



For Immediate Release

## **Nova Scotia Nature Trust secures pristine islands in promising focal area**

**Harbour and Prices Islands in Guysborough County  
add to growing conservation interest.**

**DECEMBER 4, 2023, HALIFAX, NS** – Today, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust is pleased to announce a significant conservation gain in the province with the addition of 149.7 hectares (370 acres) of spectacular coastal wilderness just outside Canso, within the Mi'kmaw district of Eskikewa'kik.

Harbour and Prices Islands are, in fact, comprised of several small islands, but their significance is substantial, according to Bonnie Sutherland, Nature Trust Executive Director. "So far, there has been less coastal development here than in other parts of Nova Scotia, but very little is currently protected," explains Bonnie. "This win is an important step forward in an area that we hope sees more preservation soon while it remains relatively untouched," explains Bonnie.

Conservation interest within the Country Harbour Headlands Coastal Segment is growing, and Harbour and Prices Islands strengthen its network of protected places. The islands sit adjacent to the Canso Coastal Barrens Wilderness Area and are close to several other islands awaiting formal conservation designation. Their securement helps maintain the coastal area's integrity and increases connectivity for the associated wildlife.

The islands host a variety of habitats, including dramatic coastal barrens, softwood forest, and peatlands, as well as hundreds of breeding, migrating, and overwintering birds. Multiple species of gull nest there, and a Great Blue Heron rookery is also known to Harbour Island. Immediately adjacent to a globally significant Important Bird Area (*IBA*), the surrounding coastal landscape supports an abundance of waterfowl, seabirds, and shorebirds, including Eiders, Mergansers, Purple Sandpipers and the Harlequin Duck, a species of special concern determined by the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA).

"There have been alarming declines of migratory birds since the 1980s, and facing this biodiversity crisis, the need to conserve important coastal islands is urgent says Bonnie. "Atlantic Canada and the eastern U.S. have suffered the greatest amount of coastal habitat

loss in recent years," she explains. "Saving intact islands like Harbour and Prices are critical."

News of this recent acquisition is not only good for nature but for people, too. Whitehead Harbour, surrounding the islands, is a known paddler's paradise, with many enjoying the area's unique recreational aspects and remote beauty, now protected forever.

The securement of Harbour and Prices Islands also supports the Nature Trust's recent Hope for the Coast conservation effort, whereby the organization has set a goal of acquiring an additional 5,000 acres of coastal property to help offset high rates of land fragmentation and development in the province. In addition to public funds raised, this land securement was made possible with the help of a generous donation by Nature's Way Canada through their participation in the 1% for the Planet program, the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund, and the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust.

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#### **QUOTE:**

"By working with partners such as the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, we are helping to protect coastal wilderness, including softwood forest and peatlands in Nova Scotia, and providing habitat for breeding, migrating, and overwintering birds. This protection plays a crucial role in helping to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and contributes to the recovery of species at risk, such as the Harlequin Duck. Through programs like the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, the Government of Canada is making progress toward its goal of conserving a quarter of land and water in Canada by 2025, working toward 30 percent of each by 2030. Only by engaging in a whole-of-society approach can we meet our conservation goals."  
– *The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change*

#### **ABOUT:**

##### **Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP)**

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique partnership that supports the creation and recognition of protected and conserved areas through the acquisition of private land and private interest in land. To date, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$440 million in the Program, which has been matched with more than \$870 million in contributions raised by Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trust community leading to the protection and conservation of more than 700,000 hectares of ecologically sensitive lands.

##### **Nature's Way Canada**

In 2002, Nature's Way Canada was the first natural health products manufacturer to join the 1% for the Planet network. Each year, their employees vote on how a portion of funds raised through their participation are distributed. For over a decade, The Nova Scotia Nature Trust has been selected as a beneficiary. Nature's Way Canada is headquartered in Dartmouth,

Nova Scotia, with its parent organization, Schwabe, located in Germany, whose range of products includes Omega-3 and herbal supplements.

### **Hope for the Coast**

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust's Hope for the Coast fundraising initiative is an urgent and targeted effort to save 5,000 acres of Nova Scotia's most ecologically significant coastal lands. Funds raised help to secure priority coastal lands through land donations, conservation agreements or purchases and ensure they are protected forever. Hope for the Coast contributes to the organization's Twice the Wild campaign, which aims to double the land it conserves by 2025.

### **Twice the Wild**

Twice the Wild is an ambitious campaign to double the Nature Trust's protected areas - from 15,000 to 30,000 acres - by 2025. These achievements contribute directly to the federal government's commitment to save 30 percent of Canada's lands by 2030 and answer the global call for urgent action to address the biodiversity and climate change crises.

### **LEARN MORE:**

Visit: <https://nsnt.ca>

### **VIDEO AND IMAGES:**

<https://nsnt.ca/media>

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