



Nature Trust and Acadia Announce Landmark Conservation Partnership and Canadian First in Land Conservation

Halifax, N.S. (September 8, 2011) – Acadia University and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust have announced a groundbreaking conservation partnership. New protected areas arising from the partnership will advance coastal conservation in the province, and set a new standard for land stewardship by academic institutions across the country.

The announcement was held at the Museum of Natural History in Halifax on September 8, where Acadia University and the Nature Trust signed a Memorandum of Understanding committing the organizations to work together to permanently protect a series of ecologically important coastal lands owned by the university. The land will remain in Acadia ownership, but the natural values will be permanently protected by a conservation easement agreement.

“Acadia is delighted to be putting our long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship into tangible, measurable action,” said Ray Ivany, President and Vice-Chancellor of Acadia University. “Thanks to our partnership with the Nature Trust, we can ensure that important natural areas entrusted to our care are protected in perpetuity.” He added, “The partnership also gives the university, our faculty and students the opportunity to participate directly in protecting Nova Scotia’s increasingly threatened coastal legacy.”

The conservation easement between the Nature Trust and Acadia marks a significant step forward in land conservation in Canada. It is the first time in Canadian history that university land has been protected through a conservation easement. Nature Trust Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland, applauded Acadia for being an environmental pioneer among academic institutions in Canada, and noted, “We hope this landmark conservation easement, the first of its kind in Canada, inspires other academic institutions across the country to follow Acadia’s lead, by taking action to protect significant natural areas in their own care.”

The first Acadia property slated for protection is Bon Portage Island, located in Shag Harbour off Nova Scotia’s southern coast. Bon Portage, at 300 acres, is one of Nova Scotia’s last remaining large, unspoiled coastal islands, and one of the most ecologically important islands. Part of an internationally designated “Important Bird Area,” Bon Portage provides a critical stopover for many migrating songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. It is also home to over fifty species of breeding birds, including the largest breeding colony of Leach’s storm-petrels south of Newfoundland.



A conservation easement will permanently protect the outstanding wildlife and habitats of Bon Portage. For Acadia, the easement preserves another irreplaceable asset. The island is one of the province's leading ecological research and field education sites. It supports a field school and unique learning and research opportunities, treasured by generations of Acadia students, and by other scientists and researchers. By ensuring the island remains undisturbed and unspoiled, the conservation easement protects these irreplaceable learning and research opportunities, as well as the scenic values enjoyed by generations of local residents.

“For years, Bon Portage has provided researchers with unique opportunities to observe and study wildlife and it makes sense that we make every effort to preserve it for the benefit of future generations of scientists,” said Ivany.

Sutherland announced that the Nature Trust has launched a fundraising drive to make the long-term protection of Bon Portage Island possible. “Nova Scotians cherish our coastal legacy and lament its degradation. Here is a chance to make a difference, to be part of protecting that legacy—by making a tax-deductible gift to the Bon Portage Island campaign.”

For more information and to support the campaign, visit nsnt.ca/bonportage.

FOR BROADCAST USE

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Notes:

Photographs and Bon Portage Island Campaign video available for media use.

Interviews opportunities available.

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