

Gifts Fit for a Turtle: New Wilderness Sanctuary and *Gifts of Nature* from Nature Trust

November 27, 2017 [Halifax, N.S.] –Nova Scotia’s most endangered turtle has yet more critical habitat safeguarded, thanks to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, a generous gift, and growing public support for preserving our wild species and spaces. The new donation of land by Gail Freeman adds to our Barren Meadow turtle sanctuary in southwest Nova Scotia. We also have another type of gift and an exciting chance for all Nova Scotians to take action to save wild places across the province.

The 112 acre land donation adds critical habitat to the Nature Trust’s Turtle Sanctuary at Barren Meadow near Colpton, northwest of Bridgewater. Nova Scotians have generously stepped up twice before to help the Nature Trust purchase two adjacent properties on Barren Meadow. With surrounding Crown lands pending designation as a Nature Reserve, there are only a few land parcels missing to complete a contiguous corridor of essential habitat for the turtles and other imperiled plants and wildlife. And now, the owners of one of these crucial missing pieces has generously stepped forward to add their land to the sanctuary.



Blanding's Turtle. Photo by Brennan Caverhill

The sanctuary, encompassing riverside fens, brooks, wet meadows and rocky outcrops provides the diversity of habitats turtles need to forage for food, bask, nest and over-winter. The connectivity of habitats provided by the growing assemblage of lands ensures turtles can move safely from one habitat to another. Besides habitat loss, roads and cars are one of the biggest threats to turtles.

“Without intact habitat and safety from cars, Blanding’s Turtles will go extinct. This gift of land at Barren Meadow means permanent, legal protection of critical habitat in an unroaded area--a forever home for one of Canada’s most endangered species. With habitat, there is hope!” noted Karen McKendry, Conservation Coordinator for the Nature Trust.



Wetlands in the newly protected Barren Meadow site.

The gift of land was made by Gail Freeman, who was inspired to protect the land after witnessing first-hand the impacts of development on nature. Ms. Freeman said, “What better way to leave a legacy than donating our pristine natural land to the Nature Trust! With this donation, I am assured that this land will remain as is, for all the species that live there and for future generations.”

With only about 350 Blanding’s Turtles surviving in the Province, and few intact habitats left anywhere in Canada, protection of this site is an

important conservation gain for one of Canada's most endangered species. Today's announcement marks the Nature Trust's 8th protected area for rare turtles, encompassing 309 acres of conservation lands.

This gift of land reflects an inspiring trend. Nature Trust Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland noted, "Nova Scotians have always been deeply connected to the land, but more Nova Scotians are sensing the urgency of protecting wild spaces and wildlife, and taking action to make that happen."

Earlier this fall, Alistair Saunders and his wife Chris Corston donated an island and lakeshore property on the [Bras d'Or Lake](#), fulfilling his late mother's dream to protect a treasured "little piece of Scotland" in her new home. In the spring, Peter Freeman donated his land at [Hog Lake](#) in Queen's County, another refuge for imperilled wildlife and plants. Peter was inspired by the opportunity to teach his sons about the importance of philanthropy and protecting special natural places.



MacRaes Island on the Bras d'Or Lake.

Shorefront on the beloved [St. Mary's River](#), is now protected forever too, thanks to a generous land donation by David and Faye Sobey. Mr. Sobey grew up camping and fishing on the river, and was inspired to donate to ensure that a treasured family gem would be protected and cared for as it is, for wildlife to thrive and future generations to enjoy. Nova Scotia landowners are clearly motivated and inspired to leave a natural legacy in Nova Scotia.



Hog Lake in Queen's County



Mitchell's Pool on the St. Mary's River

There is a role for every Nova Scotian in protecting our wild areas legacy, and more and more Nova Scotians are stepping up to make a difference.

Ms. Sutherland noted, "While not everyone has land to donate, many Nova Scotians want to help protect our wild spaces and species. Through the Nature Trust, *anyone* can make a tangible and lasting conservation impact, through a charitable donation. These gifts, big and small, are what makes land and wildlife conservation possible."

Even *gifts* of land and conservation easements require fundraising for the Nature Trust, with costs for land assessments, conservation planning, legal, survey and other other upfront

expenses. As well, funds are needed to ensure the long-term stewardship and management of all the lands entrusted to the Nature Trust's care. Public support through charitable gifts has been a critical part in our conservation successes from the 100 Wild Islands and Troop Island, to the Purcell's Cove Conservation Lands and the Barren Meadow Turtle Sanctuary.

A unique way for Nova Scotians to take action to save wild places, while also providing a solution for easy, impactful and meaningful holiday gifts is through the *Gifts of Nature*. Donors can directly fund important conservation work, by giving a symbolic gift of an island or spectacular old-growth forest. Or protect critical homes for wildlife by symbolically adopting a turtle, bird or frog. Browse the [Gifts of Nature catalogue](#) for symbolic gifts along with unique Nature Trust branded items, or call the Nature Trust for further information (902) 425-5263.



All gifts of nature will receive a charitable tax receipt, and they, their loved one, colleague or friend receives a beautiful donation/adoption certificate, a letter about the conservation gains their gift makes possible, and a set of beautiful notecards matching the theme of their gift. We will even ship *Gifts of Nature* directly to your recipient.

Every dollar raised helps save wild spaces in Nova Scotia today, and ensures a lasting natural legacy for our friends, families and all the species that share our province.

Protection of the Barren Meadow Turtle Sanctuary was possible thanks to Gail Freeman, the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, the Marguerite Hubbard Charitable Foundation and generous donations by many individuals and families. This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada. Together with landowners and its generous supporters, the Nature Trust has safeguarded over 10,700 acres of treasured wild spaces, including 91 conservation sites all across the province, protected forever, for nature and for people too.