



Summary Report: What we heard during Nova Scotia Wilderness Areas Consultations

January 9th through March 9th, 2020.
Prepared by Nova Scotia Environment

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Overview

This document provides a summary of what we heard during the public consultation (January 9 – March 9, 2020) on six proposed wilderness area sites in Nova Scotia. A separate formal consultation was completed with the Mi'kmaw of Nova Scotia.

In September 2019, the Province of Nova Scotia announced new areas for protection. On January 9, Nova Scotia Environment's Protected Areas and Ecosystems Branch (PAE) initiated consultation required for all of the new wilderness areas, as well as an additional site. Three of the six sites are proposed new wilderness areas and three are additions to existing wilderness areas. Public consultation of at least 60 days is required for new wilderness areas and additions to existing wilderness areas under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

For three of the sites, the focus of the consultation was on proposed changes since the release of the Parks and Protected Areas Plan in 2013, because earlier consultation was completed as part of that process.

The current consultation process was supported by an informative webmap and site descriptions. A copy of site descriptions and maps available during the consultation is available in Appendix A. The consultation asked for comment on the following proposed wilderness areas and wilderness area additions:

- ▶ Archibald Lake Wilderness Area, Guysborough Co.
- ▶ Katowe'katik (McGowan Lake) Wilderness Area, Queens and Annapolis counties
- ▶ addition to Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area, Halifax Regional Municipality
- ▶ addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area, Halifax Regional Municipality
- ▶ addition to Silver River Wilderness Area, Digby Co.
- ▶ Pleasant River Wilderness Area, Queens and Lunenburg counties

Several methods were used to notify the public about the open consultation process. On January 9, 2020, an email was sent to individuals and organizations who have indicated interest in information about protected areas consultations. On January 10, 2020, the province issued a news release announcing the consultation.

The consultation was promoted on Nova Scotia Environment's website and through Facebook and Twitter. Advertisements were placed in the following outlets (copy of advertisements in Appendix B):

- ▶ The Chronicle Herald
- ▶ Progress Bulletin
- ▶ South Shore Breaker
- ▶ Tri-county Vanguard
- ▶ Antigonish Casket
- ▶ Guysborough Journal



Summary Consultation Results

A total of 317 unique responses were submitted from individuals and organizations across the province. The majority of comments concerned the proposed Archibald Lake Wilderness Area, with a total of 226 unique comments. Comments were submitted by:

- ▶ E-mail to protectedareas@novascotia.ca
- ▶ Phone
- ▶ Letters to Nova Scotia Environment
- ▶ Letters to the Minister of Environment
- ▶ Comments received through communications with staff or during meetings


The most common method of submitting public comments was email. There was some duplication of emailed and posted letters, and these were cross referenced so that the same submission was not double counted. Several respondents took the opportunity to comment on issues not open for consultation, such as the recent delisting of the proposed Owl's Head Provincial Park.

A number of respondents indicated they were submitting a response on behalf of an organization or were a member of an organization. Below is a list of organizations that respondents indicated they were affiliated with. Please note that individuals and government departments are not included in the list below:

- ▶ Atlantic Mining NS Corp (Atlantic Gold)
- ▶ Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
- ▶ Ecology Action Center
- ▶ Gale's End Press
- ▶ Halifax North West Trails Association
- ▶ Lays Lake Outdoor Association
- ▶ Melrose Fish and Game Association
- ▶ Nature Conservancy of Canada
- ▶ Nova Scotia Power Inc.
- ▶ Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society
- ▶ Paul Marriner Outdoor Writing & Photography
- ▶ St. Mary's River Association
- ▶ Tuskent River Environmental Protection Association

Highlights include:

- ▶ The majority of respondents indicated support for land protection, including ninety-five (95) respondents submitting general comments for all areas under consideration.

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- ▶ The remainder of comments were site specific, sometimes naming more than one site in a submission.
 - ▶ Potential for economic development or benefits resulting from environmental protection.
 - ▶ Desire to protect lands valued for traditional recreational use, such as hunting, fishing and camping.
 - ▶ Concern about loss of motorized access.
 - ▶ Concern that land protection may limit future economic development in some areas, particularly mining.

Detailed information about what we heard about individual sites is included in the following sections.

Area specific comments

Archibald Lake Wilderness Area

Most of the comments submitted during the public consultation were about the proposed Archibald Lake Wilderness Area. A total of 226 unique comments were submitted. Fifty-three (53) respondents indicated they live locally or have strong family ties to the area. One hundred and twenty-nine (129) comments indicated strong support for protection, and ninety-seven (97) indicated no support for protection of this area.

Two main themes emerged in the comments; that the area should not move forward for protection to avoid impacting a proposal to develop a gold mine at nearby Cochrane Hill, and the area should move forward for protection so traditional uses of the area may continue and to protect the environment. Many comments supporting protection indicated a great love for the area, including memories of spending time there with family over generations as a traditional gathering place.

Environmental protection

Many respondents highlighted their attachment to this area and emphasized how significant its environment values are. The area is widely considered important for maintaining the ecological functioning of the salmon bearing St. Mary's River. Many respondents noted the river is critical summer habitat for adult salmon, and year-round juvenile habitat. Anything that potentially threatens the water flow, or does not protect the existing quality, was a concern to these respondents.

Multiple respondents also suggested that the nearby proposed Nine Mile Woods Wilderness Area also be protected, and that this be expanded to surround Lewis Lake, Lithgow Lake, Timber Lake and the Cameron Lakes. A

desire to provide better ecosystem protection, including additional riparian zones for endangered species (such as wood turtle) and help preserve biodiversity connectivity within the St. Mary's River watershed was stated. It was noted this site is one of the last examples of older and contiguous forest within the Aspen Drumlin Plain Natural Landscape.

Respondents spoke about the importance of preserving old hardwood forests as quality habitat. It was noted this area provides habitat for brook trout and endangered mainland moose.

Recreation and Motorized Access

The Archibald Lake area is a well known outdoor recreational area used by anglers, hikers, hunters, and campers. Long term and ongoing use of the area was clearly demonstrated in comments, including learning to hunt, fish or paddle in the area. Visiting the area is a family tradition for many respondents. Attachment to the area, and an appreciation for the unique wilderness was evident in many comments.

Many respondents strongly supported protection, while requesting that access to these lakes on roads and trails by vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles, be continued. Many spoke about how this relates to recreational purposes, including fishing, hunting and camping. Some respondents noted how important to them it is that fishing on the lakes by motorized boats continue to be permitted.

Tourism

Many respondents believe the area is a prime tourist destination, and that protecting its beauty and ecology will enhance its appeal to many types of tourists and visitors. Camping, fishing, paddling, and wilderness hiking were among the activities noted as having tourism value or potential in the area. Some indicated they believe that legal protection of the area would strengthen and support the work being carried on by Historic Sherbrooke Village and the proposed Beluga Whale Sanctuary at Port Hilford.

Economic considerations and mining

This was the most widely commented topic concerning the designation of Archibald Lake Wilderness Area, with divergent views. Those that commented in favour of protecting the area typically stated that it would prevent a proposed mine at nearby Cochrane Hill from sourcing water or discharging treated wastewater at Archibald Lake. Those that requested Archibald Lake Wilderness Area not be designated indicated they wanted the area available to support development of the proposed mine.

Respondents indicated they believed that either protecting, or not protecting, the area would be of the greatest long-term benefit to the residents of the area both economically and socially. Concern was expressed about potential

damage to the watershed that may occur in relation to mining activities, and many felt that sustainable tourism would lead to greater economic benefit for the community over the long term. Economic development was referred to mostly as the number of jobs in the area over time. Concern was also expressed that if the mine did not move forward, families would have to move out of the area for employment, and that a potential loss of corporate taxes would have a negative impact on the municipality.

Additional comments concerned the process by which this wilderness area was selected and announced for protection, noting this area was not identified for protection in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan. Advocates for mining indicated that may have a chilling effect on the future development of the mining industry in Nova Scotia. They expressed concern that the province is creating unexpected barriers to viability of the proposed Cochrane Hill Gold Mine while the project is undergoing environmental assessment.

Katowe'katik (McGowan Lake) Wilderness Area

A total of sixteen (16) unique comments were submitted for this area. One respondent indicated they lived locally. All respondents indicated support for protection of the area, and a number of these comments included support for designation with a Mi'kmaw name instead of the originally proposed name. Respondents spoke of the importance of the local area for its unique environmental values and how it was important to conserve and protect the following:

- ▶ provincially endangered Blandings Turtle,
- ▶ threatened Ribbon Snake,
- ▶ water ways, including traditional portage routes.

It was noted that this area has been long used for fishing, hunting, camping and paddling. While most respondents supported the designation type change from Nature Reserve to Wilderness Areas, a number indicated they would prefer to see the area remain a Nature Reserve, as proposed in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan. Those that did not support the change in designation type stated concerns for use and litter left behind from activities such as hunting.

A few respondents requested that various adjacent and nearby Crown land parcels be added to the wilderness area to enhance protection of old forests and species-at-risk habitat, improve ecological connectivity across the landscape, and conserve Mi'kmaq cultural sites. These included additional Crown lands on McGowan Lake and Harmony Lake, as well as lands recently acquired by the Province on Medway River.

Addition to Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area

A total of thirteen (13) unique comments were submitted for this proposed addition, consisting of multiple inholdings or adjacent parcels. One respondent indicated they have local ties to the area.

Support was strong for this addition, as it would improve ecological connectivity of the area and simplify boundaries. A few respondents commented they would like to see additional motorized access to lands previously designated.

Addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area

A total of fifteen (15) unique comments were submitted for this addition, consisting of two separate parcels. One respondent indicated they have local ties to the area. All respondents indicated support for the addition.

Many noted that the addition would protect additional lakeshore at Frederick Lake and increase ecological connectivity within Terence Bay Wilderness Area. A few respondents commented they would like to see additional motorized access to lands previously designated.

Addition to Silver River Wilderness Area

A total of sixteen (16) unique comments were submitted for this area. One respondent indicated they have strong family ties to the area. All respondents supported designation.

Respondents spoke of the area's importance as habitat for wildlife as diverse as endangered mainland moose and chimney swifts. It was noted the area is important for Atlantic Coastal Plain Flora along lakeshores and wetlands, supporting turtle nesting along the few large sand beaches, and forested wetlands that support several at-risk songbird species.

Respondents were pleased the designation will protect land historically used for canoeing, fishing, and camping. Some mentioned off-highway vehicle access, with comments indicating responsible use should continue, and others requested that access be reduced, and some roads be decommissioned.

Pleasant River Wilderness Area

A total of twenty-one (21) unique comments were submitted for this area. Four (4) respondents indicated they lived locally or have strong family ties to the area. All respondents indicated support for the area.

Respondents spoke to the importance of the local area for its unique environmental values and how it was important to conserve and protect the following:

- ▶ provincially endangered Blandings Turtle

- ▶ threatened Ribbon Snake
- ▶ water ways, including traditional portage routes
- ▶ Dwarf Birch
- ▶ LaHave Drumlins natural landscapes
- ▶ Golden Crest, Black Ash, Blue Curls, and Long's Bulrush

It was noted that this area has been long used for fishing, hunting, camping and paddling. Most respondents who commented on potential designation with the Mi'kmaw name "Pu'tlaqnn" instead of "Pleasant River" supported the name change; however, it was also pointed out that "Pleasant River" is more recognized and would more easily help people locate the new wilderness area. A few respondents commented about the potential for mining in the area, including some overlap of existing mineral rights with the proposed boundary. Some asked that the proposed wilderness area not be designated if there is potential for mining in the area, and others indicated they would like the overlapping exploration rights removed.

Appendix A – Site descriptions and maps

Archibald Lake Wilderness Area

Archibald Lake Wilderness Area will protect 684 hectares (ha) of woodlands, lakes and several small wetlands in the watershed of Archibald Brook, an important tributary of the St. Mary's River.

The candidate wilderness area consists of Archibald, McDonald and Rocky lakes (240 ha altogether), along with surrounding provincial lands. At least 300 ha is old hardwood forest on elongated hills (drumlins). The remainder is primarily mature or older hardwood forest on hills and mature softwood forest on flatter terrain. This forest provides important habitat for species that depend on or prefer old forest.

The watershed of Archibald Brook provides quality habitat for brook trout and other aquatic species.

Nearly the entire site consists of ecosystem elements that are poorly represented in Nova Scotia's protected areas network, including the well drained hardwood drumlins. It also overlaps with a mainland moose concentration zone delineated by the Department of Lands and Forestry. With the lakes and surrounding hardwood hills, this is a very scenic area. It is used and enjoyed for a variety of outdoor activities, including sport fishing, hunting, camping and camp use.

Three campsite leases occur on Archibald Lake. These will be honoured under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act.

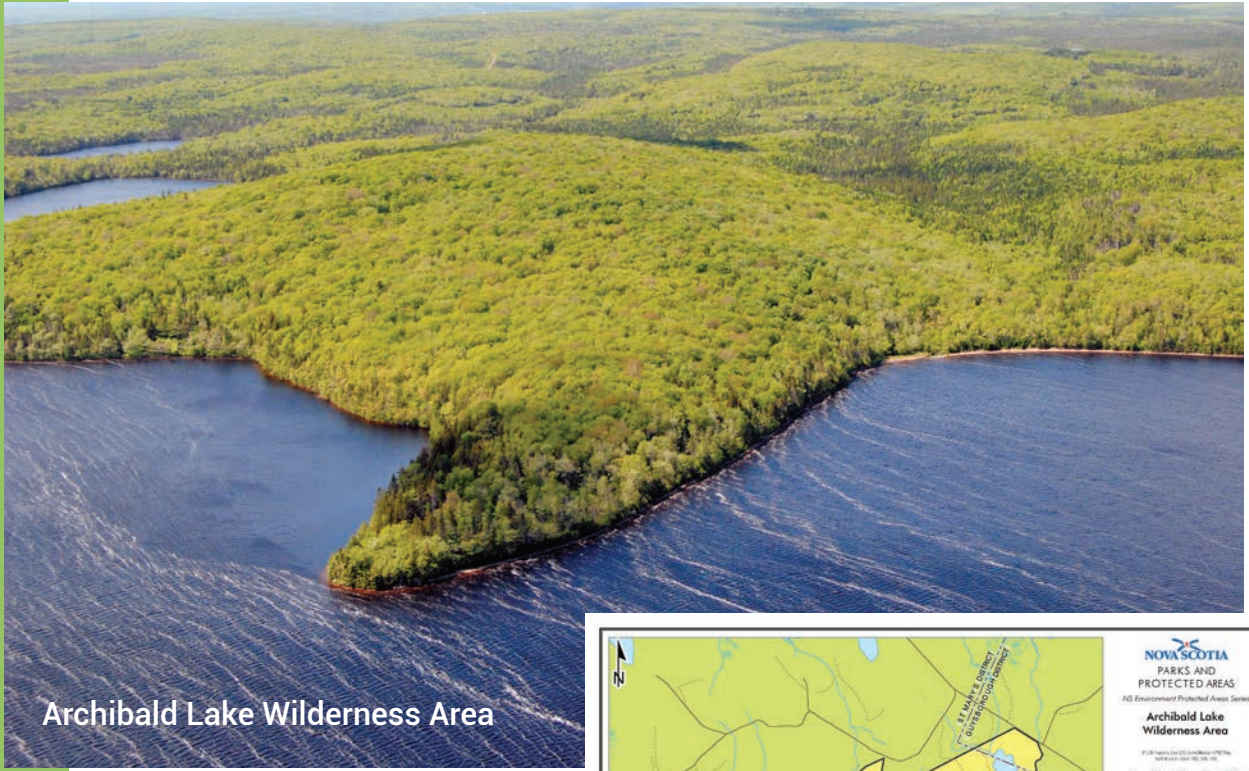
The proposed boundary avoids forest access roads and trails wherever practical. Depending on interest, the final boundary can be adjusted to accommodate public vehicle access to one or more of the lakes.

About 10 ha around Archibald Brook is subject to mineral exploration rights. These rights can be honoured under the Wilderness Areas Protection Act, provided activities do not degrade the wilderness area.

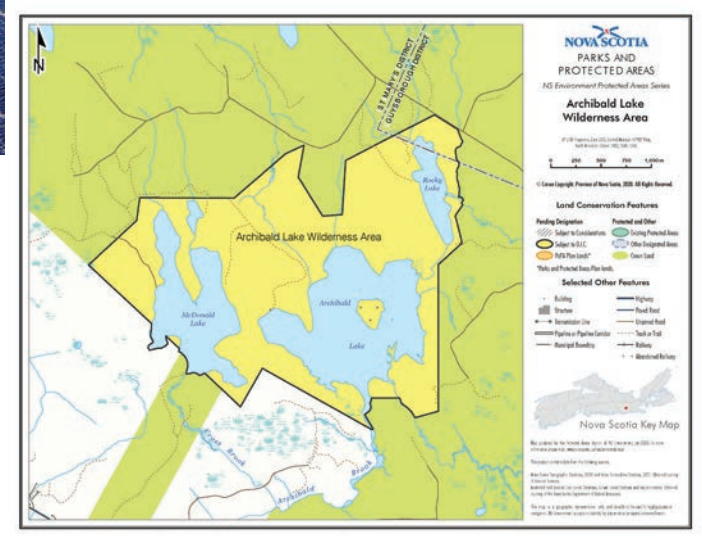
Archibald Lake is also identified in Atlantic Gold's description for the proposed Cochrane Hill Gold Project:

<https://ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/80159?culture=en-CA>

The company's proposed use of Archibald Lake cannot be permitted within a wilderness area.



Archibald Lake Wilderness Area



Katowe'katik Wilderness Area

Katowe'katik Wilderness Area will protect about 1,225 hectares (ha) of woodland and lakeshore habitat at McGowan Lake, in Queens and Annapolis counties, about 8 km east of Kejimikujik National Park.

This area is home to one of only several populations of endangered Blandings Turtle and threatened Ribbon Snake in Nova Scotia.

Establishing this wilderness area complements efforts of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, which has acquired and protected about 26 hectares of private land at McGowan Lake.

This wilderness area will include the following lands:

- ▶ 1,155 ha previously consulted on and proposed for protection as a nature reserve in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan. This includes lands of the former Bowater Mersey Paper Company acquired for protection in 2007.
- ▶ 45 ha of additional land along the western shore of McGowan Lake, which was acquired for protection in 2014.
- ▶ Several forest access roads and powerline corridors which were not part of the earlier boundary concept or consultation.

The wilderness area will protect over 9 km of shoreline on Dean and McGowan Lakes, within the Medway River system. Much of the forest cover consists of mature and immature mixed-wood and softwood forest, with some hardwood drumlin hills. As the forest ages, it will become increasingly important for species which prefer older forest. Older forests can also store significant amounts of atmospheric carbon.

Protection of these lands helps improve representation of the LaHave Drumlins Natural Landscape in Nova Scotia's protected areas system.

This is an important area for scientific research and education. The Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute (MTRI) is located next to the boundary, at Highway #8.

Designation as a wilderness area instead of as a nature reserve will allow hunting and angling and provides the Minister of Environment authority to allow vehicle access to adjacent properties.

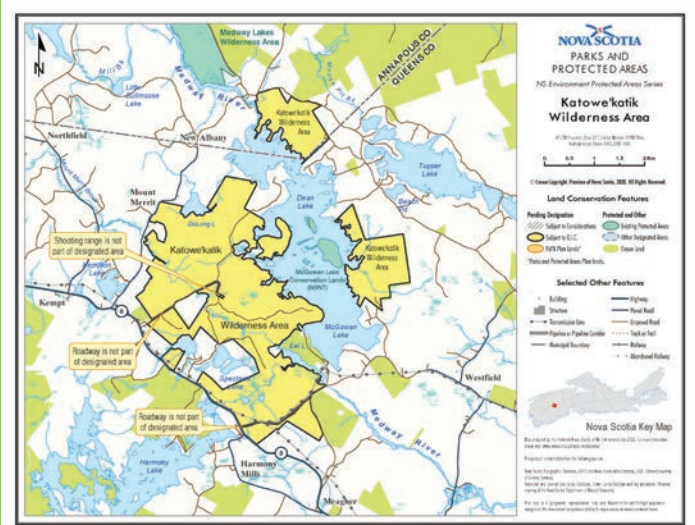
The Mount Merritt Shooting Range and Mount Merritt Road to the range will not be part of the wilderness area. However, some other roads which were left outside the earlier nature reserve concept will be within the boundary of the wilderness area. Eight hectares of plantation next to MTRI will not be part of the wilderness area.

Two powerline corridors within the wilderness area will be added to a licence held by Nova Scotia Power (NSPI) that governs operation and maintenance of powerlines in wilderness areas. NSPI will also be authorized to access the dam and spillway at the outflow of McGowan Lake by road from the shooting range.

As recommended by Mi'kmaw elders, the name of the wilderness area will be "Katowe'katik" instead of "McGowan Lake." Katowe'katik means Eel Lake, which is a lake next to McGowan Lake. This name honours the special significance of the McGowan Lake area to the Mi'kmaq, along with the cultural significance of eels to Mi'kmaw culture. American eel remains an important species for the subsistence fisheries of many Aboriginal communities throughout its range but is now also considered "endangered" or "threatened" in some jurisdictions outside Nova Scotia.

The main purpose of this consultation is to seek comment on:

- ▶ provincial lands added to the proposed boundary since release of the Parks and Protected Areas Plan in 2013
- ▶ the change in designation type from nature reserve to wilderness area, and
- ▶ a change of name from McGowan Lake Wilderness Area to Katowe'katik Wilderness Area



Addition to Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area

Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area protects more than 16,000 hectares (ha) of rugged woodlands, lakes and waterways of the Eastern Shore interior, in Halifax Regional Municipality.

An addition of approximately 516 ha (1,275 acres) to this wilderness area will add the following provincial (Crown) lands:

- 1.** 267 ha at Fishing Lake. About 190 ha of this was acquired by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and transferred to the Province for protection in 2014. The adjacent Fishing and Bell lakes will also be added to the wilderness area. A conservation easement applies to the former Nature Conservancy of Canada property, which is already recognized as a type of protected area. Lays Lake Road and the roads to Hartman Lake and Portapique Lake are not included in the planned addition.
- 2.** 36 ha at Admiral Lake, recently confirmed to be Crown land. This includes Admiral Rock and four islands, with over 2 km of lake frontage.
- 3.** 2 ha near Webber Lake, west of Lays Lake Road. This is part of a parcel acquired jointly by Nova Scotia Environment and the Department of Lands and Forestry to help consolidate provincial ownership near the western side of Lake Charlotte.
- 4.** 23 ha at Moose Cove Lake, which is an inholding acquired by the Province in 2018
- 5.** 41 ha of scenic and rugged slopes between the west side of Oyster Pond and the existing wilderness area, acquired by the Province in 2018.
- 6.** 24 ha inholding at the south end of Salmon River Lake which is being donated to the Province for protection. This parcel includes the lower section of Salmon River and a traditional portage used for angling, canoeing and other access to the wilderness area. A rough, deteriorating road which provides limited vehicle access to Salmon River Lake may be left out of the addition to accommodate this access, depending on public interest and further consideration of impacts to the wilderness area.

The addition also includes the following lands owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC):

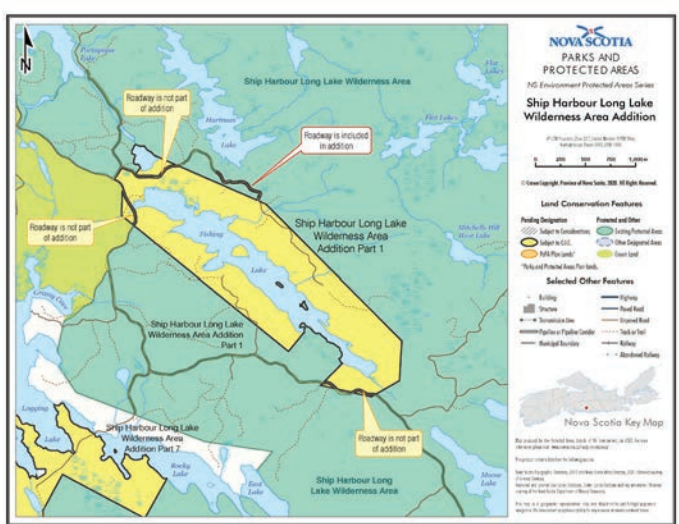
- 7.** 106 ha at Logging Lake
- 8.** 15 ha parcel at Fish River, surrounded by lands of Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area. Another 5 ha of Fish River which passes through the NCC property will also be added. NCC will continue to own its Logging Lake and Fish River lands. These are

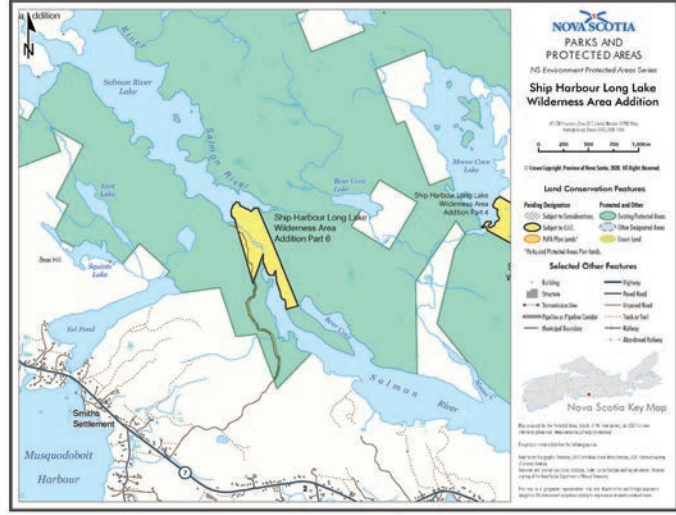
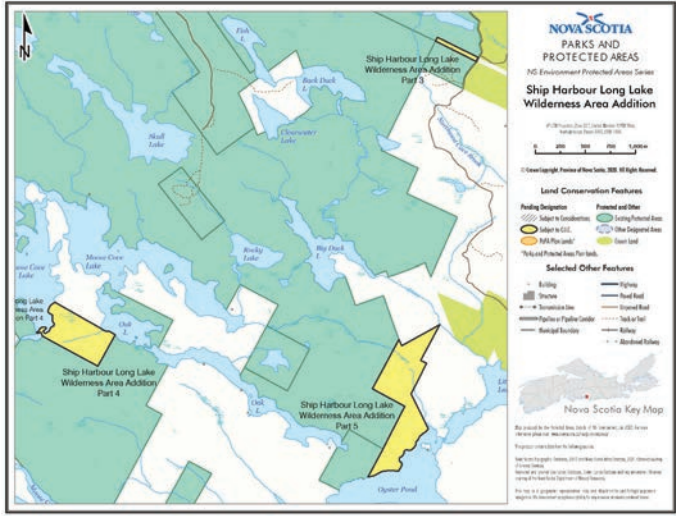
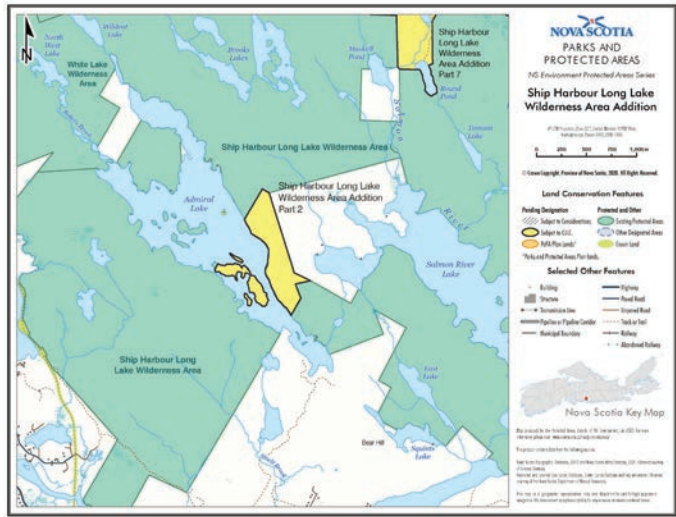
already recognized as a type of protected area. Designation as wilderness area adds protection and management options. Provisions of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* will now apply, except for any uses or restrictions the NCC may choose as landowner.

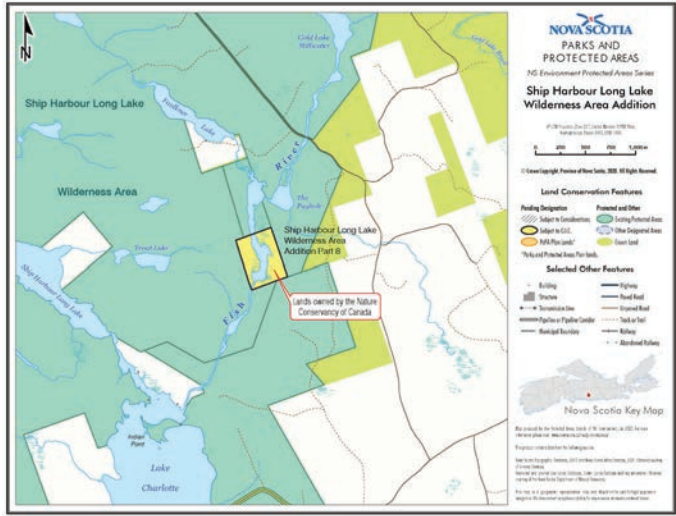
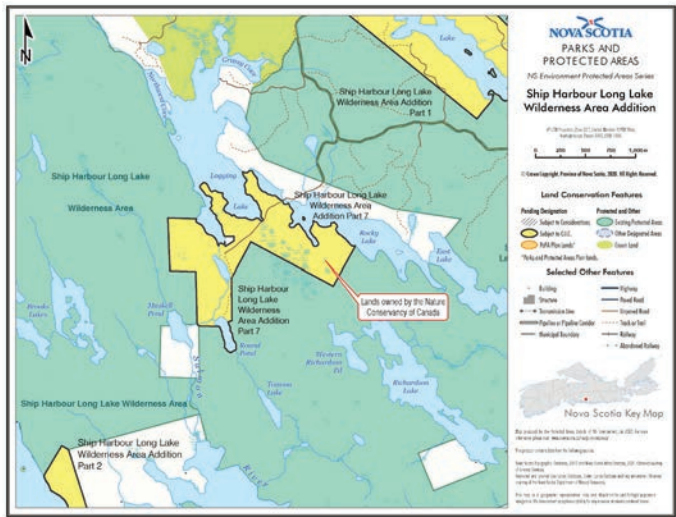
This addition will fill gaps and improve boundaries of Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area. This helps protect rare lichens, woodlands, beautiful scenery, quality angling and paddling opportunities, and more. The net increase in protected land is approximately 210 ha.



Addition to Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area







Addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area

Terence Bay Wilderness Area protects about 4,500 hectares of coastal barrens, woodlands and lakes. It is part of an 8,000 hectare assemblage of coastal parks and protected areas between Peggy's Cove and Sambro, in western Halifax Regional Municipality.

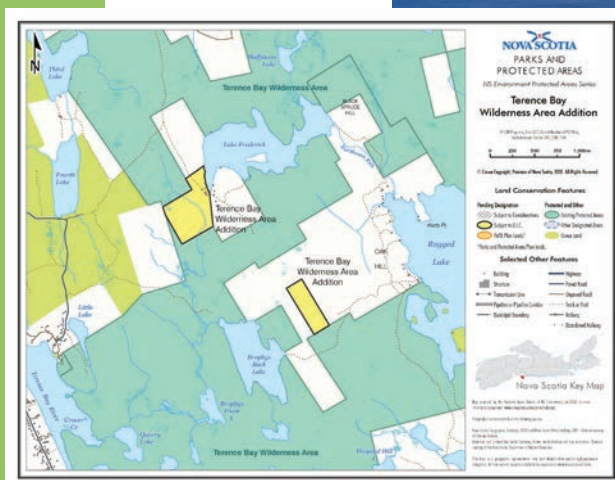
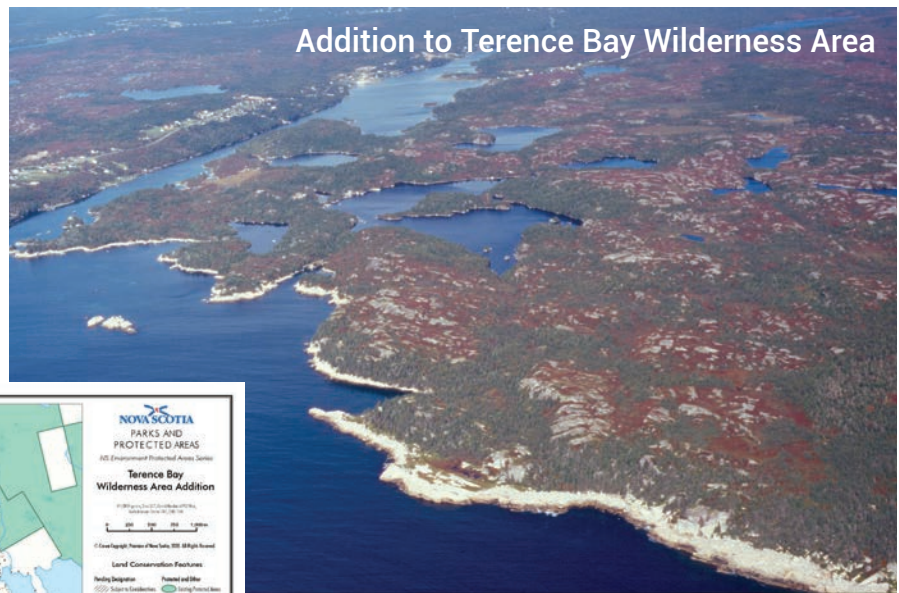
A 38 hectare (ha) addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area will add:

- ▶ A 27 ha parcel at Lake Frederick, acquired in 2009. This was previously consulted on and proposed as an addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan.
- ▶ An 11 ha parcel near Brophy's Back Lake which was acquired by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust and transferred to the Province for protection in 2015.

The parcel at Lake Frederick is wooded and includes 300 m of frontage on Lake Frederick. A rough road which passes through the parcel enables access to private parcels in the area. The lake is used for a variety of recreational purposes, including sport fishing.

The smaller parcel near Brophy's Back Lake is also wooded but has no lake frontage. This parcel is the primary focus of this consultation as this has not been part of previous consultations.

Addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area



Addition to Silver River Wilderness Area

Silver River Wilderness Area protects a 30 km corridor of river, woodlands, lakes and wetlands in the interior of Digby and Yarmouth counties, and is approximately 5,300 hectares (ha) in size.

An addition to this wilderness area will add close to 2,200 ha of the upper Silver River watershed, in Digby County, including another 8 km of river corridor.

The addition includes the following provincial (Crown) lands:

- 1.** About 1,010 ha of land acquired from the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) in 2014. The NCC is a private, not-for profit land trust. These provincial lands are subject to a conservation easement and are already considered as a protected area;
- 2.** The northern portion of the historic New France (Electric City) parcel (about 47 ha), avoiding archaeological sites and areas accessed by vehicle; and
- 3.** Langford Lake, Little Tusket Lake, part of Silver River, an island in Langford Lake and two islands in Long Tusket Lake (about 127 ha);

The addition also includes the following lands owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada:

- 4.** About 810 ha to the east of the provincial lands, in the headwaters of Caribou River; and
- 5.** About 220 ha north of the provincial lands at Little Tusket and Long Tusket Lake.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada will continue to own its lands, which are already recognized as a type of protected area. Designation as wilderness area adds protection and management options. Provisions of the Wilderness Areas Protection Act will now apply, except for any uses or restrictions the Nature Conservancy of Canada may choose as landowner.

The net increase in protected area with this addition is approximately 174 ha, much of which consists of lakes and river.

The ecological values of the addition include:

- ▶ Snapping turtles, which nest on beaches and live in the watercourses. These turtles are considered a species of concern both provincially and nationally, as populations are declining.
- ▶ Pockets of older forest, consisting of eastern hemlock, red spruce, white pine, and shade tolerant hardwood forest. These host uncommon and at-risk birds, including Canada warbler, chimney swift and nighthawk. Other forest is younger due to harvesting in recent decades.
- ▶ Though rarely encountered, this is also habitat for endangered mainland moose.

The area has a long tradition of sportfishing, canoeing, camping, hunting and other outdoor adventures.

An east-west off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail crosses the addition near the southern end of Little Tusket Lake and passes by a campsite on the southeast side of Little Tusket Lake. If there is interest, the Minister of Environment will consider designating this for OHV use, under terms of a trail management agreement with the All-terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia (ATVANS) or other organization.

Langford Road (west of Silver River) and Cranberry Lake Road (east of Silver River) are not part of the addition, nor is the drive-in campsite at the south end of Little Tusket Lake and access road. Vehicle access on these roads and to this campsite will not be affected.

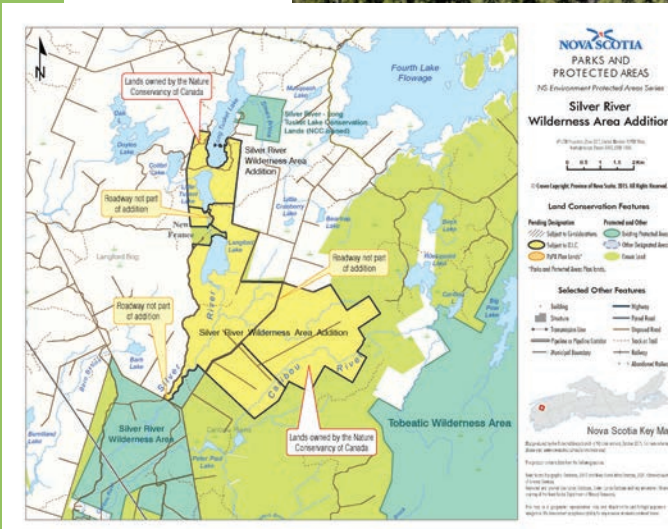
The Nature Conservancy of Canada intends to permit on-going public vehicle access to the campsite and boat launch at the southwest corner of Long Tusket Lake.

At historic New France (Electric City), the area with archaeological ruins, the picnic and beach area at the north end of Langford Lake ("Casino Beach") and the drive-in campsite at the south end of Little Tusket Lake are not part of the addition to Silver River Wilderness Area.

The entire New France (Electric City) parcel was proposed as a provincial park in the Parks and Protected Areas Plan in 2013. However, after further planning and consultation, the Department of Lands and Forestry now intends to manage a portion of this parcel as a special category of Crown land to provide flexibility in managing the historic features and recreational use of this area. There are no plans to change existing vehicle access, including to Casino Beach and the drive-in campsite at the south end of Little Tusket Lake. The Department of Lands and Forestry intends to work with the Electric City / La Nouvelle France Society and other interested community groups to maintain basic infrastructure at New France and support visitor experience. The remainder of the New France parcel is now part of the addition to Silver River Wilderness Area.

The main purpose of this consultation is to seek comment on the extent of provincial lands to be added to Silver River Wilderness Area. This has changed since release of the Parks and Protected Areas in 2013 and since additional public consultation in 2014. Most of the change is due to the transfer of over 1,000 ha from the Nature Conservancy of Canada to the Province in 2014.

Addition to Silver River Wilderness Area



Pleasant River Wilderness Area

Pleasant River Wilderness Area will protect up to about 2,900 hectares (ha) of woodland, river, stream, wetland and lakeshore habitat which is home to Blandings turtle, eastern ribbon snake and rare plants.

The wilderness area will consist of three separate parts within the Pleasant River watershed, near the community of Pleasant River, in both Lunenburg and Queens counties, with:

1. About 1,723 ha at Shingle Lake;
2. About 519 ha at Pleasant River Lake; and
3. About 663 ha along the lower Pleasant River, south of the community of Pleasant River.

Most of these provincial lands were previously consulted on and proposed for protection in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan as: (1) Shingle Lake Nature Reserve (first part), and (2) Pleasant River Nature Reserve (second and third parts). All three parts will now be designated as Pleasant River Wilderness Area.

The lower Pleasant River part includes two properties which have not previously been consulted on:

- ▶ About 19 ha at Bull Moose Brook acquired by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) and transferred to the Province in 2014; and
- ▶ About 29 ha of wetlands next to Pleasant River acquired by the Province in partnership with Ducks Unlimited.

Several adjustments are also being made to boundaries to reflect updated survey information on the extent of provincial lands in the area.

Most of the woodlands consist of a mix of mature softwood and mixedwood forest, with some hardwood. Soils are generally thin, with relatively low productivity. Aquatic habitats include slow moving river and streams (stillwaters), wetlands, shallow lakes and lakeshores. These are important to the species-at-risk found here.

Blandings turtle is considered nationally and provincially endangered and eastern ribbon snake is nationally and provincially threatened. Golden crest, found on the shores of Shingle Lake, is a rare coastal plain flora (plant) species which is also nationally and provincially threatened. At least three other rare coastal plain or arctic-alpine plant species occur here.

Protection of these lands helps improve representation of the LaHave Drumlins Natural Landscape in Nova Scotia's protected areas system. It also

complements efforts of the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, which has protected a number of private properties in the Pleasant River watershed.

The area is used for fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing, camping and other activities.

The road to the beach at the north side of Pleasant River Lake will continue to be open to vehicle access, as will Medlee Lane, which provides access to the northeast end of Shingle Lake. Another road corridor to a private parcel on Pleasant River Lake will be left outside the wilderness area.

Designation as a wilderness area instead of as nature reserve will allow hunting and angling and provides the Minister of Environment authority to allow vehicle access to adjacent properties.

Three existing campsite leases will be honoured under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*.

Existing mineral rights overlap with 208 ha of the Shingle Lake part and 26 ha of the lower Pleasant River part. Legal designation of these lands will only come into effect if the mineral rights expire and are not renewed.

Consideration will be given to designating this wilderness area as Pu'tlaqnn Wilderness Area, after a local Mi'kmaw elder's vision of a lake named "Shaving Lake" or "Shingle Lake". More information on this vision is available from Nova Scotia Environment.

The main purpose of this consultation is to seek comment on:

- ▶ the roughly 56 ha of provincial lands added to the proposed boundary since release of the Parks and Protected Areas Plan in 2013 (all within the lower Pleasant River part)
- ▶ the change in designation type from nature reserve to wilderness area, and
- ▶ a possible change of name to Pu'tlaqnn Wilderness Area.



"Nukumif's journey" by Melissa Labrador

The Story of Pu'tlaqnn — A Mi'kmaw Elders Vision

Charles W. "Charlie" Labrador, well known Mi'kmaw Elder and First Chief of the Acadia First Nation was well known for his connection to Mother Earth and he shared traditional knowledge with everyone he knew. His upbringing was closely connected to the land, as he lived off of the land.

He often spoke of his visions later in life. One of those visions was from back in the 1990s where he was working in the woods not far from his home in Molega, near the Wildcat Community where he grew up.

Because of his spiritual connection to the land and the spirit of the ancestors, he often spoke of having "visitors" around him in many of the things he did. On one particular day, he was working in the woods and had just taken his lunch break when he shared that the ancestors or "old people" as he called them visited. As he sat on a log eating a sandwich, he shared that there were about four people who watched him while he ate. They did not say anything and smiled, nodding their head in approval, he recalled. Approval perhaps of the road he was on, of his journey here on the Earth.

Another vision he had came when he was driving in his old truck and heading into the forest to work. On the ground he could see a huge shadow and knew it was an eagle flying above him. As he looked up at it, he could clearly see the eagle's eye and was immediately given the sight of the eagle and connected to the eagle above him, as it flew over the land. He also saw an island in his vision while he was looking below through the eagle's sight. This was interpreted as connecting to a burial site.

Often burial sites are found on islands and there is oral knowledge indicating there are burial sites in what is known today as the Shingle Lake area.

In this powerful vision he said he could see a river with a large arrow that pointed to a lake. This lake had a name and it was "Shaving Lake". When he arrived home later, he drew this vision on paper. He then inquired with his son, Todd Labrador who is well known for his birch bark canoe building, if he knew of any lakes named "Shaving Lake". He could not think of any, but did know of "Shingle Lake" which is not far from Molega/Wildcat Community as the "crow flies".

"When one tries to translate the word shaving in the Mi'kmaw language you get the word that refers to wood chips...shingle....shavings, etc. Which basically means the same. So that is what we thought ..this was a lake and area of some kind of importance for our ancestors in Kespukwitk district." Todd Labrador, noted on his Father's vision.

Since Charles' passing in 2002, his son Todd and his family have shared his visions and often talk about them. The "Shaving Lake" vision is especially important, as it is felt that this vision and this lake would be as important to our Mi'kmaq people today as it was to our Ancestors and if this means the protection of this "Lake", that importance also extends to the future generations.

Charlie Labrador passed in 2002, but his knowledge and connection to the land is still shared and felt. Naming the combined Pleasant River/Shingle Lake wilderness area after his vision would not only honour his spirit and time here on the Earth, but also honour the Ancestors in Kespukwitk. The Mi'kmaw word his family would like to see included as part of this new wilderness areas name is "Pu'tlaqnn" (pronounced BOO-dah-law-en).

Story retold by Melissa and Todd Labrador, granddaughter and son of Charlie Labrador

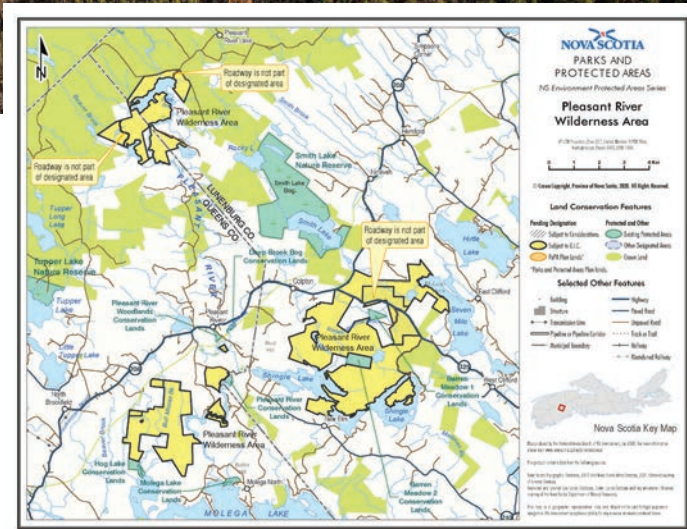
January, 2020



The Labrador family paddling a traditionally crafted birch bark canoe Photo by Corbin Hart



Pleasant River Wilderness Area



Appendix B – Copy of newspaper advertisements

South Shore Breaker



Protected Areas Consultation

We are asking Nova Scotians for comments on the following proposed wilderness areas and additions:

- Addition to Silver River Wilderness Area
- Katowe'katik (McGowan Lake) Wilderness Area
- Pleasant River Wilderness Area
- Descriptions and maps are available at novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas

Please submit comments by March 9 to:

protectedareas@novascotia.ca

Protected Areas and Ecosystems
PO Box 442
Halifax, NS B3J 2P8

902-476-4012



Protected Areas Consultation

We are asking Nova Scotians for comments on a proposed addition to Silver River Wilderness Area.

Descriptions and maps are available at
novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas

Please submit comments by March 9 to:

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- Addition to Silver River Wilderness Area
- Katowe'katik (McGowan Lake) Wilderness Area
- Addition to Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area
- Addition to Terence Bay Wilderness Area
- Pleasant River Wilderness Area
- Archibald Lake Wilderness Area
- Descriptions and maps are available at novascotia.ca/parksandprotectedareas

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