

Sobey Family Protects Land on the St. Mary's River: Nova Scotia Nature Trust's Conservation Legacy Grows



Sherbrooke, NS (August 15, 2017) – At a special public celebration in Sherbrooke on Saturday, David and Faye Sobey entrusted their 30 acre property on the St. Mary's River to the care of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. The property provides critical habitat for several endangered species but is also steeped in memories for the Sobey family who have been visiting this part of the river for over 80 years.

The property builds on our long-time conservation work on the St. Mary's River, one of Nova Scotia's most ecologically rich and important rivers. The new property brings our conservation network to nine protected areas encompassing 800 acres of important forests and wetlands on this river.

The Sobey property at Mitchells Pool, just north of Sherbrooke Village, includes 30 acres beautiful floodplain forest, a rare ecosystem in Nova Scotia. Its large oaks, maples, and yellow birch provide cooling shade essential for the river's aquatic life. The property's stillwater, brooks, swamp and island provide important habitat for a diversity of wildlife, from ducks and forest birds to amphibians and reptiles including Wood Turtles, a species on Canada's endangered species list.



A Wood turtle, one of the endangered species finding refuge on the St. Mary's

The Sobey's generous gift of land makes a significant conservation contribution. It protects some of the last intact floodplain forest in the province, and critical habitat for imperilled birds and turtles.

Over the years, the Sobey's took note as friends and neighbours on the river took action to protect their lands through the Nature Trust, including late Sandy and Shirley Cameron.

Wanting to ensure the Mitchells Pool lands were kept pristine, and recognizing the importance of intact forests for the river's health, the Sobey family decided to donate their land to the Nature Trust.



The Mitchells Pool Conservation Lands

But their motivation went beyond conservation. Like so many Nova Scotians, the Sobey family has a deep connection to the land, steeped in precious family memories. David Sobey began visiting the river with his family as a young boy and the river grew to be a significant part of his life.

“In the late 1930s my father began taking my older brother Bill and I and my younger brother Donald, down to the St. Mary’s River,” Mr. Sobey noted. “As a youngster, at college, this was a great place for my buddies and me to come. And way back in 1953, Faye and I had even our honeymoon here at Mitchells Pool. And we’ve kept coming down here over the years with our family. So, the river has always been a part of my life.”

While the Nature Trust’s work is based on and driven by conservation science, the real magic comes from the people we work with and their connection to these special places. It has been a joy for staff to work with Mr. Sobey to preserve this treasured place, so close to his heart.



David Sobey and his son Paul at Mitchells Pool

Many landowners who partner with the Nature Trust are concerned about the future of their land and inspired by the Nature Trust’s potential role as a steward of the lands they love.

Mr. Sobey noted, “It’s not just my time as the caretaker of the land that matters, or my son Paul’s time—it’s in perpetuity. And I feel that the property is in good hands with the Nature Trust. They are committed to looking after it, forever. And they’ve certainly shown they can look after these properties.”

What a wonderful contribution David and Faye Sobey have made to protecting Nova Scotia’s natural legacy and the legacy of the St. Mary’s River. They have preserved a special place where future generations can come to enjoy and experience that same wonder that captured David Sobey’s heart when he was just a boy.

The River has a rich human history, once renowned as an Atlantic Salmon angling river, and is loved by locals and visitors alike, as an iconic scenic, recreational and wilderness treasure. The local community has been actively working for years to restore and protect the watershed and its fish populations through the St. Mary’s River Association, and welcomed news of a new protected area on the river.

Asked about what he hopes for the property, Mr. Sobey replied, “The Mitchell’s Pool lands are going to be a part of Nova Scotia that keeps its natural beauty forever. I hope that my children and grandchildren and other people too, will enjoy visiting this land like I have since I was just a young fella.”

Our conservation work on the St. Mary’s River, and protecting Nova Scotia’s freshwater and endangered species legacy, is generously supported by many individuals and organizations. Major supporters include the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, the David and Faye Sobey Foundation, Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Marguerite Hubbard Charitable Foundation.

BE A PART OF THE LEGACY!

- **Donate today** to support our conservation work on the river
- **Volunteer** as a property guardian. Help us in meeting the commitment to protect our conservation lands on the St. Mary’s, forever

Call our friendly staff at (902) 425-5263, nature@nsnt.ca or visit www.nsnt.ca.

