

An Earth Day Gift: Nature Trust Announces New Freshwater Refuge for Wildlife

April 21, 2017 [Halifax] – In celebration of Earth Day, the Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced new conservation lands on Hog Lake in Queen’s County, Nova Scotia. The property was generously donated to the Nature Trust to protect important freshwater habitats and associated wildlife, including three species on Canada’s endangered species list.

The 64 acre property, located about half way between Kejimikujik National Park and Bridgewater, includes shoreline habitat on Hog lake, extensive wetlands covering about 40% of the property, including a riverside fen and brook system, as well as patches of old forest.



Blanding's Turtle hatchling, Photo by Brennan Caverhill

A haven for wetland-dependent wildlife including a family of nesting loons, the property also has potential habitat for the nationally endangered Blanding’s Turtle and Eastern Ribbonsnake. Both are species threatened by increasing habitat loss. Hog Lake also provides important habitat for rare plants including Long’s Bulrush, Common Buttonbush, Virginia Meadow Beauty, Goldencrest, and Redroot.

Halifax resident Peter Freeman grew up enjoying the wilds of Hog Lake and the surrounding forests and wetlands, from his nearby family cottage. He was delighted to entrust this special place to the Nature Trust, knowing they would be good stewards of the land.

He noted, “Recreational properties and development continue to place more and more demands on nature, sensitive lands and species, which if not managed properly will lead to extinction and eventual irreversible changes for future generations. As private landowners my family and I felt we had to do our part to give nature a better chance, so we decided to donate now, to support the efforts of the Nature Trust. Now, the land will always be there

for nature and future generations to come, and we can still gently visit it ourselves.”



Virginia Meadow Beauty

The Hog Land Conservation Lands contribute to a larger assemblage of protected areas in the region, including adjacent lands proposed for protection by the Province (part of the Parks and Protected Areas Plan), and other nearby Nature Trust conservation lands. Protecting corridors of



View across the Hog Lake Conservation Lands

interconnected habitat is critical for the long-term survival of wildlife and the health of the overall ecosystem.

Hog Lake is connected to Molega Lake, which like many of the lakes in Southwest Nova Scotia, has been extensively roaded and developed for cottages. Hog Lake remains

virtually undeveloped, with the entire shoreline habitat still intact.

“We hope Mr. Freeman’s generous donation, and growing public awareness of the need to protect critical wildlife habitats like those surrounding Hog Lake, might inspire other area landowners to add their lands to this freshwater legacy project,” said Nature

Trust Conservation Director, Ross Firth.



Common Buttonbush

A financial planner by profession, Mr. Freeman noted that protecting land may make financial sense for landowners as well. Donating ecologically important land or entering into a conservation agreement with the Nature Trust can provide tax benefits.

“A gift of land can eliminate big capital taxes for heirs, eliminate property taxes, and also provide special income tax incentives for donors under the Federal Ecological Gifts program. There is no reason not to donate land today!” noted Mr. Freeman.



View of the fen on Hog Lake Conservation Lands

The Nature Trust will ensure the conservation values of the property are maintained and protected in perpetuity, through its ongoing land stewardship program. Volunteers interested in helping to care for and monitor this site, or any of the Nature Trust’s growing network of 88 conservation lands across the province can contact the Nature Trust for information (902) 425-5263 or nature@nsnt.ca. Donations are also welcome, to support the long-term stewardship of the new protected area.

On July 22 the Nature Trust will hold a community celebration in Pleasant River in partnership with the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute. The “Going Wild” event will celebrate this and two other new protected areas, and offer nature-based activities to discover and learn about the unique wildlife and natural history of the area.

The Nature Trust’s Endangered Species and Freshwater Legacy programs are supported by the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, the Marguerite Hubbard Charitable Foundation, the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund (contributions from hunters and trappers), Environment and Climate Change Canada’s EcoAction program, Sage Environmental Program, Bend Beauty and Nature’s Way Canada, as well as many generous individual donors.

Thanks to ongoing community support and generous landowners like Mr. Freeman, the Nature Trust has protected over 10,000 acres of Nova Scotia’s unique and imperiled wild spaces. The Nature Trust is dedicated to ensuring these lands remain forever wild, for nature and for people too.

Hog Lake Conservation Lands

