

Forever Wild



2023/24
GRATITUDE
REPORT

www.nsnt.ca



Protecting tomorrow. Today.

Our province is blessed with stunning landscapes and a rich diversity of flora and fauna, a natural legacy we all treasure and share. But climate change and rapid loss of biodiversity around the world put that legacy at risk. Every day, many natural areas are irreversibly damaged or destroyed, and irreplaceable parts of the nature we love are lost.

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is the only land trust focused exclusively on protecting the most ecologically important and vulnerable places throughout the province of Nova Scotia.

Since 1994, we have used a strategic, science-driven approach to identify and protect the most threatened, unique and significant natural areas. Together with landowners, local communities, other conservation organizations, and government we save and steward wild places. We commit to protecting these special places forever.

With a proven record of success, our conservation lands provide a network of spectacular wild places we can learn about, explore and enjoy—now and always.

Strategic Priorities

PACE. We will significantly accelerate biodiversity conservation in Nova Scotia.

PERMANENCE. We will be a leader in land stewardship, ensuring all lands entrusted to our care are truly protected, forever.

RESILIENCE. We will have an enduring, reliable revenue model and engaged community support that together will sustain our operations into the future.

PEOPLE. The united efforts of professional staff, partners, and vibrant volunteers will provide the resources that are needed to realize our strategic plan.



Irwin Barrett

From our Executive Director

Thanks to you, our passionate friends and supporters, it has been another remarkable year for nature and for the Nature Trust. Compelled by continued environmental crises and an ever more urgent global call to save more land, more quickly, the Nature Trust's focus on our strategic priorities is creating impact.

In 2020 we committed to increasing the pace of conservation action by doubling the space we protect for nature by 2025: *Twice the Wild*. Thanks to you, this year brought us within sight of that ambitious goal, saving a record 21 new conservation lands and bringing our total to 194 sites and over 25,000 acres protected, forever. We protected more of Nova Scotia's most rare, unique and ecologically important lands, preserved essential habitat for our most endangered species, extended landscape connectivity and wildlife corridors, and safeguarded essential ecological services from

carbon storage to clean air and water to mitigation of coastal erosion.

Our focus on permanence means that the natural values of the lands entrusted to our care are truly protected in perpetuity. Your support is building the capacity and expertise needed to meet our promise of *forever wild*. Our growing volunteer program provides essential on-the-ground stewardship support. And exciting new technologies are scaling up capacity to manage more lands and increasingly complex stewardship and ecological challenges.

The promise of *forever wild* also means the Nature Trust itself must be resilient, to weather uncertainties and change. Your support is building a solid foundation of a broad support base, diverse revenue streams, reserves, and 'forever funds.' Our sustainability comes from people, too, with the amazing volunteers, supporters and conservation partners we're so fortunate to have with us.



One of the things I love most about being part of the Nature Trust is the profound and pervasive sense of purpose in everything we do. Our pursuit of that shared purpose, protecting Nova Scotia's amazing and inspiring natural legacy, brings rare gifts to all of us—hope, wonder, awe, and at times pure joy!

The passion, generosity and inspiration you bring to the Nature Trust make incredible things possible. Thanks to you we can be audacious. Bold. Dream big. And achieve every ambitious conservation goal we set. On behalf of all of us at the Nature Trust, our heartfelt thanks and deepest gratitude.

Bonnie Sunderland

Your Conservation Impact

Because of you, another 3,132 acres are now protected.

Thanks to you, another 21 incredible properties were added to our protected areas network this year. Guided by conservation science and strategic planning, our focus is Nova Scotia's most ecologically significant and vulnerable places. Coordinating our efforts with other land trusts and Mi'kmaq and government partners also allows us to maximize the impact of our conservation work.

We target priority lands within focus areas critical to fostering biodiversity, landscape connectivity, and nature-based solutions to climate change. Given the staggering amount of land held privately, working with landowners is key. Through outreach and education, the Nature Trust offers landowners the ability to protect their land by voluntary stewardship or permanent conservation through donation, sale, easement, or bequest.

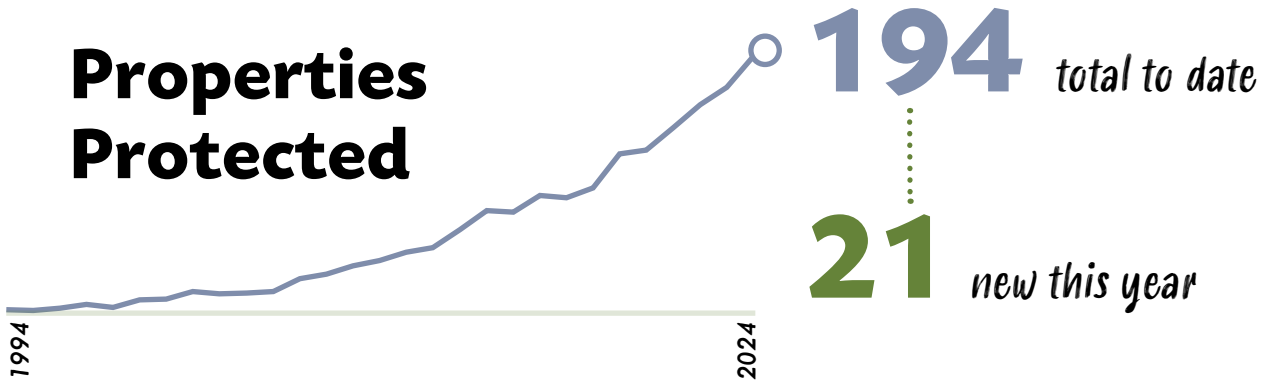
With the support of these landowners and donors like you, we are thrilled to report that another 3,132 acres are now protected forever.

*On behalf of all the
nature saved, thank you!*

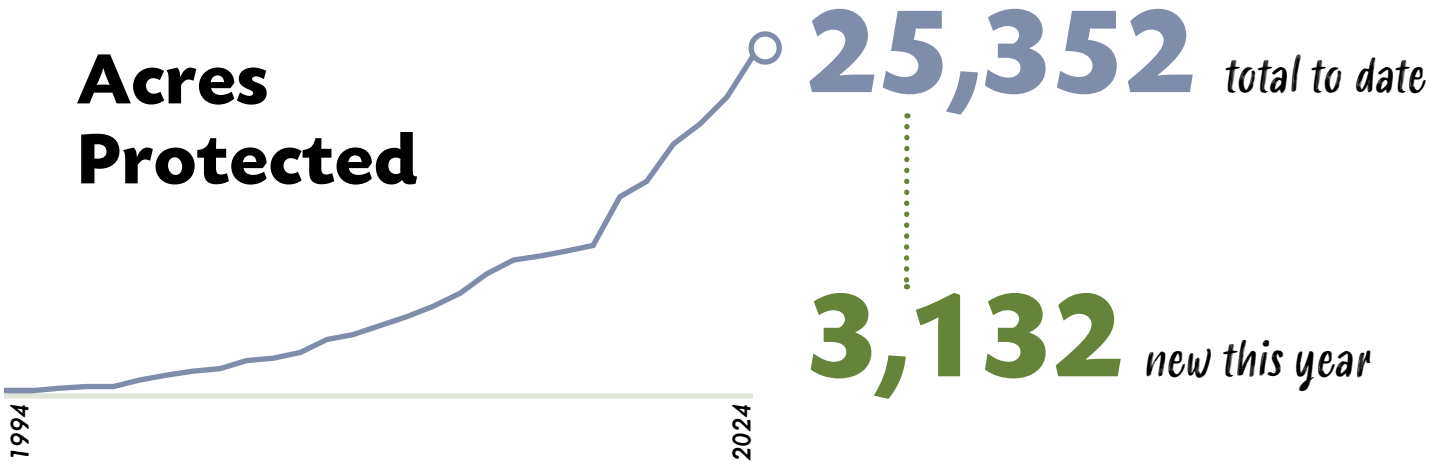


CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS *as of March 2024*

Properties Protected



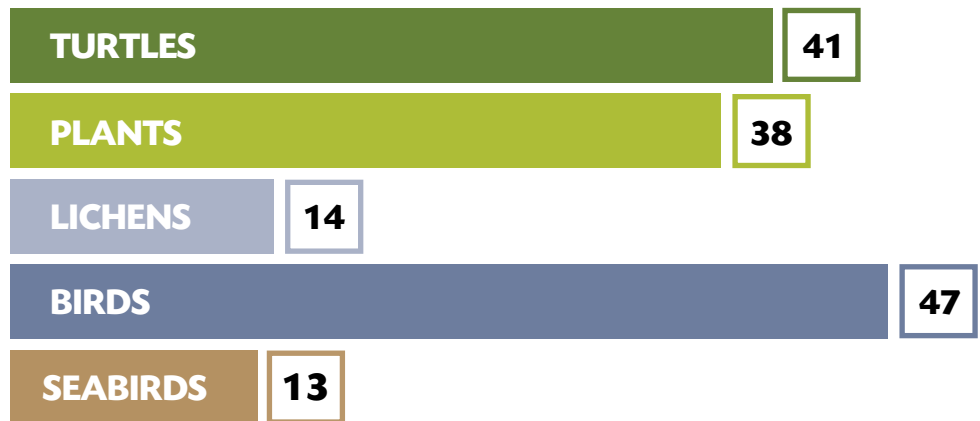
Acres Protected



13,121

ACRES FOR SPECIES AT RISK

PROPERTIES FOR AT RISK SPECIES *total to date*



new this year:

1,614
ACRES OF
OLD FOREST

28,729
METRES OF
ATLANTIC COAST

6,909
METRES OF
FRESHWATER SHORELINE

CONSERVATION LANDS

Margaree Watershed

The famed Margaree River is one of the largest rivers in Nova Scotia and was designated as a Canadian Heritage River in 1998. Thanks to a long history of collaborative and proactive work, the Margaree River is the only river in Nova Scotia that consistently exceeds conservation requirement numbers of Atlantic Salmon. The Nature Trust has secured 371 acres on the steep western slopes of MacLeods Mountain in the Margaree River Valley, creating a corridor between two previously separated parcels of the Sugarloaf Mountain Wilderness Area. It holds extensive, intact stands of old growth hardwood forest, critical to keeping the overall temperature of the river and its tributaries cool and its inhabitants healthy. It is also mapped critical habitat for Bicknell's Thrush, which is listed as Endangered under the Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act.

St. Mary's River

Four properties added 577 acres to the spectacular "ribbon of green" protected along the St. Mary's River. Conservation lands here protect rare Acadian floodplain forests and old growth hardwood and hemlock forests, providing a haven for wildlife, including endangered Wood Turtles and diverse at-risk species of birds. Together with conservation partners, over 11,000 acres and 54 kilometers of important riparian shoreline is now protected on this beloved river, with more on the way.

Kespukwitk Wild

Kespukwitk / Southwest Nova Scotia has long been recognized for its high biodiversity value, including concentrations of species at risk. Two new lands in this biodiversity hotspot add 314 protected acres of critical habitat for Blanding's Turtles, one of Canada's most endangered species.

South Shore Islands

Four islands - Sheep, Cape Negro (the Nature Trust's largest single property to date), Knob & Round - add 813 acres along the southern coast of the province. This area is critically important to migrating songbirds and shorebirds, overwintering waterfowl, and offshore seabirds who only require land when they nest. These coastal areas have many benefits to human well-being as well, including support for Mi'kmaw coastal culture, coastal community access, research, recreation, and important ecosystem services.





Mabou Highlands

At nearly 3,500 acres, the Mabou Highlands is the Nature Trust's largest land assemblage – and two newly protected lands have expanded it even further. Extending the protected forest strengthens the resilience of forest ecosystems and secures important habitat for multiple species of conservation interest. Together with lands protected by the Province and other conservation partners, this impressive assemblage now covers more than 7,500 acres of coastal wilderness.



Bras d'Or

With three newly protected lands, North Mountain Ridge now comprises over 1,200 acres of steep mountainous terrain, where towering, noble stands of mature hardwoods provide habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife including rare lichens and at-risk birds. And in Maskells Harbour, one new property brings our conservation lands to more than 460 acres of spectacular forest, rolling hills, and over three kilometres of Bras d'Or Lake shoreline.



Canso Coastal

The coastline and islands in the Canso Coastal Barrens are characterized by dramatic granite bedrock barrens, softwood forest, and peatlands. This new focus area is critically important for bird conservation, welcoming a significant number of breeding, migrating, and overwintering birds, including many boreal species. Our newly conserved Harbour and Prices Islands add important island habitats to the growing network of protected areas along this coast.



Urban Wildlands

Two of the beloved urban wildlands closest to Nova Scotia's largest urban centre grew this year. A 109 acre property now protects the northern border of "our own Central Park," the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes wilderness, while a 17 acre property in the beloved Purcells Cove Backlands completes the Nature Trust's protection of the full perimeter of Purcells Pond.

EXPANDING HORIZONS

**NEW FOCUS AREAS TARGET ONE OF OUR CONSERVATION PRIORITIES:
PRESERVING NOVA SCOTIA'S COASTAL TREASURES**

**HOPE
FOR THE
COAST**

This year we launched a new targeted initiative to secure more coastal lands and islands quickly. With opportunities to acquire intact, undeveloped coastlines becoming increasingly rare, the Nature Trust's concerted efforts resulted in 10 new properties totalling 10,663 acres added to our coastal conservation lands this year.

Learn more here!



Canso Coastal Barrens

Located within the Mi'kmaw district of Eskikewa'kik, the coastline and islands in the Canso Coastal Barrens are characterized by dramatic granite bedrock barrens, softwood forest, and peatlands. This part of Nova Scotia has seen less coastal development than in other parts of the province; at the same time, within this Country Harbour Headlands Coastal Segment, less than 5% of islands currently benefit from some level of formal protection. The Nature Trust's protection of Harbour and Prices Islands is a substantial addition to a part of the province witnessing growing conservation interest.

The area supports a significant number of breeding, migrating and overwintering birds, including an abundance of waterfowl, seabirds and shorebirds. Several species of conservation concern find refuge here including Eiders, Mergansers, Purple Sandpipers and Harlequin Ducks (listed as Special Concern by the federal Species at Risk Act). Harbour and Prices Islands support many boreal species such as Blackpoll Warblers, Fox Sparrows and Boreal Chickadees, all species decreasing in abundance on the mainland due to habitat disturbance. They also provide refuge for Willets, a shorebird species in decline.

In light of the staggering decline of many birds, the protection of these intact islands is critically important to providing hope for the future of Nova Scotia's natural legacy.

LaHave Islands

Located at the edge of the Mi'kmaw district of Kespukwitk, the LaHave Islands have been inhabited and explored for countless generations.

Like all of the South Shore, this area is highly sought after for development, and with pristine beaches and quiet but show-stopping vistas, the islands are no exception. Protecting islands in this area is critical to preserving the ecological functioning and integrity of the whole island group, as well as its availability for public access.

The Nature Trust now protects two islands in this archipelago, both of which were generously donated to ensure that they remain a place for everyone to enjoy, whether for picking blueberries, clam digging, or stopping by in a kayak.



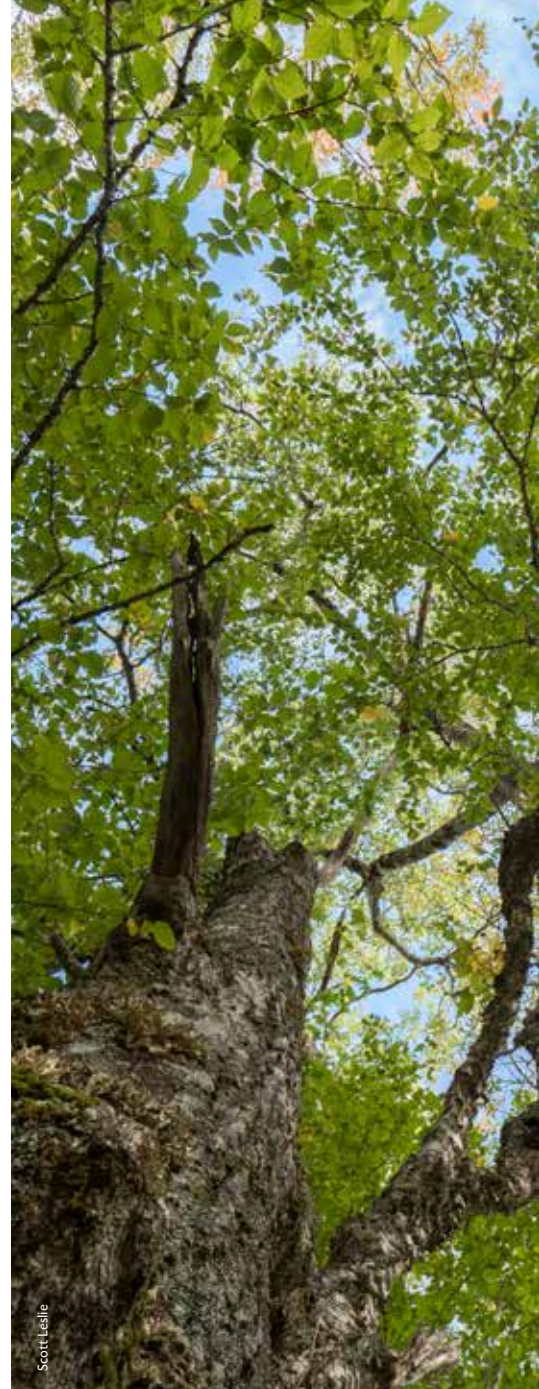
Learning Toward Reconciliation

What is Wabanaki Forest?

The Nature Trust and other conservation organizations have begun referring to the Eastern Maritime forest as Wabanaki forest, or Wabanaki-Acadian forest. Wabanaki comes from the Algonquian word Wabanakik, which roughly translates as “dawnland” and encompasses the unceded territory of the Mi’kmaw, Wolastoqiyik, and Passamaquoddy people. The coastal-influenced maritime climate of humid summers and cold winters in this region gives rise to a unique forest mix of northern hardwood and boreal species, now recognized

as one of North America’s most endangered forests.

The Nature Trust is committed to meaningful reconciliation with all Indigenous Peoples on whose treaty and ancestral territories we live and work. As we reflect, engage, and deepen our relationships with our Mi’kmaw and other Indigenous partners, you will see us use the original name for the Wabanaki forest along with other Mi’kmaw place names and species names. We invite you to join us on this learning journey.



Scott Leslie

HAVE YOU
HEARD?

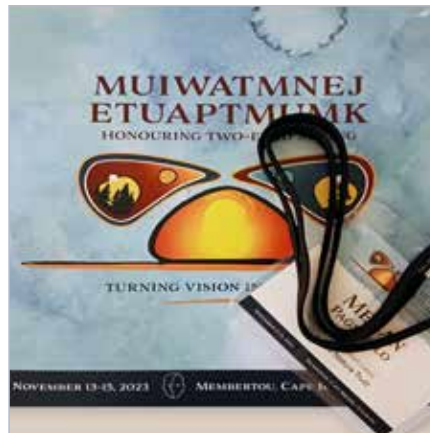


Building sustainability and resilience for the future are key strategic priorities for the Nature Trust to ensure our promise of ‘forever wild’.

In the past year, we have continued to nurture a positive, inclusive and inspiring organizational culture to attract and retain a growing network of top caliber staff and volunteers, and to invest in training and new technologies to enhance capacity and efficiencies across the organization.



Muiwاتمnej Etuaptmumk



In December 2023 Nature Trust staff were honoured to participate in the Muiwاتمnej Etuaptmumk (Honouring Two-Eyed Seeing) Conference hosted in Membertou First Nation. The three-day conference was presented by the Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) and focused on helping attendees understand the concept of Etuaptmumk and how it can bridge the gap between Indigenous knowledge and modern science. In the words of Elder Albert Marshall, Etuaptmumk (two-eyed-seeing) "[R]efers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and using both of these eyes together*."

In addition to phenomenal keynote speakers, including Elder Albert Marshall, Dr. Shelley Denny and

David Suzuki, attendees also had the opportunity to immerse themselves in Indigenous and Celtic music with incredible performances by Jeremy Dutcher, Morgan Toney, Alan Syliboy and the Thundermakers, and the Sons of Membertou.

In addition to participating in over 20 engaging wisdom circles, including Understanding Etuaptmumk Through Stories, Etuaptmumk and Reciprocity - Examples from Unama'ki with Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources and the Province of Nova Scotia, Treaty Epistemology and Etuaptmumk in Wabanaki, Yukon Native Teacher Education, and Indigenous Tourism ReconcilAction, this conference was also an opportunity to strengthen relationships amongst organizations, many of which are also working to protect beautiful Nova Scotia. It was so wonderful to connect with individuals and groups from across the country working to incorporate Etuaptmumk into their work. The conference left Nature Trust staff inspired to continue on our path to reconciliation.

Wela'liq to CEPI, the presenters, musicians, dancers, and everyone else who made this conference such a success!

*Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012, p 335.

Stewardship Matters

Caring for conservation lands in perpetuity is a vital part of our work, and ensures that these places remain wild. With 196 properties (and counting!) across the province, our stewardship work is truly a team effort, and we're thankful for the support of our donors, funders and partners who help make this possible. Here are just a few of last year's stewardship highlights!

GOING DEEP AT SAND BEACH

Last summer, Amanda Loder from the Canadian Wildlife Service and Joanna Skomorowski, our Stewardship Manager, travelled to our Sand Beach conservation lands to measure peat depths in the wetlands.



Amanda specializes in studying carbon storage in wetland soils and used a soil auger to measure depths of peat in both Black Spruce swamps and a bog on the property. They found peat depths of over 2.7m in the bog – so much that the soil auger couldn't go deep enough to reach the bottom! This is great news, because wetlands like those at Sand Beach have high potential to store carbon and buffer against the impacts of climate change.

Our Sand Beach conservation lands were purchased under the Nature Smart Climate Solutions grant from Environment and Climate Change Canada. Under this grant, the Nature Trust and other partner organizations are exploring the importance of wetlands in storing carbon.

HOT SPOTTING

The closure of the woods following the devastating fires in Shelburne County and Hammonds Plains in June 2023 caused some mayhem within our stewardship team. With interns soon arriving and several weeks' worth of fieldwork planned, they had to rework the first half of the field season in just a few days and by the end of the season, managed to successfully accomplish all the work that needed to be done.

Employing satellite imagery continues to offer our stewardship team greater flexibility, particularly for properties that are difficult to reach or have other challenging attributes. During the wildfires, our Cox's Lake conservation lands were badly burned. Using LENS technology, the team was able to assess not only damage to the forest canopy but also to the vegetation below, where a hotspot on the northeast edge of the land was identified.



Coastal Collaboration



The Coastal Restoration Society aims to transform marine and aquatic restoration into a large-scale industry while building capacity and meaningful employment in host First Nations communities. They're experienced working in ecologically significant areas and working around species at risk and other ecological concerns.

In collaboration with several Mi'kmaq communities, the Coastal Restoration Society conducted a number of clean-ups in Nova Scotia this year, focusing on fishing gear that was discarded, lost, or abandoned (ghost gear) as a result of Hurricane Fiona. They use boats, helicopters, divers, and remote-operated vehicles where necessary, operating on a scale that the Nature Trust would find very difficult to replicate.

Last summer they removed thousands of tonnes of ghost gear from the water around Outer Bald Island, Little Half Bald Island, Peases Island, and Spectacle Island, all protected by the Nature Trust. On behalf of the threatened bird populations that take refuge in this fragile archipelago, as well as all of us who benefit from cleaner seas, thank you!



CELEBRATING THE ST. MARY'S

In August, we shared recent conservation wins along the St. Mary's River with our extended family of donors, volunteers and partners in Historic Sherbrooke Village, meeting with friends new and old at the Sherbrooke Saturday Market and hosting an open house and donor reception to talk about our conservation work along the river. We then headed out for two public hikes on the recently protected conservation lands to share the wonder and magic of this storied river and its shores.

The next day we hosted a volunteer recognition breakfast and a training event with Property Guardians from the Sherbrooke area, and spent the afternoon completing the Nature Trust's first ever property monitoring blitz on the St. Mary's River.

Our sincere thanks to our partners in conservation, including the wonderful kitchen staff at the Tearoom, the St. Mary's River Association, the Historic Sherbrooke Village Development Society, and all our generous donors and volunteers helping to ensure that the St. Mary's will be protected for generations to come!



Nature's Way at Pennant River

An energized staff team from Nature's Way Canada joined us in October for some trail maintenance on our popular Pennant River Conservation Lands. This donated property of more than 300 acres of mixed forest is also a beloved site for hiking, swimming, and fishing. Protecting urban wildlands is one of the Nature Trust's conservation priorities, but sometimes trails near urban centres become "over-enjoyed" and require some care to

ensure they are kept safe for hikers and the nature around them.

Our stewardship work was cut out for us, and we made plans to install some additional boardwalk. But hauling lumber and tools into a narrow, rocky trail system required extra hands, and we are so grateful to the team from Nature's Way for their help. Within a few short hours, sections of boardwalk and new codroy trails were established to help reinforce the trail system in the muddiest areas. This was also a special opportunity for the Nature's Way team to see the new trail signage they created for us. Our thanks and admiration go to Nature's Way for all of their fantastic support and exemplary participation in the 1% for the Planet program.

Deloitte Impact Day

Every year, Deloitte organizes a company-wide Impact Day in October to encourage all firm

members to volunteer their time and experience in their community. This year we were so pleased to welcome a group of Deloitte employees to our Frederick Lake property. The group learned more about the Nature Trust, participated in site monitoring activities, and collected Red Oak acorns in support of the federally-funded Thriving Forest program and their mission to plant 21 million trees across Nova Scotia. We are so thankful for all of the helping hands at Deloitte as they joined us for a wonderful day of impact for nature!



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS



The Nature Trust's conservation achievements would not be possible without the dedication and commitment of our passionate and enthusiastic volunteers.

Property Guardians help the Nature Trust monitor and maintain properties across the province, and as the number of lands in our care grows, so does our need for these incredible volunteers. This year we welcomed 35 new Property Guardians, who received training at 7 different sessions. 82 Property Guardians were trained on the Landscape App; their use of this key stewardship technology continues to make monitoring our lands more streamlined and precise, and we are so grateful that they are stepping up to the challenge. We are also grateful to have a new Field Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator on staff to help oversee this growing Property Guardians cohort, especially with the addition of our new Wilderness Property Guardians category!

Not all of our volunteers regularly find themselves knee-deep in mud, though - we also rely on generous

volunteer efforts to care for Nature's Garden, to fill key strategic positions on our Board of Directors, and to help us fulfill longtime wishes - like getting all Nature Trust lands onto iNaturalist! Thanks to two incredible volunteers behind-the-scenes, citizen scientists can now record all of their naturalist observations directly on the app! Volunteers also stepped in as Nature Trust ambassadors at community events, helping to raise the profile of the Nature Trust.

We are always delighted when we can join together with volunteers, and this year we continued to increase the number of volunteer events! These included a Pleasant River Invasive Species Removal with Ducks Unlimited, a Garden Workshop with Helping Nature Heal, and independent trail work with the Property Guardians who are part of our 100 Wild Islands Hub. We also hosted several webinars for volunteers, with topics including Leaches Storm Petrels, Wetlands 101, and Leave No Trace.

NEW! Wilderness Property guardians

This year we officially launched our Wilderness Property Guardians program, to recruit volunteers to help us care for our most wild – and difficult to monitor – conservation lands. As our network of conservation lands continues to grow, many new properties are in remote locations and are difficult to access. As we rely on volunteers to support our stewardship of these areas, the Nature Trust has created a new category of Property Guardians for people with advanced wilderness skills who would like to take on some of these more challenging lands.

Wilderness Property Guardians use their specialized skills and expertise to access properties without defined trails and traverse demanding terrain, such as steep hills, wetland areas, and thick regenerating forests. If you or someone you know may be a good fit to help us monitor one of these more demanding locations, please reach out to volunteer@nsnt.ca.



DENNIS EDWARDS

Our most prolific Wilderness Property Guardian this year! He has monitored and cared for many of our lands, sometimes even spending a few days out at a time walking property boundaries, assessing trails, observing and recording any changes or things that are not permitted on the property, and documenting and taking pictures of notable areas. He volunteers his specialized outdoor skills – acquired first as a child with his family and with Cubs and Scouts, then later through a long career as a shipwright and project manager with the Department of National Defense – to help the Nature Trust care for some of our wildest wild places.

“I’m fortunate to say that I’ve visited at least 10 different Nature Trust lands, so it’s hard to pick a favourite, especially as more and more lands are quickly being secured,” says Dennis. “But the St. Croix conservation lands are pretty special, as it’s home to me – in fact, the house I grew up in overlooks the cliffs along one of the properties.”

Find more volunteer stories at nsnt.ca/volunteer



Thank you to the TD Bank Group for providing a multi-year grant supporting the development of our volunteer program. Their support helps us engage local citizens, restore and maintain wild places, create a tangible impact on the environment, and build connections between people and nature. Thanks to TD we have been able to expand our volunteer program and build our organizational capacity.



Conservation Spotlight:

Piping Up for Plovers

Did you know that last year was the first time Piping Plovers hit their population goal in 30 years?

One of the most important outcomes we hope for is that our conservation work results in a meaningful and visible impact for species and habitats in Nova Scotia.

The provincial recovery objective was to have 60 breeding pairs of piping

plovers, and that goal was exceeded in 2023. The Nature Trust is thrilled that four of our protected beaches are nesting sites for these beloved birds - including the most productive nesting beach in the 2023 count.

Piping Plovers have been an endangered species since 1985 and this news is a heartening milestone in the right direction! In order for the population to fully recover, these

numbers do need to be sustained for a 15-year period. To help ensure their recovery continues, you can continue to support our work protecting their critical habitat, and stay watchful for signs on nesting beaches, ensuring you walk on wet sand, with pets on leashes, and leave no trace behind.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this tremendous work possible!



Your love of nature can last forever.

When you name the Nature Trust as a beneficiary in your Will, you create a legacy to be cherished for generations to come.

To learn more about leaving a gift in your Will or other simple options to create a natural legacy, please visit our website or contact us today.



Barbara Haley
Senior Advisor, Legacy Giving
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LAND DONORS

We could not achieve our mission without visionary, community-minded, nature-loving and generous land and conservation easement donors. These are just a few stories from the past year in gifts of land.



Joleen & the late Donald Gordon

In November 2023, Donald and Joleen Gordon signed a conservation easement to protect 109 acres of their property forever, while allowing them to enjoy a place that has been precious to them for over fifty years.

The property lies on the northeastern shore of Cox's Lake near Hammonds Plains and complements the growing assemblage of protected lands in the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes area.

The land was purchased in the mid-1960s by Donald and Joleen's friends and mentors, Gordon and Lucy Riley, who encouraged their oceanography students to visit and cross-country ski, hike, and canoe. After Gordon died in 1985, the couple started looking after the property so that Lucy could continue to enjoy it. In 2002, when Lucy turned 90, they bought the property from her.

"The Rileys had hoped to keep the land in a wild state for as long as possible, and we shared that vision. We see this donation as a tribute to them."

Gertrude McCarron

In December 2023, Gertrude McCarron donated 93 acres on the North Mountain in Lime Hill, filling a critical gap in the provincial North Mountain Wilderness Area and strengthening the Nature Trust's adjacent North Mountain Ridge conservation lands.

While working through her late husband's estate, a lawyer mentioned that the Nature Trust might be interested in some of the land her husband had acquired through his business many years previously. Gertrude's son, Lee, reached out to check in on the land's conservation potential and was delighted to learn that it lay within one of the Nature Trust's focus areas.



GERTRUDE & LEE MCCARRON

Lee explains, "Any time that you can donate something, and have people to steward the land, that's way better than what we could do ourselves. We're certainly glad to be able to close this piece off so it can be protected forever, and it's in good hands with you all."

Sherry & Ed Bartlett & Hillary Caldwell

Summers in the LaHave Islands have been a beloved part of Sherry and Ed Bartlett's family life for more than forty years, even as their home base moved all around the world.

Over time they became increasingly concerned about protecting this special place from mounting development pressures. Several years ago, they purchased Knob Island just near Wolfe, wanting to ensure that, like Round (which they had purchased soon after their annual summer visits began), it remained a place for everyone to enjoy, whether for picking wild blueberries, clamming, or stopping off in a kayak.

"It's so nice to look out on both islands and know that they're safe for the next generations to enjoy," says Sherry.



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR INCREDIBLE DONORS!

We are so grateful to all of our supporters - you are outstanding heroes for conservation! Here are just a few of your inspiring stories from this year.

Klaus Jensen

Klaus made his first financial donation to the Nature Trust in 1999. Over the years, as he watched the organization respond to conservation opportunities and become more strategic, he recognized the value of unrestricted donations. He and his wife, Joan, became two of our first Champions of the Wild, giving multi-year pledges of unrestricted funding to support the on-going activities of the Nature Trust (in which Klaus is also involved as a Property Guardian!). And more recently, Klaus and Joan have shared their interest in leaving a lasting legacy for nature with a gift in their Wills. Klaus and Joan have made their mark on nature, and their legacy will continue on for future generations.



Kim Anderson

Kim Anderson's love of the outdoors blossomed when she moved to Nova Scotia in 2017. But when a swath of land near her cottage in Queens County was sold for development, she realized that the habitat and wildlife she appreciated so much was vulnerable. Motivated to help, she first became a NatureMaker monthly donor, then a Champion of the Wild. As a physician specializing in cardiology and heart transplant, Kim knows well the researched benefits of nature. "A healthy environment is important for the widespread health of future generations," Kim says. "The commitment doesn't have to be big, but being able to do it is a real, sustainable way to protect the province."



Christopher Hopgood

For a decade, Christopher Hopgood's generous financial support and enthusiastic participation in Nature Trust special events and activities have made him an integral part of our donor community. An avid hiker and swimmer, he frequently visits Nature Trust lands, favouring Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes and the 100 Wild Islands, to escape his city home and enjoy nature. Supporting local is important to Christopher, likely due to his immense appreciation for the province he has lived in all his life. As a Champion of the Wild, he has generously donated stock to the Nature Trust, avoiding capital gains tax while receiving a charitable tax deduction. He has included the Nova Scotia Nature Trust in his legacy planning. A former investment advisor, Christopher recognizes the financial advantages of being a donor. "It's wonderful. I can help such an important cause and still leave enough to my other beneficiaries."

Enjoy more inspiring stories at nsnt.ca/giving/donor-stories or share your story with us at barbara@nsnt.ca



IN MEMORIAM

In 2023, the team at the Nature Trust were all deeply saddened to learn of the passing of David Sobey.

Through his very generous support and as an ambassador who inspired many landowners, donors and volunteers, David Sobey left an indelible mark on protecting the St. Mary's River, a part of Nova Scotia especially close to his heart. And the incredible \$1 million gift he and his family provided for the Nature Trust's *Twice the Wild* campaign was transformative for the pace and scale of saving wild, endangered spaces all across Nova Scotia.

To learn more about David Sobey and his immense natural legacy, [visit our blog online.](#)

Our Legacy Circle is a group of very special Nature Trust supporters who are generously planning a future estate gift (i.e. a gift in a Will) or who have given a gift of conservation land or a conservation easement.

In November, a Legacy Circle Appreciation Event was held to bring together these two groups of foundational donors (Legacy Gift donors and land donors) for an informal and meaningful event in the President's Lodge overlooking the water at the Atlantic School of Theology. We were thrilled to "induct" a number of new members into the Circle; each person received a special plaque and pin, reserved for our Legacy Circle supporters.

Champions in the Wild

Our Champions of the Wild are donors of providing the Nature Trust with capital to better plan ahead strategically.

Each year, as a small token of our thanks, we hold a special field trip to give our Champions an opportunity to see the results of our work and to learn about what goes on behind the scenes.

Over 90 people have now joined our Champions of the Wild group, and in September, we were thrilled to host a field trip to see the sustainable farming practices at the Wolfville Farm, including delicious tastings and a guided walk through the preserve, conserved by a unique partnership between the Nature Trust and the Town of Wolfville.



donors who have recognized the importance of ongoing, unrestricted support to allow us

to thank them for their foundational support, we have arranged for our Champions a “behind-the-scenes” look at our operations and the challenges of protecting land forever.

Our Champions of the Wild donor group will be invited to witness the opening of Benjamin Bridge winery, followed by a walk at the Wolfville Watershed Nature Partnership between the Nova Scotia Nature



Jacques Gaud

Our deepest thanks to all of our donors

NEW LAND DONORS

Sherry Bartlett, Ed Bartlett &
Hillary Caldwell
Cameron Corporation Ltd.
Joleen & the late Donald Gordon
Lee Ann & the late Bob Kinzer
Andrew Larkin
Gertrude McCarron

NEW LEGACY GIFT DONORS & ESTATES RECEIVED

Joan Backman
Christian Croft
Jacques Giard & Mercedes Ballem
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A special thank you to the conservation game-changers.

Environment and Climate Change Canada

The Government of Canada has committed to protect 30% of Canada's land by 2030, to save nature and advance nature-based solutions to climate change. They have backed this promise with billions of dollars in funding - the largest investment in nature conservation in Canadian history. The Canada Nature Fund and the Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund encourage and support land trusts, community organizations and Indigenous groups in advancing land conservation nationwide.

The Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust

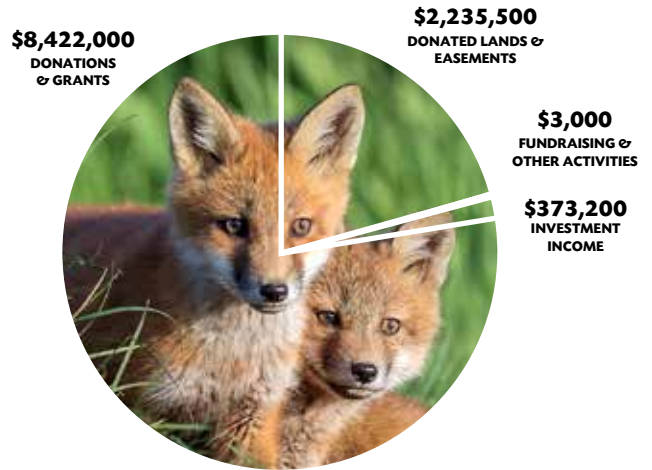
In 2008, in recognition of the essential role of private land conservation and the unique work of land trusts in protecting Nova Scotia's biodiversity, the provincial government created a \$23 million conservation trust, adding \$20 million more in 2022. This funding has been game-changing for land trusts, escalating the pace and scale of conservation success exponentially. It has helped to protect thousands of acres of Nova Scotia's most important wild spaces, including over 120 Nature Trust conservation lands to date. Many of these could simply not have happened without the Land Legacy Trust.

Financial Accountability

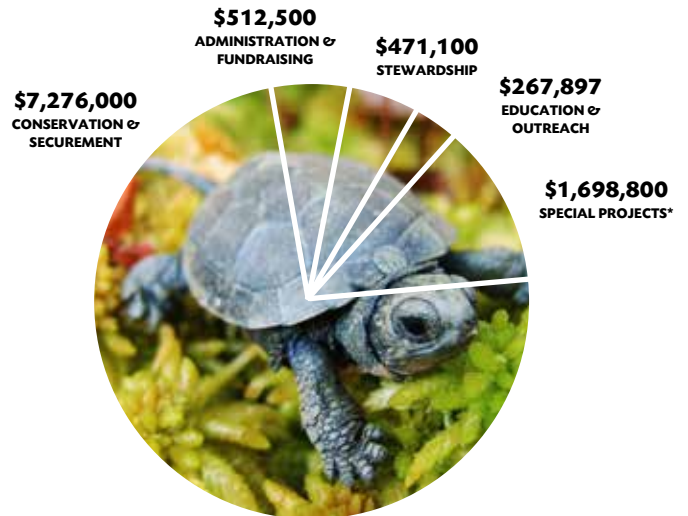
In the past year (April 2023-March 2024) we expended \$9.7 million (95% of expenses) in charitable programs and initiatives, advancing our conservation mission through private land conservation, land stewardship and management as well as education and public engagement in conservation.

Our balance sheet remains positive and strong, with no long-term debt and \$35.2 million in conservation lands and easements. Our endowment funds have grown to \$22.4 million, providing operational stability and the security to meet our long-term stewardship commitments to the lands entrusted to our care. We added \$420,000 to our operating reserve fund, helping to stabilize finances, ensure sustainability for the organization, a cushion against unforeseen events, losses of income or large unbudgeted expenses.

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



INCOME
TOTAL \$11,033,700



EXPENSES
TOTAL \$10,226,300



INVESTMENT
TOTAL \$796,000



Keep up to date by signing up for our monthly newsletter Landlines here!

*Note: Figures include \$1,698,800 in grants managed on behalf of partners in collaborative projects (no net impact on financial position)

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April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

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Thank you for
another wonderful year
of saving nature!



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