

# Action is Our Middle Name

## MARINE

The Marine Team hosted Kelp Fest in May, bringing together hundreds of farmers, entrepreneurs, foodies, researchers and policymakers to celebrate amazing local kelp-based products being developed and further explore opportunities and identify the support needed to help realize a thriving, sustainable kelp farming sector in Atlantic Canada.

Throughout the summer, we advanced eelgrass programming in all four Atlantic provinces. As a partner on Dalhousie University's Community Eelgrass Restoration Initiative, we assisted with youth engagement programming to bring kids into the wonderful world of eelgrass, and we expanded membership in our citizen science iNaturalist program.

We're working with the Atlantic Healthy Oceans Initiative (AHOI) in western Newfoundland to support eelgrass survey efforts in several special coastal areas in the Gros Morne region, including the rarely visited St. Paul's Inlet. AHOI data was then added to our Gros Morne community-led marine atlas project over time to inform marine planning in the region. We also continued collaboration with six watershed partner groups across P.E.I. and New Brunswick, supporting data collection in dozens of Gulf region eelgrass meadows. We co-hosted a workshop with Kouchibouguac National Park on our kayak survey protocols and developed a series of methodological videos to demonstrate SeagrassNet survey, acoustic survey and kayak survey methods.

In August, we released a report highlighting the work we have done with the Nova Scotia swordfish harpoon fishery titled Keeping a century-old fishery alive. The report includes findings from rod-and-reel gear trials, an economic analysis of potential returns from charters, surveys exploring the potential benefits and challenges of this emerging venture and our recommendations to make this venture a reality.

Together with our partners at Make Stewardship Count, we effectively lobbied for a crucial review of the long-outdated FAO Guidelines for Seafood Ecolabelling at the 36th Annual UN FAO committee on fisheries. These guidelines, pivotal for certifications like the Marine Stewardship Council, are overdue for updates that will raise standards across certification schemes, ensuring greater sustainability in seafood ecolabelling practices.



PHOTO Raymond Plourde



PHOTO Stoo Metz Photo



PHOTO Sebastian Pardo



PHOTO Simon Ryder-Burbidge



PHOTO Jimmie Pederson

## WILDERNESS

The Wilderness Team successfully opposed a very sudden proposal for a new spring bear hunting season, which would have taken place at a time of year when no hunting season for any species has ever existed in the province. The proposed spring bear hunt was a very bad idea and was rightly cancelled, meaning that Nova Scotians can continue to enjoy our shared woods and waters in the spring.

Along with community groups across the province, we are working to better protect our provincial parks through our campaign to amend the Provincial Parks Act. Ensuring the Provincial Parks Act is finally updated and strengthened is necessary to close the loopholes in the Act and protect our provincial parks from being targeted by private interests, like Owls Head and West Mabou Beach Provincial Parks have been.

We sounded the alarm about Atlantic Mining/St. Barbara attempting to get out of their mine remediation obligations at the Moose River gold mine. Talking to the media about the risk of the mine being abandoned helped to raise public awareness about the common problem in Canada.

The second annual Wetlands Appreciation Week was a huge success. Together with 12 other organizations across the province, a variety of events to celebrate Nova Scotia's wetlands took place, including webinars, guided hikes, a bird walk, a bioblitz and other fun interactive activities.

PHOTO Annabelle Valliant-Fraser



PHOTO Matt Bawtinheimer

## TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Team was busy across Nova Scotia this summer, with the Pop-Up Bike Hub (PUBH) visiting 19 communities, distributing 100 safe cycling accessories and fixing a grand total of 560 bikes! Our PUBH Mini, which focuses on HRM neighbourhoods using a cargo bike to commute with all its gear, repaired 178 bikes.

Under the Welcoming Wheels umbrella this year, we gave away 67 bikes during the Kids Gifting Session. In the Earn-a-Bike Program, 19 people registered and participated as volunteers in our Repair Nights. Our Bike Buddy program, where we pair newcomers with experienced cyclists, had 68 participants!

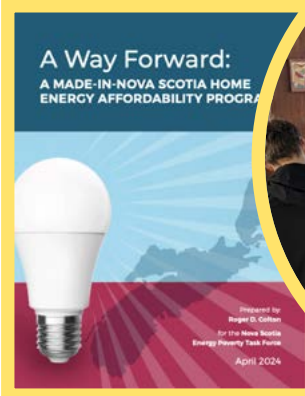
We offered our new Local Activation program, partnering with Eskasoni First Nation, Spryfield and New Glasgow to both continue and initiate the co-creation of active transportation (AT) interventions with community partners to help increase sustainable transportation options.

We provided public AT education by installing a bus bike rack at Bike Again (HRM) where you can practice getting your bike on and off public transit in a stress-free environment.

We held our annual International Walk to School Month event in October.

Our team collaborated with the Art of City Building to bring the wonderful folks from Equiterre to Halifax to present their advocacy work on vehicle weight and size culture.

We developed new resources for communities developing active transportation plans. The first is a Request For Proposals (RFPs) template and guide – this tool is for small municipalities and organizations to navigate writing RFPs. The second is our How to Engage with Public Engagement guide, a resource for both the public and municipal staff to help understand the logistics of good community engagement practices.



## ENERGY & CLIMATE

The Energy & Climate Team is pushing for renewable and affordable energy in the provinces and an Atlantic net-zero energy grid. To further push for regional cooperation, we are developing an east coast coalition for net-zero and creating five case studies on sustainable energy pathways.

We're engaging with communities to address the energy poverty crisis, launching A Way Forward: A Made-in-Nova Scotia Home Energy Affordability Program report and campaign with Roger Colton and the Energy Poverty Taskforce (EPT). It promotes a home energy affordability assistance program. We held engagement sessions with municipalities to see how they were addressing the crisis on a local level. We created a stakeholder thinktank to address the benefits and challenges of deep retrofits for affordable multi-family housing. We conducted 45 free energy audits for faith buildings in partnership with Efficiency Nova Scotia, Clean Foundation and Faith & the Common Good. Further addressing energy equality, we hired ASBB Consulting to conduct a study on job growth in the energy sector and how it can address high unemployment rates in equity-deserving communities.

On the community engagement front, we held five presentations on Energy is Life for the Seniors College Association of Nova Scotia. We launched the Electric School Buses for Children's Health campaign and spoke to 45 classrooms, busting the myth that gas-powered school buses are healthier than diesel by putting them through an air monitor test.

Our team is continuing to push for a sustainable, just and equitable energy future.

## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Built Environment Team led a campaign to promote choosing green leaders in this year's municipal elections, which took place on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024. The EAC developed and distributed voter materials, including **toolkits for HRM, CBRM, and rural municipalities**. We sent out a survey to all council and mayoral candidates in HRM, which 53 out of 79 candidates completed. We hosted a fair in which 20 civil society groups interacted with about 50 candidates about their platforms. Our aim was to make climate and environmental justice top election issues and to elect the most environmentally conscious regional council to date.

The Built Environment Team is gaining momentum in advocating for a protected Halifax greenbelt, actively engaging both new partners and existing members of the Our HRM Alliance coalition, we continue to focus on curbing urban sprawl and safeguarding our valuable natural assets. This summer and fall, we hosted over 10 public events, including hikes, family-friendly activities, invasive species surveys and bioblitzes. These events aimed to enhance education about the beauty and significance of HRM's blue and green network for people of all ages.

The Built Environment Team is still eagerly awaiting the new Regional Plan for HRM, which is the city's vision for how and where HRM will grow to a population of one million. Halifax continues to face record population growth, leading to challenges with housing affordability, transit capacity and service delivery, among others. Meanwhile, the EAC remains steadfast in advocating for the greenest possible Regional Plan.

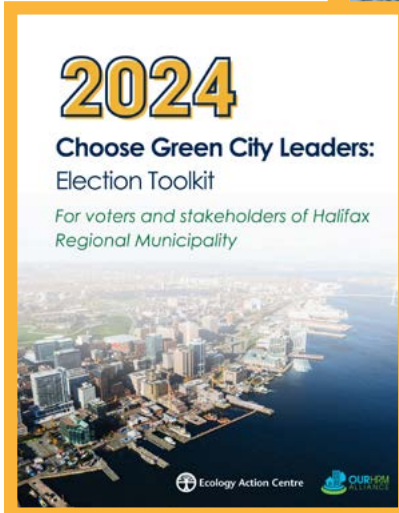


PHOTO Jillian Ramsay

## COASTAL & WATER

The Coastal & Water Team has continued to mobilize Nova Scotians and advocate for the Coastal Protection Act (CPA), which the province announced in February 2024 that it would not be proclaiming. We engaged in a province-wide reach out to MLAs, Minister Halman and Premier Houston to make it clear that this important piece of legislation is needed to protect our coastal ecosystems and communities.

The Coastal Coalition, a grassroots group of local activists that the EAC is part of, distributed hundreds of 'CPA Now' lawn signs across the province. In collaboration with the Coastal Coalition and Nature Nova Scotia, we held a hugely successful rally at the Nova Scotia legislature on Wednesday, May 8. Hundreds of Nova Scotians, including municipal and opposition leaders from Yarmouth to Cape Breton, showed up to demand the government reverse its decision and proclaim the CPA. We also launched another letter writing campaign with over 1,100 people once again contacting their MLA and Minister Halman to demand immediate action.

In August, we commissioned a telephone poll conducted by Narrative Research to gain insight into how Nova Scotians feel about coastal protection in the province. The results align strongly with what the EAC is hearing from community, and the numbers confirm that there is broad, continued support for the CPA across the political spectrum in 2024 as there was when the act was passed with all party support in 2019.

Meanwhile the province has spent hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to spin its failure on coastal protection as a win, but the EAC will not waver in our campaign to demand the proclamation of the CPA.



PHOTO Nicolas Winkler Photography



PHOTO Kevin Prinoski



PHOTO Nicolas Winkler Photography



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## FOOD

Between April and June, the Food Team worked closely with governance consultants to dissolve the Halifax Food Policy Alliance and in its place establish the Halifax Food Council (HFC). The HFC is a collaborative food governance body responsible for the implementation and oversight of the JustFOOD Action Plan. In July, the HFC hired two new staff members: an Indigenous food coordinator and an African Nova Scotian and Black (ANSB) food coordinator. These staff will support JustFOOD implementation and oversight and will advance food sovereignty and justice recommendations drafted by Indigenous and ANSB advisory bodies.

In October, the HFC hired two additional staff members, an engagement and government relations coordinator and a research and evaluation coordinator. These staff will work alongside the Indigenous and ANSB food coordinators to support the JustFOOD Action Plan implementation and evaluation, maintain and grow regional partnerships and develop knowledge products, among other responsibilities.

Throughout the summer and fall, the HFC has worked with community partners to support the JustFOOD program delivery, including delivery of an urban orchard pilot, an ANSB traditional meal preparation program and an English for Migrant Workers Pilot. The EAC Food Team continues to support the Coalition for Healthy School Food – Nova Scotia Chapter in its advocacy around the province's forthcoming universal school lunch program, focusing on localizing the school food program to allow for more choice and flexibility in menu development and creating pathways for schools to develop and maintain relationships with local food suppliers.