

# Action is our Middle Name

## FOOD

While the gardens rest and farm staff plan for the season ahead, the BiHi Park site of Common Roots Urban Farm was excited to launch its new off-grid, solar-powered cold storage. Built in collaboration with many community partners, the project explores how small-scale, community-led food infrastructure can support local community gardens, farms and food groups.

With the build completed at BiHi Park, the full feasibility study and open-source designs are now available and free to access, adapt and build from. We hope this work supports others imagining more resilient, community-led food systems. [commonrootsurbanfarm.ca/bi-hi/coldstorage/](http://commonrootsurbanfarm.ca/bi-hi/coldstorage/)

Over the winter, the JustFOOD /Halifax Food Council met with core members of the proposed Halifax Food Council to evaluate the proposed governance structure and consider new ways of working together. Our food system monitoring framework – a major project in partnership with N.S. Public Health – is nearing completion. This framework is intended to live on our online Virtual Food Hub that will support both organizations and individuals interested in food security and sovereignty in the HRM. We've been working on a communications plan to support connections, broadcast opportunities and tell stories about food system work. If you want to say in the loop, please sign up for the JustFOOD newsletter on our website: [justfoodhalifax.ca/](http://justfoodhalifax.ca/)



PHOTO: Nicola Nemy



## BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Built Environment Team continues to closely monitor and engage on land-use planning decisions in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) that will have a resounding impact on our local communities and wild spaces.

We continue to oppose the Special Planning Areas (SPAs), areas the provincial government plans to fast-track urban sprawl. Many SPAs threaten our local ecology and recreation opportunities, while increasing taxes and traffic. With the Wilderness Team, we attended the HRM's open houses on Sandy Lake and Highway 102 West Corridor (Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes) SPAs, working with local coalitions to rent adjacent rooms to the open house. This helps us share details from relevant environmental and traffic studies with attendees. These rooms were widely visited during the sessions, and provided the public with tools to advocate for the protection of Sandy Lake and BMBCL during this critical moment.

After our continued pressure for proactive advancement on the Halifax Green Network Plan (HGPN), HRM staff presented a progress report in January 2026. This presentation was well attended by members of the community and Council, thanks to diligent advocacy work. We will continue to ensure the HGPN moves in the right direction.

With HRM's Suburban Plan public engagement underway, we are working with staff and residents to ensure strong environmental and community standards are represented in the plan's design. We created public explainers to clarify and offer points of advocacy for community members. We also hosted an event between the Alliance members, HGPN staff and Suburban Plan staff, so resident priorities are being properly included in the plan, such as conservation of our wildlife corridors, protections for our watersheds, accessible transit and active transportation options, and support for local businesses.



PHOTO: Jocelyn Brown



PHOTO: Korney Dunsby

## MARINE

The Marine Team was on the ground during this year's meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas and played a vital role in efforts to advance sustainable management. After a record number of shark-related proposals, measures were adopted with new protections for basking and white sharks, reduction of catch limits for South Atlantic shortfin makos, and the development of a new process that will close persistent loopholes in shark protection previously exploited by countries.



Over the fall and winter, the Kelp Kurious project has embarked on another year of growing kelp seedlings in our nursery for springtime harvest at our partnering sea farm in Mahone Bay, Indian Point Marine Farms Ltd. This season, we've trialed forced reproduction, growth techniques for *Laminaria digitata*, and supported the Buchwald Lab's research into seedling growth techniques. We look forward to sharing new market research and resources in the spring and convening stakeholders at Kelp Fest to further support the development of Atlantic Canada's cultivated kelp sector.



## COASTAL & WATER

The Coastal & Water and Marine Teams hosted a high-level meeting with other organizations working in Nova Scotia who are all facing challenges and barriers with obtaining permits for coastal nature-based climate solutions work (e.g. shoreline clean ups; eelgrass restoration). The meeting sought to identify common challenges shared among the groups and potential solutions. The EAC shared these challenges with the Nova Scotia House of Assembly's Standing Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development at the end of October.

The Team completed the Peregrine Accelerator for Conservation Impact program at the end of last year with a final retreat of all participating organizations held in Montreal in December 2025. The program's focus is to develop innovative conservation solutions to support ecological and human health in the North Atlantic Transboundary Landscape. The Peregrine Accelerator was pivotal in developing the capacity of the Coastal and Water Team to support its ongoing work on coastal protection.

In March 2026, we will host two key events. First, a workshop for members of the Coastal Coalition Nova Scotia to help build advocacy capacity with regards to coastal protection campaigns, recognising that despite the province's unwillingness to proclaim the Coastal Protection Act, our collective advocacy continues.

Second, the EAC will host the first International Coastal Access Symposium on March 26, 2026. It will bring coastal access practitioners and advocates from around the world in a one-day, virtual format symposium. The event is free to attend and registration will soon be available on the EAC website.



PHOTO: Harry Collins



PHOTO: Powan Swain

## WILDERNESS

Together with our community partners, we successfully defended West Mabou Beach Provincial Park — again. Our team helped support the local community and build province-wide support for saving the park. We aided with sign printing and distribution, raised awareness through media interviews and attended the packed community meeting in Mabou. Together, we managed to save the park from this most recent threat.

This victory was extremely important, not just for West Mabou Beach Provincial Park, but for all provincial parks in Nova Scotia. But we didn't stop there. We pushed back hard against comments from Premier Houston and Natural Resource Minister Kim Masland, who said that this government is open to potential development in any park or protected area.

Until the Provincial Parks Act is strengthened, we know that Nova Scotia will be stuck fighting the same fight over and over. That's why we've continued the campaign to protect these important places in perpetuity by amending the Provincial Parks Act.

In addition to defending existing protected areas, we advocated for designating new protected areas to help us reach the Province's 20-percent-by-2030 commitment. We amplified campaigns for community-proposed protected areas like Ingram River, Chain Lakes, Goldsmith Lake and Minamkeak Lake Wilderness Area and brought together groups from across the province to create a stronger voice for nature conservation.

PHOTO: Jessie Winkiewicz



## TRANSPORTATION

Throughout November and December, the Transportation Team hosted a series of bike repair workshops in collaboration with FamilySOS and the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre. Over each 3-session workshop, participants gained hands-on experience with basic bike repair skills necessary for properly maintaining their bike. Dedicated repair stands, work benches and toolkits were also purchased for each centre, so community members will have access to supplies needed to fix their bikes year-round.

As well, we co-hosted a youth summit in February called Get Up & Get Organized for youth age 15-24 in the CBRM and Victoria county region. This focused on how youth can be involved in positive change in their communities, with key examples in food insecurity, active transportation/mobility, planetary health and housing/homelessness.

Our Local Activations program collaborated with the Spryfield Community Association to prepare a site and install a bench at Long Lake provincial park.

Winter Walk Day was held this February. Over 12,000 students across 59 schools and youth groups participated, hosting activities to get students walking and rolling outside for a winter walk!

Back at the workshop, the volunteers at our Welcoming Wheels program have been working hard all winter – to date, they have repaired 25 bikes in preparation for our spring gifting sessions and Bike Buddies program. In collaboration with Mountain Equipment Company, our Shifting Gears program ran a workshop on winter riding and preparing your bike for winter storage.



PHOTO: Aaron Barrington

## ENERGY & CLIMATE

The Energy and Climate Team works to inspire change toward greater energy efficiency and a more sustainable, reliable and affordable electricity grid. The Energy Team is online, in the media and in meetings, advocating for what we do want and against what we don't want. We will continue to push back against uranium mining, fracking, biomass and nuclear power.

We've launched some seriously wholesome engagement programming. In September, we began hosting Teens for Climate hybrid meetings for teens grades 9-12 across the province. At Nocturne in October, three new climate badges were launched in partnership with HalifACT. And drumroll, please — we recently published a kid's book, *The Great Adventure of ESB* by the Electric School Bus, written and illustrated by members of our Energy Team and available in French and English.

Speaking of electric vehicles, did you know that they can store energy and serve as an electric generator during power outages? Our team is working on reports on how Vehicle to Grid technology can be used to empower communities during emergencies.

Green Jobs and the Just Transition are always top of mind for us. In November, we held a conference in Sydney with New Dawn to assess the potential of starting a social enterprise providing training and jobs in energy-efficiency renovations and maintenance. Eager to see offshore wind developed, but insistent that it be done right, we contributed to January's Call for Information and are working with groups near and far to develop strategic communications.



IMAGE: Abby Lefebvre, Chris Benjamin