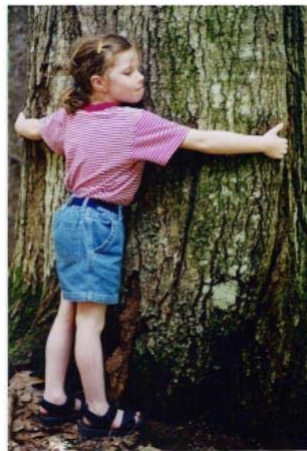




Nova Scotia Nature Trust

A Forest Legacy

Final Report



Project Goal and Objectives

Project Goal: to conserve wildlife habitat through the formal protection and stewardship of old growth forests on private land, based on landowner education and stewardship initiatives.

Objectives to achieve the Project Goal:

- Contact and educate landowners of Nova Scotia's priority old and unique forest sites on private lands to encourage protection of the sites;
- Create detailed forest conservation proposals for major corporate landowners of priority forest conservation sites;
- Provide education on the role of old and unique forests and the importance of forest conservation for woodlot owners, managers and government agents involved in forestry and wildlife management and for the general public;
- To formally protect priority old and unique forest sites through acquisition, conservation easement, provincial or federal designation or stewardship agreement;

Work Completed and Results

Landowner Contact	
Landowners Contacted	77
Landowners Visited	26
Sites Visited	34
Stewardship Agreements	5
Hectares in Stewardship Agreements	Over 400
Land Stewards Newsletter Sent to Previously Contacted Landowners	

Corporate Landowners

Communications pursued with 3 forest companies:

1. Kimberly-Clark donated Hardwood Lake to Nature Trust. Though not a priority for protection, it allows for further discussions with the company on protection of other properties;
2. Stora has set aside properties identified through a previous project as protected areas in their current management plan, however they are not currently able to commit to easements or donations at this time;
3. Bowater property within Cloud Lake Wilderness area was acquired by Nature Trust;

Report presented to Nova Scotia Power on priority properties for protection: not interested in moving forward with protection at this time.

Securement (see attached descriptions)

- # properties legally secured - 3
- # hectares protected - 212
- #properties in progress - 3
- # hectares in progress - 322

Total hectares to be secured - 534

Signage Program. Number of Signs fabricated

- 6 Signs for Meander River easement installed in October 2003
- 3 signs for Waternish easement ready to post
- 3 signs for St. Croix property ready for printing

Education

- # of presentations to community groups - 4
- total people attending: >100
- # of old forest walks - 2
- total participants: 50
- # of events attended with Nature Trust display and old forest information: >10

Advertisement in paper, project reports in Natural Landscapes Newsletter (Nature Trust newsletter sent to 500 people quarterly), poster created for event attended by hundreds of school children.

Other

- Nature Trust members interested in buying and protecting forest property - search for property continues;
- Ongoing communication with landowner in northern Cape Breton concerning protection of 285 hectare property near National Park and provincial Wilderness Area;

Lessons Learned

Need for Working Forest Easements

The NS Nature Trust's mission is to protect ecologically significant lands. The priority is to protect properties "forever wild", ie. there is minimal use and no cutting. In a previous project, the Nature Trust researched "working forest" easements. At present, the Nature Trust is not in a position to do "working forest" easements which would require development of guidelines for acceptable forestry practices within a conservation easement, and increased management, staff resources, and monitoring.

While meeting with landowners who own forested sites it became clear that although many are conservation minded, they are not willing to give up the use of their forests through a "forever wild" easement. Many landowners use their land in a sustainable way and would like to protect it from clear cutting or development. This is an area that should be investigated if rural Nova Scotians are to feel they have the ability to protect their land while using it sustainably.

Cross-border Land Transactions

Two of the easements in progress are properties owned by Americans. These easements are taking longer than predicted to complete due to the need for landowners and the Nature Trust to work with both Canadian and American lawyers, financial advisors, and government agencies. The Nature Trust is currently researching and compiling information on cross-border transactions in order to make this process more efficient and comprehensible.

Recommendations for Follow Up

Land Securement:

- The three easements in progress will be worked on until the properties are secured;
- Upon final securement, signage will be installed on the properties;
- Landowners contacted through the project who are interested in protecting their properties will be given assistance by the Nature Trust wherever possible and as funding permits;
- Announcement should be made and public celebration planned for each secured property;

Follow up with all landowners contacted:

All landowners contacted through the project will receive the annual Land Stewards newsletter each spring as funding permits

Inquiries:

The Nature Trust will continue to respond to all inquiries about land conservation, sending out Landowners Options for Conservation booklets and Old Forest Fact sheets, and meeting with landowners who would like to protect their properties

Working Forest Easements:

A Nova Scotia organization needs to take on the project of working forest easements - developing guidelines and determining the process involved.

If this is an organization other than the Nature Trust, the Nature Trust should provide support to this group if possible.

Corporate Landowners

- The Nature Trust will continue to work towards securing properties owned by corporate landowners;
- The Nature Trust will continue to encourage formal protection through easements or donation.

Financial Summary

Funding Sources

- EcoAction

- NS habitat Conservation Fund
- Metcalf Foundation
- Davis Foundation
- Shell Foundation
- NS DNR
- NS Dept. of Environment & Labour
- NS Nature Trust
- Volunteers
- Others

Secured Forested Properties (June 01 - Aug. 03)

Cloud Lake, Annapolis County (acquisition)

450 Granite - 451a - Granite Uplands, South Mountain subdivision - Natural Landscape - Interior Granite Rolling Plain (S. Mountain)

- 180 acres (73 hectares)
- Wilderness in-holding in the Cloud Lake Wilderness Area
- Site is characterized by bog, open meadow and forest - mid-aged and older forest - mix of coniferous and deciduous
- Acquired from Bowater Mersey
- Property contains 1) well drained tolerant upland mixed forest 2) well drained tolerant upland deciduous forest 3) well drained pine-red spruce undulating terrain 4) imperfectly drained white pine-red spruce, black spruce undulating terrain 5) wetland complex

Hardwood Lake, Kings County (donation)

450 Slopes and Ridges - 451a - Granite Uplands, South Mountain subdivision Natural Landscape - Interior Granite Rolling Plain (S. Mountain)

- 300 acres (122 hectares)
- Shoreline intact
- Red maple is dominant species - also white pine, red spruce, eastern hemlock
- Kimberly-Clark donated the lands to the Nature Trust. Girl Guides use the site for hiking and have a camp on adjacent lands at the south end of the lake - Nature Trust to allow continued use of the site by the Girl Guides
- Favourable white tailed deer habitat
- Relationship with Kimberly-Clark will hopefully lead to donation of priority forest site

Meander River, Hants County (easement)

500 Carboniferous Lowlands, 510 Till Plain, 511a Shubenacadie River Natural Landscape - Shubenacadie River Rolling Hills

- 20 acres (8 hectares) with 1200 metres of shoreline

- Floodplain forest with sugar maple, hemlock, oak, ash
- Provincially rare plant - Bloodroot
- Some Karst outcroppings
- Rare damselfly
- Adjacent to Smiley's Provincial Park

Forested Properties Being Secured

St. Croix, Hants County

500 Carboniferous Lowlands, 510 Till Plain, 511a Shubenacadie River Natural Landscape - Shubenacadie River Rolling Hills

- 20 acres (8 hectares)
- Karst topography - gypsum soils - sinkholes
- Ram's-head lady slipper site - Provincially rare flower
- Some upland mixed forest adjacent to the property

Gold River Lake, Kings/Lunenburg Counties (easement)

400 Atlantic Interior - 450 Slopes and Ridges - 451a - Granite Uplands, South Mountain subdivision

Natural Landscape - Interior Granite Rolling Plain (S. Mountain)

- Approximately 600 acres of forest (243 hectares) surrounding a 200 acre (81 hectare) lake
- Undeveloped shore line
- Pockets of old growth deciduous: Sugar Maple, Beech, Yellow Birch; some old White Pines
- Second growth of mixed forest, Red Spruce, Aspen
- Only 6 lots to be created on the site

Waternish, Guysborough County(easement)

400 Atlantic Interior - Quartzite Plains 410 - 413b Quartzite Barrens, Guysborough Subdivision

Natural Landscape - Eastern Shore Quartzite Plains/Guysborough

- 160 acres (65 hectares)
- Over 900 metres along the St. Mary's River including old floodplain forest
- Mature hardwood forest containing Red Maple, American Beech, Sugar Maple, Yellow Birch.
- Important Atlantic salmon river

Executive Director



Date of Post: January 2004