



## **Ecology Action Centre's response to Nova Scotia's "Spring 2026 Protected Areas Consultation"**

**July 27, 2026**

### **About us:**

The Ecology Action Centre is Nova Scotia's oldest and largest environmental advocacy organization. For decades, the Ecology Action Centre has advocated for more parks and protected areas, including through the Colin Stewart Forest Forum, the Parks and Protected Areas Plan and the Collaborative Protected Areas Strategy.

### **Candidate sites:**

The Ecology Action Centre welcomes this opportunity to support the designation of the 13 candidate protected areas:

- Johnson Lake Nature Reserve, Cape Breton Regional Municipality (addition, 33 hectares)
- Roseburn Nature Reserve, Inverness County (new, 47 hectares)
- Mount Pleasant Nature Reserve, Lunenburg County (new, 59 hectares)
- Lake Torment Nature Reserve, Kings County (new, 12 hectares)
- Lambs Lake Nature Reserve, Annapolis County (addition, one hectare)
- Humes River Wilderness Area, Inverness County (addition, 10 hectares)
- Herring Cove Backlands Wilderness Area, Halifax Regional Municipality (new, 505 hectares)
- Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area, Halifax Regional Municipality (addition, 144 hectares)
- Tangier Grand Lake Wilderness Area, Halifax Regional Municipality (addition, 82 hectares)
- Sackville River Wilderness Area, Halifax Regional Municipality (addition, 47 hectares)
- Sandy Point Wilderness Area, Shelburne County (new, 880 hectares)
- Carleton River Wilderness Area, Yarmouth County (addition, 50 hectares)
- Cloud Lake Wilderness Area, Annapolis and Kings County (addition, 76 hectares)

We strongly support designating all 13 sites to ensure that 1,946 hectares (19.46 square km) of forests, lakes and barrens are protected for generations to come. However, there's much more work to do.

## Site-specific feedback:

We are particularly happy to see the inclusion of the beloved Herring Cove Backlands Wilderness Area, which advocates and the local community have been trying to protect for years. “The Backlands” is an incredibly important part of HRM’s proposed greenbelt. It’s home to a globally rare Jack Pine - Broom Crowberry ecosystem. It’s also crucial habitat for rare species like the Common Nighthawk and arctic alpine plants. Beloved by locals, hikers, mountain bikers and more, we are happy to see the Province moving forward with the protection of this 505-hectare site.

Larger sites like this are critical for protecting biodiversity and habitat connectivity.

That’s why we urge the Province to work to expand the boundaries of two candidate sites: Lambs Lake Nature Reserve in Annapolis County and the Sackville River Wilderness Area in Halifax Regional Municipality. Instead of 1 hectare and 47 hectares, we urge the Province to expand the sites to 1,131 hectares and 387 hectares, respectively (as shown on the [interactive map](#) of community-proposed protected areas).

## Nova Scotia needs more protected areas:

Protected areas are the cornerstones of a healthy environment. Expanding the province’s network of protected areas is vital to protect rare and endangered species, old-growth forests, healthy watersheds and more.

[Nova Scotians remain very supportive of protecting more wilderness](#) and accelerating efforts to meet the province’s legislated commitment to protect at least 20 per cent of the province by 2030, as required under the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*.

The Province is not currently on track to legally protect 20 per cent of the province by 2030, but achieving this commitment remains both important and achievable.

In addition to designating the 13 candidate sites, the Ecology Action Centre urges this government to protect:

- all the remaining sites from the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan
- all the community-proposed protected areas that meet the national and international standards
- Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs)
- the remaining sites purchased through the Canada-Nova Scotia Nature Agreement funding

## The Parks and Protected Areas Plan:

The [2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan](#) was based on widespread public consultation, expert input and staff analysis. The Plan and the sites it identified remain an incredibly important part of Nova Scotia's protected areas network. But 13 years after it was released, there are sites from the Parks and Protected Areas Plan that *still* haven't been protected.

These sites have already been identified, assessed and consulted on; they are simply awaiting designation by Cabinet. The dozens of sites that remain must be designated without delay.

## Community-proposed protected areas:

Based on local knowledge, citizen science and gap analysis, community associations and public interest groups have nominated special sites across Nova Scotia for legal protection.

The Ecology Action Centre and the Healthy Forest Coalition recently released an [online map of these community-proposed protected areas](#) to highlight the incredible opportunities to protect more nature in the province, and what's at risk if these sites remain in jeopardy.

We are concerned that the government appears to be studiously avoiding studying and protecting these sites, despite the ecological imperative, legal commitments and public will to protect more nature.

As a result of government inaction, these sites of high conservation value remain vulnerable to development, degradation and fragmentation.

The Province should place all of the community-proposed protected areas under interim protection (i.e., enforce a moratorium on development and resource extraction) until they are fully vetted for legal protection.

