

THE PARK

Owls Head Provincial Park dates back to the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System in the 1970s. It has been a component of every major land protection plan since, including Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan and the Halifax Green Network Plan.

The park has **Tier 1 (top priority) conservation rating** from the Colin Stewart Forest Forum Final Report. Even the valuation commissioned by the prospective developer determined that the “highest and best use” of the property was “recreation and conservation.”

Owls Head Provincial Park is home to a globally rare coastal broom crowberry (plant) ecosystem. It is an endangered species habitat for barn swallows.

Ninety-two species of birds have been officially recorded there, and the provincial government identified Owls Head Provincial Park as a nesting habitat for the piping plover.

Add the recent sighting of the endangered leatherback sea turtle and ecosystems of coastal barrens, salt marshes (“wetlands of special significance”), bogs and treed wetlands, estuary, beach, and forest (including hardwood stands), this is an ecological treasure.

“Such intact ecosystems as Owls Head are our ecological life-support systems. We need them in order to survive as a species, as do the other species with which we share this land, many of which are endangered.”

- DR. KAREN BEAZLEY

Biologists who have done extensive research at the site warn that development would mean **“complete destruction of those important ecological features.”**

THE PROCESS

“The evidence on this Motion clearly establishes that Owl’s Head was portrayed to the public as a Provincial Park. Government documentation and maps, going back as far as 1978, refer to the area as “Owl’s Head Provincial Park.” Further, it was managed by Lands and Forestry to maintain its reserve status. The public had every reason to assume Owl’s Head was a Provincial Park and, therefore, attracted protections not available on Crown lands.”

- NS SUPREME COURT, JUSTICE COADY

but ...

The government **secretly removed** Owls Head Provincial Park from Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan at the behest of an American billionaire who wants to decimate it and make 2-3 golf courses and a gated community.

The park sold for the paltry sum of, get this, **\$306/acre. That’s right, approx. \$216,000.**

The government delisted Owls Head Provincial Park **without any public notice or consultation**, even though the government had conducted years of consultations about protecting the site.

The government specifically determined that there would be **NO consultation with the public or the Mi’kmaq until AFTER** it had been delisted. (When you respect peoples’ opinions, you consult with them FIRST).

The public only knows about the secret delisting & offer to sell Owls Head Provincial Park because a whistleblower contacted CBC reporter Michael Gorman. Otherwise, the public still might not know.

THE PRECEDENT

Despite immediate and widespread opposition, Minister of Lands and Forestry **Iain Rankin said there would be “no veto” from the public.**

The government **did not do any scientific or environmental review before delisting & offering** to sell the property.

Premier Iain Rankin has been asked on multiple occasions **how can the public trust that other parks awaiting designation won’t be secretly delisted and**

offered for sale. He has responded that he is **“comfortable with the process.”**

Premier Rankin has claimed that **“the community”** brought this proposal forward, when in fact **the local community—along with the general public — was not notified or consulted at all.**

To add insult to injury, the public consultation will be led by the developer, **not by the government.**

*“He [Premier Rankin] has argued that he sees a way for golf courses and environmental protection to work hand in hand. That’s a bit tricky in this case. For anybody who is familiar with this land and has been out to see it, **it’s hard to imagine a golf development without the land being basically carpet-bombed** to make it appropriate for that type of a development.”*

- CBC’S MICHAEL GORMAN



saveowlshead.org