



A Chance Like No Other





Legally protecting Owls Head Provincial Park is an opportunity to address climate change, biodiversity and habitat loss, and lost trust in government.



We are...

Concerned Nova Scotians, including scientists, Mi'kmaw Land and Water Protectors, and residents of the Eastern Shore.

SAVE OWLS HEAD
Provincial Park

10,000+
SIGNATURES
Formal Petition

TEN
THOUSAND
10,000
Members

40,000
SIGNATURES
Online Petition

Our group is made up of concerned Nova Scotians, including scientists, Mi'kmaw Land and Water Protectors, and residents of the Eastern Shore.

From scientists to sea-kayakers, the group represents over 10,000 concerned citizens who recognize the inherent value of Owls Head Provincial Park.

Local resident Sydnee Lynn McKay started the Facebook group the day after Michael Gorman broke the story. Now, there are over 10,000 members, over 10,000 signatures on the petition to the Nova Scotia Legislature, and over 40,000 signatures on our online petition.



There is a groundswell of support for this movement. Our members are not just environmentalists, but people from all walks of life and all disciplines.



We are calling on you to:

- Legally protect the park as soon as possible
- Recommit to the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System
- Ensure this can never happen again



It's critical that the government legally protect Owls Head Provincial Park without delay.



A Park is a Promise



Owls Head has been a candidate for legal protection for over 45 years... It is a park four-and-a-half decades in the making.



- The long history of Owls Head Provincial Park includes the 1975 Eastern Shore Seaside Park System Concept, which was unanimously approved by local community representatives.
- The 1980 Eastern Shore Seaside Park System Master Plan included the Owls Head park lands as part of the "Islands and Headlands" area, as a proposed natural environment park.
- That decision that led to Owls Head Provincial Park being included in the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System was revisited and reinforced repeatedly between 1975 and 2018.
- The 2009 **Colin Stewart Forest Forum Final Report** identified Owls Head Provincial Park as a Tier-1 (top-priority) conservation site. The Introductory Letter for the Colin Stewart Forestry Forum states:

“Tier 1 areas are those of highest priority and conservation value [...] Most Tier 1 areas are truly irreplaceable, meaning that they represent the last opportunities to fill particularly critical gaps in the protected areas network, or to

capture highly significant ecological features.” (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Final Report)

“Presented to government in November of 2009, this report is based on nearly 5 years of scientific analysis and cooperative planning by members of the Colin Stewart Forest Forum. It is an exceptional example of different interest groups working together – in this case major forestry companies and environmental organizations.”



The 12% review initiative was in response to the PC's Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (2007), which set a goal to protect 12% of the land in Nova Scotia by 2015.

In 2012, Owls Head Provincial Park Reserve was included in the Provincial Parks and Park Reserves map series.

The accompanying information stated:

"Protection Values:

A variety of coastal barrens and wetlands; exceptional bedrock-ridged topography; a significant sand beach which is partially on Crown but mostly on private; piping plover have nested here; property was assigned to parks program as part of the Province's commitment to develop the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System; identified by the Nova Scotia Department of Environment as lands (Patch # 304) that could contribute to the Province's goal of protecting 12% of the landbase by 2015."



- Building on previous plans, the 2013 Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan represented "what are considered to be the best lands for protection." In the plan, Owls Head Provincial Park was identified as an "existing" (not proposed) provincial park.
- In 2018, Halifax Regional Council published the Halifax Green Network Plan, which “defines an interconnected open space system for the municipality, highlights ecosystem functions and benefits, and outlines strategies to manage open space.”
- Halifax Regional Council approved the Halifax Green Network Plan, which “defines an interconnected open space system for the municipality, highlights ecosystem functions and benefits, and outlines strategies to manage open space.”

In the Green Network Plan, Owls Head Provincial Park falls under Area of Consideration 8 (100 Wild Islands). The Plan, which understands the importance of ecological connectivity, indicates an “essential corridor” between Tangier

Grand Lake Wilderness Area and Owls Head Provincial Park.



We'd like to highlight some of the significant components from that timeline. In particular, the public consultation that led to Owls Head being included in the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System was one of the most detailed consultation processes in Nova Scotia's history.

Owls Head Provincial Park was destined (through the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System community process) to become a Natural Environment Park. Its inclusion in the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System represented a significant effort with collaboration with government and unanimous local support.

The Eastern Shore Seaside Park System Master Plan identifies the Owls Head parklands as a "unique coastal landscape" in the "Islands and Headlands" area of the proposed Natural Environment Park.

Unanimous Local Support from the Citizen's Representative Committee:

"The Eastern Shore Seaside Park System Citizen's Representative Committee was formed in February 1975, following

the Nova Scotia government's announcement of plans to develop the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System. The Minister of Nova Scotia's Department of Lands and Forests declared that his department wanted to actively encourage public participation in the planning of the proposed provincial Park System [...] The Committee was comprised of 21 locally elected members representing 17 communities from Musquodoboit Harbour to Sheet Harbour. Soon after its formation, the Committee decided on its own objectives.”

- Eastern Shore Archives



***Our* Parks and Protected Areas**

*Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan was "the product of **many years** of scientific analysis followed by **multiple rounds** of planning, public consultation, and refinement."*

- Kermit deGooyer, Nova Scotia protected-areas planner

*"It builds on **extensive consultations** over the last several years involving members of the public and Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq community."*

– Introduction to **Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan**

Your government has pledged to protect all of the remaining sites from *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*. We support that decision and urge you to also designate Owls Head Provincial Park (site 694).

Government plans, maps, and websites had **identified Owls Head Provincial Park as an existing provincial park**, leading the public to think it was protected.

"The public had every reason to assume Owls Head was a provincial park and, therefore, attracted protections not available on Crown lands."

– Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Kevin Coody

"The public had every reason to believe Owls Head was a protected park and therefore attracted protections not available on Crown Lands"

More Information:

In *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*, Owls Head Provincial Park was listed as an "existing" (not "proposed") park.

In the Department of Environment's Eastern Shore Islands Wilderness Areas map, Owls Head Provincial Park is identified as "other designated area." These two examples are part of a pattern of how previous governments portrayed Owls Head Provincial Park to the public.

As Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Kevin Coody said, "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." 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.”



A Piece of Nova Scotia's Natural and Cultural Heritage

Owls Head Provincial Park represents a piece of Nova Scotia's natural and cultural heritage.

Several pre-contact archeological sites have been identified in close proximity to Owls Head Provincial Park, most notably at Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park.

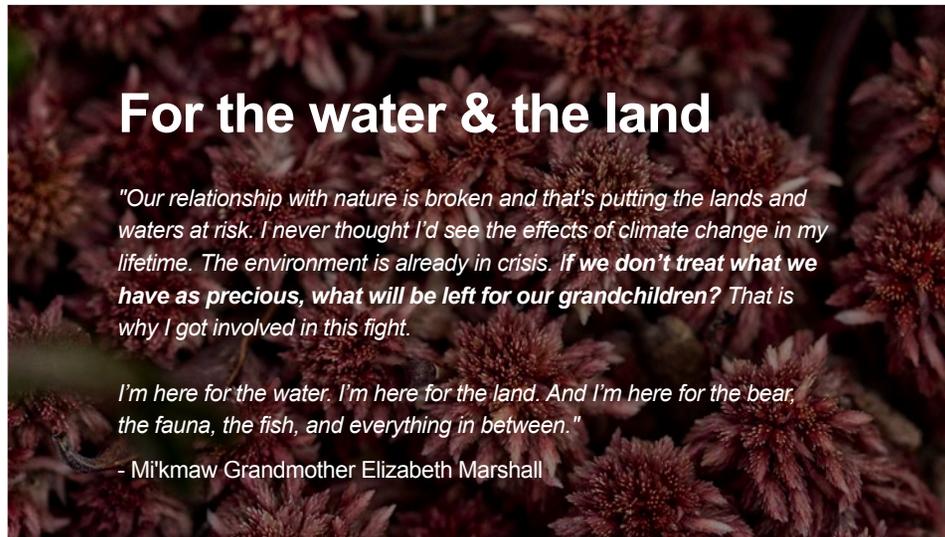
Owls Head is a piece of our natural and cultural heritage. A recent media release from the Assembly of Mi'kmaw Chiefs emphasized that the Assembly is concerned about “potential impacts to Mi'kmaw archaeological heritage and our Mi'kmaw and Aboriginal Rights at Owl's Head, where there are already six known and recorded Mi'kmaw archaeological sites.”

More information:

Owls Head Provincial Park would have almost certainly been a location of the Mi'kmaw occupation of the Eastern Shore. Several pre-contact archeological sites have been identified in proximity to Owls Head Provincial Park, most notably at Clam Harbour Beach. Other regional finds at Lake Charlotte and Head of Jeddore support the hypothesis of pre-contact occupation.

Furthermore, Owls Head Provincial Park continues to gain in significance as other areas are being lost to private

development. The significance of a large, undisturbed natural coastal area with connections to pre-contact occupations is difficult to quantify, but it must be carefully considered.



In a recent National Observer article, Grassroots Grandmother Elizabeth Marshall said the secrecy around the delisting and sale of Owls Head Provincial Park amounted to "colonization in a nutshell."

Scientists around the world are now confirming what Indigenous advocates have been saying for a long time: our relationship with nature is broken. As we face unprecedented challenges, we're starting to understand the significance of that relationship.

We've been learning from the Mi'kmaw Land and Water Protectors about what is important to them. Here is a quote from Elizabeth Marshall (pause to read quote)

So how do we honour that relationship and understanding when it comes to Owls Head Provincial Park? By ensuring that we honour and protect the land. Ecological and archaeological research at the site should occur in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq and incorporate the Two-Eyed Seeing framework.



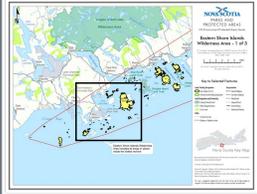
The Liberal government crossed a line and violated public trust when it secretly delisted Owls Head Provincial Park. The province is no longer encumbered by the Letter of Offer, but the land won't truly be safe until Owls Head Provincial Park is legally protected.

How *this* government chooses to respond could have significant impacts across the province.



Weakening a larger network

The previous government **undermined the integrity** of **established** protected areas systems.



Interfering with a park network has significant ecological (and economic) implications, such as the interruption of wildlife corridors, protection of existing biodiversity, the disruption of the existing 100 Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership, and loss of public trust.



A dangerous precedent

The secret delisting of a provincial park reserve sets a troubling precedent for Nova Scotia's parks and protected areas—now *and* in the future.



- ~125 Proposed Protected Areas AT RISK
- Provincial Parks AT RISK
- Nature Reserves AT RISK
- Wilderness Areas AT RISK

Until Owls Head Provincial Park is restored to Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan & legally protected, a dangerous precedent will remain— not only for the 125 provincial parks, nature reserves, and wilderness areas that are awaiting legal protection now, but **also for any such properties that could be awaiting designation in the future.**

What we decide today will help guide the course of our province for years to come.



In this time of climate change and biodiversity loss,
we are at a historic moment to choose differently
about parks and protected areas,
the future of Nova Scotia,
and the health of the planet

In this time of climate change and biodiversity loss, we are at a historic moment to choose differently about parks and protected areas, the future of Nova Scotia, and the health of the planet.



This area is of ecological and scientific interest. Multiple years of research have been undertaken, but biologists across multiple disciplines are interested in conducting further research.

Biodiversity is life

"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, Dalhousie School for Resource and Environmental Studies

SAVE OWLS HEAD
Provincial Park

FLORA
AT RISK

FAUNA
AT RISK

MARINE ENVIRONMENTS
AT RISK

HABITAT CONNECTIVITY
AT RISK

Owls Head Provincial Park and the associated marine ecosystems are important for biodiversity and thus important to us. Biodiversity is essential for human well-being because it provides us with various resources (such as food and clean water) as well as services, including protecting the coasts from erosion or storm damage, water and nutrient cycling, and carbon sequestration.

Due to the area's unique geological features, it hosts a large diversity of terrestrial and marine ecosystems. This is reflected in a high number of individual species, including over 90 recorded bird species, the presence of endangered species, and the globally rare broom crowberry ecosystem, which thrives in the rugged landscape.

More information:

When flora, fauna, and habitats are at risk, it puts our own health and well-being at risk. From the air we breathe to the water we drink and the food we eat, our world depends on biodiversity.

Many infectious diseases—including Zika, Ebola, and Covid-19, have stemmed in some way from humans interfering with wildlife and/or their habitats, creating conditions in which zoonotic diseases can pass from animals to people.

On the other hand, committing to biodiversity conservation and the protection of existing biodiversity means that we will spend less on achieving our biodiversity goals, compared to having to spend taxpayer resources on any subsequent restoration attempts.

Species pictured (left to right): Twinflower, osprey, lobster, white-tailed deer



Globally rare ecosystem

"If our province does not make an effort to protect this species, there will be no other opportunity elsewhere to protect it."

- Biologists Caitlin Porter and Dr. Jeremy Lundholm

*"Under the criteria [the Environment Department] has used to identify and prioritize lands for protection, an area supporting a **globally rare ecosystem** would rise to the **top tier of sites meriting legal protection** on the basis of its biodiversity value."*

- Kermit deGooyer, Nova Scotia Protected-Area Planner, about Owls Head Provincial Park

SAVE OWLS HEAD
Provincial Park

Broom crowberry is a flowering plant that is "endemic to eastern North America, meaning it can be found nowhere else in the world." (Porter and Lundholm). Biologists who've studied the coastal barrens of Owls Head Provincial Park warn that "if our province does not make an effort to protect this species, there will be no other opportunity elsewhere to protect it."

Even staff from Nova Scotia's Department of Environment and Lands and Forestry (now Natural Resources and Renewables) have repeatedly recognized the high biodiversity value of Owls Head Provincial Park.

More information:

"Our years of data reveal that Owls Head is ecologically unique and of importance to biodiversity conservation. [...] Broom Crowberry is endemic to northeastern North America, meaning this species can be found nowhere else in the world. In Canada, this plant only occurs within the Maritime Provinces and Quebec and within that limited range, Broom Crowberry is only common in Nova Scotia. If our province does not make an effort to protect this species, there will be

no other opportunity elsewhere to protect it.”

Biologist Sean Basquill (Ecosystems and Habitats Program, NS Department of Lands and Forestry) confirmed that across its global range, the coastal broom crowberry plant community “is only known from Nova Scotia and possibly parts of Maine.” Owls Head Provincial Park, he clarified, “appears to be one of the more important locations for the ecosystem in the province, particularly with the ecosystem’s low level of protection.”

Species at risk

We have a moral and legal obligation to protect these species. To do so, we need to preserve the habitats they depend on.

SAVE OWLS HEAD Provincial Park

LEATHERBACK TURTLE AT RISK

BARN SWALLOW AT RISK

PIPING PLOVER AT RISK

There are both marine and terrestrial species at risk to consider.

Owls Head Provincial Park provides habitat for species at risk, such as barn swallows, piping plovers, and leatherback sea turtles (all of which are legally endangered). Many of these species rely on intact and connected habitats.

Habitat loss is the number one cause of nature's decline. Creating and preserving more protected areas is therefore an essential tool to address the biodiversity crisis.

More information:

We have a moral and legal imperative to protect these species and the habitats they depend on. When we protect the spaces that wildlife use, we protect the wildlife species themselves.

(The species pictured on the left of this slide is a Canada Warbler, another endangered species that has been recorded at Owls Head Provincial Park)



**SAVE
OWLS
HEAD**
Provincial Park

Biodiversity supports fisheries

Eelgrass meadows provide **essential habitat** for lobster and other marine species to spawn, hide, and feed, resulting in a robust local fishing industry.

EELGRASS
ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT

EELGRASS BENEFITS
estimated at
\$20,000 ha/yr

\$12 M/yr
EASTERN SHORE FISHERY

EELGRASS BEDS PROVIDE
LOBSTER NURSERY HABITAT

An example of the importance of biodiversity to humans is the benefit to our local fisheries—healthy and diverse coastal habitats such as eelgrass beds and kelp forests provide habitat for fish and crustaceans (such as lobster) to hide, spawn, and feed, which leads to financial benefits for fisheries.

- DFO has declared eelgrass an “essential fish habitat”
- On average, over \$12 million worth of landings are harvested from the Eastern Shore Islands each year
- Seagrass beds (such as eelgrass beds) provide important nursery habitats to over 20% of the world’s 25 largest fisheries.
- Eelgrass offers \$20,000 in ecosystem services *per hectare, per year*.
- Protecting the coastal eelgrass meadows will benefit the local fishery.



Land and water connection

"Development of the site would completely, irrevocably, and utterly destroy the natural hydrology of Owl's Head and impact surrounding marine waters."

- Christopher Trider

"The problems really come from all sides. One is the development of the land and what happens on land, because the coastal waters are so closely connected to the land. Anything that comes from land impacts water quality, which can severely cause stress and damage on these eelgrass beds."

- Dr. Kristina Boerder, Marine Biologist

Ecosystems do not exist out of context—terrestrial and marine ecosystems are inherently linked across the land/sea barrier. What happens on land impacts fresh water and marine systems, even with mitigating factors.

Our secret weapon

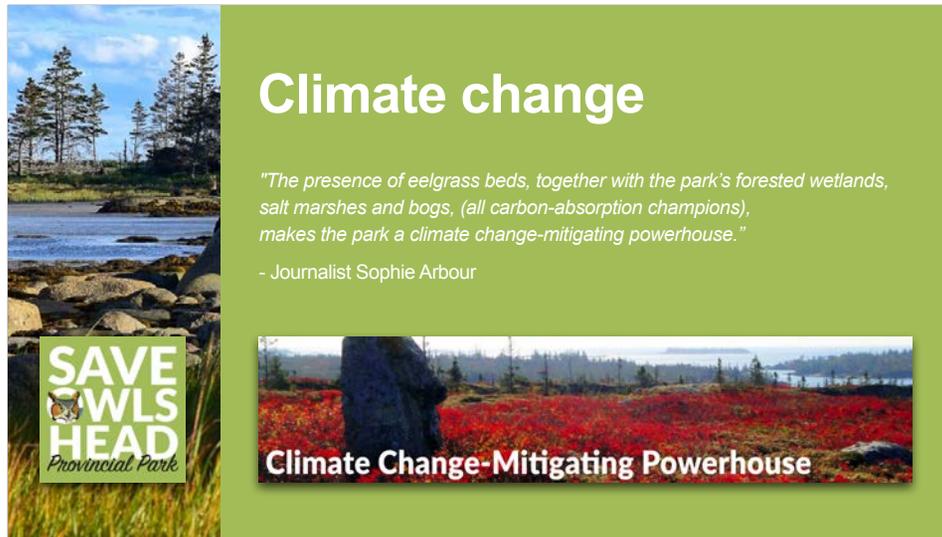
The UN Environment Programme calls **seagrass** a "**secret weapon in the fight against global heating,**" as it can "capture carbon from the atmosphere up to **35 times faster** than tropical rainforests."

SAVE OWLS HEAD
Provincial Park

Carbon Capture Powerhouse

To stick with the example of eelgrass: It's not only an "essential fish habitat," it's also a secret weapon to fight climate change.

Some benefits are easy to see and quantify (such as the value to fisheries), while others are harder to translate into monetary values. These include coastal protection, nutrient cycling, production of oxygen, and carbon capture and storage that is 10 to 40 times more efficient than forests. Together, the numerous benefits add up to an estimated value of \$20,000 (US), **per hectare, per year**, making eelgrass one of the most valuable ecosystems in the world.



Climate change

"The presence of eelgrass beds, together with the park's forested wetlands, salt marshes and bogs, (all carbon-absorption champions), makes the park a climate change-mitigating powerhouse."

- Journalist Sophie Arbour

SAVE OWLS HEAD
Provincial Park

Climate Change-Mitigating Powerhouse

- Climate change is the biggest issue of our time, globally as well as locally
- Owls Head Provincial Park is a carbon-sequestering powerhouse that we, as Nova Scotians, already own.
- In addition to eelgrass, Owls Head Provincial Park includes other powerhouse ecosystems, such as salt marshes and bogs.
- Research is currently underway to quantify the amount and age of carbon stored in and around Owls Head Provincial Park and its relevance with regards to localized climate change mitigation.

**Ecosystems are easy to disrupt
... and costly to restore**

Restoring one hectare of seagrass was found to cost on average US\$106,000

SAVE OWLS HEAD
Provincial Park

POLICY PERSPECTIVE WILEY Conservation Letters

Seagrass meadows support global fisheries production

Richard K.F. Unsworth^{1,2} | Lisa Mwanza Nondind¹ | Leanne C. Callen-Unsworth^{1,4}

Seagrass Restoration is Possible: Insights and Lessons From Australia and New Zealand

The terrestrial and marine ecosystems at Owls Head Provincial Park are still largely intact and functioning, but they are under increasing pressures from habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and climate change. These ecosystems are fragile and, once lost, cannot easily be restored.

Restoration is costly – restoring one hectare of seagrass was found to cost on average US\$106,000, which is 10-400 times more expensive than for terrestrial ecosystems. The right decision—environmentally and financially—is to legally protect these ecosystems we already have.



What's at stake

Losing seagrass meadows has dire consequences for biodiversity, for nearby seagrass meadows, and for our fisheries.



- Even with mitigating factors, sale and development of Owls Head Provincial Park would lead to unnecessary and long-term ecological damage.
- Following a massive seagrass die-off in the 1930s and widespread destruction through scallop dredging, multiple scallop fisheries along the US East Coast (such as in Chesapeake Bay) collapsed. Several still have not recovered, almost 90 years later.
- But it doesn't need to be this way. We now have the opportunity to embrace a much more positive future, one that will benefit the economy and the environment.



Opportunity to be a global leader

Worldwide, seagrass is considered to be so ecologically and economically valuable that other countries and provinces are undertaking expensive projects to try to replant lost seagrass meadows.

Groups including the United Nations Environment Program and the World Wildlife Fund have emphasized the importance of seagrass. But nearly one-third of seagrass worldwide has been lost in the past century alone.

Today, it is estimated that the world loses up to 2 football fields worth of seagrass each hour. That's the equivalent of 336 football fields each week.



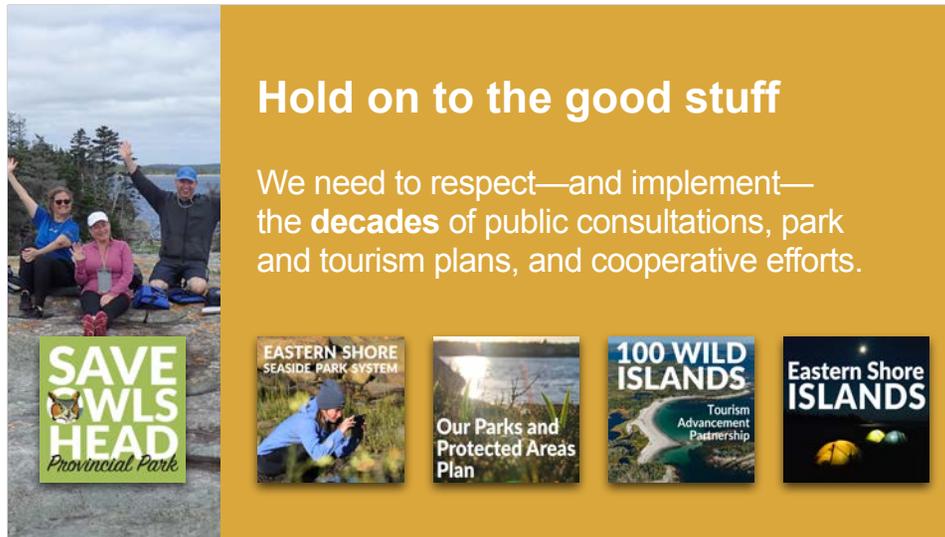
There are a number of key opportunities that depend on the protection of Owls Head Provincial Park and a renewed commitment to parks in Nova Scotia



Opportunities for the Eastern Shore

Protecting our existing assets, including Owls Head Provincial Park, will help us to realize our **potential for nature tourism opportunities** while **safeguarding the local fishery**.

- Owls Head Provincial Park is a keystone headland, which protects existing biodiversity values on land (in the park as well as nearby sites) and in the adjacent marine waters.
- New revenue-generating visitor experiences along the Eastern Shore can complement the existing 100 Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership, the Eastern Shore Islands, and the (as-yet-unfinished) Eastern Shore Seaside Park System while developing lucrative opportunities for the local communities.



Hold on to the good stuff

We need to respect—and implement—the **decades** of public consultations, park and tourism plans, and cooperative efforts.



Hold on to the good stuff... What do we mean by that? Well, there have been decades of innovative park planning, comprehensive public consultations, and an unwavering understanding of why Owls Head Provincial Park is an integral part of the Eastern Shore networks.

More information:

- The current government is committed to implementing the Parks and Protected Areas Plan, transitioning to a low-carbon economy, and becoming a strong protector of biodiversity. We don't need to reinvent the wheel; we just need to build on the extensive work that's already been done.
- We can use the long-established Eastern Seaside Park System plan, the 100 Wild Islands Tourism Advancement Partnership, and *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan* as cornerstones to help us accomplish these goals.



Tourism that thrives

A forward-thinking tourism strategy can make the Eastern Shore a leading nature tourism destination.

Regenerative tourism "recognizes the need to replace the old economic system which was based on greed, self-interest, over-consumption, and competition, with new economic thinking that emphasizes caring for the life and well-being of all creatures and the Earth."

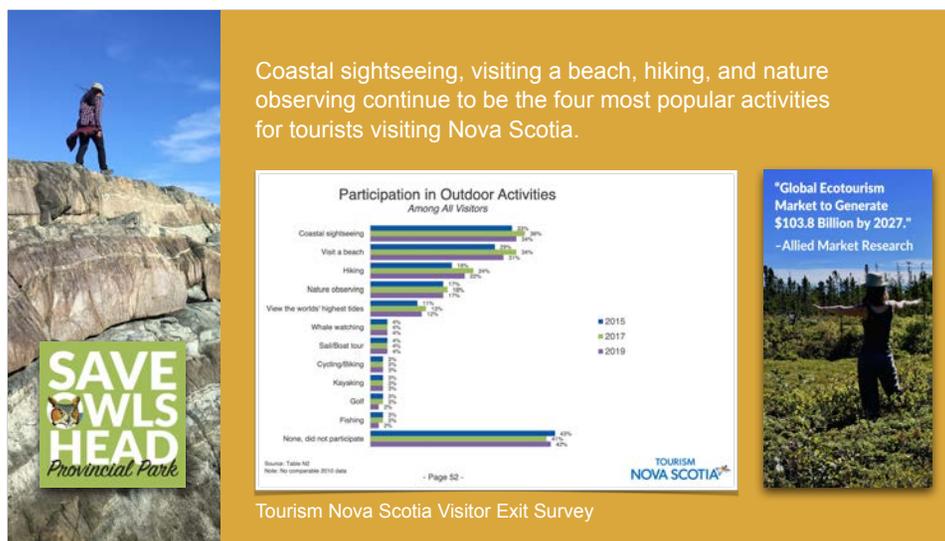
-Adventure Canada



- Nova Scotia's Provincial Parks report that they had "a successful season, with a record number of overnight stays at twenty camping parks" in 2021.
- In a post-Covid world, travellers are seeking experiences that are safe, outdoors, and nature-based.
- For the past five years, Nova Scotia tourism has been approaching tourism differently. This reflects the national approach from Destination Canada, which markets authentic experiences based on local culture, nature, food, and art. Such opportunities on the Eastern Shore are (as yet) undeveloped.
- Owls Head Provincial Park is an ideal headland for gatherings with Mi'kmaw knowledge keepers, nature tours and nature photography, biodiversity monitoring, citizen science, climate-change monitoring, and a variety of self-propelled outdoor activities (such as walking, hiking, and kayaking).
- The Eastern Shore boasts a coastline with a unique wild beauty. Owls Head Provincial Park is a key component of a larger vision for what the Eastern Shore could become.

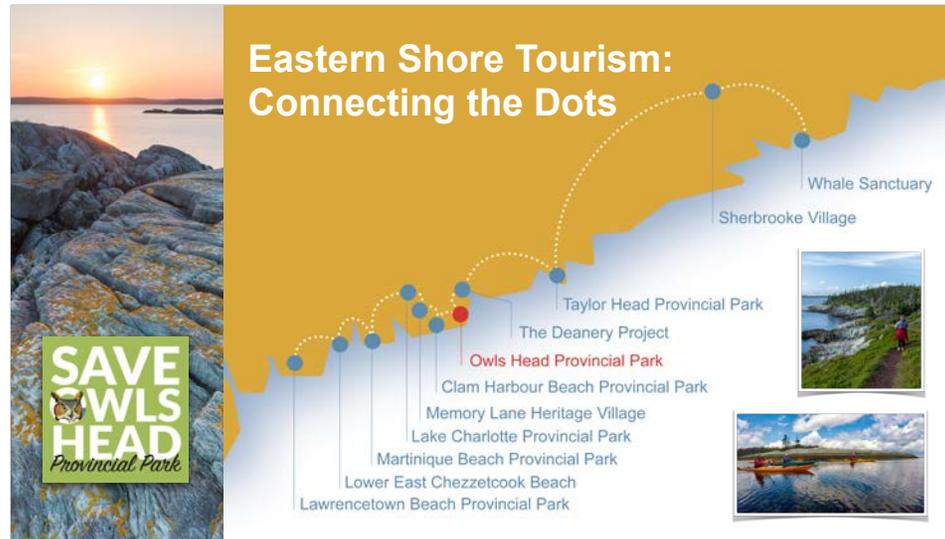
More information:

- The Eastern Shore area is an excellent candidate for new methods of regenerative tourism: tourism that emphasizes caring for the well-being of wildlife, vegetation, and ecosystems as part of an emerging global path forward to tourism that has a lighter footprint.
- Nature-based and cultural tourism can become the key drivers for the successful implementation of a beneficial development strategy for the Eastern Shore
- Parks can be the backbone of a successful strategy for economic development that maximizes biodiversity protection, drives zero-waste strategies, and respects Mi'kmaw values and perspectives (such as Netukulimk and Two-Eyed Seeing)
- When we recognize the maximum carrying capacities of regional ecosystems, and act in accordance with these measurements, we can better understand how economic incentives and subsidies can go towards smaller-footprint investments, rather than golf courses that have monoculture grass plantations.



This type of tourism strategy is not only possible, it's also **profitable**.

- A study by Allied Market Research found that the global ecotourism market will generate \$103.8 billion by 2027.
- The most recent Tourism Nova Scotia Visitor Exit Survey confirms that travellers to Nova Scotia **continue** to participate in four key outdoor activities: coastal sightseeing, visiting beaches, hiking, and nature observing.
- Owls Head Provincial Park and the associated shorelines, headlands, and natural areas offer outstanding values to establish a new and thriving nature-based tourism economy.
- We can do this through better infrastructure and increased staff and funding for park planning.



The emerging tourism opportunities along the Eastern Shore are firmly planted within a number of communities, new initiatives, heritage sites, beaches, and coastal access, some of which are listed on this slide.

The government can support the Eastern Shore by investing in necessary infrastructure and increased staff and funding for park planning. We'd especially like to point out Lake Charlotte Provincial Park. Like Owls Head Provincial Park, Lake Charlotte was a component of the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System Master Plan. Some components of the plan, (like Clam Harbour Beach and Taylor Head) were developed. Others, like the destination campground at Lake Charlotte, were never funded or built.

The Eastern Shore Seaside Park System, if it had been developed properly, could have rivalled Kejimikujik in terms of camping and wilderness access. Its proximity to the urban centre would have made it accessible to more people. It would have anchored a series of other nature-based public access and development opportunities all along the Eastern Shore. And it still can.





Dare to:

- Restore trust in our government
- Commit to our park networks
- Preserve public coastal access
- Reimagine tourism

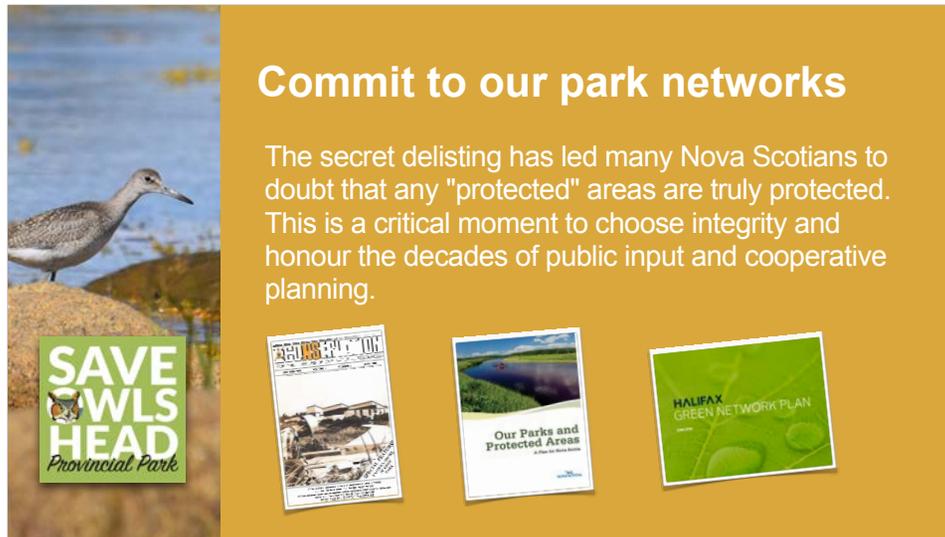
Now that you are in a position to act on this file, we are hopeful that you will legally protect Owls Head Provincial Park. Nova Scotians are calling for stronger environmental leadership; this is the chance to show that you will listen and act to address the urgent crises we're facing.



Restore trust in government

By eradicating what previous politicians did in secret, this administration can help Nova Scotians to start believing in government again.

Legally protecting Owls Head Provincial Park would be a clear opportunity to show the people of Nova Scotia that the government is listening.



Commit to our park networks

The secret delisting has led many Nova Scotians to doubt that any "protected" areas are truly protected. This is a critical moment to choose integrity and honour the decades of public input and cooperative planning.

SAVE OWLS HEAD Provincial Park

Our Parks and Protected Areas

HALIFAX GREEN NETWORK PLAN

Ecological connectivity, biodiversity conservation, recreation opportunities, and tourism strategies all rely on established park networks, including *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*, the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System, and even the Halifax Green Network Plan.

The commitment to designate all of the remaining sites from *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan* is a wonderful step forward. But that alone won't restore the park network or the public's trust. To do that, the government must legally protect Owls Head Provincial Park.



Preserve public coastal access

In a province where a mere 5% of our coastline is public and protected, it is vital to protect the 5+ miles of publicly owned coastline at Owls Head Provincial Park.

SAVE OWLS HEAD Provincial Park

NOVA SCOTIA
AAA 000
CANADA'S OCEAN PLAYGROUND

ONLY ~5% OF COAST IS PUBLIC AND PROTECTED
Honour the vision of
CANADA'S OCEAN PLAYGROUND

- Nova Scotia's coastline has iconic community, recreation, and tourism attributes.
- Today, only about 5% of coastline is public and protected, leading Owls Head Provincial Park to become even more important as a public coastal park.
- It should be treated as a shared resource
- Removing the coastline from public access at Owls Head Provincial Park would not sit well with Nova Scotians



Reimagine tourism

Protecting Owls Head Provincial Park will help us to embrace new, low-impact tourism opportunities that benefit the province and the planet.

Reimagine
nature, culture, art, and foraging
as revenue-generating visitor experiences.

Globally, the largest tourism operators are shifting to an entirely different model—lower-impact tourism, which is better aligned with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

By legally protecting Owls Head Provincial Park and investing in the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System, we can benefit the economy while still protecting the environment. Conservation must be the over-arching priority at Owls Head Provincial Park, but that doesn't preclude opportunities for sustainable, revenue-generating visitor experiences. Thoughtful investment in the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System could include:

- Low-impact walking or hiking trails (carefully planned and executed with guidance from scientists and other experts)
- Four-season tourism based on the natural world
- Plein-air painting groups and workshops with local artists
- Photography workshops

- Outdoor cuisine specific to the Eastern Shore (such as lobster boils)
- Paddling adventures
- Bird-watching tours
- Photography workshops and events for content creators

More information:

Presenting nature, culture, art and foraging in Owls Head Provincial Park and surrounding areas as new revenue-generating visitor experiences is exactly what travellers are looking for—experiential tourism. This would support a sustainable economic system in which multiple people and communities benefit, whether that is through cafés, inns, galleries, or nature-based experiences.



The people speak

"I don't think there has ever been so much interest in a single park reserve before. People from all across the province want to visit Owls Head Provincial Park—to paint or take photographs, to kayak, to hike, and even to visit the wetlands. Let's turn that passion into sustainable tourism revenue for Nova Scotia."

- Lindsay Lee




Joy Laking



Rachel Kendall



Kathryn Price

There is deep and sustained interest in Owls Head Provincial Park. Let's turn that passion into sustainable tourism revenue for Nova Scotia.



- We need to re-think how tourism can successfully contribute to a more sustainable vision for our province and our planet. Let's start by showcasing a thriving, beautiful, and wild area of Nova Scotia.
- It's time to implement a new Coastal Tourism Strategy for the region, integrated with the local fishery, Mi'kmaw and local communities, and the cultural sector.
- Destinations, tourism strategies, municipalities, even cities and towns are starting to implement sustainable tourism and development.
- We need to think globally and act locally.

More information:

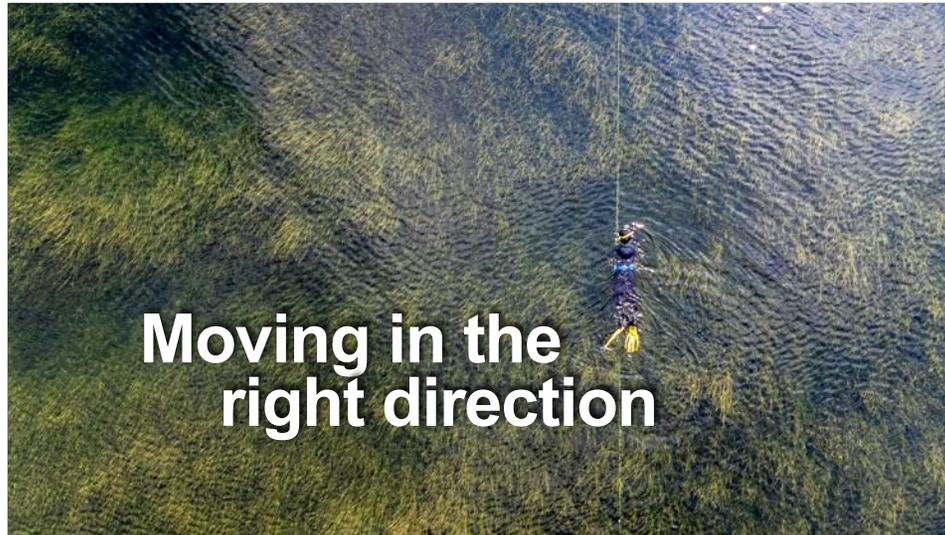
In 2021, there are many exciting economic development opportunities in which to invest. We can empower and support

people from rural communities to develop sustainable local economies.

Implement Doughnut Economics and Circular Economics on a pilot basis, to help showcase a thriving, beautiful, scenic wild area of Nova Scotia.



- The large undisturbed coastal barrens, wetlands, bogs, and beaches of Owls Head Provincial Park need to be viewed through the lens of climate change, the global loss of biodiversity, and the importance of habitat connectivity for all species.
- With the information we now have about habitat fragmentation, rapid biodiversity loss, and the climate emergency, Nova Scotia is equipped to make decisions that are more compatible with our environmental goals and values.
- Ensuring that Owls Head Provincial Park is protected would symbolize the environmental leadership that Nova Scotians have been calling for.



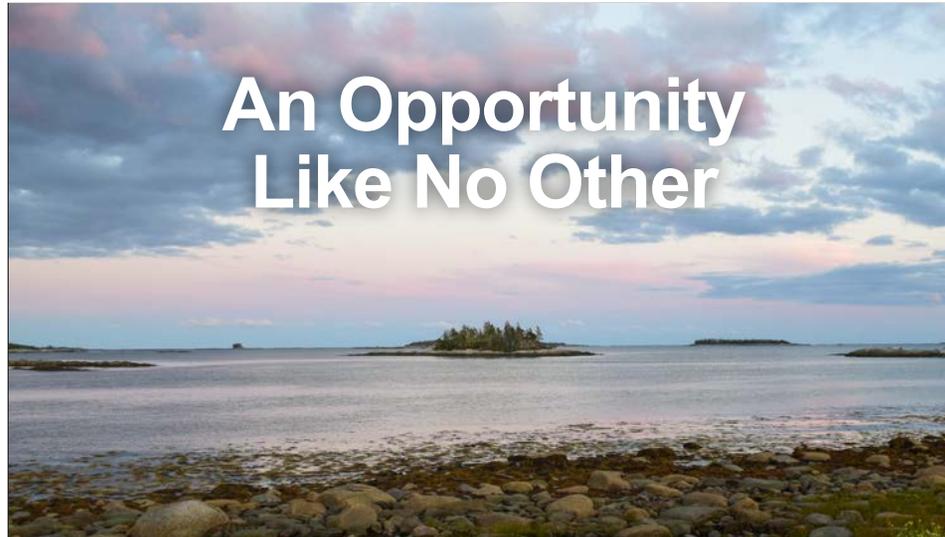
We're relieved that your government has pledged to be more transparent and more accountable to the citizens of this province.

We applaud your insistence on a fair and thorough public consultation, your willingness to listen to Nova Scotians, and your desire to ensure this never happens again. Nova Scotians care deeply about protecting our parks, our coastlines, and our environment. The Premier's mandate letter for the Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables, your legislated protected areas commitment, and your careful attention to this file all signal to us that you are trying to raise the bar.

It appears that you're working to address problems in the province in a way that is fair and evidence-based. Not only has the PC government pledged to increase the protected areas quota to at least 20 percent of our land and water by 2030, but you've also legislated that target.

Yet Nova Scotians still aren't sure that they are being heard. For almost two years now, concerned citizens have been writing letters, sending emails, attending demonstrations, meeting with their MLAs, signing petitions in person and online... Even seeking change through the ballot box.

"At least 20% of the total land and water mass of Nova Scotia will be legally protected for nature conservation by 2030 [...] We will also will also implement the Nova Scotia Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan, wherein approximately 125 identified sites from this plan are awaiting legal protection. At present, all that's required is an Order-in-Council to ensure protection of these areas."



Now that the province is free from the Letter of Offer, there is a clear opportunity to legally protect Owls Head Provincial Park. Designating the park will help assure Nova Scotians that we're on the right track and that their government *is* listening.

This is a powerful way to show that transparency, accountability, and science-based decision-making will be a priority for this government.

Thank you to our volunteers

Presentation Team

Pam Baker, Retired teacher, Board member of Twin Oaks & Birches

Dr. Kristina Boerder, Dalhousie University (Science)

Celes Davar, Earth Rhythms (Tourism)

Beverley Isaacs, Local resident and advocate

Kathy Kaulbach, Touchstone Design (Design)

Lindsay Lee, Editor & Website coordinator (saveowlshead.org)

Christopher Trider, Retired Park Systems Planner (Historical context)



**Thank you
photographers
and artists
for your generous support**

Nicolas Winkler (Slides 1, 2, 20, 24, 25, 26, 30, 45, 46)
Beverley Isaacs (Slide 3)
Jennifer MacLatchey (Slides 4, 34, 42)
Gloria Chaisson (Slide 4)
A for Adventure (Slides 4, 31)
Kevin Prinoski (Slides 4, 14)
Sydnee Lynn McKay (Slide 4)
Simon Ryder-Burbidge (Slides 4, 29)
Robert Dawet (Slide 4)
David Sorcher (Slide 5)
Nick Hawkins (Slides 6, 7, 29)
Unknown (Slides 11, 23)
Simon Pont (Slides 15, 16, 19)
Susan Vickery (Slide 17)
Hectic Media (Slides 18, 36)
Lucas Berrigan (Slide 21)
Megan Timmons (Slide 22)
CPAWS-NS (Slides 23, 33, 35)
Stephen Glazier (Slides 27, 40, 47)
Nova Scotia Department of Environment (Slide 27)
Peter Copus (Slide 36)
Envisat (Slide 37)
Mariele Guerrero (Slide 39)
Eleanor Kure (Slide 41)
Nicole Tomasic (Slide 42)
Joy Laking (Slide 43)
Rachel Kendall (Slide 43, 44)
Kathryn Price (Slide 43)
Kristina Boerder (Slide 43)