
Protected Areas & Ecosystems Branch
Nova Scotia Environment
PO Box 442
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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January 29, 2020

Re. New protected areas for consultation

The Ecology Action Centre would like to applaud the Nova Scotia government's recent announcement to protect three new Wilderness areas and expand three others. This represents another important step towards reaching the Province's long-promised 13% land protection goal and Nova Scotia's commitments to fighting climate change and biodiversity loss.

We are writing to formally extend our support for the protection of these areas, for their recreational values, cultural significance, and critical ecosystem benefits, including wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and carbon sequestration. Please designate the new and expanded protected areas forthwith, and please ensure the largest possible boundaries for each.

We are particularly pleased to see the Archibald Lake area near the St. Mary's river being brought forward for Wilderness Area protection and endorse its immediate designation. The protection of Archibald Lake will preserve old hardwood forests, quality habitat for Brook Trout, and protect Mainland Moose – ecosystem elements currently not well-represented in Nova Scotia's protected areas network.

In addition, we strongly urge the Province to also include immediate designation of the nearby pending Nine Mile Woods Wilderness Area. This ecologically important area to the north of Archibald Lake has been awaiting designation since 2013 and does not require additional consultations to formally designate it. Importantly, we would also recommend increasing its boundaries to fully include Lewis Lake, Lithgow Lake, Timber Lake, and the adjacent Cameron Lakes, which would provide significantly better ecosystem protection, including additional riparian zones for endangered species (e.g. the wood turtle) and help preserve biodiversity connectivity within the St. Mary's River watershed. This site is also one of the last and best examples of the Aspen Drumlin Plane Natural Landscape.

We are also very pleased to support the designation of Katowe'katik Wilderness Area which is critical for its scientific, recreational, and ecological values. This area provides rare habitat for the nationally and provincially endangered Blandings Turtle and threatened ribbon snake. The Pu'tlaqnn (or Pleasant River) Wilderness Area, too, provides critical habitat for Blandings Turtle, Eastern Ribbonsnake, and threatened rare plants (e.g. Golden

Crest). Its slow-moving rivers and streams, wetlands, shallow lakes, and lakeshores are important for these species-at-risk.

Both the Pleasant River and Kat'owe'katic Wilderness Areas will improve the representation of the LaHave Drumlins natural landscape in our protected areas network. Protecting Kat'owe'katic (Eel Lake) and Pu'tlaqnn (Shingle Lake) will safeguard a place of cultural significance to the Mi'kmaq. Finally, these two proposed protected areas provide carbon sequestration services due to their mature and growing mixed wood and softwood forests.

The addition of almost 2,200 hectares to Silver Wilderness Area, including 8 kilometres of the river corridor, provides critical habitat for Snapping Turtles, a species of concern both provincially and nationally due to their precipitous decline. It is critical to protect the natural biodiversity of this area, including the presence of older hardwood forest consisting of eastern hemlock, red spruce, and white pine which are home to at-risk birds such as the Canadian Warbler and the Chimney Swift.

The protection of additional hectares in the Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area and Terence Bay Wilderness Area will increase the quality and experience of recreational activities, including canoeing, hiking, and fishing. These activities provide important mental and physical health benefits for Nova Scotians.

We welcome these important additions to the Protected Areas network in Nova Scotia and encourage the government to add the remaining areas from the Parks and Protected Areas Plan to our provincial network as soon as possible. Target 1 of Canada's [2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets](#) commits Canada to the protection of at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, by 2020 with further targets of 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. We urge Nova Scotia's government follow suit to continue to help meet our national and [international targets](#) for terrestrial and marine protection.

We believe protected areas are essential to addressing the twin existential threats of biodiversity collapse and the climate crisis. We encourage the Province of Nova Scotia to be a leader in environmental sustainability, for the well-being of present and future generations and for the health of the land, water and air upon which we all depend.

Sincerely yours,

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