www.nsnt.ca.

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*Interviews with Bonnie Sutherland are available upon request.
Backgrounder, photos, and videos are available at nsnt.ca/media.*

100 Wild Islands

Off Nova Scotia's east coast lies a little-known yet incredible natural treasure – a vast and beautiful archipelago of over 100 Wild Islands. This is one of the last remaining intact and ecologically rich island groups of its size in North America. In 2014, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust launched a ground-breaking campaign to protect the entire archipelago. To date, over 85 percent of the 100 Wild Islands have been protected, with more in progress!

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 percent of Canada's lands by 2030 and answers the global call for urgent action to address the biodiversity and climate change crises. The initial fundraising goal of four million dollars was met in just 14 months and together with 4 to 1 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.