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DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT

PLANNING THE EASTERN SHORE SEASIDE PARK SYSTEM

by Dale Smith
Manager, Parks Planning

Background

Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore extends from the Halifax-Dartmouth Metro area over 200 kilometres eastward to Canso. It is a deeply-indented coastline, with rugged, exposed headlands protruding into the Atlantic covered with a coastal forest of black spruce, fir and birch. Picturesque fishing villages and good beaches are common. The inland landscape, part of the southern upland plain which stretches from Yarmouth to Canso, is marked by numerous glacial boulders and granite outcroppings. The inland vegetation is dominated by red spruce, hemlock, and pine. It has numerous lakes and rivers, long popular with freshwater fishermen.

In August, 1972 the Province of Nova Scotia and the Federal Government signed a memorandum of intent regarding the establishment of a national park on the Eastern Shore. The memorandum produced wide-spread public opposition. In response, the provincial government re-examined the whole question of a national park, as well as its overall land use policy for the area. As an alternative, in December 1973 it announced its intention to establish the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System. This project was to be planned, developed, and managed by the Department of Lands and Forests.

The provincial alternative differed substantially from the national park concept. No permanent residents were to be displaced from their homes, and disruptive effects on cottage owners and non-permanent residents were to be minimized. Furthermore, existing businesses were not to be negatively affected.

In response to the high level of public interest and concern, the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System Citizens' Advisory Committee was established in February, 1975 (see page 14). Following intensive review and discussion with Lands and Forests staff, the Citizens' Representative Committee gave acceptance-in-principle to the concept. Since then the Department has worked closely with the Committee. The association has proven positive and productive. This process of public consultation is now widely viewed as a proven model that is adaptable to a variety of recreational land use planning problems and issues.

The Park System

The Eastern Shore Seaside Park System has been planned to capture the essence of the Eastern Shore landscape, and to do so by providing a wide range of high quality, outdoor recreation opportunities featuring ocean beaches, scenic headlands, islands, and inland water resources. The park concept is based on four primary objectives:

- (1) To provide the widest possible range of recreational opportunities emphasizing the unique coastal environment and excellent inland water resources.
- (2) To consider the expectations and concerns of area residents in the planning and development of the park system.
- (3) To blend the park system into the rural character of the Eastern Shore, minimizing disturbances to existing communities.
- (4) To establish a balance between resource use, and the need to protect fragile aspects of the natural landscape.

The park system extends eastward from Lake Charlotte (located approximately 55 kilometres east of Dartmouth) to Taylor Head (near Sheet

Harbour), a distance of 30 kilometres. In a north-south direction it extends approximately 20 kilometres inland from the Atlantic Coast. The proposed system consists of a variety of park sites and backcountry recreational opportunities linked by roads, trails, and water routes to form an integrated system (See page 8). Camping opportunities are planned for each end of the System at Lake Charlotte and Taylor Head. These campgrounds will provide the overnight campsite from which campers can choose a trip to the scenic coastlands, or the inland water resources of Lake Charlotte and Tangier Grand Lake, or the thousands of hectares of backcountry waterways and woodlands in a proposed multi-use resource management area.

Clam Harbour is the main ocean beach component. Together with the Lake Charlotte Campground proposal, they will form the western anchor of the System. Clam Harbour will be developed as a 200 hectare outdoor recreation park with emphasis on beach use and associated beach facilities and services. A highlight of this park is the construction of a major beach centre presently underway, containing washrooms and showers, change rooms, a food outlet and an indoor interpretive centre.

In contrast, the eastern anchor of the Park System is Taylor Head, an 812 hectare site to be developed as a natural environment park. In this type of park the outstanding qualities of the natural environment are highlighted and, while opportunities for swimming, picnicking, hiking and camping will be provided, only a minimum level of facilities and services, will be developed.

Planning and Development Priorities

With development underway at Taylor Head and Clam Harbour, planning priorities now have been shifted to other elements within the Eastern Shore

Seaside Park System. Accordingly, a revised work program was prepared in June, 1979 and identified the following major tasks with completion schedules as noted.

1. Planning the interpretive and outdoor educational opportunities within the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System, emphasizing the design of facilities and displays for Clam Harbour and Taylor Head. (Autumn, 1980).
2. Compilation of an historical inventory of the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System. (Draft Report Complete).
3. Preparation of initial concept plans for the provincial park proposed at Lake Charlotte. (Winter, 1981).
4. Inventory and assessment of backcountry canoeing and boating opportunities, both within and connecting with the proposed Multiple Use Resource Management Area. (Draft Report Complete).
5. Preparation of detailed site development plans for the proposed campground with Taylor Head Provincial Park. (Winter, 1981)
6. Publication of a park development plan for Clam Harbour Provincial Park, to serve as a public information document. (Pending Formal Release)

Summary

The Eastern Shore Seaside Park System is rapidly gaining recognition as an innovative and highly effective approach to planning parks and outdoor recreation opportunities within the Province. The particular challenge on the Eastern Shore has been the incorporation within the park system of outstanding recreational and scenic environments, while achieving the best possible fit with surrounding community activities and land uses. In this regard, the active participation of area residents in an advisory capacity has been perhaps the single most significant basis for progress achieved to date.

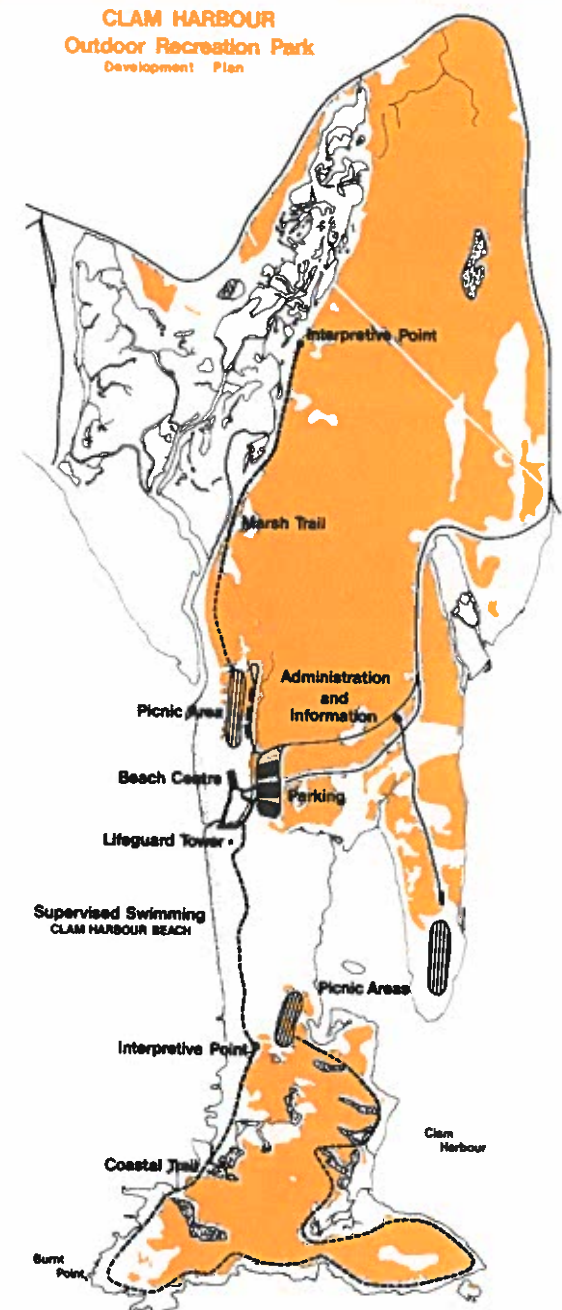
CLAM HARBOUR BEACH

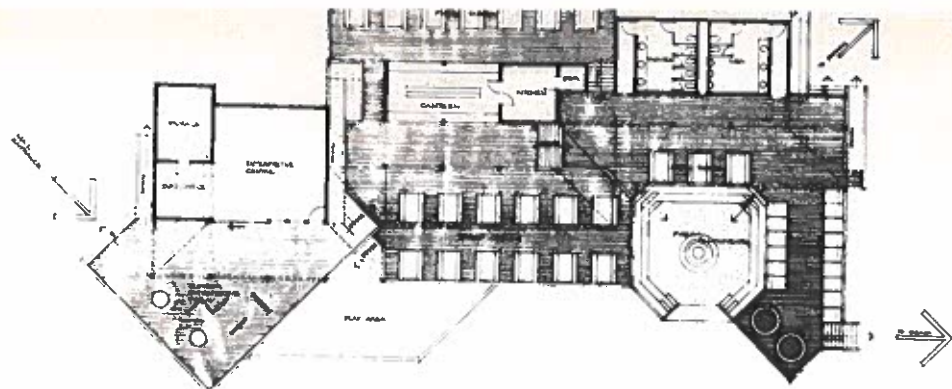
by Paul Euloth
Planning Technician

Clam Harbour Beach traditionally has been a popular destination for residents of Halifax County. Located approximately 85 kilometres east of Dartmouth on the Eastern Shore, the Beach is visited by hundreds of swimmers, sunbathers, picnickers and beachcombers on warm summer weekend days. Its attractiveness is well documented in a recent country-wide survey of recreation potential, which rates Clam Harbour Beach among the best in the Province. This rating is based on the 1.5 kilometres of high quality sand that forms the Beach, its warm shallow waters and the presence of sufficient back-up land nearby that can accommodate the facilities and services required by large numbers of beach users.

Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park is centered on a peninsula in Clam Bay, which is formed by a wide barrier beach of fine white sand extending more than 1500 metres, connecting Burnt Island to the mainland. The landward end of the peninsula consists of gently rolling oblong hills called drumlins, which were deposited by glaciers thousands of years ago, whereas on Burnt Island the underlying quartzite bedrock is covered by only a thin veneer of glacial till. Behind the beach, a large cranberry marsh extends to a tidal estuary in Clam Harbour. In combination, the beach, island, drumlin and estuary provide an environment with excellent opportunities for nature study and environmental interpretation.

Currently, the Department of Lands and Forests is in the third year of a planned five year program aimed at developing Clam Harbour Beach as a 200 hectare outdoor recreation park. The major focus of the program is to provide modern recreational facilities and services to compliment the public





Beach Centre

use of the beach. As such, Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park will form the western anchor of the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System (See page 8). Clam Harbour contrasts with Taylor Head, at the eastern end of the park system, which is being developed as a natural environment park aimed at providing high quality outdoor experiences to comparatively small numbers of visitors with only essential facilities and services.

Since the most significant feature of the Clam Harbour Park is the beach, the major concern for park planning has been to improve the utilization and enjoyment of the beach by the public. A beach centre has been located on the drumlin overlooking the beach and will serve as the focal point for visitor activities. The centre consists of a cluster of small buildings on three levels connected by wood decking. An interpretive building occupies the highest level (see illustration) and will be the first contact point with the public. Here the visitor will be provided with the framework of the park story which will be elaborated in other areas of the park by interpretive trails and exhibits. A few steps down toward the beach is a snack bar and picnic deck overlooking a children's play area. At the lowest level nearest the beach are toilet facilities, change cubicles and outdoor showers.

A series of elevated boardwalks link the main parking lot, beach centre and the beach. These are designed to provide access for handicapped users as well as the general public.

Three picnic areas are planned for the park. Construction of the major

area, located on the bluff west of the beach centre, will commence this summer. This area features excellent views of the beach, Burnt Island and surrounding headlands. The park visitor can drive directly to the picnic area.

A second picnic area is planned for grassy point, a small peninsula jutting into Clam Harbour, and a walk-in picnic site on Burnt Island will be developed in the future.

Environmental education will play a major role at this outdoor recreation park. The beach, estuary and saltmarsh provide an excellent opportunity to show visitors the importance of these coastal features. Three major educational facilities are incorporated in the plan: (1) The interpretive structure inside the beach centre will be the first contact point with the public; (2) An exhibit proposed for Burnt Island will identify unique plant and animal associations of the park (the actual form of this exhibit has not been decided on). (3) A series of nature trails to provide on-site information of Burnt Island and the salt marsh. Design of the overall interpretive program is now underway and will be completed during the present fiscal year.

Development over the past two years has focused on building the beach centre and associated services for pedestrian and vehicular access. During the remaining three years of the planned five-year implementation program efforts will concentrate on developing the trails, picnic areas and general site rehabilitation and beautification following construction.

CLAM HARBOUR: THEN AND NOW

by Kathy Kuusisto,
Historian

The Eastern Shore is a region of Nova Scotia long neglected by historians. Although the beauty of its physical features has been noted in numerous guide books, tourist pamphlets and maps during the past one hundred years, the history of its communities has, by and large, not been recorded. However, the establishment of the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System has stimulated the study of local history—a study essential for the development of a park interpretive programmes.

At Clam Harbour Provincial Park, for example, the interpretive programme will re-construct the story of the past by showing the sequence of community activities and land uses that preceded the development of the park.

Owing to the scarcity of detailed historical records, it has been necessary to piece together the story of Clam Harbour entirely from local sources. Contrasting sharply with the methods of

traditional library and archival research, researching local people and the landscapes within which they live is often equally productive. However, this history must be searched out judiciously and interpreted with care.

Within the park are abandoned cellars, domestic plants gone wild, old fence lines, wagon trails, and local place names, all revealing, to the historian's trained eye, the form and pattern of previous land uses. But more important are the recollections, stories and reminiscences of long-time residents. These provide invaluable insights into past activities and lifestyles.

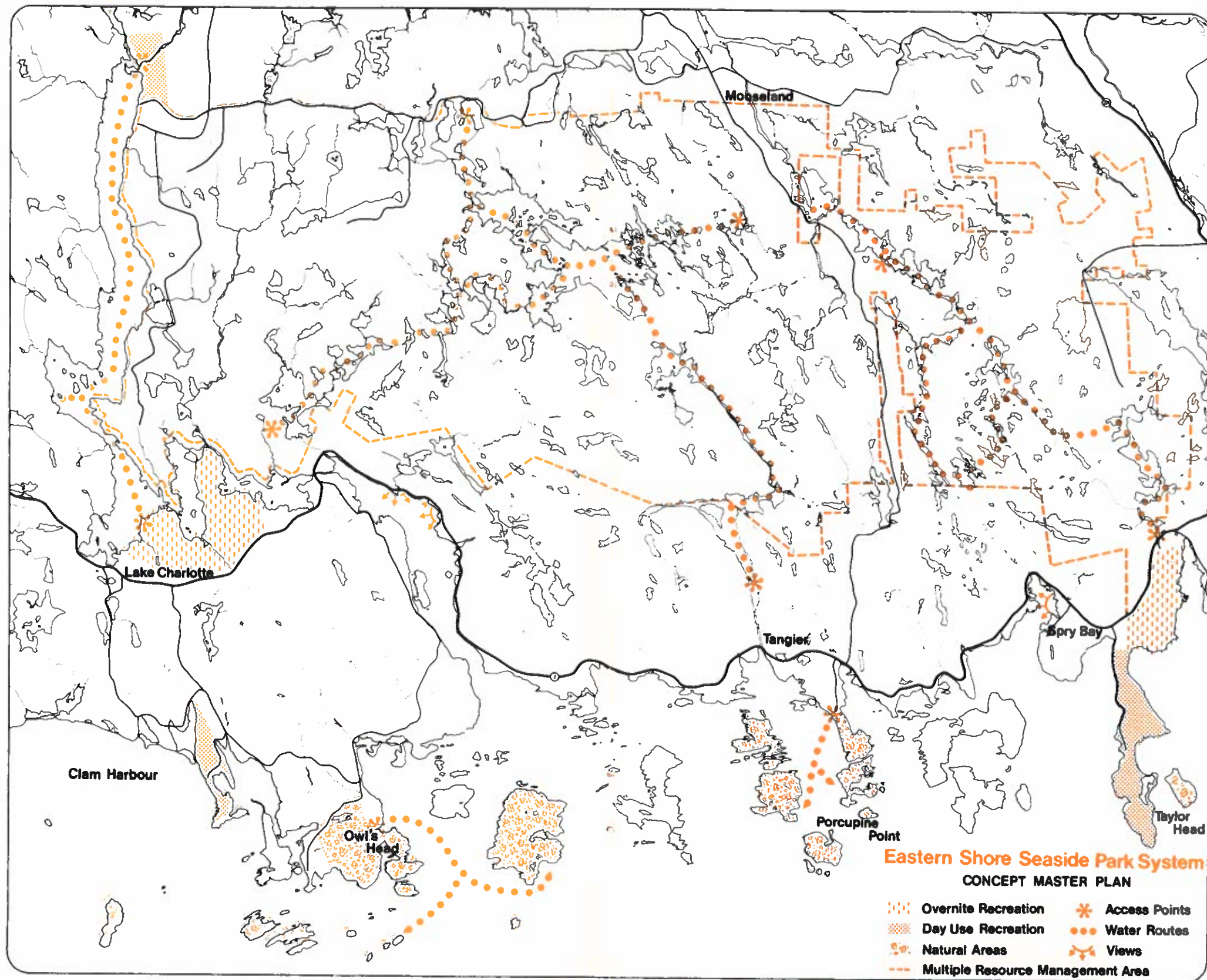
The picture of Clam Harbour that emerges is one of a community owing its existence to the riches of the sea. Since the mid-nineteenth century, a thriving fishery, particularly the lobster fishery, has been the traditional mainstay of life. Conversely, due to limitations of climate and soil agriculture was practised at a subsistence level only.

Around the turn of the century a visitor to Clam Harbour would travel by stage to Lake Charlotte, or coastal steamer to Owl's Head, and from there by horse and wagon or on foot. Since the journey would consume the better part of a day, the traveler would likely stay overnight at the Stoddard House, which today stands near the entrance to



The salt marsh behind Clam Harbour beach is a nursery area for the fishes of the sea around Nova Scotia.

Tony Duke

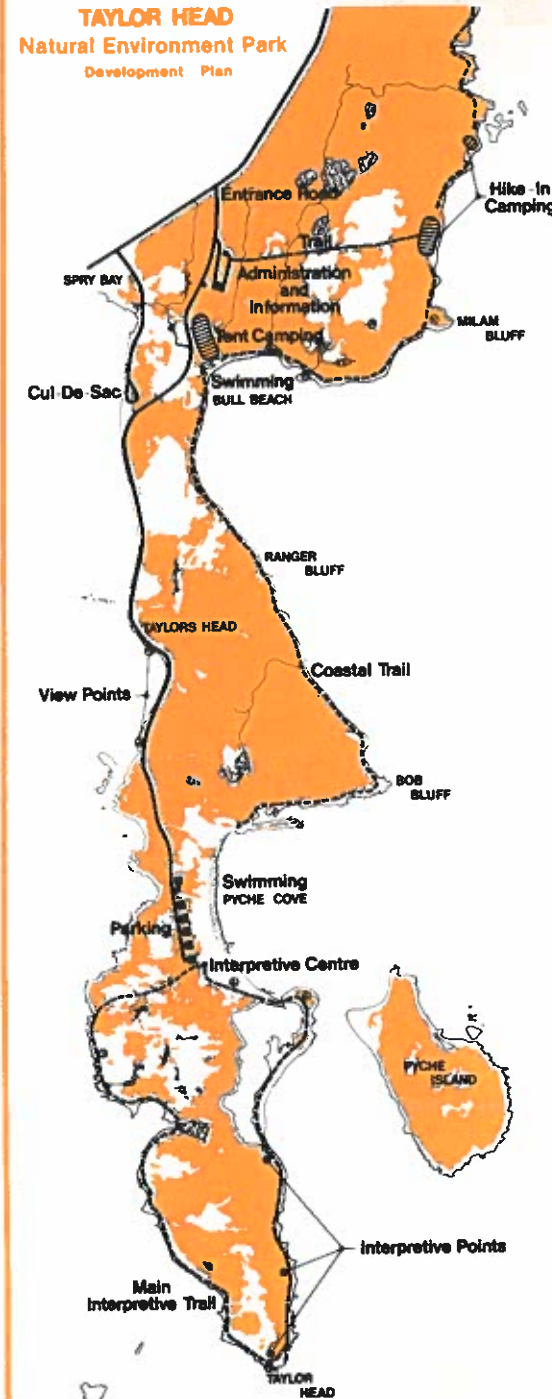


Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park. In those days its guests would have originated from across Canada and the United States. Our fictional traveller might well have encountered a prospector attracted by the gold discoveries at Tangier and Mooseland in the 1860's, a lobster buyer from Boston, a salesman from the large hardware and ship chandlery outfitters in Halifax, the county school inspector, or perhaps a wealthy family on holiday.

As the journey to Clam Harbour would be different from today, so would the village itself. The forest-clad hills that stretch westward from the beach were once fields and pastures. Overlooking Clam Harbour Beach there were once three farms, one of which was built in the early 1800's. Now all that remain to identify them are the gaping stone cellars, the rows of field stones marking the edges of fields, and scattered domestic plants.

Along the shore toward Mink Island Cove, the traveller would encounter fishing camps of the Stoddard and MacIntosh men. Formerly all the fishermen based their activities on the offshore islands. With the introduction of gasoline engines at the turn of the century, the camps were moved closer to home. Talking to these men, the traveller would learn of the best fishing grounds, the names of the islands, and other significant bits of local history. With luck he might be able to buy a salmon or a lobster for less than twenty cents for a picnic on the beach.

Life at Clam Harbour has changed dramatically since the turn of the century, yet the sea continues to be the key to life in this Eastern Shore community. Previously, it provided the link to the outside, as well as the source of economic life through the fisheries and coasting trade. Now, although some people continue to fish, the connection with the sea has changed. It now underlies new activities and economies—outdoor recreation and tourism. The establishment of the Clam Harbour Beach Park marks the beginning of a new era in the relationship between Clam Harbour and the sea.



TAYLOR HEAD PROVINCIAL PARK

by Paul Euloth
Planning Technician

Taylor Head is a peninsula approximately 6.5 km long, jutting into the Atlantic Ocean from the Eastern Shore. Typical of many rocky headlands along this shoreline, its interior is generally poorly drained with peat bogs forming in the wet depressions. It is forested chiefly with black spruce, tamarack and red maple. The trees are gnarled and stunted where exposed to wind and salt spray (this is an excellent example of "krumholtz" vegetation). The 16 km of rugged shoreline included within the park vividly convey the message of what happens when the sea meets the land.

Taylor Head is currently under development as a natural environment park. In this type of park, the overriding objective is to provide the park users the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding natural and scenic landscapes of the area. Therefore, while traditional day use and camping opportunities are provided within natural environment parks, equal emphasis is placed on activities that promote an appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural and cultural resources. In the case of Taylor Head, it is the ruggedly attractive Eastern Shore landscape and its characteristic shoreline features, that are of interest.

In managing natural environment parks, the challenge is to ensure that recreational use and development are in harmony with the environment on which they are based. At Taylor Head, the concept of zoning has been adopted to balance recreational use and environmental management. According to this approach, development of recreational facilities will be concentrated within specifically defined areas, while the remainder of the park will be

left in its natural state and devoted to hiking, viewing, and nature study.

In keeping with the zoning concept, recreational development has been planned for two sites adjacent to Pyche Cove will be developed as a day-use beach area to provide opportunities for swimming, sunbathing, viewing and interpretation. Reflecting the park's natural environment orientation only essential facilities and services will be provided, and alteration of the environment in constructing and maintaining these facilities will be limited to that which is absolutely necessary. For example, the parking lot at Pyche Cove has been sited approximately 100 metres from the beach and within the treeline, so that it is screened from the view of beach users. Access to the beach is by cable boardwalk, which follows the contour of the beach.

At Bull Beach, a campground is planned and a site analysis is currently underway to determine the type of camping most suited to the area. Tent-camping adjacent to Bull Beach, with several small "hike-in" primitive coastal camping areas is one alternative being considered.

The remainder of the park will be devoted to hiking, viewing, interpretation and nature study. Here the qualities of the natural environment will be emphasized and facilities will be limited essentially to trails. Supporting interpretive facilities, visitor parking, orientation and information, as well as necessary services, will be provided within development zones at Pyche Cove and Bull Beach.

To date, development of day facilities at Pyche Cove has been completed. Planning and development activity over the next few years will be concentrated on the park interpretive program, the establishment of a park entrance control facility on the main entrance road, and the Bull Beach campground.

GEOLOGY OF TAYLOR HEAD

by Robert G. Grantham
Curator of Geology
Nova Scotia Museum

The Eastern Shore is a bedrock-determined region. Soils are poor and thin and geological formations are readily visible. The configuration of the land, its drainage patterns, vegetation, and recreational resources have been greatly influenced by an interesting geological past. Indeed the Atlantic Geoscience Society, in their *Geological Highway Map of Nova Scotia* identified Taylor Head as an area of major geologic value.

The rocks of Taylor Head, located in the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System tell a fascinating story of drifting and colliding continents, deep sea sedimentation, and uplifting of great mountains, followed by massive erosion

and glaciation.

Approximately 1000 to 900 million years ago all the world's continents were one large land mass. For some reason, as yet unexplained, this continent began to break apart. Along these breaks, or rifts, massive earthquake and volcanic activity occurred. When the rifts widened and opened far enough, new oceans were created.

In one of these new oceans, 500 million years ago, sand, silt, mud, and clay were deposited to make up the present rocks of Taylor Head. Sediments washing off an old, possibly African, Precambrian Shield accumulated on the floor of the new ocean. A several kilometre thick accumulation of sand, with occasional muddy layers, was topped with a few kilometres of muds and thin sandy beds. While these sediments accumulated, they recorded their environment. Special sedimentary features were preserved. In many places unique structures known as "sand volcanoes" were formed. These are only found in the Taylor Head area. These structures have the same shape as a volcano but



Paul Euloth inspects a very large sand volcano hardened into the rock of Taylor Head.
Tony Duke

are about the circumference of a saucer and are sedimentary features, not volcanic. They are the result of early expulsion of water from the sediments under increasing pressure from overlying muds and sands. Other special features called "flute marks" indicate that fast-flowing bottom currents known as "turbidity flows" moved large volumes of sediment rapidly across the sea floor.

After the sediments accumulated, the separation of the continents ceased. Then about 400 million years ago they began to move toward each other. The reasons for this change of motion are as much a mystery as the original continental breakup. We do know that when the continents collided, and that massive beds of mud, silt and sand were squeezed between the moving continental blocks and folded into large up and down warped areas known as anticlines and synclines. These folded beds were raised from the sea and formed a mountain system that would have rivalled today's Alps. In a short time, geologically-speaking, these mountains were eroded

down to an almost flat surface.

One of the last major events to leave its mark on the rocks of Taylor Head was the Ice Age. Approximately 1 million to 10,000 years ago massive ice sheets up to 1 kilometre thick covered much of the northern hemisphere, including most of Canada and parts of the northern United States. As the glaciers moved, or when they melted away, their influence was recorded. Huge boulders left scattered on the surface and deep gouges and scratches in the bedrock, known as striations, can be found on Taylor Head.

This peninsula jutting into the Atlantic and surrounded by many picturesque islands is an open book to the earth's past, awaiting any visitor who cares to wander through its pages. The recent establishment of a provincial park at Taylor Head by the Department of Lands and Forests provides an excellent opportunity to develop outdoor educational facilities to assist the interested park visitor in gaining an understanding and appreciation of these fascinating prehistoric events.

