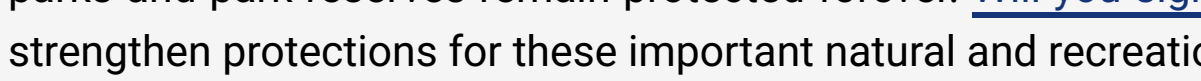
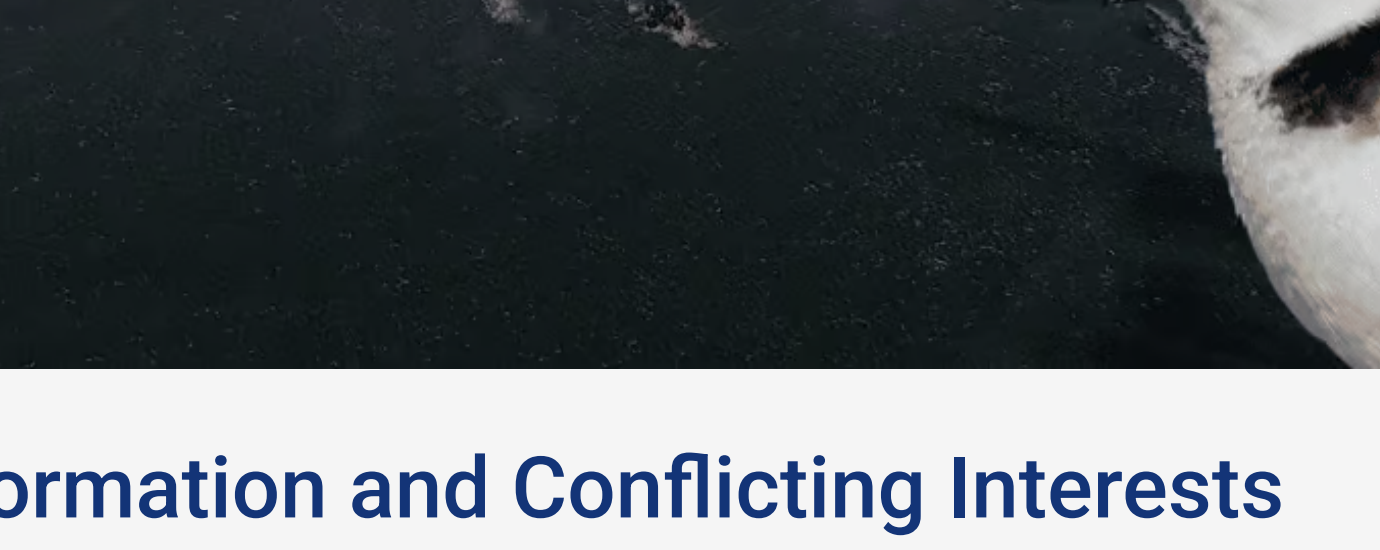


A map of the Maritime provinces of Canada, specifically New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Three constituencies are highlighted in yellow: Saint John in New Brunswick, Miramichi in New Brunswick, and Sydney in Prince Edward Island. Other locations marked include Moncton, Fredericton, and Summerside. The map also shows the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and the Cabot Strait.

A map of Nova Scotia, Canada, showing the locations of four study sites. Sable Island is located in the Bay of Fundy. Truro is on the northern coast. Digby is on the southern coast. Haldane is located in the Minas Basin. The map also shows the Atlantic Ocean to the east and south.



Update the Provincial Parks Act



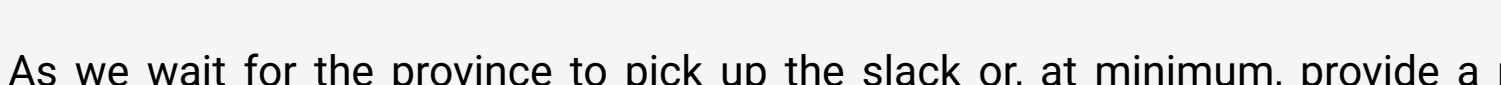
The Ingram River area is a matrix of public and private lands supporting some of the most pristine wilderness left on St. Margarets Bay, including old forests, habitat for many provincially and federally listed species at risk, and some of the best hiking, hunting, and fishing opportunities in the Halifax area. Additions to the existing protected parcels along the Ingram River were released for consultation in Fall 2021 and immediately faced a misinformation campaign by WestFor Management Inc, which happened to operate a crown logging lease in the area. WestFor suggested through their [Facebook](#) presence and [a news interview](#) that, under protection, the Nova Scotia province would no longer be able to access the area, despite government openness to ATV and snowmobile use and the fact that all Nova Scotians have the legislated right to access forested lands for many purposes. This narrative comes up again and again when big forestry interests are threatened by conservation initiatives.

There are several different kinds

system, each with varying degrees of protection and allowances for differentiated activities. This may make public land protection vulnerable to misinformation.

- **National Parks:** Federally regulated and managed – Protect unique places and provide limited recreation opportunities
- **Provincial Parks:** Provincially regulated and managed – Protect important natural features and provide limited recreation opportunities in addition to research and education
- **Wilderness Areas:** Provincial – Protected for their representative features and provide for research, education, some economic activities, and recreation activities such as hiking, sportfishing, and hunting
- **Nature Reserves:** Provincial – Protected for their unique features and generally limit human use
- **Municipal Conservation Lands:** Owned and/or managed by municipalities – Generally protected through bylaws for the recreation opportunities they provide
- **Private Conservation Lands:** Owned and/or managed by land trusts or private citizens – Protected by charitable and volunteer action and, depending on the features found within, may receive some protection through legislation like the Beaches Act, Special Places Protection Act, or Trails Act

-
- South Panuke Wild Addition
- Old Forest Policy Addition
- Special Management Zone
- Island Lake Wild
- Mineral Exploration License
- Current Mineral Exploration License
- Allen Village
- Ingram River
- 100 m
- Legend:
- Main Vehicle/Only Routes
 - Potential designated OHV route
 - Routes not affected by proposed conservation lands



action, we are increasingly concerned that the delay may be intentional. Most of the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan parcels that are still *unprotected* are listed in the Plan as “delayed to 2020” due to “addressing mineral” and “petroleum rights,” or “wood supply.” We think the province is intentionally delaying formal protection for these public lands so that industry can take what they want, first.

Citizens Step Up To Fill The Gaps

While the province drags its feet, Nova Scotians are stepping up to protect local wildernesses through citizen science, petition signing, and direct action. Nova Scotia doesn't have a formal process for protecting citizen-nominated protected areas. The public land parcels identified as candidates for protection in the now outdated Parks and Protected Areas Plan were the result of a lot of internal scientific work, some collaboration with external environmental experts and industry representatives, and almost no consultation with the public. When the province released their new Collaborative Protected Areas Strategy in 2023, intended to act as a guide towards achieving the 20% by 2030 goal, there was no commitment to include citizens in the planning stage of any of the province's existing land protection process. Considering that the province also didn't identify any of its own new candidate

information about public lands that can benefit land use planning and management, but also because public buy-in is essential for maintaining the environmental and cultural values protected areas are protected for in the first place.



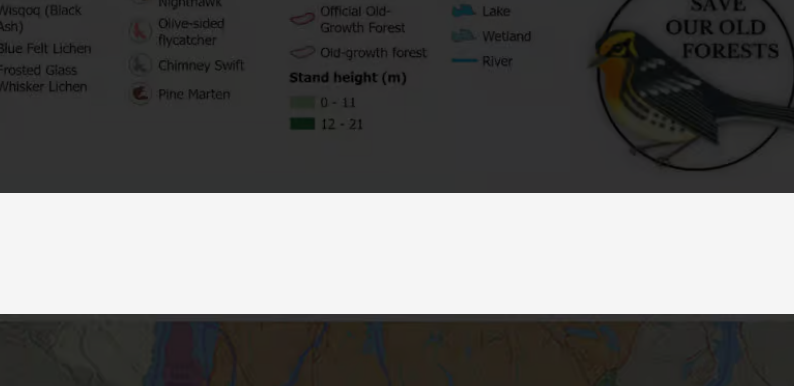
**HELP US SAVE
SANDY LAKE**

Much of Sandy Lake is still awaiting legal protection. In 2022, the province identified Sandy Lake as an area they would fast-track desperately needed housing development, despite existing plans and municipalities' opposition. The Regional Park and outcry from scientists, hobby naturalists, and the public. Write to the Premier, your MLA



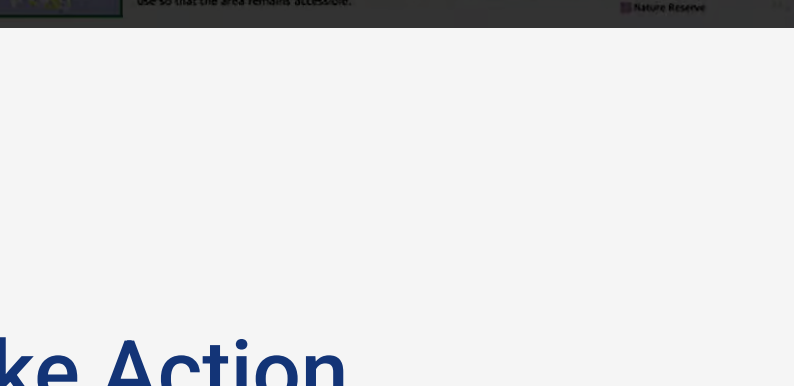
Finally protect this rare wild gem in the city.

The Blomidon Naturalists Society is proposing a new wilderness area for Crown land in southwest Kings County. The southwest corner of Kings County is the only major section of public land in the County that remains largely forested without human habitation. To date, there has been little opportunity or process for citizens to suggest public lands for formal protection. Take action today and help BNS protect this last wilderness.



confirmed species at risk. The *Citizen Scientists* of Southwest Nova Scotia submitted a proposal to the Dept. of Environment and Climate Change to protect an area of 3900 ha of Crown land surrounding Goldsmith Lake in 2022. Help the Citizen Scientists and Save Our Old Forests get this forest protected by signing onto their petition.

The proposed Ingram River Wilderness Area is a treasured community wilderness on the outskirts of Halifax, containing beautiful canoe routes, the oldest hemlock tree on record, and several resident species at risk. Locals want to give this area second chance – a chance to recover, where forests can



Help the St Margarets Bay Stewardship Association and allies protect Ingram River from corporate capture and government inaction.

round of protected area parcels. I am concerned that this process only included the short 6-question survey government sent out, and not meaningful consultation with scientists, conservation groups, and local residents on the importance of the habitats they concerned.

conservation groups, hobby naturalists

with how many parcels identified in the now outdated F

undesignated, as we approach the end of the 2030 timeline.

The Parks and Protected Areas Plan built on previous planning documents and identified additional areas that would require more planning, restoration, or other work before protection but that could have brought total land protection in Nova Scotia to 15%, had they all been designated by the 2020 deadline. I understand that some delays in designating candidate protected areas must be explained by logistical issues, such as acquisition, research, or other needs. But looking at these still pending parcels and the reasons for delayed designation given in the Plan, the vast majority seem to be awaiting clarification on mineral or petroleum rights. So it would seem that this government is intentionally avoiding

protecting public lands in order to allow for unsustainable natural resource development. This is unacceptable. It's time our province designated all remaining protected areas in the old Parks and Protected Areas Plan and started work on a new (and full) plan that will take us into the next decade.

Your latest Protected Areas Strategy survey asked Nova Scotians very broad questions like "what are some barriers to achieving 20% protected areas?", "how can private landowners be encouraged to contribute to the 20% goal?", and "what should government consider in identifying new protected areas?" but you don't ask us the more meaningful questions of "where would you like to see protected areas created or expanded?", "which organizations, industry groups, and citizen groups would you like to see engaged in this next round of protected areas planning?", or "how can government create more opportunities for public engagement as this process continues?" Surely those 6 simple questions you've put to Nova Scotians through this survey do not constitute the entirety of the public consultation you

new Protected Areas Strategy will be based on...

Citizens are mobilizing to protect areas like Ingram River, Goldsmith Lake, and Chain Lakes, often racing against harvest activity as they gather old tree and species at risk sighting reports to give your Natural Resources and Environment Department's staff. Please designate all remaining provincial parks, nature reserves, and wilderness areas across Nova Scotia and provide citizens with an update on your full process for the next round of protected areas planning, including how we might formally nominate areas for protection, how we might contribute citizen science data, and how we might provide feedback on the

draft plan once it's ready.

Sincerely, [Your Name]

[Community], Nova Scotia

you go one step further?

[explore the Protected Areas Viewer](#) to learn about existing and pending protected areas near [reach out to your MIA](#) and ask them what they're doing to ensure we meet our protected areas

...prepare for a disappointing response and be ready to follow up. Did you get a generic response repeating the province's supposed commitment to nature protection and detailing what they do? Focus your response on clarifying questions like "Why have no protected areas been designed in the last year?" "Who, specifically, are you engaging in your work to move [your local pending protected areas] towards official protection?" and "Do you mean to say that government has no intention to release the 2020 Protected Areas Plan, incorporating citizen knowledge and desires for community-nominated protected areas?"

ected areas?"

3) Contact your MP and tell them

- Together, we can protect these important areas for generations to come
- Nature depends on it
- 
- A scenic view of a rocky coastline with evergreen trees and a small building. The image shows a rugged, rocky shore with several tall, dark evergreen trees growing on it. A small, light-colored building is visible on the left side of the shore. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a clear, pale blue. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.



Actions and Updates in your Inbox