

Friends of the Wild: Halifax Mayor Encourages Citizens to Join the 100 Wild Islands Legacy

(Halifax, N.S) September 15, 2016 – Halifax Mayor Mike Savage joined the Nova Scotia Nature Trust today to celebrate a major milestone in Nova Scotian wilderness conservation. From a wild and beautiful island paradise on the eastern shore, the Mayor helped launch the Friends of the Wild. He encouraged citizens to join this new initiative to help shape and sustain one of Nova Scotia’s least known, yet greatest natural treasures, Halifax’s own 100 Wild Islands coastal wilderness.

The 100 Wild Islands is a vast, wild archipelago of beautiful, unspoiled coastal islands nestled between Clam Harbour Beach and Taylor Head, just over an hour from downtown. Still undiscovered by most Nova Scotians, this spectacular wilderness is home to pristine white sandy beaches and idyllic turquoise lagoons, dramatic headlands and cliffs, ecologically rich wetlands, ancient bogs, barrens and even rainforest. It stretches 30 kilometres along the coast, encompassing over 280 islands, and an incredibly rich diversity of habitats and wildlife.



Aerial of the 100 Wild Islands. Photo: Nick Hawkins

With enthusiastic support from the Mayor and Eastern Shore Councillor David Hendsbee, the city granted \$300,000 to the 100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign. With that commitment, the Nature Trust reached its ambitious seven million dollar legacy campaign goal. These funds will make it possible to secure the entire 100 Wild islands as a protected coastal wilderness.

The Nature Trust seized one of the last opportunities to protect a coastal island wilderness of this scale and ecological significance. To date, they have successfully protected over 80% of the archipelago’s 7,000 acres of land, through a combination of land donations, purchase, conservation easement agreements with island owners, and Wilderness Area designation on all provincially-owned lands. Other island owners are keen to add their lands to the island legacy as well.

“The Nature Trust’s vision, ambition, passion and perseverance in taking on and achieving the remarkable 100 Wild Islands campaign is truly inspiring,” the Mayor noted. “What an incredible gift they have given to the municipality, to the Province and to our citizens – a world-class coastal island wilderness, right here in our own backyard.”

With funds now in place to secure the remaining islands, the Nature Trust is turning its attention to the future of the 100 Wild Islands.

“Saving land is just the first step. We commit to protecting our conservation lands, *forever*,” said the Nature Trust’s Executive Director Bonnie Sutherland. “Today we launched the Friends of the Wild, an opportunity for all Nova Scotians to be a part of the 100 Wild Islands legacy, and to ensure *forever* the incredible story of this coastal wilderness.”

Already all levels of government, the business community, and many of the city’s prominent citizens have stepped up with significant gifts to achieve the first \$7 million goal, the funds needed to secure this island paradise. The Mayor is encouraging other citizens to now step up to support this remarkable island legacy.

“We are the only city in Canada with a world-class coastal wilderness within our boundaries. The Friends of the Wild gives us all an opportunity to support and shape the future of our incredible 100 Wild Islands coastal wilderness,” the Mayor said.

He noted that people want to live in Halifax not just because they can enjoy urban amenities and our historic downtown but also because of the access to fantastic natural areas. They can leave a downtown condo or a cruise ship and be in a pristine island paradise in less time than it takes to commute across Toronto!

Larger than many of Canada’s national parks, the 100 Wild Islands provide irreplaceable opportunities for wilderness recreation and globally significant ecological research and education.

Its protection also offers exciting potential for ecotourism and rural economic development, an asset to attract new business and new residents, and to retain Nova Scotia’s brightest and best, in keeping with the One Nova Scotia vision.

Friends of the Wild supporters will join the legacy of founding donors who helped protect the islands. Their support will ensure the Nature Trust is able to care for the islands for the future, for generations to come. They will help to build the broad public awareness and engagement that is critical for the long-term planning, management and stewardship of this vast and unique island wilderness. Friends of the Wild will also help to create opportunities for people to come and experience the magic of the 100 Wild Islands.

The Nature Trust invites all Nova Scotians to be a part of the incredible 100 Wild Islands story. To join the Friends of the Wild and find out more visit www.100wildislands.ca.



Mayor Mike Savage and Councillor David Hendsbee on Borgles Island today