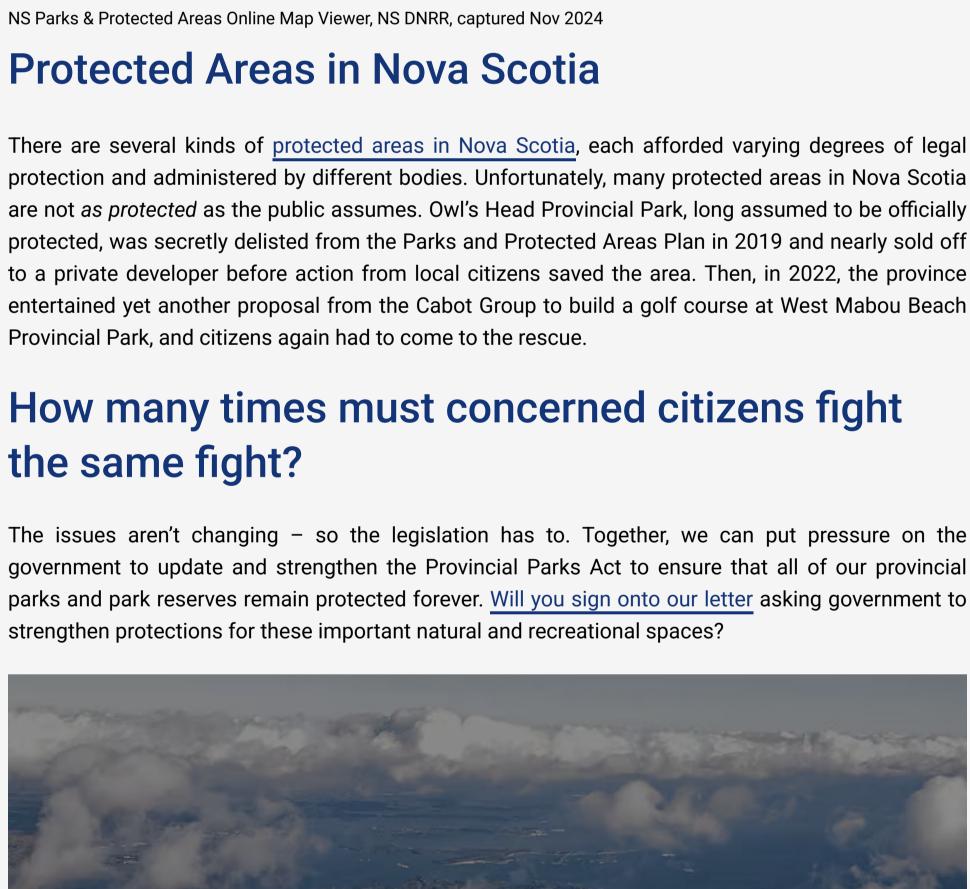


"climate stabilization areas."

provincial government committed, with funding from the federal government, to increasing protected areas to 20% by 2030. Nature Nova Scotia supports these ambitious goals and encourages all Nova Scotians to take up the call to action. Help us "Make Room For Nature" by getting informed and engaging your local or national representative on this important issue. Miramich Cabot NEW BRUNSWICK

Summerside Charlottetown Moncton Fredericton



Update the Provincial

Parks Act

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 of conservation lands under the Nova Scotia protected areas system, each with varying degrees of protection and allowances for differened 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,

• Nature Reserves: Provincial – Protected for their unique features and generally limit human use

through bylaws for the recreation opportunities they provide

• Municipal Conservation Lands: Owned and/or managed by municipalities - Generally protected

• Private Conservation Lands: Owned and/or managed by land trusts or private citizens -

Existing Hiking Trail

Upper

Existing or Potential Canoe Routes

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

sportfishing, and hunting

government.

Take the Ingram River for example...

Main Vehicle/OHV Routes

Lake Island Lake WA

- Mineral Exploration License Dauphinees
- essential connecting routes through the proposed Island Lake Wilderness Area, which is the larger of the two in this example. All together, the protection of the Ingram River was a very small step towards better conservation of an area that supports 18 confirmed species at risk and provides countless dollars in ecosystem goods and services every year, including through Mi'kmaw-led industry. The only Nova Scotians who didn't benefit from the new Ingram River designations were those who wanted to clearcut it... Where Do We Stand Today? The province stopped designating new protected areas in 2024, leaving many parcels in the 2013 Parks and Protected Areas Plan unprotected. As of summer 2025, Nova Scotia is sitting at just 13.5% protected lands, less than 4 years away from the 2030 deadline for protecting 20%.

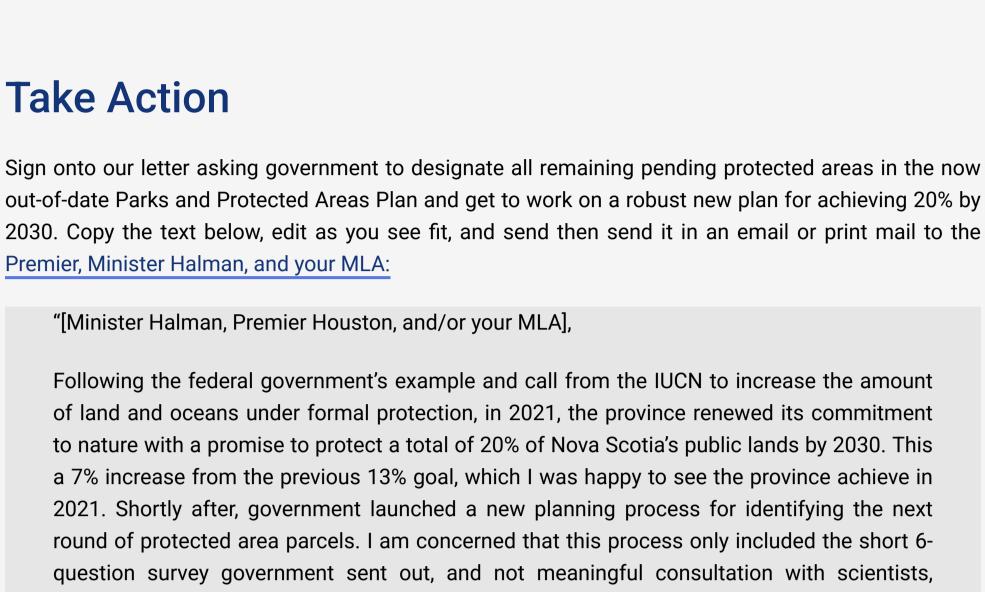
public. Write to the Premier, your MLA, and municipal councilor and ask them to finally protect this rare wild gem in the city. #makeroomfornature #20percentby2030

HELP US SAVE

SANDY LAKE

protected for in the first place.

The Blomidon Naturalists Society is proposing a new wilderness area for **Crown land in southwest Kings County.** The southwest corner of Kings County is



This is unacceptable. It's time our province designated all remaining pending 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 your

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

conservation groups, hobby naturalists, or other members of the public. I am also concerned

with how many parcels identified in the now outdated Parks and Protected Areas Plan are left

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

new Protected Areas Strategy will be based on...

draft plan once it's ready.

[Community], Nova Scotia

Sincerely, [Your Name]

Can you go one step further? 1) Explore the Protected Areas Viewer to learn about existing and pending protected areas near you, then reach out to your MLA and ask them what they're doing to ensure we meet our protected areas commitments. 2) Prepare for a disappointing response and be ready to follow up. Did you get a generic response reiterating the province's supposed commitment to nature protection and detailing what they have done? Focus your response on clarifying questions like "Why have no protected areas been designated in the last year?" "Who, specifically, are you engaging in your work to move [your local pending protected

Nature depends on it

Together, we can protect these important areas for generations

to come

Learn more about the 30% by 2030 goal and how we can help

Canada get there by visiting our friends at Nature Canada.

Actions and Updates in your Inbox

© Nature Nova Scotia

Global Deal for Nature that included land, freshwater and marine ecosystems and called for protecting at least 30 percent of lands by 2030, with an additional 20 percent of land protected as In response to the following UN Convention on Biodiversity call for expanded global protected areas, Canada committed to a two-stage expansion of our protected areas system. The federal budget is investing \$3.2 billion, over five years, to establish new terrestrial and marine protected areas across Canada, including in Nova Scotia. There has never been a bigger investment for nature protection, so it is a milestone worth celebrating! While future funding will be needed to ensure Canada meets its commitment to protecting 25% of land and ocean by 2025 and 30% by 2030, Budget 2021 charted a clear path for action on species loss and climate change. For Nova Scotia's part and to help Canada reach this important goal, the

Misinformation and Conflicting Interests Whether or not and how Nova Scotians should have been consulted before the attempted sale at Owls Head or development deal at West Mabou Beach remains uncertain. It was only after CBC journalist Michael Gorman obtained a Freedom of Information request that the public learned of the secretive delisting of Owls Head Provincial Park. Our nature network went to court over that very question in 2020, where Bob Bancroft and NatureNS member organization Eastern Shore Forest Watch argued that government had a duty to consult with the public before agreeing to sell the parcel, even though it was not technically designated yet and only a park in name alone. Justice Christa Brothers decided that such a "public trust doctrine" respecting public lands was not the kind of "incremental change to the common law that [the] court [was] permitted to make", instead suggesting that if citizens had a problem with any politicians' decisions they should voice as much at the polls. The Liberal government was shortly after replaced by the current Progressive Conservative

It can also be difficult to get *new* protected areas designated in Nova Scotia. In 2021, the province

reached its previous 13% land protection goal with the addition of 80 new sites, including the

protection of mature forests of the Sackville River Wilderness Area in Upper Sackville and an

expansion for Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area. This helped address a large gap left

in the Parks and Protected Areas Plan, which had over 100 sites still waiting for protection at the

time. These gains were hard-won though. Following the success of misinformation campaigns

targeting the Biodiversity Act, forestry lobby groups set to work spreading misinformation about the

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 Scotian public

would no longer be able to access the area, despite government openness to ATV and snowmobile

Parks and Protected Areas Plan and the process for protecting Nova Scotia's wild spaces.

- Potential designated OHV route Route not affected by proposed Special Management Zone **Current Mineral Exploration License**
- Ingram River protected areas as proposed in 2021, taken from NSDNRR online public consultation The proposal for the Ingram River included the addition of lands to the existing South Panuke Wilderness Area, designation of the new Island Lake Wilderness Area, creation of a special management zone along the Ingram River waterway, and protection of additional lands under the Old Forest Policy. The South Panuke Wilderness Area addition was part of a volume-based crown forestry

license. Now protected, government amended its license with the company to remove these lands

(and only these lands) from the license. The northern side of the proposed wilderness area addition

bordered on a large block of public land that is part of the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative (MFI). This is a

forestry pilot project that gives the Mi'kmaq forest planning and management responsibility on

designated public parcels, through the guiding principles of Netukulimk, and it is unaffected by the

new protected areas designations. The 888ha Special Management Zone (SMZ) proposed for the

valley corridor would not allow for forestry activities. This area forms a thin buffer around

watercourses, wetlands, and other sensitive habitats that are inappropriate for forestry operations

anyway. The areas added under the Old Forest Policy included 54ha of old-growth and near old-

growth forest. This hectarage was so small compared to the rest of the proposed conservation lands

that it could not reasonably be considered to negatively impact forestry interests. It will, however,

As for recreational access, all Nova Scotians have the legislated right to cross forested land for the

purpose of fishing and hunting, especially public land, including Ingram River. Wilderness Area also

allow for hunting, fishing, and even ATV use in designated areas. In fact, the Department of

Environment and Climate Change had already indicated that it would amend existing provincial trail

management agreements with the All Terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia (ATVANS) and

Snowmobilers Association of Nova Scotia (SANS) to allow continued ATV and snowmobile use on

significantly benefit the conservation of declining old forest species in the area.

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 the province's existing land

protection process. Considering that the province also didn't identify any of its own new candidate

protected areas through this "strategy", many in the natural history community were left wondering

what the document even existed for. This is a serious gap, as local citizens often have useful

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

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 municipal support to finish the

Regional Park and outcry from

scientists, hobby naturalists, and the

citizens to suggest public lands for

formal protection. Take action today and

The forests surrounding Goldsmith Lake

are old, diverse, and support 95

confirmed species at risk. The Citizen

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

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

grow old again and wildlife can return.

Help the St Margarets Bay Stewardship

Association and allies protect Ingram

River from corporate capture and

government inaction.

of

signing onto their petition.

Scientists

Southwest

Nova

help BNS protect this last wilderness.

As we wait for the province to pick up the slack or, at minimum, provide a reason for the lack of

THE LAST WILDERNESS the only major section of public land in IN KINGS COUNTY the County that remains largely forested **Chain Lakes Citizen-Proposed** without human habitation. To date, there Wilderness Area has been little opportunity or process for

OLD BIODIVERSE

FORESTS

Goldsmith Lake,

Annapolis County

SOMETHING FOR

EVERYONE

Ingram River

Wilderness Area

"[Minister Halman, Premier Houston, and/or your MLA], Following the federal government's example and call from the IUCN to increase the amount of land and oceans under formal protection, in 2021, the province renewed its commitment to nature with a promise to protect a total of 20% of Nova Scotia's public lands by 2030. This a 7% increase from the previous 13% goal, which I was happy to see the province achieve in

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.

area] towards official protection?", and "Do you mean to say that government has no intention to release a full 20% Protected Areas Plan, incorporating citizen knowledge and desires for community-nominated protected areas?"

3) Contact your MP and tell them you support the 30% by 2030 national protected areas goal.

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