

## **Nature Trust Celebrates World Rivers Day with River Conservation Announcement**

September 27, 2016 (Halifax) — The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is celebrating World Rivers Day by announcing protection of important freshwater habitat on the Pleasant River. The conservation lands adds to a growing network of six Nature Trust protected areas on the river.

The 18 acre property contains a forest and fen. The wetland supports Long's Bulrush, a species of national conservation concern, and potential breeding habitat for a number of birds of conservation concern including Rusty Blackbird, Common Nighthawk and Olive-sided Flycatcher.

This new protected area is also great news for rare turtles that make the area their home. Jeffie McNeil, a species-at-risk biologist with the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute (MTRI), highlights conservation on Pleasant River as necessary to the survival of the Blanding's Turtle, a species that is listed as endangered in Canada.



*Blanding's Turtle hatchling. Photo: Brennan Caverhill*

“Pleasant River supports one of only four known populations of Blanding’s turtles in Nova Scotia,” says McNeil. “For the past decade volunteers in the surrounding community have been working to protect these turtles from predation, vehicles and other threats. Conserving important habitat for Blanding’s Turtles is another way that we can help recover the population. Protecting habitat for Blanding’s Turtles also benefits many other species that use the same habitats.”

Steve Mockford, Associate Professor at Acadia University in Wolfville, agrees that protecting land for one species benefits many other species as well.

“The protected areas at Pleasant River contain habitat that is important to many of this species’ life history stages, for example, overwintering. The benefits to the protection of these areas go beyond Blanding’s Turtle though, as these areas also contain habitat for the Eastern Ribbonsnake, as well as vernal pools that are important for several amphibian species,” says Mockford.

The property was generously donated by Acadia Broadcasting who was pleased to support the Nature Trust's conservation efforts.

"The land was available and meets the Trust's mission and vision to work with private landowners in order to protect the natural areas throughout the province. Our Company recognizes the hard work and dedication of the professionals and volunteers with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and congratulates them on their efforts," said Acadia Broadcasting's representative.

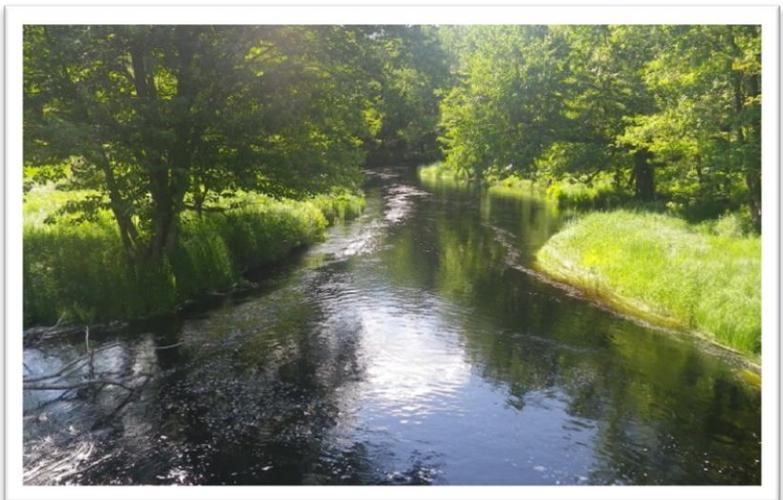


*Ribbon Snake. Photo: Jeffie McNeil*

Freshwater rivers, lakes and wetlands are a cherished element of the Nova Scotian landscape, but they are also vital for environmental health. Freshwater habitats provide a range of critical ecological services from clean drinking water to flood prevention, as well as homes for unique and endangered species. Habitat loss is one of the greatest risks that impact freshwater habitats and threaten their biodiversity, here in Nova Scotia, across Canada, and across the planet. The Nature Trust is dedicated to addressing these issues in Nova Scotia by securing the highest priority

freshwater habitats as conservation lands, through private land conservation. Many significant freshwater habitats are found on private land in Nova Scotia.

"It is heartening to see our impact in protecting Nova Scotia's freshwater legacy by directly addressing one of its biggest threats—habitat loss," said Nature Trust Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland. "We are so grateful to landowners like Acadia Broadcasting who make such conservation achievements possible."



To date, the Nature Trust has protected 86 Conservation Lands across Nova Scotia, encompassing over 10,000 acres of land. These conservation sites include 20 in Southwestern Nova Scotia preserving important river, wetland and lakeshore habitats, and in turn help the species that depend upon them.

Major funding for this conservation achievement was generously provided by the Marguerite Hubbard Charitable Remainder Trust, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, Keurig Canada and Banrock Station. Donations to the property stewardship fund, or other conservation efforts of the Nature Trust, can be made at [www.nsnt.ca](http://www.nsnt.ca) or by calling the Nature Trust at 425-LAND.

