



Nova Scotia Nature Trust saves rare coastal gem

June 24, 2021 (Halifax) — While Nova Scotians are emerging from the recent pandemic lockdown, some flighty south shore residents are also gathering and celebrating! Just in time for our feathered friends' return, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced saving a spectacular coastal wilderness near Port La Tour on Nova Scotia's south shore. The 363 acre purchase secures one of the province's last remaining large and ecologically rich coastal properties, and a significant site for migratory, overwintering and nesting birds.

"Thanks to enthusiastic public and government support, one of Nova Scotia's last, large coastal wilderness areas is now protected forever--a beautiful landscape of pristine beaches, dunes, wetlands and forest, rare and endangered plants and wildlife," says Bonnie Sutherland, Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. "Saving this unique coastal gem is truly something for all Nova Scotians to celebrate."

Opportunities to protect Nova Scotia's treasured coastline are rare. Over 85% of Nova Scotia's coast is privately owned and faces increasing development pressures. Ownership is highly fragmented, in small parcels, making assemblage of contiguous coastal habitats challenging.

Located on Nova Scotia's southwest coast, the Nature Trust's newest protected area includes an ecologically rich mosaic of coastal habitats, from some of the most pristine sand beaches and dunes in the region, to saltmarsh, wetlands, bogs and coastal forest, and provides important habitat for diverse wildlife including rare and endangered birds and lichen.

The property's protection strengthens the conservation value of other protected lands in the area as well, by providing essential landscape connectivity. Nature needs connected habitats, for wildlife to move safely, and for nature to thrive long-term. The new protected area is adjacent to the provincially-protected 2550 acre Port LaTour Bogs Wilderness Area, creating a large, contiguous protected area, and adding critical coastal habitats to the suite of biodiversity already protected.

Many species of conservation concern, including several federally designated Species at Risk, will benefit from the property's protection. Among the most significant are Piping Plover, listed as Endangered under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA). These birds often travel back and forth between the adjacent beaches, which regularly support successfully nesting Piping Plovers - in fact, this area is considered amongst the most productive breeding sites in the province in recent years. Very few other beaches that support Piping Plover benefit from existing protection, and are under increasing pressures from sea-level rise, erosion, development, and human use.

A variety of shorebirds also use the property during their migration to and from more southerly locations. These avian visitors include relatively large numbers of Semipalmated Plover and Semipalmated



Sandpiper, as well as Black-bellied Plover and Least Sandpiper. With shorebird populations declining 40% over the last decade globally, protecting one of their important migratory stopovers is critical.

The purchase of Port La Tour Beach was made possible by significant financial support from major partners:

This project was made possible by the Natural Heritage Conservation Program Land Trusts Conservation Fund, an initiative funded by the Canada Nature Fund, supporting Canada's land trusts in helping to meet Canada's ambitious biodiversity goals.

"Nova Scotia is a province full of beauty. Located along one of Canada's great coasts we are home to many countless wildlife and diverse landscapes. By working together with Nova Scotia Nature Trust we are preserving the important coastal habitat near Port La Tour. Our government is continuing to deliver on our commitment to protect our province's natural environment now and for future generations."

– The Honourable Bernadette Jordan, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard and Member of Parliament for South Shore—St. Margarets

Other major support came from the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, a significant funder for the private land conservation work of land trusts in Nova Scotia, and donations by many individuals and families.

The protection of Port La Tour Beach represents another major milestone in the Nature Trust's [Twice the Wild campaign](#).

Announced in September 2020, the ambitious conservation campaign aims to double natural areas the Nature Trust protects and stewards across the province by 2023, to a total of 30,000 acres. Other major land accomplishments to date include the high-profile Blue Mountain Wilderness Connector, critical bird habitat in the Tusket Islands, endangered turtle and salmon habitat on the St. Mary's River, and rare gypsum karst and highland wilderness sites in Cape Breton.

This latest conservation win for Nova Scotia is timely in light of the important role that natural spaces and access to nature have played for Nova Scotians throughout the pandemic.

"Nova Scotians can help save even more spectacular places like Port La Tour Beach, all across Nova Scotia, with a charitable donation to [Twice the Wild](#)," said Sutherland. "With every dollar donated being matched 4 to 1, every gift makes a big difference in saving twice the wild. Twice the space for nature, and for people to enjoy too."

To donate or learn more, visit www.TwiceTheWild.ca.



Photos and video of Port La Tour Beach can be found at <https://nsnt.ca/media/>.

About Funding Programs:

Natural Heritage Conservation Program

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique public-private partnership to support new protected and conserved areas by securing private lands and private interests in lands. The program is managed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Federal funds invested in the program are matched with contributions raised by NCC and its partners, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trust community.

The Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust

This independent trust was established in 2008 by the Province of Nova Scotia from Crown Share Payments. Its purpose is to provide funds to support Nova Scotia's land trusts in protecting ecologically significant, threatened and irreplaceable natural areas on private lands in Nova Scotia.

About Twice the Wild:

The Nature Trust's Twice the Wild Campaign is an ambitious campaign to double the Nature Trust's protected areas by 2023. Through generous conservation partners, the Nature Trust is able to leverage an inspiring 4 to 1 match for every donation to save the twice the wild across Nova Scotia.

www.TwiceTheWild.ca

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