

Action is Our Middle Name

WILDERNESS

We celebrated a major victory in defense of all of Nova Scotia's Parks and Protected Areas when the government finally announced it would not allow a proposed private golf course to be built on West Mabou Beach Provincial Park. We played a leading role in defending the park, coordinating a successful provincewide campaign alongside local champions and citizens across N.S. Government received thousands of letters and got the message loud and clear: "Hands off our Parks and Protected Area; they are not for private developers!"

In HRM, we continued to work alongside the Sandy Lake Conservation Association to advocate against the N.S. government's fast-track planning for housing development that would harm Sandy Lake and Sackville River. Karen McKendry led a series of very successful public hikes in the area.

In August, we hosted N.S.'s first annual Wetland Appreciation Week, in partnership with groups and organizations across the province. The week included guided hikes, webinars, interactive activities and more.

MARINE

The Kelp Kurious project harvested a bountiful crop of sugar kelp from Indian Point Marine Farms in Mahone Bay this season. Kelp Fest 2023 was a success with 180 people attending events, 10 restaurants featuring EAC's kelp on the menu and 17 other businesses developing sample kelp products. We also released a seaweed market roadmap for Nova Scotia and a post-harvest handling guide.

We're working alongside a century-old swordfish harpoon fishing fleet to help adapt this small-scale, sustainable fishery to changing ocean conditions and declining harpoon catches. Now in its second year, the trial got off to a great start in July with EAC's fisheries scientist on board.

Our eelgrass program hosted several workshops this summer to train more than a dozen watershed groups in eelgrass mapping, monitoring and restoration methodologies – early steps towards a regional eelgrass research and conservation network.

TRANSPORTATION

In June, the team rolled out our How-To Guide for Creating Community Bike Repair Spaces. The guidebook addresses a growing need for inclusive, community-based spaces that provide Nova Scotians with access to active transportation tools, resources and education.

Our own mobile bike repair spaces had a spectacular season, with the Pop-Up Bike Hub (PUBH) repairing over 300 bikes in 17 communities across N.S. The PUBH Mini has had a great season partnering with the Wonder'neath Art Bikers, a mobile bicycle art program providing free artmaking opportunities. The Mini helped to get over 80 bikes safely rolling across five HRM communities.

The Welcoming Wheels Earn-A-Bike and Bike Buddy programs had a great season, with 47 participants across both programs. We continue to support and facilitate community active transportation initiatives across the N.S. for all ages and abilities. Hats off to our summer staff who worked hard to get bikes safely rolling in N.S.!

FOOD

We've been working diligently to prepare Part B of the JustFOOD Action Plan, which will include implementation strategies and budget proposals for priority recommendations. To inform this work, we launched three new working groups: an (1) African Nova Scotian and Black Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group; an (2) Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Justice Working Group; and a (3) Municipal Working Group, which brings together more than 20 municipal staff members from across business units.

We continue to work with community partners to improve regional food access and strengthen our food system. We have been collaborating with Feed Nova Scotia to progress a rural food delivery pilot program and are working with a range of partners to support food distribution during times of emergency. We also continue to develop an interactive HRM Food Asset Map, which will be launched publicly in 2024.

COASTAL & WATER

In March 2023, Nova Scotia Environment & Climate Change Minister Tim Halman announced an indefinite delay of the Coastal Protection Act (CPA) regulations, and in August, released a statement that the province would not commit to implementing the Act before July 2025. Recently, we have been outspoken in the media regarding our disappointment and working closely with municipal councils and coastal property owners across the province, which we will continue until the regulations are released. We held a Virtual Town Hall for coastal communities to learn and discuss implications of the CPA in August. We're providing policy recommendations for municipalities to develop their own coastal development regulations in the meantime and contacting councils to sign onto a joint statement calling on the province to implement the Act immediately. We also have a successful ongoing letter campaign for the public to contact Minister Halman, Premier Houston and their MLA calling for the release of the regulations.

ENERGY & CLIMATE

We mobilized citizens supporting the federal Clean Electricity Regulation. We've presented letters to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, organized MP meetings and are contributing to a fall consultation process.

We've commissioned East Coast Environmental Law to explore how offshore wind is assessed and regulated in Germany, U.K., Northern Ireland and the U.S., and submitted comments to the province on the Offshore Wind Development Roadmap.

We've worked with volunteers to pilot an Energy Transition Deep Canvassing Project in Eastern Passage and Stellarton. After attending the Pictou County Climate Summit in June and speaking with residents, we've started door-to-door canvassing with plans to expand efforts.

We submitted comments on the Zero Emissions Vehicle Mandate to ensure reduced wait times for EVs in Atlantic Canada. We published our report "Ensuring Electric Vehicle Adoption in Nova Scotia." We hosted an electric school bus (ESB) showcase, laying groundwork for an ESB pilot in HRM.

We continued our home energy efficiency workshops in Mi'kmaw communities, participated at the First Nations general assembly and Bright Futures Camp in Millbrook, and hosted an inter-spiritual roundtable on climate.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

With the recent extreme weather events in Nova Scotia, we're more motivated than ever to ensure Halifax is growing in a sustainable and resilient way. This summer, HRM released its draft Regional Plan for public consultation; the vision for how and where the city will grow to one million people. We led EAC's analysis and review of this draft document and submitted our feedback to HRM planners.

The city is growing, and so is our team! This summer, we hired a planning student to research what other Canadian cities are doing to build complete communities and promote gentle density in the suburbs. While promoting sustainable development patterns, we also worked hard to protect our green network and hosted another summer of "Hike the Greenbelt" hikes.