

# Natural Landscapes

The Newsletter of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust

Fall 2002

## Land Protected in Mabou Highlands *by Beverly Colpitts*

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is pleased to announce that conservation easements have been placed on two properties in the Mabou Highlands of Cape Breton. The Treat family, Bob, Mary Lou, and their five children: Sharon, Roger, Caroline, Jessica, and Rory are the first landowners to sign easements on their properties in the Sight Point region of Cape Breton. For the past three years, the Nature Trust has been working with several private landowners in the Mabou Highlands to establish a 2000-acre protected area that will provide a unique blend of minimal impact residential use and vast expanses of “forever wild” forested highlands, shoreline and meadows. The Treat family owns 275 acres of these lands.

Bob and Mary Lou Treat, originally from the United States, first visited Cape Breton in 1955 on the recommendation of friends. The couple, having spent only three days in Cape Breton during a hurricane, fell in love with the area. The following summer, the Treats, with six month old Sharon, made a trip back to Cape Breton and camped on Carmelita Hinton’s (Jean Rosner’s mother; see our last issue of Natural Landscapes) property. That same summer another couple camped on Mrs. Hinton’s property and was also enthralled by the area. Both couples asked Mrs. Hinton if she would rent out her house in Port Ban the next summer, and fortunately, Mrs. Hinton chose to rent it to the Treats.



*Rory Treat photo*

That summer of 1957 was a special one because Mrs. Hinton showed the young Treat family a 75-acre parcel of land that was available for sale in Sight Point. Land was fairly inexpensive at the time, so the Treats decided to purchase the property. Soon after the first land purchase, the Treats bought another 200-acre lot in Sight Point.

Bob and Mary Lou have spent much time investigating the history of their properties, and have learned that their lands were originally settled by the ancestors of Allan J. MacEachen, Prime Minister Trudeau’s Deputy Prime Minister from 1962 to 1984. Their investigation also led to the discovery of an old house foundation on their 75-acre lot that was originally built by MacEachen’s great uncle. The lot with the old foundation was left wild for decades until the Treats purchased the land. To minimize environmental damage to the property, the Treats opted to build a house on the original foundation. So in 1958, with the help of the late Dan MacIssac, friend and Cape Bretoner, Bob began building their summer home. As the house was being built, the Treats attempted to match some of the features of the original

MacEachen house, and after three years, the house was completed. To this day, the home is run by propane (for their stove, refrigerator, and lamps) in order to avoid the environmental impacts that would have been associated with bringing in electricity.

The young couple, both working within the private school systems in Vermont, (continued page 6)



*Rory, Mary Lou and Bob Treat receiving an Alice Reed print in commemoration of their easement. (Jennifer Pinks photo)*

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## Staff and Volunteer News

### Welcome Doris

On behalf of the Nature Trust, I would like to welcome our interim Executive Director, Doris Cameron. Doris brings to the Trust her many years as an Executive Director and Director of Development for organizations such as the Canadian Diabetes Association, Muscular Dystrophy Association and Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada. In addition to the Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) designation, she has completed the Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector Management National Certificate Program. We are looking forward to her leadership in development and fundraising over the coming months.



*Doris at Wolfville Ridge. (Jennifer Pinks photo)*

*Bonnie Sutherland*

### Looking Ahead

Over the past few weeks I have met the team of volunteers and staff who have committed their time, energy and enthusiasm to ensure that the Nature Trust meets its goals and objectives. I am looking forward to working with this strong team to move the Nature Trust forward. I welcome your calls and e-mails, and look forward to your support in the coming months as we work together to protect Nova Scotia's natural legacy.

*Doris Cameron*

## New Properties Committee Volunteers Bring Strong Backgrounds to NSNT

*Colin Piercey* practises litigation at Stewart McKelvey Stirling Scales in Halifax. He graduated from Dalhousie University with a B.Sc. in Biology and obtained his law degree from Osgoode Hall Law School. Colin is the Chair of the Nova Scotia Canadian Bar Association - Environmental Law Section.

*Anil Mohan* is a lawyer with Metcalf & Company, practising primarily in the field of marine law. He earned his degree from Dalhousie Law School, along with a Certificate in Marine and Environmental Law, emphasizing business and the environment. Before studying law, Anil was a Canadian Forces flying officer, during which time he travelled extensively and gained exposure to a wide variety of international organizations.

*Jane Latremouille* is the manager of the acquisition section for the NS Department of Natural Resources. She has worked at the Department of Natural Resources for 7 years. Previously, she worked for two survey companies and the Canadian Hydrographic Service, and as a property paralegal in the private sector. She is a graduate of the University of Ottawa and has a diploma from the NS community college's paralegal program.

*Thank you to the continuing members of the property committee for their guidance, expertise and commitment.*

## Thank You Newsletter Volunteers

*Emma Boardman* started volunteering for the Nature Trust newsletter in 1998. Over the years, Emma has assisted with all aspects of the newsletter. She writes articles, does layout and helps with the mail out -- we would never be able to put the newsletter together without her! She currently lives in Halifax, but she is originally from Chester, Nova Scotia. She received a Bachelors Degree from McMaster University majoring in Drama and Japanese Studies and a diploma in Information Technology from ITI.

*Janet Brown* joined the Newsletter Committee in Spring 2002. Janet helps with editing and the newsletter mail-out. She has recently returned to Halifax, after 15 years in Toronto, where she worked as Print Production Manager in advertising and public relations firms. Janet also was Production Editor for a large German medical publisher for 8 years. We are lucky to have an experienced editor on board!

*If you are interested in becoming part of the Newsletter Committee, please call the Nature Trust at: (902) 425-5263.*

## Gaff Point Protected *by Noreen Channels*

The permanent preservation of the 124-acre Gaff Point in Kingsburg has become a reality. This headland, one of the last undeveloped headlands on the south shore, is located at the western end of Hirtle's Beach and juts out two kilometres into the Atlantic. It is characterized by coastal forests, steep cliffs, open meadows, and spectacular views in all directions. The conservation project was initiated by the Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy (KCC), which then sought partnerships with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The KCC's goal for Gaff Point is to maintain the property in an undeveloped and natural state in perpetuity. Public use of Gaff Point for walking and enjoyment of nature will be encouraged, but not advertised, in order to balance use with preservation of the wilderness.

The KCC began the protection of Gaff Point in 1996 when it purchased a parcel of land. In 1999, about one third of Gaff Point was divided into

housing lots with access to be over the protected Hirtle's Beach using a long-established right of way. In hopes of acquiring and preserving this land, the KCC invested in a ninety-day option on these properties. With only a week left on this option, a Nova Scotian businessman agreed to purchase and hold the land until funds could be raised. Then, a local family generously donated 12.5 acres jointly to the KCC and the Nature Trust. Another family willed their land to the KCC. On the strength of this support, the Nature Conservancy and the Nature Trust agreed to a partnership with the KCC to secure the remaining lots of Gaff Point.

The KCC and the Kingsburg community, with substantial help from municipal and provincial governments, were able to raise about \$250, 000 of the approximately \$1 400 000 needed to complete the project. The partnership of the Nature Conservancy and the Nature Trust has been instrumental in



*Terry James photo*

expanding the project to provincial and national levels, and in providing the expertise necessary for such a large undertaking. The Nature Conservancy and the Nature Trust are working with the KCC to develop a stewardship plan for the protected area.

*For more information, contact Kingsburg Coastal Conservancy at (902)766-1221, [info@kingsburgconservancy.org](mailto:info@kingsburgconservancy.org) [www.kingsburgconservancy.org](http://www.kingsburgconservancy.org)*

## Province Plans to Protect Land at Cape Split *by Emma Boardman*

In July, the province of Nova Scotia announced its purchase of 700 acres (280 hectares) at Cape Split at the end of the Blomidon Peninsula, Kings County. The land, owned by the Jodrey family since the 1920s, was bought for \$5 million. Conservation efforts date back to the 1940s when the area was first proposed as a National Park by the Annapolis Valley Board of Trade. Though the Jodreys have been extremely responsible landowners, it is hoped that the government ownership of the land will ensure the preservation of Cape Split in perpetuity.

Cape Split is much loved and visited by wilderness recreation enthusiasts and nature lovers for its hiking trail, spectacular views of the coast and the Fundy tides, forests, flora, and bird-watching opportunities. On the exposed basalt cliff faces, isolated colonies of rare Arctic-alpine and boreal disjunct flora exist. The old growth forest features native hardwood species including yellow birch, sugar maple and beech which provide shelter for a rich ground cover of ferns, as well as spring flora such as purple trillium, Dutchman's breeches and spring beauty. In the lower and wetter areas of the Cape, coastal forests of red spruce, mixed with yellow birch and balsam fir, exist. Cape Split is a stop for many migratory birds, and some shorebirds find nesting sites along its coastline.

The Cape is also of unique historical and cultural value. A Mi'Kmaq legend details its origins: it was created by Beaver as a dam, then was broken and twisted by his rival, the god Glooscap, to prevent the flooding of too much land. Mi'Kmaq  
(continued page 7)

## Project Updates

### Volunteer Plant Monitors: An Important Resource

*by Lisa Rockwell, Coastal Plain Project Assistant*

Throughout the summer a dedicated group of people helped to save threatened plants in Nova Scotia. These volunteer plant monitors are land owners and community members who want to do their part in protecting rare and endangered coastal plain plants and their habitat. The purpose of the program is to gather valuable information about how the plant communities are changing from year to year. This means recording information about the species of plants growing, how many are flowering, their size, water level, as well as any disturbances to the shore.

Monitoring is important because of the special habitat occupied by coastal plain species. Although the plants are genetically unrelated, they share the same ecological niche: nutrient poor lakeshores between the high and low watermark. These areas are frequently disturbed and inhospitable to more aggressive plants that could easily out-compete the coastal plain flora. This particular niche, however, often causes these plants to grow slowly, sometimes not even flowering or producing seeds every year. The delicate state that these plants are often in means that cottage development, alteration of the lakeshore, damming, picking, and trampling can be disastrous to the health of the plants. In addition, added nutrients from fertilizers and sewage can change the shoreline habitat, allowing other plants to take over. Having a network of monitors who make notes on how these changes are affecting the coastal plain flora is invaluable to their protection.

The information gathered by monitors is shared with the Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora Recovery Team, a group of plant specialists dedicated to implementing a recovery plan for these rare and endangered plants. By knowing how healthy the plants are and how their populations are changing, the Recovery Team can make informed decisions about the best way to conserve these unique plants. Currently, of the 64 species of coastal plain plants, 8% are globally rare, 17% are nationally and provincially at risk, and 27% are known or believed to be provincially at risk. Habitat for these plants is decreasing in the US due to development pressures. As a result, Nova Scotia's populations are some of the healthiest in the world. Understanding this, the importance of monitors becomes clear: they assist in the effective conservation of these plants by helping to fully understand the threats they face and how they are reacting to their changing habitat over time.

Something almost equally astounding is the amount of dedication and pride monitors put into their work. Every year the Nova Scotia Nature Trust receives phone calls and e-mails from interested and concerned community members

willing to take time from their busy summer schedules to help monitor. Some have even continued to monitor since the program first began four years ago. "It's the commitment and enthusiasm of the monitors that really keeps this program going," said Meredith Flannery, coordinator of the Coastal Plain Stewards project.

So far this year, the Nature Trust has trained 10 new monitors, in addition to the 48 returning monitors, helping to gather information on coastal plain plants in southwestern Nova Scotia.

*Lisa returned to Saint Mary's University in September as a 4th year biology and geology student.*



*Lisa Rockwell canoeing on Belliveau Lake. (photo by Melbourne Muise, plant monitor)*

## Successful Shorebird Event *by Donald Sam, Project Coordinator*

On Wednesday August 14<sup>th</sup>, the Nature Trust co-organised a community shorebird event at Evangeline Beach, North Grand Pre, to raise awareness of the Fundy Shorebird project. Events included a guided walk, community barbeque, and an evening presentation. The North Grand Pre Community Association held its annual general meeting in conjunction with the events and community members discussed their Association's plans for developing facilities for viewing shorebirds at Evangeline Beach.

On the walk, led by Sherman Boates of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources, participants gasped in amazement when they spotted flocks of thousands of shorebirds moving to and from their beachside roosts. An unexpected visitor swooped in for a brief appearance -- a peregrine falcon streaked into the roost and remained in the area for several minutes in pursuit of prey! This time, the shifting flocks of shorebirds managed to elude the falcon.



*Shorebird Stewards receive certificates acknowledging their commitment to conservation. (l-r) Bob Bearne, Joan Bearne, Donald Sam (NSNT staff), Brenda Coldwell, Ed Murphy. Jennifer Pinks photo*

After the barbeque, held at the Evangeline Beach Canteen, landowners who have agreed to serve as "shorebird stewards" formally received certificates to recognize their efforts to conserve shorebirds and their habitat.

Later, Sherman Williams, a naturalist from Avonport, presented a wonderful overview of shorebirds, their migration, and the marvelous mud flats of the Minas Basin. With his digital camera, he showed a "bird's eye" view of the basin! He also explained the intricacies of the local tides. The sight of clouds of shorebirds out the back door of the Canteen made for a memorable night.

Thanks to Sherman Boates, Sherman Williams, the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ed and Marg Murphy, the Boyd's, Just Us Coffee and the many helping hands.

## Conservation Without Borders *by Steve Gormley, Land Securement Coordinator*

The Nature Trust is in the process of protecting nearly 3,000 acres of land in Nova Scotia owned by US citizens. Through the Conservation Without Borders project, the Nature Trust will finalize the protection of these properties and build resources and experience to facilitate cross-border transactions.

We will consult with Revenue Canada, the US Internal Revenue Service, specialists in law, appraisal and accounting, and land trusts and conservation groups across Canada who have gained experience in cross-border transactions. Previous work done by the The Nature Conservancy (US) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada documents procedures for one option -- US landowners donating land in Canada directly to The Nature Conservancy (US). Building upon this information, materials will be developed for landowners from the US that outline conservation options, tax and estate planning implications, and step-by-step procedures.

In order to build conservation capacity across Canada, resources created by the Nature Trust through Conservation Without Borders will be available to other conservation organizations.

## Honouring and Celebrating Jean Rosner's Life

*by Steve Gormley, Land Securement Coordinator*

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, a beautiful summer day, many of Jean's family and friends gathered together at the Rosner family Cape Breton home, overlooking the sparkling waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, to honour and celebrate Jean's life. Jean passed away at her home in Concord, Massachusetts this past May. As we are coming to understand, Jean had many connections to the people of Cape Breton and Inverness County, through her friendships, her broad community interests, and her social activism. And, of course, Jean had a very deeply felt connection to the landscapes of Inverness County and, in particular, to the Mabou Highlands.

There were several moving speeches and stories, humourous and more serious – often reflecting on Jean's ties to the people and places of Cape Breton. There was lots of music too for this memorial and celebration – traditional Gaelic songs, a contemporary song about Gillis Mountain, fiddle music and a bagpiper. A letter writing campaign to express concerns about the impacts of offshore gas exploration was launched. Allan MacEachen, former Deputy Prime Minister to Pierre Trudeau, was among the many distinguished guests who provided very personal vignettes of Jean's life.

Sylvia Fischer, a dear friend of Jean's, presided over this celebration. Jean's three children, Marni, Sarah and Peter, all who had come from afar to be in Cape Breton this summer, warmly greeted all who were there on this special day.

## In Memory of Jean Rosner *excerpt from a letter by Peter Brock*

I am sending you \$500 in memory of Jean Rosner. I have just returned from Alaska and your newsletter has informed me of her death. She was a special friend.

I met her first about 30 years ago when I went to do a film about her attempts to preserve Sight Point. That first night we sat with her friend Joe in his barn on a few hay bales and talked by the light of an oil lamp. We filmed the road along the shore and then walked to MacKinnons Brook. The piece was shown nationally on CBC as part of the new "This Land" series.

Years later, as my wife and I were preparing for a long sailing voyage, we stopped in Baddeck as part of our "shake down cruise." Jean came aboard for a sail and, though almost blind, put on a harness and crawled forward so she could sit on the bow as we sailed, then went below to a bunk so she could listen to the water. Later she came to Marblehead, near her home in Concord, to see us and it was all I could do to persuade her that she could not paddle out to the boat in the SE gale which was starting to blow hard. We were, in fact, stuck on the mooring for three days in that gale, and wouldn't have stayed there as the gale built except that Jean was coming for a visit. She wanted to sail with us many times as we traveled, and just last year it was hard to persuade her that it would be difficult for her to come to Alaska. Jean is known as a "landsman," but she loved the sea and would have savoured the snow capped mountains and breaching humpbacks – though she could not have seen them by then. But she could have felt the boat rise to the Pacific swells. She was game to the end.

## Land Protected in Mabou Highlands

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was fortunate to have summers off, and so they were able to spend every subsequent summer in Sight Point.

Mary Lou still loves the "dramatic cliffs" that reach the sea, the beautiful sunsets, the "gorgeous oceanside trails" and the "unique geological formations of the shoreline." In the early days, Mary Lou remembers how the spruce forest resembled a "fairyland". Though the Treats love the land, the major draw is the people and the culture of Cape Breton. The culture, she says, has considerably influenced the lives of her children. In particular, their son Roger continues to live in Sight Point and is now an exceptional fiddler and fiddle builder. The summer trips to Cape Breton certainly affected their daughter Jessica, as she was born in Moncton, N.B. on the trip back to Vermont.

For over 40 years, the Treat family has continued to make Cape Breton their other home. With the signing of the conservation easements, the Treats have helped to pass on this natural legacy to future generations. Congratulations to the Treat family!

*Thank you to Mary Lou Treat, for her generous help with this article, and to Rory Treat for the use of his breathtaking photos of the family's land!*

## Thank you to our Supporters!

*The following members have joined or renewed since the last issue of Natural Landscapes (July 2002):*

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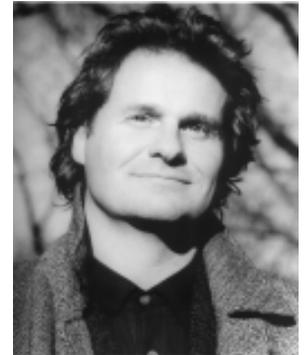
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## Fifth Annual Dinner with Silent Auction Promises to Entertain & Inspire

### Guest speaker Wade Davis

*with performance by Mary Jane Lamond*  
Saturday, October 19, 2002 6pm  
Casino Nova Scotia Hotel, Halifax  
\$75 per person, tables of 10 available  
**Advance Tickets Only**  
For ticket reservations phone 902-425-5263



Canadian born Wade Davis is a Harvard-trained anthropologist, botanical explorer, and best-selling author. He has spent the last 25 years travelling the world from the Arctic to the Amazon, Tibet to Venezuela and beyond. Audiences consistently remark that they sat breathless and spellbound during his presentation. Described by many as an adventurer and a living Indiana Jones, Wade considers himself "an independent scholar." His books on topics such as Haitian Vodoun, the healing forests of the Amazon and the Penan of Borneo have become favourites worldwide. *One River* was nominated for the 1997 Governor General's Literary Award for Non-fiction.

### IN MEMORIAM

*Special gifts were made to the Nature Trust recently in memory of Lt. Cdr. David Howitt and in memory of Jean Rosner.*

## Cape Split Protected (continued from page 3)

artifacts have been found in the area, and early European visits to the area were recorded by de Monts, Champlain and de Poutrincourt in about 1604.

Public safety and the preservation of the ecological integrity of the land are the main priorities for the province. The government plans to take a low impact approach, continuing the work of the Jodrey family -- providing ample parking and safe public access to the area, while conserving the land. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will lead a management planning team, and plans to hold internal planning meetings and, eventually, meet with local

landowners, especially those who hold land between Cape Split and Blomidon Provincial Park. Because of the Nature Trust's solid reputation and history of conservation and landowner contact in the Annapolis Valley, it has been invited to be on this team, along with DNR, and the departments of Environment and Labour, and Tourism and Culture. DNR hopes that the Nature Trust's previous contact with area landowners will help with the promotion of responsible land stewardship there.

*Thanks to Rosalind Penfound, NS Department of Natural Resources, for her tremendous help with this article.*

## The Nature Trust's Fifth Annual Scenic Adventure Raffle

### Grand Prize:

Two nights for two at *Oceanstone Inn & Cottages*, a full day guided sea kayak excursion (lobster lunch included!) courtesy of *NovaShores Adventures*, and whale watching with *Peggy's Cove Whale & Puffin Tour*

### 2nd Prize:

Tarn 2 Tent from *Mountain Equipment Co-op*

### 3rd Prize:

A limited edition Alice Reed framed print, *Eskers & Pickerelweed*, donated by *ScapeArts & Frame Plus Art*

(Estimated total value of prizes: \$1100)

Draw to be held on October 19, 2002 at the Nature Trust Annual Dinner.

Contact the Nature Trust at (902) 425-5263 to purchase or help sell raffle tickets.



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### JOIN THE NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST

Membership in the Nova Scotia Nature Trust is open to any person or corporation interested in the protection of Nova Scotia's natural beauty and native biodiversity. Members receive the newsletter, *Natural Landscapes*, are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting, and may participate in the various committees. Members also have the satisfaction of knowing that they are making an important contribution to the protection of outstanding natural areas.

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