

## **Generous Gift of Islands adds to the 100 Wild Islands Legacy**

(Halifax, N.S) July 22, 2016 – The Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced today the protection of two spectacular coastal gems, Laybolt and Witchwood Islands, the latest additions to the land trust’s iconic 100 Wild Islands coastal legacy campaign. The 96 and 42 acre islands have been entrusted to the care of the Nature Trust through a generous donation by two Nova Scotian families.

45 years ago, Sally and Ravi Ravindra, along with another couple who wish to remain anonymous, purchased Laybolt Island, off the coast of Little Harbour on Nova Scotia’s Eastern Shore. The families saw a wonderful opportunity to keep at least one spectacular part of Nova Scotia’s beautiful coastline wild. They enjoyed many special adventures to the islands over the years, but chose not to develop the islands, and to simply keep them in their wild state.



*Munju and Sally Ravindra on Laybolt Island*

Asked about their motivation, Sally Ravindra spoke of being inspired to protect the islands. She noted, “I couldn’t imagine the islands’ almost sacred shores destroyed. The islands are incredibly beautiful. And wild. We just knew in our hearts they should stay that way.”

Sally’s daughter Munju recalls fond memories of venturing by boat to the island as a child with her parents and brother Kabir, tramping along wild shores and through dense, mossy forests, exploring, camping and enjoying nature at its wildest.

“My mother and I have always found spiritual meaning in nature. It’s how we find our reality. And the island has always been a big part of that for us,” Munju said.

The families both recognized, well ahead of their time, that the islands are truly unique, the kind of special place that should be protected forever. They became the islands’ faithful stewards, ensuring the natural habitats remained undisturbed. Over the years, both families also followed the work of the Nature Trust, and its partnerships with landowners to protect significant natural areas. When they heard about the Nature Trust’s 100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign, the idea crystalized that their islands should be part of this bold vision to protect a vast coastal island wilderness area on Nova Scotia’s Eastern Shore.

They began to explore the options for the future of their islands. Ultimately, both families decided to entrust the islands to the care of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust; a gift of nature, for nature. They wanted to ensure the islands will be stewarded not just by their families, but beyond their lifetimes, for generations to come.

“I always felt that the property didn’t really belong to us - it belonged to nature,” Sally noted. “It only belonged to us on a piece of paper, and we always felt like it had a larger purpose and place.”

After years of loving stewardship by the island owners, Laybolt and Witchwood Islands have been donated to the Nature Trust. The islands will be part of the broader 100 Wild Islands coastal wilderness, and part of the Nature Trust’s growing network of over 80 protected areas across the province.

The Nature Trust couldn’t be more pleased with this generous gift of land. “It is so inspiring to meet families like these, who care passionately about Nova Scotia’s wild places, and who are dedicated and so generous they are willing to give away their own treasured land, for the benefit of preserving Nova Scotia’s natural legacy,” noted Nature Trust Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland. “Both families deserve tremendous thanks and appreciation for this wonderful gift of nature.”

Their island legacy story is part of a video series highlighting the many faces behind the Nature Trust’s landmark 100 Wild Islands Conservation campaign, from passionate volunteers and donors, to visionary island owners ([www.100wildislands.ca/faces](http://www.100wildislands.ca/faces)).

The islands are located just over an hour east of Halifax, 1.5 kilometers offshore from Little Harbour, and south of Clam Harbour Provincial Park. Almost joined together at low tide, the islands encompass 140 acres of

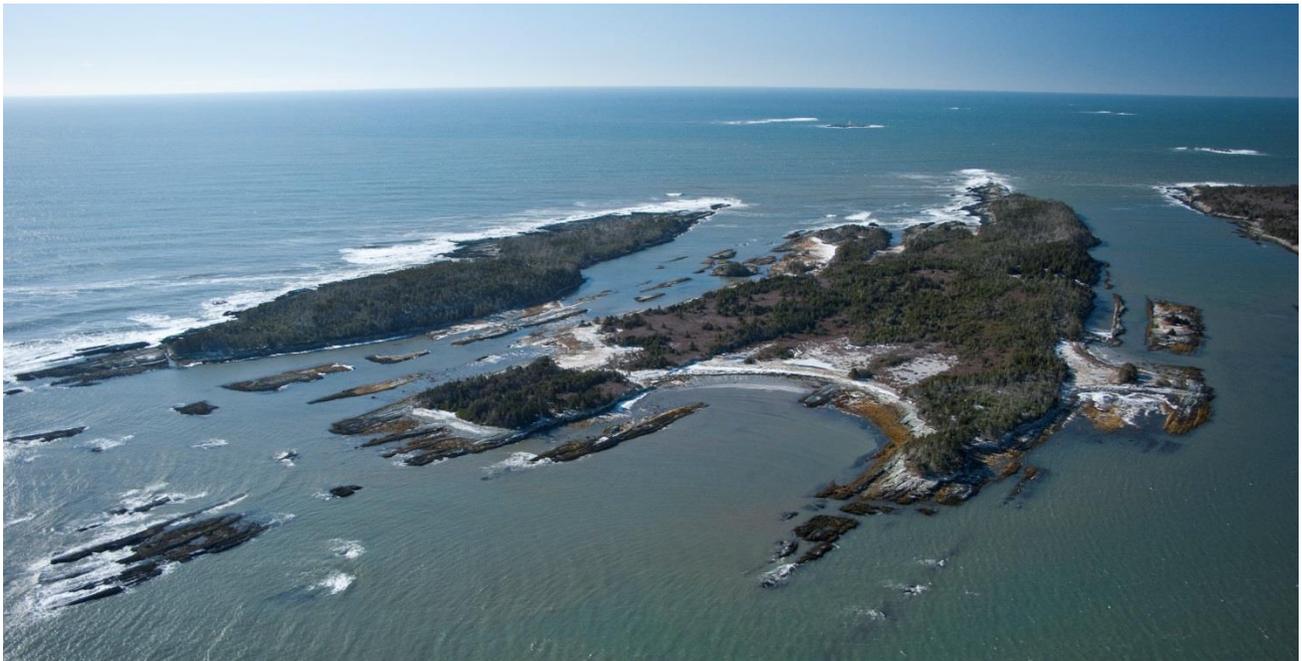


*Dramatic coastal features on Laybolt Island*

coastal forests and meadows, tranquil freshwater and tidal wetlands in the sheltered inlets, and dramatic exposed rock formations on

the windward side. They are home to several rare and uncommon plant species including Seabeach Ragwort, Estuarine Sedge and Knotted Pearlwort. They also harbour over 30 different species of birds, including many shore and songbirds that are increasingly rare on mainland Nova Scotia such as Blackpoll Warbler, Fox Sparrow and Boreal Chickadee.

The islands are the most southerly among a group of over 200 beautiful, undeveloped islands nestled together on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, which have been recognized as a globally significant coastal wilderness. The Nature Trust launched a bold and ambitious effort to protect the entire area, known as the 100 Wild Islands. The islands form one of the last vast, wild and ecologically rich coastal archipelagos left in North America. The islands encompass over 7,000 acres of diverse coastal habitats stretching 30 kilometers along the coast from Clam Harbour to Taylors Head. The islands are some of the largest in the province and are closely nested, creating an interconnected island ecosystem unlike any other in the province.



*Laybolt and the Witchwood Islands from air*

“We are fortunate to have such a globally unique and significant natural treasure, right here in our own back yard,” Bonnie Sutherland said. “We are also incredibly fortunate that Nova Scotians care passionately about land and about our coast. People are stepping up to generously to do what they can to protect our unique natural legacy, before it’s too late,” Sutherland added.

Since publically launching the 100 Wild Islands campaign in 2014, the Nature Trust has succeeded in bringing about the protection of more than 70% of the 100 Wild Islands archipelago, encompassing 5,400 acres of island wilderness. With help from other island

owners, generous donors and volunteers, the Nature Trust hopes to protect close to 80% of the 7000 acre wilderness by the end of 2016.

Major campaign supporters to date include Paul Gauthier, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, TD Bank Group, the Wilson family, Clearwater Seafoods and the Hansen-MacDonald family, Martha McCain, Yvon and Malinda Chouinard, Paul Scott, Dave Hebb, the McCain Foundation, O'Regans Automotive Group, Jim Lawley and Eric Thomson, Killam Properties Board of Directors, Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program, and several anonymous donors. The Province of Nova Scotia has designated all provincially-owned islands within the area as Wilderness Area under the new Parks and Protected Areas Plan in response to the Nature Trust's bold 100 Wild Islands vision.

While exciting progress has been made, the campaign is still under way. There are still islands at risk of development, and more funds to be raised. There are also still opportunities for Nova Scotians to get involved.

“While not all of us are in a position to donate an island, or to make a substantial donation, everyone can part of the 100 Wild Islands legacy,” Bonnie Sutherland noted. “every donation makes a difference, whether it's \$100 or \$10. And for every dollar donated, Cole Harbour native and major campaign benefactor Paul Gauthier is matching the gift, doubling the impact!”



*Tidal wetlands on Laybolt Island*

Donations to the 100 Wild Islands, or other conservation efforts of the Nature Trust, can be made at [www.100wildislands.ca](http://www.100wildislands.ca), [www.nsnt.ca](http://www.nsnt.ca) or by calling the Nature Trust at 902-425-LAND. The Nature Trust will celebrate this conservation achievement along with other exciting land protection successes at their Annual Dinner and Auction November 3<sup>rd</sup>. They are also hosting a series of guided hikes and paddling trips exploring their conservation lands network, and all are welcome to attend. Contact the Nature Trust or visit [www.nsnt.ca](http://www.nsnt.ca) for details.