

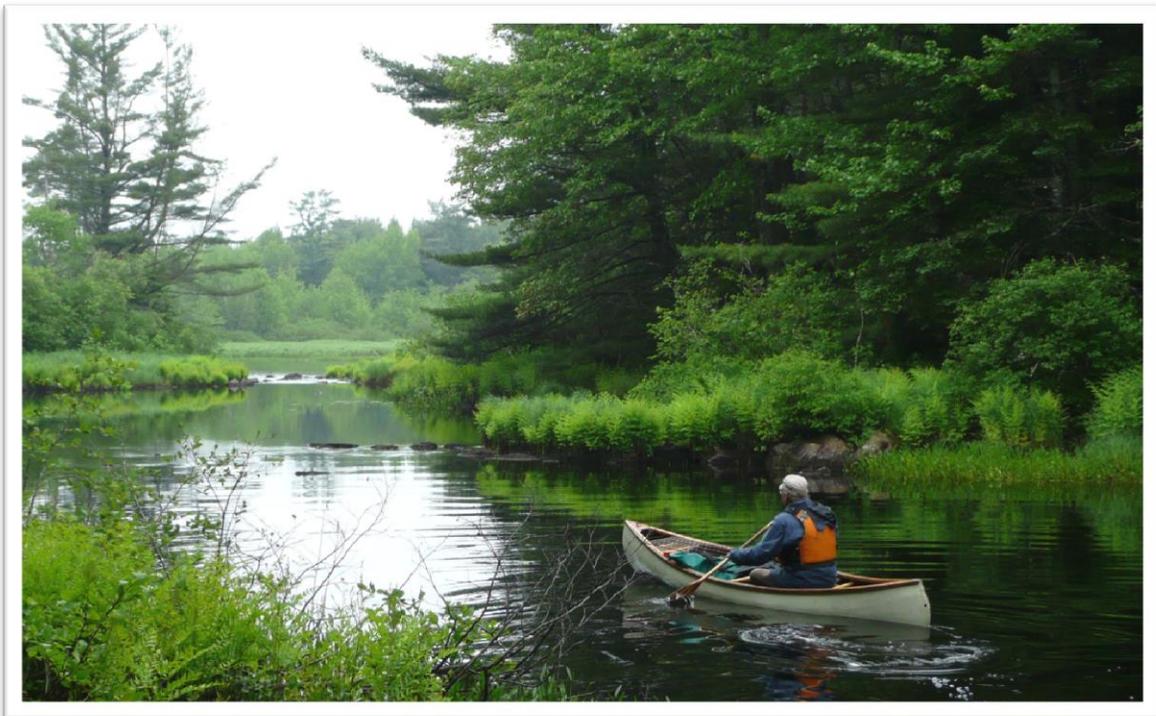
Nature Trust Protects Freshwater Wilderness on the Herbert River

HALIFAX, March 20, 2015 – Another key piece of ecologically rich river frontage has been protected by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, bringing a vast freshwater wilderness sanctuary in Hants County one step closer to reality.

The 120 hectare Devils Jaw Conservation Lands encompass a rich complex of wetlands and forests, including over four kilometers of pristine shoreline. Several endangered species, such as Canada Warblers, Rusty Blackbirds and Wood Turtles find refuge in the undisturbed freshwater and forest habitats of the area. The property takes its name from the dramatic waterfalls, rapids and gorges along the Herbert River, aptly known as the Devils Jaw.

The new protected area is situated across the river from the Nature Trust’s Herbert River Conservation Lands, and is surrounded by Crown land encompassing a spectacular 2900-hectare area of wetlands and mature and old growth forests. The Crown lands are proposed for designation as the Devils Jaw Wilderness Area under the Parks and Protected Areas Plan. The Nature Trust and Province are working together to protect and steward this new conservation site, as part of the larger protected area initiative awaiting approval by the Provincial Cabinet.

According to Nature Trust Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland, “Protecting these inholdings of private land was critical. Their development could have significantly impacted the natural integrity of the entire wilderness area.” She added, “Development could also have negatively impacted access and enjoyment for the many wilderness paddlers and hikers who enjoy the river’s solitude and natural beauty.”



Paddling along the Devils Jaw Conservation Lands (credit dTy)

Dr. Dusan Soudek was delighted to hear this critical piece of wilderness was secured. A long-time conservationist and wilderness paddler himself, Dr. Soudek acquired and worked with the Nature Trust to protect the nearby Herbert River Conservation Lands in 2013, through a conservation easement.

“As a neighbouring landowner, canoeist, camper, and occasional trout angler on the Herbert River I am extremely pleased to see this new site protected,” said Dr. Soudek. “This is an important wilderness area, enjoyed by many. Now those who visit the river, whether this spring or summer, or centuries from now, will find the wild shorelines as captivating, beautiful, and accessible as they are today.”



The Devil’s Jaw property was purchased by the Nature Trust at fair market value from Armco Capital. “We greatly appreciate George Armoyan and his team at Armco for recognizing the unique conservation values of this site, and for working with us towards its conservation,” Sutherland noted.

Asked about their participation in the project, Armco Capital’s Director of Development and Sales, Adam McLean said, “The Nature Trust has done an excellent job executing on their mandate for this area and we were glad to have the opportunity to assist in this important conservation exercise to protect a large freshwater wilderness for future generations.”

And this wilderness may be just the beginning of a new conservation partnership. McLean noted, “The Nature Trust is a very professional group to work with and we hope to be able to work together on other ecologically significant areas in the future.”

Conservation of these important freshwater habitats, the diverse wildlife species they support, and the important recreational opportunities they foster, is a fitting way to mark **World Water Day** (March 22). This international day is dedicated to celebrating fresh water and its importance to the planet and its inhabitants.

The Nature Trust’s freshwater conservation efforts are generously supported by the Keurig Canada, Ascenta, Banrock Station, the Small Change Fund and the Province of Nova Scotia through the Lands and Legacies Conservation Partnership.



Wood Turtles and Canada Warblers—Two of the endangered species finding refuge in the freshwater wetlands and woodlands of the Herbert River (credit Scott Leslie)

For anyone keen to experience and explore this latest addition to Nova Scotia's freshwater legacy, the Nature Trust and Canoe Kayak Nova Scotia are hosting a guided canoe trip on the Herbert River in September. The Nature Trust is also seeking volunteer "conservation guardians" to help in stewarding the new conservation lands.

To join the paddling trip, to volunteer and/or to donate in support of the protection and long-term stewardship of the Devil's Jaw Conservation Lands or other Nature Trust conservation projects across the province, visit www.nsnt.ca or call (902) 425-5263.



DEVILS JAW CONSERVATION LANDS

