

Nature Trust Celebrates New Protected Islands on the Eastern Shore

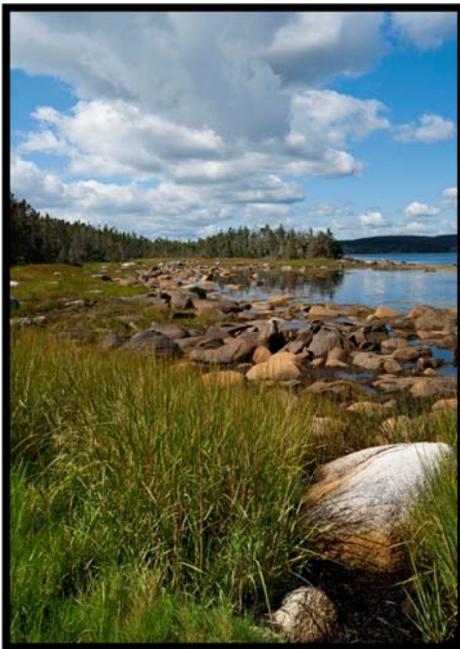
Murphy's Cove, NS (July 26, 2014)—The Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced new island conservation successes today, as part of its exciting 100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign. A large and enthusiastic crowd at a community celebration in Murphy's Cove, on the eastern shore, welcomed news of another 275 acres of protected areas on the islands they have treasured for generations.

The new conservation lands are one kilometer offshore from Popes Harbour, on Gerard Island, one of the largest islands in Nova Scotia. The 800 acre island is nestled between the Nature Trust's existing conservation lands at Shelter Cove and Taylors Head Provincial Park.

Ecologically rich and diverse, the new conservation lands encompass large areas of undisturbed coastal forests, bogs, barrens, cobble beaches, wetlands, eelgrass meadows and saltmarsh, including the well-known 15 acre landmark, "the Mud Hole." They also protect over nine kilometers of pristine shoreline, including several species of provincially rare coastal plants.



Bob Guscott



The unique shallow, rock-strewn bay known as "the bawleen," between Gerard, Phoenix and Stoney Island, shelters a rich diversity of birds and marine life including terns, eiders, eagles, osprey, endangered harlequin ducks, porpoises and seals. Gerard and surrounding islands have been found to support well over 100 species of nesting and migratory birds.

Home to some of Nova Scotia's only remaining undisturbed maritime coastal boreal forests, the island provides refuge to boreal songbirds that are increasingly rare on the mainland. The forests were also recently discovered by Nature Trust scientists to be rainforests, supporting provincially rare lichens and habitat for the nationally endangered Boreal Felt lichen. Much of the forest has been largely undisturbed



by humans since the last ice age, over 10,000 years ago, which is exciting both from a conservation perspective and the one-of-a-kind research opportunities these 'old process' forests and rare pristine shorelines offer to scientists and researchers.

The new conservation lands build on past Nature Trust coastal conservation achievements in the area. In October the Nature Trust acquired the true gem of this vast island wilderness, and the most imminently threatened, the 530 acre Borgles Island. Combined with Shelter Cove and Ship Rock Island conservation lands, the Nature Trust has now protected over 1000 acres in the archipelago.

At the community celebration, the Nature Trust honoured the island owners who have made this recent conservation success possible. Local residents John and Janet protected their five properties through a combination of donation and sale to the Nature Trust. A multi-generational local fishing family, the Abriels were delighted to discover a way to ensure that their island lands would always remain just as they have always been, for future generations to enjoy.



Roger Gerard was also recognized for his role in today's announcement. His ancestors were the first settlers on Gerard Island, residing there seasonally in the days before motorized fishing vessels. He donated his share in his family's lands to the Nature Trust. He hopes other descendants will follow his lead in preserving the proud heritage and history of generations of local fishing families, by protecting the islands. The Nature Trust also acknowledged Jonathon Chittick for agreeing to sell his land to the Nature Trust to become part of this growing coastal wilderness.



The new protected lands mark another milestone in the Nature Trust's recently launched 100 Wild Islands Campaign. The most significant coastal conservation effort in Nova Scotia's history, this exciting campaign aims to protect an entire archipelago of over 100 wild and beautiful islands in the Bay of Islands, between Clam Harbour Beach and Taylors Head Provincial Park. Stretching 30 kilometres along the coast and encompassing over 250 kilometres of pristine shoreline, the proposed "100 wild islands" is truly a natural wonder worth protecting.

Well-loved by adventurous wilderness sailors and sea kayakers and generations of local families alike, the 100 Wild Islands are otherwise one of Nova Scotia's least known, yet greatest natural treasures. Touted as "the most valuable islands you've *never* heard of," the islands offer one of the best and last opportunities to protect an ecologically rich, vast and unspoiled island wilderness anywhere in North America. Right here in our own backyard.

According to the Nature Trust's Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland, "Response by island owners has been incredibly positive and enthusiastic. After a little more than a year, island owners, including the Province, have already committed to protecting over 6000 of the total 7000 acres of land." She added, "That's over 80% of the islands committed for protection already—an unbelievable start and a clear sign that Nova Scotians truly value our coastal legacy and are keen to see it protected." Since the public launch in June, other island owners have already come forward to protect their islands as well.





To bring this globally significant island wilderness dream to reality, the Nature Trust launched a 7 million dollar fundraising campaign. In just over a year, they have raised an impressive \$4.4 million through generous foundations, businesses and individual donors. The irreplaceable opportunity to protect Nova Scotia's (and Canada's) unique coastal legacy on this scale is clearing inspiring. With a generous anonymous donor offering to match every new dollar donated, the Nature Trust has just 1.3 million dollars left to raise. With the

matching gift offer, every dollar donated means two dollars to protect the islands.



Beyond the cost of acquiring islands through purchase, donation and conservation easement, the Nature Trust is raising funds for the long-term management and care of the islands. As Peter Green, the Nature Trust's Coastal Conservation Coordinator noted, "The Nature Trust's responsibilities don't end when we secure these islands. We commit to protecting the islands in perpetuity, in partnership with local communities

and volunteers. We need to ensure the islands are protected forever. For nature, and for people too."

As part of that commitment, the Nature Trust held the first in a series of community workshop this spring, encouraging residents to share their knowledge of the islands, and their vision for the islands' future stewardship. A local advisory committee is also helping the Nature Trust to work closely with the community in protecting and stewarding the islands.

The Nature Trust encourages all Nova Scotians to be a part of the incredible 100 Wild Islands story. Every dollar donated will be matched by another dollar to protect this irreplaceable part of our coastal legacy. Tweet *your reason* to protect 100 Wild Islands to #100wild islands.

For more information, please visit www.100wildislands.ca.



Blackpoll Warbler (Chris Pepper)