



ISLAND  
NATURE  
TRUST

**JUNE 2023**  
**#158**

*Dedicated to the Protection of  
Natural Areas in Prince Edward  
Island Since 1979*

**Magazine**

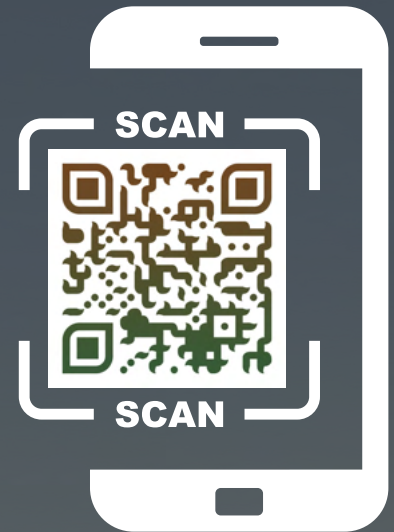


**INT**



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Throughout the magazine you will see QR codes accompanying some articles. The codes are a gateway to additional online info & resources.

When you see a code simply open your smartphone camera app, aim at the code and click the pop-up link on your screen. You will then be taken directly to the article or page on your smartphone browser.



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with great pleasure that I offer this introduction. Within the following pages are exciting announcements, encouraging updates, timely articles, and focus pieces on some of the wonderful donors, sponsors, and volunteers that are supporting the Trust.

I am pleased to announce that as of June 20, 2023, Island Nature Trust owns and protects in perpetuity just over 10,000 acres of land. A special thank you to Bruce and Patricia Craig for donating the parcel of land that got us to this point.

As we celebrate this great success, we are reminded that our work is far from over. 10,000 acres is equivalent to less than 1% of the province's landmass. With a goal to see 10% protection, and a current protection rate of 4.9%, the Trust and others in the PEI conservation community still have a long way to go.

On behalf of the board and staff at Island Nature Trust, I would like to acknowledge that we would not be where we are today without the partners, sponsors, and donors who helped us reach this impressive land protection number. We look forward to your continued support as we forge ahead towards our next milestone.

With 10,000 acres and aggressive conservation goals, comes great responsibility. It's imperative that we maintain a staff of skilled individuals to help us realize these goals.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge some outgoing staff for their contributions and introduce the most recent members to our team.

Thank you to Amy Frost-Wicks, former Land Stewardship Manager for her hard work managing stewardship efforts on our ever-growing inventory of natural areas. Amy is pursuing a master's degree at Memorial University.

Thank you to Johanna Merth, former Engagement Coordinator, for ushering our volunteer and community engagement programs to the "next" level. Johanna has recently joined her partner in Switzerland.

Please join me in welcoming Kaylee Busniuk and Kayle Laverty to the Trust. Proper introductions can be found on page 34.

A special thank you to the volunteers working alongside INT staff. We would not be able to meet our conservation goals without your help.



*Bianca McGregor*

Bianca McGregor  
INT Executive Director  
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A N N O U N C I N G

# 10,000 ACRES

M I L E S T O N E

Island Nature Trust (INT) is excited to announce that it has achieved a major conservation milestone by protecting over 10,000 acres of land in Prince Edward Island. This achievement marks a significant point in the organization's ongoing efforts to protect and conserve the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Island.

Since its inception in 1979 by a small group of volunteers who saw the pressing need for conservation in the province, INT has worked tirelessly to conserve and steward ecologically significant land across Prince Edward Island. Over the past four decades, the organization has secured a network of 98 natural areas, covering more than 10,000 acres of land and protected a wide variety of habitats working towards the goal of protecting 10% of the Island. These natural areas, including wetlands, forests, grasslands, and shorelines, are home to a diverse range of flora and

fauna, including many endangered and threatened species that rely on these ecosystems for their survival. The protected areas also support a range of important ecological functions that benefit our Island communities and play a crucial role in purifying air and water, storing carbon, and preventing soil erosion.

"The acquisition and protection of over 10,000 acres of land is a significant achievement for INT, and we are incredibly proud of what we have accomplished," said Bianca McGregor, Executive Director of Island Nature Trust. "However, it does not end here. 10,000 acres is similar to the size of Charlottetown city limits, and we are aiming to increase this number substantially by the end of the decade."





**GOAL**  
140,000 TOTAL ACRES  
PROTECTED

**CURRENTLY**  
68,500 ACRES PROTECTED  
BY ALL CONSERVATION  
PARTNERS

**INT**  
10,000 ACRES  
MILESTONE  
(CHARLOTTETOWN  
CITY LIMITS)

Bianca adds, "PEI's population is growing and our rural landscapes are under increased pressure from residential development, resource use, and climate change. It is important to note that most of this achievement was accomplished in the last few years, highlighting our accelerated efforts and a race-against-time to protect what little ecologically diverse land remains in PEI."

"This success was accomplished in no small part to the dedication and hard work of our donors, staff, partners, and volunteers, who have worked tirelessly to protect and preserve the natural beauty of Prince Edward Island. However, to meet our long-term goals of placing 10% of the province under protection, we need Islanders to continue their support by donating suitable land for protection or cash to INT."

In the past year, INT has protected 29 Natural Areas, totalling over 2,405 acres of ecologically significant land. In a province where 87% of the land is privately owned and population growth, development, and climate change continue to exert pressure, this recent success highlights INT's unwavering strategic commitment to permanently protect and secure large contiguous natural areas throughout PEI.

An example of this strategic objective is the recent donation of 15 acres by Bruce and Patricia Craig in Old Bedford Rd, lifting INT over the 10,000-acre mark. The generous contribution expands connectivity for wildlife by serving as an addition to the existing 100-acre Blooming Point Woodland Natural Area, which was acquired by INT in 1999. This connectivity strengthens the conservation efforts and promotes the preservation of the surrounding ecosystems.



The donated property's ecological importance further reinforces the significance of INT's approach. The presence of a freshwater marsh, forested wetland, and riparian zone along the Trout River, combined with a diverse array of micro-ecosystems, underscores the property's ecological richness. This varied habitat supports a wide range of flora and fauna, providing valuable resources for numerous species and promoting biodiversity. The property also contains ideal habitats for species such as the endangered Canada Warbler and the Olive-sided Flycatcher.

By actively focusing on creating connected and expansive natural areas, INT ensures the long-term viability of ecosystems and the conservation of vital ecological processes. These tracts of protected land allow for the preservation of intact ecosystems and the sustainable management of natural resources. INT's dedication to bringing such areas into protection contributes to maintaining healthy populations of wildlife, conserving critical habitats, and safeguarding the province's natural heritage.

Reaching the milestone of 10,000 acres demonstrates INT's effectiveness in engaging donors, landowners, and the community at large to contribute to the conservation cause. Each donation, like the one made by Patricia and Bruce Craig, plays a crucial role in realizing INT's mission and contributes to the collective effort of protecting Prince Edward Island's natural heritage for future generations of nature and people to come.

The protection of these properties would not have been possible without significant contributions from our individual donors, the Provincial government of PEI, MapleCross Fund, and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

**You can help us achieve the goal of protecting 10% of PEI by donating land or cash today:**

**[islandnaturetrust.ca/donate](https://islandnaturetrust.ca/donate)**





# INT Expands its 'Corridors of Connectivity' Mission with Generous Land Donation in Blooming Point

Island Nature Trust (INT) has reached a major milestone in its conservation efforts. With the recent donation of 15 acres by Bruce and Patricia Craig, INT's total acquisitions of ecologically important land now exceeds the 10,000-acre mark. This contribution located in Blooming Point on the Old Bedford Road, not only expands connectivity for wildlife, but also strengthens conservation efforts and promotes the preservation of surrounding ecosystems.

The story behind the Craigs' donation is one that exemplifies the deep connection between individuals and the natural world. When Bruce and Patricia purchased the land in 2020, they had plans to build a cabin. The property's historical significance - dating back to the 1700s - and its diverse ecological features, including old-growth and poplar forests, as well as a pond in need of restoration, captured their attention. Little did they know that their land was situated near the existing 100-acre Blooming Point Woodland Natural Area, acquired by INT two decades

earlier. This discovery sparked their interest in contributing to the conservation efforts of Island Nature Trust.

Bruce Craig, a historian with a passion for the Island's heritage, began volunteering at INT as a member of the board of directors in the fall of 2020. Through conversations with representatives from INT's land acquisition team, Bruce learned that a network of protected natural areas was next-to-or-near their small property. This further solidified their decision to make a significant contribution.

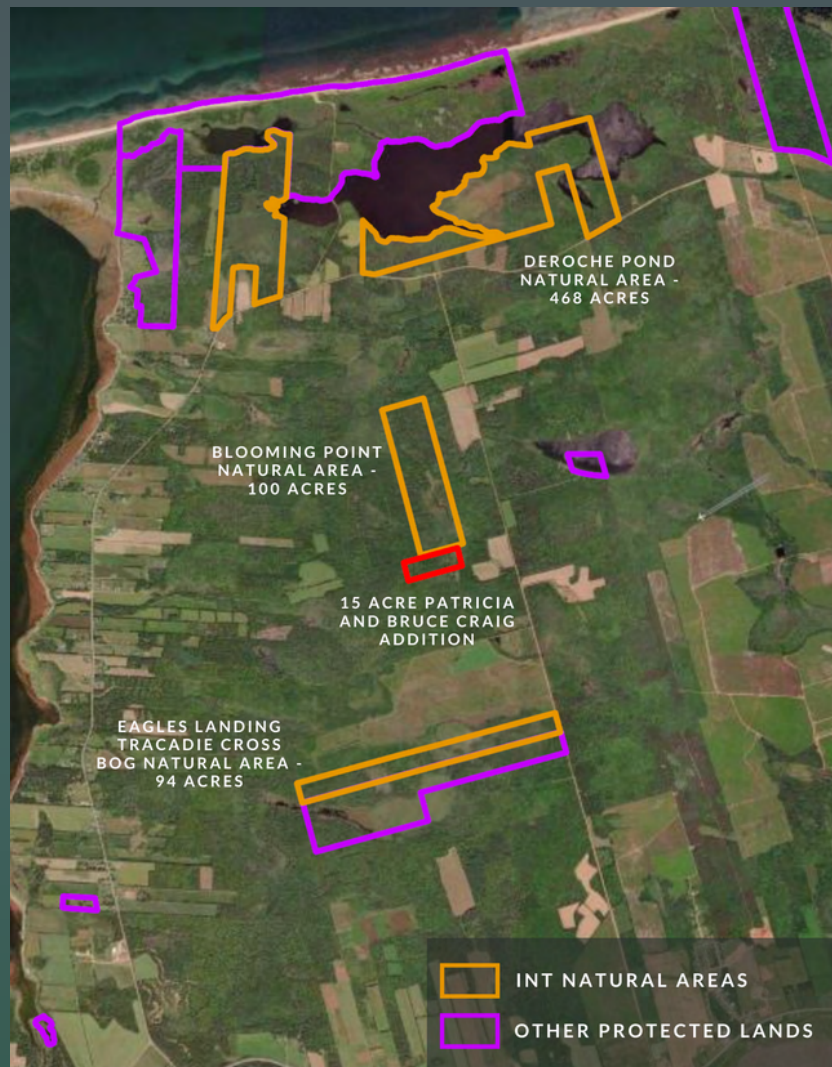




Highlighting the ease of working with INT during the donation process, Bruce expressed his satisfaction, stating, "We spoke to INT staff about our parcel and discovered that INT owned the land across from ours. It was a pleasant surprise. All along the way, the organization's professionalism and responsiveness were outstanding. For us the donation from start to finish was wrapped up in just a couple of months."

During a recent interview with INT, Bruce shared his deep appreciation for the biodiversity and unique ecological features found on their donated land. The wetland provides ample habitat for a wide variety of bird species. The presence of old-growth forests, particularly hemlocks, holds personal significance for Bruce, as the devastation caused by historical logging practices has significantly reduced their numbers on the Island.

"Even though it's such a small parcel, its ecological richness is staggering!" says Bruce. "We saw frogs, birds, and various species - although the elusive loons, of which I have a fondness for, have yet to be spotted due to their need for larger open water areas. Additionally, the presence of old-growth trees, particularly hemlocks, resonated with us as we cherish their preservation."



Bruce's vision for his donation aligns with INT's overall goal of securing and protecting large contiguous natural areas. He emphasizes the importance of acquiring lands that connect to existing properties and believes that conserving lands should also go hand in hand with providing public access and educational opportunities.



Continuing to look ahead, Bruce hopes that the Island Nature Trust's milestone of protecting over 10,000 acres will inspire others to contribute to conservation efforts. He highlights the importance of legacy giving, urging individuals to consider donating to causes they care about, such as land acquisition and conservation. Bruce and Patricia exemplify this commitment by setting up The Terra Nova Fund of Prince Edward Island, an endowment through the Community Foundation of PEI, which will support the organization's work even after their passing.

To those considering donations, Mr. Craig offered his advice, highlighting legacy giving as an impactful option. He shared, "Legacy giving allows individuals to make a broader impact on society. Donating to causes like land acquisition and conservation can have lasting effects."

When asked about his hopes for the future of conservation in the region, Bruce emphasized the need for increased support, saying, "While the government has set a target to protect 7% of PEI by 2030, I believe we should strive to achieve this goal sooner. More people who are willing to donate their land is crucial and can have a profound impact on conservation efforts."

Bruce and Patricia Craig's generous donation of 15 acres has propelled Island Nature Trust over the 10,000-acre mark for total land acquisitions. Their commitment to protecting and preserving ecologically important lands sets an inspiring example for others. With continued support and donations, INT can forge a path towards a sustainable future, ensuring the conservation of Prince Edward Island's natural heritage for generations to come.

**Are you interested in donating your land for Island Nature Trust to protect forever?**

**Gifts Of Land:  
Add A Patch**







Landowner, Kathy Stuart, recently donated the Stuart Memorial Woodland to the Island Nature Trust, which encompasses 255 acres of Wabanaki forest, bog, and riparian habitat along the Sturgeon and Montague Rivers. This donation is the fourth largest in the organization's history, exemplifying its strategic priority to secure and protect large contiguous natural areas with diverse ecosystems across the province.

## INT Seeks Donations From PEI Landowners

The Trust's Add A Patch campaign launches with the hope to reach the goal of preserving 10 per cent of PEI's ecologically significant land, through generous donations of land.

Since 1979, INT has been steadfast in its mission to acquire and protect ecologically significant land on Prince Edward Island. This is particularly challenging because 87 per cent of PEI is privately owned, making it the highest per capita rate in Canada.

This disproportionate ownership is the by-product of a 1770's colonial land grab, where PEI, known then as the Island of St. John, was mapped

and divided into 67 lots and townships. Hundreds of years later, these policy decisions continue to impact conservation efforts and stymie the Island Nature Trust's overall goal of protecting 10 per cent of the Island's land.

Kerry-Lynn Atkinson, who has been working as an ecologist on PEI for 15 years, now serves as Island Nature Trust's land acquisitions manager – a job that entails her to secure large contiguous natural areas with diverse ecosystems across the province and protect them in perpetuity. "Our strategic focus for acquisitions is to create connected natural areas,"





Kerry-Lynn Atkinson, the land acquisitions manager at Island Nature Trust, is tasked with assessing the open market for suitable land and working with potential land donors to assess if their properties are eligible for protection.

she says. “In my role, I am tasked with assessing the open market for suitable land and working with potential land donors to assess if their properties are suitable for protection. I also work with other INT staff to outline tax advantages available to land donors.”

Private land ownership makes it challenging for INT to create connected natural areas. The organization focuses on acquiring larger tracts of land with the requisite characteristics that advance INT’s core mission, including those with high biodiversity and ecosystems with species at risk.

“The size and number of conserved natural areas have been growing over decades,” says Atkinson of the land INT has already protected since 1979.

“We’re refining our strategy to connect and expand these conserved areas to allow them to carry out their natural functions and processes. Sometimes all it takes is the addition of a key piece of the landscape’s puzzle to support ecosystem services.”

Island Nature Trust defines ecologically important land as an area that contains vital habitat features that house several Island species and carries out critical ecosystem functions: including freshwater wetland, upland forests, salt marshes, old-growth forest, riparian zones and streams. Ideally these parcels are larger than 35 acres in size.

“Not to say that if an individual wanted to donate a 20-acre parcel that we’re not interested,” Atkinson clarifies.

**“Our strategic focus for acquisitions is to create connected natural areas”**





"That parcel could be a key puzzle piece that houses some really important habitat or could grow an already protected natural area – we're certainly interested in looking at smaller parcels, but larger ones are the goal right now."

Kathy Stuart is a multi-generational landowner who believes strongly in the INT's mission. Almost two decades after inheriting family plots that encompass 255 acres of Wabanaki forest, bog, and riparian habitat along the Sturgeon and Montague Rivers, Stuart donated her land to INT – the fourth largest donation in the organization's history.

Prior to her donation, Stuart protected her properties in 2018 under the PEI Natural Areas Protection Act, with the help of INT and the PEI Department of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.

"I wanted to emphasize the forested wetland in order to protect wildlife, water and the forested ecosystem from unwanted development," she says. INT fundamentally relies on the generosity of Islanders like Stuart for

**"...Sometimes all it takes is the addition of a key piece of the landscape's puzzle to support ecosystem services."**



donations, and offers a variety of incentives to landowners, including a charitable tax receipt for donated land, as well as potential capital gains tax relief through Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program.

But Stuart says the main motive for donating wasn't just because of any financial benefit – she wanted to ensure that the unspoiled storybook-quality woodland of her childhood will be protected for generations to come.

Now, the Stuart Memorial Woodland has done just that, establishing a legacy of conservation on behalf of the entire Stuart family.

"The economic value is what everyone thought about as far as a piece of woodland," says Stuart,

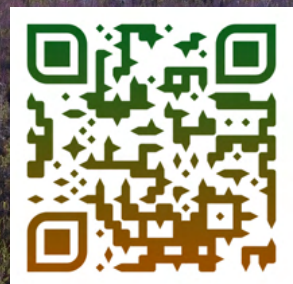
admitting she recognized the ecological value of that land, even at an early age. "For me, I understood the environmental impact beyond that economic value; it's finally coming into its own as a natural ecosystem."

Thanks to generous donations like Stuart's, Atkinson is optimistic that INT's goal of protecting 10 per cent of Island land is well within reach, and she hopes it will inspire more Island landowners to donate in the future.

"We've had our most successful year ever as far as land acquisition goes," she says. "We're hoping to continue that upward trend and keep adding to these protected areas. This won't happen without the support of Island landowners."

**To find out more about how to donate ecologically vital land to the Island Nature Trust, please visit**

**<https://www.islandnaturetrust.ca/add/>**





# PASSPORT TO NATURE 2023



Passport to Nature is an immersive, nature-based event series designed to help Islanders and visitors learn more about PEI's wild places. Our mission with this program is to help you discover and understand the rich wildlife these special places have to offer.

While a few of our events have reached capacity, don't lose hope! There's still an opportunity for you to participate! Simply get on the waitlist for your desired event by reaching out to Kayle, our Engagement Coordinator. Take a moment to send her an email, emphasizing the event you're interested in and the number of people eager to partake in the excitement. Act now and secure your spot for an unforgettable experience!

[engage@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:engage@islandnaturetrust.ca)

## Schedule:

[ISLANDNATURETRUST.CA/PASSPORT-TO-NATURE](http://ISLANDNATURETRUST.CA/PASSPORT-TO-NATURE)

**JUL 08** | **Orchid Walk & Talk**  
~~1PM - 4PM~~ **FULL**

**AUG 10** | **Walk to St. Peter's Island** INT MEMBERS  
~~9:30AM - 1:30PM~~

**AUG 11** | **Walk to St. Peter's Island** Public  
~~10:45AM - 2:45PM~~ **FULL**

**SEP 14** | **Medicine Walk** ALL AGES  
~~4:30PM - 6:30PM~~

**SEP 21** | **Medicine Walk** AGES 7 - 12  
~~4:30PM - 6:30PM~~

**OCT 01** | **Mushroom Walk & Talk**  
~~2PM - 4PM~~ **FULL**

**NOV 02** | **Trivia Night for Nature Nerds**  
~~7PM - 9:30PM~~





# In Loving Memory of



## GLORIA MCKINNON PERRET

With heavy hearts, we bid farewell to a remarkable and unwavering supporter of Island Nature Trust.

Gloria's journey with Island Nature Trust began in 2006 when she became a lifetime member. Her dedication to the cause was fuelled by an unfaltering passion for wildlife and a deep-rooted desire to safeguard the beauty of our natural areas on PEI. In 2010, together with her beloved husband Chuck, Gloria made an extraordinary contribution by donating 174 acres of their cherished shore farm on the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Island Nature Trust. This act of selflessness and love for

the land showcased their unwavering commitment to preserving natural spaces for wildlife and people of the community.

Gloria's exceptional efforts did not go unnoticed. In recognition of her outstanding contributions to national land conservation, she was bestowed with the prestigious Hon. Angus MacLean National Area Award in 2014.

We are eternally grateful for her contributions and will think of Gloria and Chuck whenever we visit the Perret-McKinnon Natural Area, where their legacy will live on forever.

To make a contribution in honour of Gloria, please visit [secure.islandnaturetrust.ca/mend](https://secure.islandnaturetrust.ca/mend) or call 902-892-7513

Contributions will help our stewardship program manage the longterm integrity of our natural areas.





# Stewardship At Home: Harvesting and Starting the Seeds of Life

In our previous issue you learned what it takes to plant young trees and saplings; now let's take it a step further. As a direct impact of post-tropical storm Fiona, many of Prince Edward Island's seed-bearing trees are laying horizontally; fortunately, word is spreading about the benefits of natural decomposition of those trees. Although it will take time for the trees to decompose and make room for new growth, this process will increase the quality of nutrients that are available in the soil. However, for the time being it seems as though many of the trees that have fallen are still rooted to some degree and they are not ready to stop providing. As you walk through the woods you may notice that the downed trees are persisting and continuing to bear flowers that will later become seeds. This makes the seeds of the larger, mature trees more accessible and gives landowners the opportunity to try their hand at harvesting and starting their own native species seed bank. Here are a few quick tips, tricks, and notes to keep in mind if you wish to start growing your own native trees:

**1.** Many species need to go through a stratification process to germinate successfully. In our northern climate, cold stratification is achieved naturally when trees release their seed in the fall, allowing them to overwinter in the organic material below. This process can also be achieved artificially by placing the seeds in a sealable plastic bag with a moist starting medium, typically sand, vermiculite, sphagnum moss, or potting soil. Different species will have different requirements in terms of length of stratification and temperature (some need cold and warm stratification).

**2.** Not all seeds will be viable. The viability of most seeds can be estimated by placing the seed in a bowl of water; the seeds that float will not germinate and should be discarded.

**3.** Be respectful, do not collect seed from someone else's property without permission.



**4.** Geographic location – some trees carry diseases, fungi, or pathogens that may be harmful to other trees. For example, the American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) suffers from beech bark disease which is the combination of the beech scale insect (*Cryptococcus fagisuga*) and a native canker fungus (*Nectria*) that impacts a large percentage of the beech trees on PEI.

**5.** Ecosystem requirement for each species – be sure that you have an area that is suitable for the species you harvest before harvesting. If you do not have a place for these species to thrive, perhaps it would be best to leave the seeds of that tree for the next person to harvest, for them to regenerate where they are, or as a source of food for the wildlife that reside in the area. Fun fact – some of our migratory bird populations are at risk and with the destruction of Fiona their seed sources may be depleted so try not to over harvest – plus birds are an excellent source of seed dispersal.

**6.** Some of our key native Wabinksi – Acadian Forest species can be difficult to identify and may have invasive look-a-likes. Ensure that you know which species you are harvesting.

## Here is a quick ID, harvest, and seed starting guide for some key native deciduous species:

### Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)

Sugar maple leaves are lobed and resemble the maple leaf on the Canadian flag, the margins are smooth, but the lobes come to a point. Be careful not to confuse it with the invasive Norway maple. The fruit, or seed of maple trees are referred to as “samara” and contain two seeds with “wings” that make them resemble helicopters when they fall from the tree and drift to the ground.



**Sugar maple leaves**



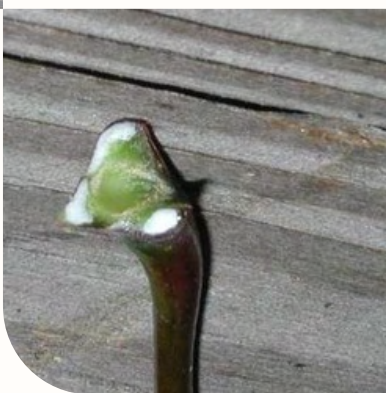
**Sugar maple samara**



The fastest way to distinguish between the non-native Norway maple and the native sugar maple is to check the color of the sap that is released from the base of the petiole. If the sap is white then the tree is a Norway maple, but if it runs clear, it is a sugar maple, and you are good to collect the samaras.



**Sugar maple leaves and seeds (left)**  
**Norway maple leaves and seeds (right)**



**Sap from Norway Maple petiole**

### **Harvest:**

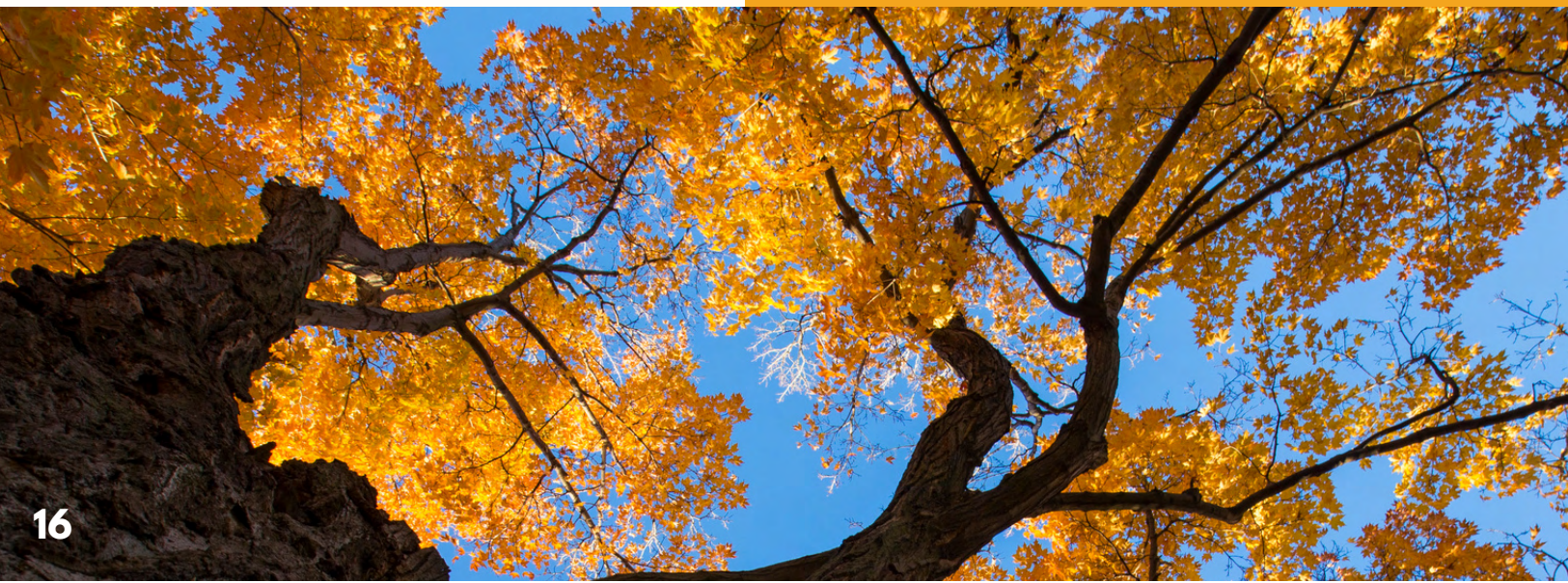
Late September to October when the samaras (winged fruit) become brown in color

### **Storage:**

- Short term: spread out on a tray in a cool, dry location
- Can be stored for up to 5 years, though viability decreases after the first year
- Germination: cold stratify in the refrigerator around 34°F in starting medium for 35-90 days and plant in the spring

### **Dispersal:**

- Can be planted in the fall following harvest, apply mulch after planting and remove mulch the following spring
- Plant in an area that will have light shade during growing season
- Plant in well drained soil





### Harvest:

May to June when the samaras become reddish tan in color

### Storage:

- Do not require a dormancy period
- Can be stored in the refrigerator if they are not allowed to dry out
- For longer storage periods, moisten starting medium in a sealable bag and store between 33-41°F for 60-90 days and plant in the fall

### Dispersal:

- Can be planted immediately after harvest or after stratification in the fall
- Moist areas, typically near streams or wetlands

## Red maple (*Acer rubrum*)

Red maple resembles a sugar maple; however the margins of the leaves are serrated rather than smooth.



Red Maple Leaf



Red Maple samaras

## Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*)

Northern red oak is Prince Edward Island's provincial tree, readily identified by its smooth, round fruit that sprouts from the tree with a beret style attachment. The lobes of the northern red oak leaves come to a sharp point and are not to be confused with the non-native English oak which are rounded at the lobe margins.

Red Oak Leaf



Red Oak Acorns



### Harvest:

- Mid-September to October when they start to drop to the ground
- Inspect and discard acorns with holes

### Storage:

- Require a dormancy period prior to planting
- Store in a sealable bag with moist starting medium in the refrigerator around 40°F for 42 days

### Dispersal:

- Can be planted in the fall to be dormant and naturally germinate through the winter months
- Germination is most successful when covered by a soil or leaf litter layer
- Not tolerant of overly wet areas



## Yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*)

The yellow birch is the longest living of the birches on the island and is readily identified when comparing the bark. The bark of the yellow birch separates in thinner strips and has a golden hue rather than white like paper birch and gray birch.



Yellow birch bark



Yellow birch fruit

### Harvest:

- Often too high to harvest by hand, so they can be collected by laying a sheet out below mature tree -seeds fall from trees naturally in October
- Seeds are incased in bracts and can be processed easily by running the bracts over a strainer, allowing the smaller seeds to fall through the strainer

### Storage:

- Seeds can be stored in a refrigerator in tightly sealed containers for up to 4 years
- Requires a stratification period to germinate before planting, store in sealable bag with moistened starting medium in the refrigerator between 32.5°F and 39°F for 30 to 60 days

### Dispersal:

- In the spring, sprinkle seeds on top of soil without covering
- Requires sunlight to germinate but loses viability when they become too dry, so plant in a moist area or somewhere that is accessible to water them

**Ensure you know the species you are collecting seeds from before planting.**

Learn more about potential invasive species from the Invasive Species Council, as well as the native, Wabinaki – Acadian forest species and the conditions in which they thrive from the MacPhail Woods Ecological Forestry Project

<https://peiinvasives.com/invasive-species/>

<https://macphailwoods.org/resources/native-plant-species.>

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Environment and  
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et  
Changement climatique Canada

macphail  
ecological woods  
forestry project



# SPECIES CONSERVATION:



## *Seasonal Awareness*

Now that it's summertime, we flock to the beach to swim, to sunbathe, and build sandcastles, possibly even to go for a run. Many beachgoers are accompanied on these adventures by their canine companions, but did you know that dogs pose a threat to wildlife? Even if Fido and Sadie are the best-behaved pups in the neighbourhood, they are still perceived as predators by many species of birds. Help conserve our coastal spaces and the wildlife that depend on them for food, shelter, and a safe place to raise a family by keeping your dog on leash at the beach.

Leashing your dog when you visit the beach is so important because it minimizes disturbance to wildlife. Disturbance is any disruption to, or alteration of normal activity patterns or behaviours like feeding or nesting. While an off-leash dog chasing a group of shorebirds may seem harmless, disturbance can have serious direct and indirect effects on birds. When flushed by an off-leash dog, birds will expend energy flying some distance away. This interrupts their feeding, displaces them from prime foraging locations, and forces them to spend more time remaining vigilant against future disturbances. Most of the shorebirds we encounter on Prince Edward Island are long-distance migrants trying to rebuild and expand the fat reserves necessary for the remainder of their epic journey. They do not have excess energy reserves to devote to avoiding dogs.

Any disturbance that causes them to stop feeding, or that limits feeding, can negatively impact their long-term health and survival.

Minimizing disturbance by loose dogs is most important during the breeding season. Several species of shorebirds construct nests on the ground on Island beaches between May and September. For example, the endangered piping plover nests in dry sand amongst sandstone pebbles and pieces of broken shell. Spotted sandpiper nest in the soil near the shoreline, while willet nest in sand dunes or near salt marshes. Generally inconspicuous, the eggs of ground-nesting shorebirds are vulnerable to being trampled by dogs free to roam the beach. When adults birds are actively incubating their eggs, disturbance can cause them to abandon their incubation duties, leaving the eggs at risk of thermal stress. Prolonged or chronic disturbance can also result in nest abandonment. Upon hatch, newly hatched chicks are extremely vulnerable as their only defence mechanism is to freeze, crouching motionless in the hopes of evading detection. Weighing less than a nickel at hatch, chicks are also at high risk of being trampled and need space to feed safe from disturbance.

Keeping your dog on leash at the beach is an easy and effective way to earn them good dog status this summer. It's also important to leash your dog in natural areas, on trails, and along field edges to protect ground-nesting birds that call those spaces home, like ovenbird, hermit thrush, and bobolink.



# VOLUNTEER FEATURE:

*Jacob Robar*

– Conservation Guardian

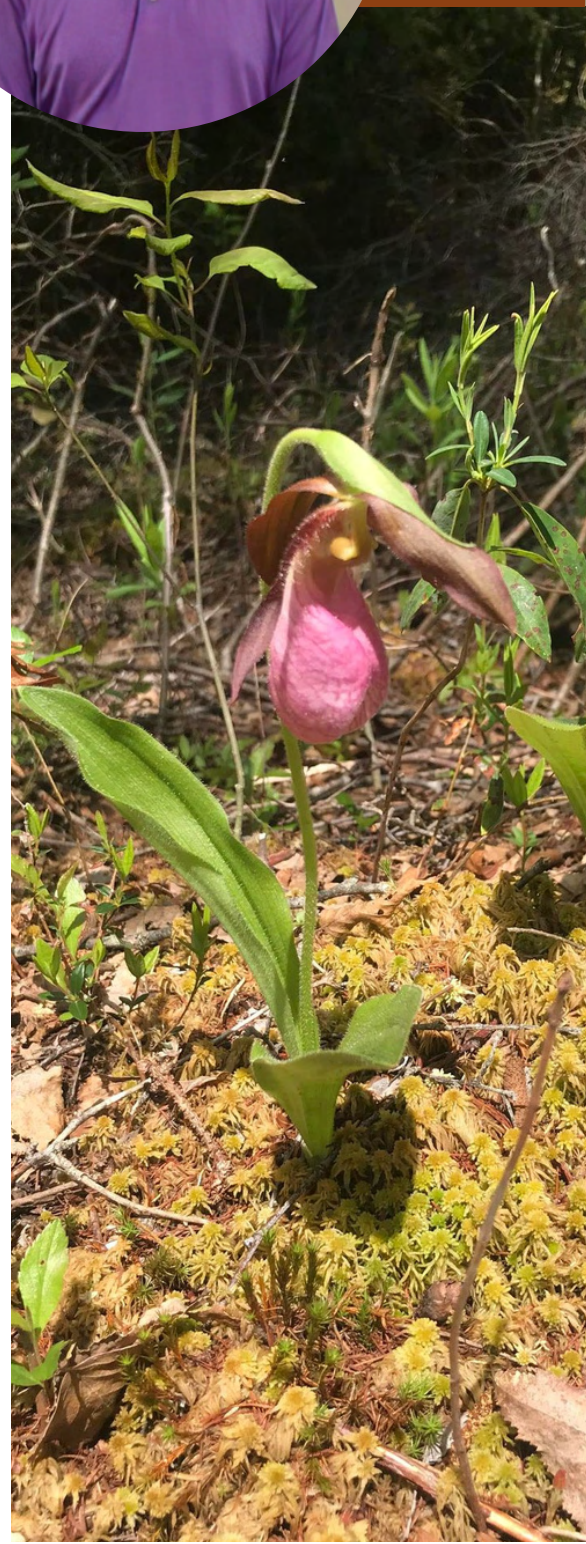


## NEBRASKA CREEK AND JOYCE GAUDET INT PROPERTIES

BY JACOB ROBAR

Hi, my name is Jacob Robar and I am the Conservation Guardian for Nebraska Creek Riparian Zone and the Joyce Gaudet Miscouche Bog Natural Area Properties. I moved to PEI from Nova Scotia over 10 years ago for school, I now call Kensington home. My love for nature and especially the forest began at a young age. This passion was passed down to me from my father, who originally worked as a forestry tech in Nova Scotia, as well as from spending time at the family woodlot. Once in PEI, I purchased my own woodlot on the Allen Rd, which was adjacent to an INT property. In an attempt to get some more information about the area and the surrounding properties I reached out to INT. From there, a partnership was born.

My volunteerism with INT began with work on my own property and the fact that I was always near the INT properties, so it only made sense to join the organization as a Conservation Guardian in 2021. I began by familiarizing myself with the two properties, spending many days walking, flagging, making way points with Avenza Maps, and ultimately putting up the iconic yellow INT signs. These properties at Nebraska Creek and the Miscouche Bog often became my getaway, my home away from home.





My passion for nature began with my father quizzing me about what types of trees we saw in the forest and how to identify them, but now, it has become so much more than that. It was the array of trees that originally got me hooked, like seeing a stand of cedar for the first time. However, my passion for nature and the area has now expanded into a fascination with the wildlife, the history of the area, the bog ecosystem, and the creeks and streams that flow there. All of these factors have led me to feel compelled to donate my time and energy to INT and these magnificent pieces of land in such a unique part of our Island.



My hope is that all the work that I am investing into these properties, whether it be the monitoring, preservation, or the documentation of these beautiful natural areas will one day lead them to becoming someone else's passion. Perhaps, as others enjoy natural areas like these, they will lead to volunteering with INT or any other organization that does fantastic work to ensure that places like Nebraska Creek and the Miscouche Bog are here for many generations to come.

**" These properties at Nebraska Creek and the Miscouche Bog often became my getaway, my home away from home."**





A photograph of two people, a man and a woman, standing in a forest. They are wearing hats and outdoor gear. The man is in the foreground, looking towards the camera, and the woman is slightly behind him, looking to the side. They are surrounded by green trees and foliage.

# ANALYZING BIODIVERSITY LOSS

*Barry Cottam & Kaylee, INT Land Stewardship Manager*

## HOW CAN GUARDIANS HELP?

BY BARRY COTTAM

As a newbie INT Guardian, the increasing loss of – and concerns about – biodiversity around the world has got me wondering how we guardians can help. One of the big issues is how to measure the loss of species in virtually every taxonomic group. Measuring loss depends, of course, on having adequate baselines of what is there, but these are generally lacking. As well, many species are as yet unnamed and no matter how many trained scientists are working on naming them, the work will never be complete. This is especially true in the field of entomology; approximately 1.5 million species have been named (although names are often not final) but estimates of unknown species run between 5-10 million. And naming in itself, while a necessary step, is just the beginning – we need to know as well when and where any given species lives. Given all this, we could be forgiven for concluding that measuring loss is impossible.

This is true only in the broadest sense, however. The effort to measure loss is certainly not futile in the local sense, and, if enough of us engage in this activity, real contributions can be made over time. Guardians are involved locally – we each have our spot(s) of INT land to check and any observations we make will add up for our particular places over time. So how do we go about making observations? How do we go about reporting them in ways that help address the issue of biodiversity loss? What resources are available to help us? And will our efforts make any difference? Answers to these questions are wrapped up in the concept of citizen – or community or public – science. Originally used to denote involvement of non-scientists in scientific research, the term generally now has broader, and sometimes controversial, meanings, not necessarily tied directly to specific studies [1].

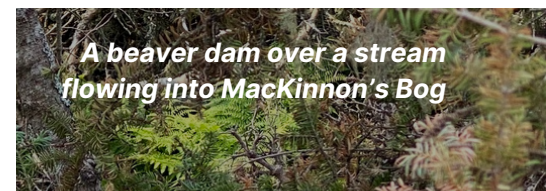
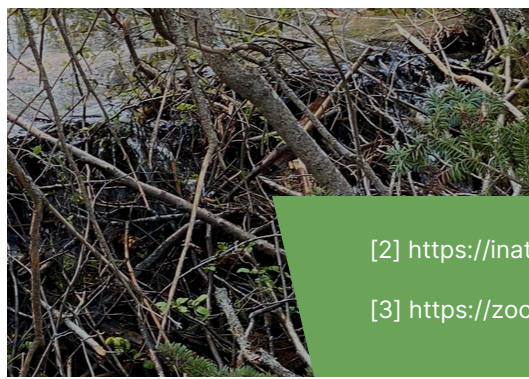
[1] [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Citizen\\_science](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Citizen_science)



First, a little story. On June 1, two intrepid INT staff and I tried to find a rather remote part of the area for which I am the guardian, MacKinnon's Bog. A large part of this bog is accessible along Hwy 313, but an even larger section is pretty much inaccessible – even Avenza Maps had trouble! We made a number of observations along the way, however, including a beaver dam, a number of spring flowers, and what may be coyote scat. For folks into tracks and signs of mammals, the scat is interesting in its own right. But budding entomologists know to pay attention too and, sure enough, other species were noted. One of these is an as yet unidentified ant, the other, illustrated here, is a carrion beetle, *Nicrophorus defodiens*, no common name, in the family Silphidae. This is a new record for the Island, to my knowledge, bringing the number of silphid species here to ten. A hike in the woods, a sighting of something arousing curiosity, a recorded observation, a new record – not an especially unusual experience here, the Island being as understudied as it is. Every new study, whether NaturePEI special projects – such as

mapping Mushrooms of PEI [2], or scientific field collections – such as the recent discovery of 295 new records of beetles on PEI [3], yields new results. (INT has its own project on iNaturalist, a collection of observations from INT Natural Areas; open to all, it's "primarily intended for" guardians, making it a good place for us to see observations from other areas besides our own.)

One need not be an expert, either in science or photography – I'm not, but I'm close to 200 new records through this simple process, although this figure needs further work to confirm. This may seem like a lot, but what it really means to me is that much more study of the Island is both necessary and rewarding to any of us who undertake it. The only reason I think this is a new record is because I posted this observation on iNaturalist, the best and most powerful way for people interested in nature to both contribute and learn. At time of writing, 2277 observers have contributed 77561 observations of 4817 species, including 222 bird species, 1191 plants, 800 fungi and lichens, 31 mammals, 10 amphibians,



*A beaver dam over a stream flowing into MacKinnon's Bog*

[2] <https://inaturalist.ca/projects/mushrooms-of-pei>

[3] <https://zookeys.pensoft.net/article/82976/>

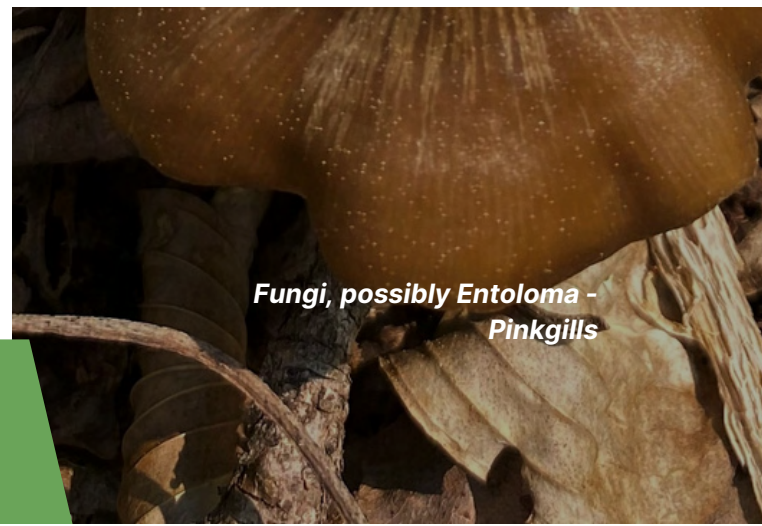


3 reptiles, and 2378 arthropods, a group that includes insects – 2220 species – and spiders – 113 species.

If you haven't signed on already, iNaturalist is easy to join – you can learn much more than you need to know at [4]. Any living – or dead! – thing in nature is grist for this increasingly popular mill. A clear photo – doesn't need to be fancy – or sound recording can get you started. The AI program helps with identifications, your smart phone will pop in the location (you'll need to use the map otherwise), and your uploaded observation will be available to anyone in the world who sees it and chooses to help with ID. Systematically organized, photos can be useful records of your own if you are into following the presence or absence of living things you regularly come across.

Many other resources are available if you wish to do some homework on making identifications. In my particular areas of interest, insects and spiders, helpful resources include BugGuide, the Moth Photographers Group, BAMONA – Butterflies and Moths of North America, and good old Google. Any number of Facebook groups and Watch programs are available as well.

Smart phone users can benefit from apps such as PictureThis, an excellent resource for plant ID, and Merlin, which provides real-time identifications of birds while recording their songs.



*Fungi, possibly Entoloma - Pinkgills*

[4] <https://inaturalist.ca/pages/help-inaturalist-canada-en>.





*The carrion beetle,  
Nicrophorus defodiens*



Will this make a difference? Yes, in a number of ways: as individuals, we will continue to learn and benefit from ongoing experiences in nature; as Islanders, we will contribute to the knowledge base of life on the Island; and scientists are turning to iNaturalist as a data source. The value of citizen science is increasing; the trained professionals can't be everywhere all the time, so need our eyes and ears. Even the controversies over use of photographs to make identifications seem more muted, as citizen scientists learn how to take photographs incorporating the characteristics that are required. While many species cannot be identified conclusively from photos, images are much better than no data at all, and knowing the order, family or genus is useful even though species certainty remains elusive.

In short, we guardians are in a good position to be helpful: we use smart phones, trail cameras, make reports. These tools help us help INT; taken a step further, as discussed above, they also help us make a broader contribution, whether we realize it or not, to the ongoing evaluations of biodiversity loss.

**Interested in  
volunteering?**

**For more info, visit;  
[islandnaturetrust.ca/volunteer](http://islandnaturetrust.ca/volunteer)**







*A mushroom grows on a decaying tree stump*



*Sandpiper foraging for food*

# The BIG Picture

Help us build The Big Picture by sending in your photos of wildlife in natural areas across PEI! Tag us and use #givingbacktonature on social media or send your photos to:

[bigpicture@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:bigpicture@islandnaturetrust.ca)

 [IslandNatureTrust](https://www.instagram.com/IslandNatureTrust)

 [IslandNatureTrust](https://www.facebook.com/IslandNatureTrust)



*A Bald Eagle perched on top of the sand dunes*



*Ideal Piping Plover habitat*



*A beautiful patch of Leather Leaf*





*Tree Swallow perched on nesting box*



*Spawn eggs*



*Goldthread*



*Busy beaver activity*



*Coastal Krummhölz*



# THE ACTION TREE

Island Nature Trust recently hosted an inspiring community project – The Action Tree - that aimed to raise awareness about the urgent need to address biodiversity loss. This initiative invited individuals to reflect on their personal commitments and take tangible actions to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity on PEI. Participants were encouraged to contribute their ideas and actions to a symbolic tree, which beautifully represented the collective impact of individual efforts.

Participants were asked to consider the changes they could make immediately and in the future, regardless of their scale or magnitude. The overarching objective was to encourage collaborative efforts and demonstrate the remarkable accomplishments that can be achieved when working together.

The responses received during exemplified the diversity and enthusiasm of the participants. Here are some of the results:



*"Transform my even aged monoculture wooded area into a varied aged biodiverse forest."*

*"Remove invasive species from my yard."*

*"Continue to teach great-grandchildren to save seeds."*



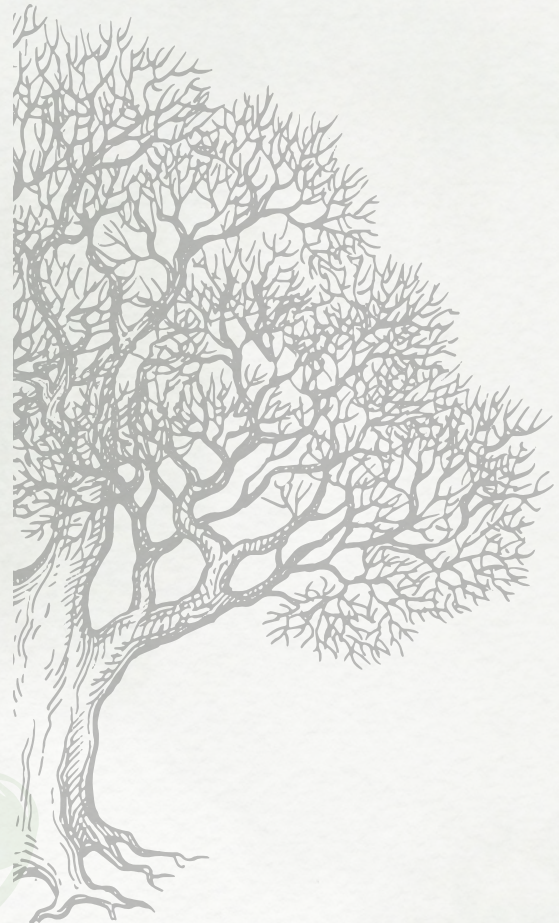
*"Upgrade our electrical panel to accommodate solar panels and electrical vehicles."*

*"Increase native seed sources."*

*"Create a spot where Barn Swallows could easily be attracted to for nesting."*

*"Ride my bike more often."*

*"Support climate progressive politicians."*



This project served as a powerful reminder of the collective responsibility we share in safeguarding biodiversity in PEI. By encouraging participants to reflect on the changes they can make, no matter how big or small, it goes to show the potential of individual actions to make a significant difference. Let us continue to work together, branch by branch, to ensure a sustainable and thriving environment for future generations!



# SEED TREE SPONSORSHIP

Island Nature Trust is grateful to announce a \$15,000 donation from Charlottetown Toyota in support of the Seed Tree Sponsorship Initiative. As a local business who wanted to make a difference, Charlottetown Toyota reached out in May to see how they could make an impact with their donation.

Seed Trees in the Wabanaki-Acadian Forest are identified as they are impactful in their age and stature. They hold ecological significance as seed and nursery providers for new generations of their species.

Launched in 2023, Seed Tree Sponsorship highlights these incredible trees, their influence on the natural regeneration of our forests, and as seed providers and gives individuals and organizations an opportunity to honour their importance through sponsorship.

Shortly after Fiona hit, the INT stewardship team canvassed many of our natural areas to identify species and forests of note where seed trees were present and in need of protection. So far staff have identified seed trees in 26 of our natural areas.

Charlottetown Toyota's donation, to support a yellow birch in the Dunk River Hardwoods Natural Area, supports the ongoing stewardship efforts of the tree itself, the natural area where it is found as well as the acquisition of other impacted forested properties that will benefit from seed tree saplings as part of their recovery.



Matthew Maclennan of Charlottetown Toyota (pictured with INT Executive Director, Bianca McGregor) was instrumental in facilitating this donation and offers the following reflection:

“After the devastation of post-tropical storm Fiona, the province of Prince Edward Island had lost a large portion of our shared natural space. Countless trees were destroyed. We here at Charlottetown Toyota feel that repairing our shared forests is a necessary effort and will be beneficial to the interests of all Islanders. This contribution given to the initiative will help with ongoing stewardship efforts and the reclamation of the yellow birch tree species that hold ecological significance within the Dunk River area.”

A big thanks to the whole team at Charlottetown Toyota! For more information on Seed Tree Sponsorship and how you can become involved, please contact Melissa Cameron at 902-892-7513 or [development@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:development@islandnaturetrust.ca)



# PARTNERSHIPS

With the successful launch of the Seed Tree Sponsorship initiative, we wish to thank Carr, Stevenson & MacKay for their sponsorship of a sugar maple in the Malcolm McArthur 1899 Natural Area, located in Queens County. Sugar maples, deciduous trees known for their famous Canadian by-product, maple syrup, grow well in shade and require deep, moist, and fertile soils. Sugar maples are a climax species of the Wabanaki-Acadian forest, living between 150 to 300 years and reaching heights of up to 28m. We are excited to welcome Carr, Stevenson & MacKay as donors to this impactful and important project.

It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that we share the news that with their most recent donations, Phillips Agri Services, helmed by John Scales, has donated more than \$50,000 cumulatively. Through the donation of a portion of the sale of their Wild Bird Food, Phillips Agri Services has been an active donor with Island Nature Trust for more than 10 years. We are grateful for the sustained support of the Phillips Agri Services team!

Island Nature Trust is pleased to announce that we are the recipient of a \$2,500 donation from Escala Sales & Marketing. An Eastern Canada sales agency made up of passionate adventurers and curators of the finest outdoor and specialty equipment and experiences. As brand partners with Patagonia, Escala participates in the 1% for the Planet program, as does Island Nature Trust. Thank you, Escala!



**Are you interested in  
sponsoring a Seed Tree?  
For more info, visit  
[islandnaturetrust.ca/seedtree](http://islandnaturetrust.ca/seedtree)**





# LAND STEWARDSHIP FIELD SEASON May 1st to June 16

Native trees and shrubs have been planted on Natural Areas with partners (including Province of PEI and Kensington North Watersheds Association)

**528**



**10**

Boundary signs have been installed at 10 Natural Areas which equals 22.8 km of boundary monitored

Natural Areas monitored for emerald ash borer with a total of 7 traps in western PEI

**3**



**3**

Natural Areas in eastern PEI have been monitored for hemlock woolly adelgid



**1390**

Kilograms (3,064.42 lbs) of garbage have been removed from Natural Areas

Natural Area name signs installed

**8**



**38**

Natural Areas have been monitored for general disturbances and habitat quality





## SAND DUNES

### Did you know..?

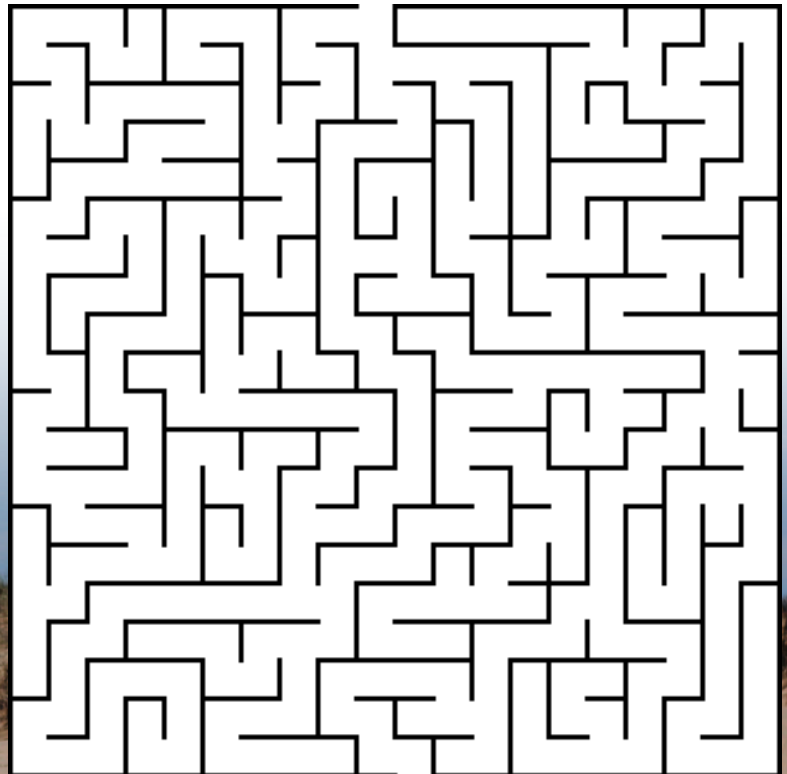
The total area classified as sand dune on PEI is approximately 59 km, which is pretty small compared to the 3,300 km of coastline we have!

These natural sand features are very sensitive, they have been protected under the Environmental Protection Act. The delicate root systems can be damaged by walking across the dunes!

Plants such as marram grass catch and stabilize sand, allowing the dunes to grow. These dunes create favourable habitats for many shoreline-bird species.



## Help the Piping Plover get to its favourite habitat on PEI!



Feel free to share your achievements on social media by using hashtag:

**#givingbacktonature**

 [islandnaturetrust](#)

 [Island Nature Trust](#)



# NEW STAFF

## Kaylee Busniuk, Land Stewardship Manager

Kaylee joined Island Nature Trust in April 2023 as the Land Stewardship Manager. Originally from Thunder Bay, Ontario, Kaylee is an ecologist and a graduate of Lakehead University (HBEM '16) and Memorial University of Newfoundland (MSc '20).

She is excited to continue her career in environmental management by leading the stewardship of INT's ten-thousand acres of protected lands. Kaylee is looking forward to building collaboration between environmental groups on PEI, engaging with Conservation Guardians, and exploring the diversity of ecosystems found in the Natural Areas.

In her free time, Kaylee enjoys volunteering with Girl Guides of Canada, hiking with her dog Roxy, and partaking in a variety of fiber arts. Kaylee is thrilled to be a part of the INT community and looks forward to meeting all the volunteers and members this summer!



Kaylee's predecessor, Amy Frost-Wicks is departing INT to pursue her master's research about the distribution of black ash in Newfoundland, at Memorial University of Newfoundland. We thank her for the management of vital stewardship work in INT Natural Areas during her three-year tenure and wish her the best on her new endeavors.

Kaylee can be reached at;  
[land@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:land@islandnaturetrust.ca)



## Kayle Laverty, Engagement Coordinator

Kayle joined Island Nature Trust in June 2023 as the new Engagement Coordinator. Kayle is from PEI and resides here with her husband and two children. She has always had a love for the outdoors and that led her to both Holland College (Wildlife Conservation-Technical Diploma) and the University of Prince Edward Island (Bachelor of Science, Wildlife Conservation).



It has been her dream to work for an organization that is driven to protect the Island's ecosystems. PEI is, and always will be, her home and she hopes the work she does can help make a positive impact. Kayle is also grateful for the opportunity to work in an engagement role. Working alongside her colleagues, volunteers, and other environmentally focused individuals means there is always more to learn!

In her free time, Kayle enjoys hiking, canoeing, and showing her kids the amazing things you can find in nature! She is excited to be able to do some of her favorite things while at work; what more could you ask for!

Kayle's predecessor, Johanna Merth left INT to finalize her master's and travel! Her presence will be greatly missed by all the staff here at INT as well as all the volunteers she has worked with. We wish her nothing but the best on her new adventure!

Kayle can be reached at [engage@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:engage@islandnaturetrust.ca)



# Nature is our security blanket...

## But it's worn out!

Help us repair this patchwork landscape so it can continue protecting you!



### Match a Patch

Donate cash so we can acquire natural areas that protect and provide for us all. Your donation will be tripled!



### Mend a Patch

Donate cash to our stewardship fund to bolster our conservation efforts.



### Add a Patch

Donate land for us to protect from future development.



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[islandnaturetrust.ca](http://islandnaturetrust.ca)

Call: 902-892-7513 Email: [admin@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:admin@islandnaturetrust.ca)



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Please take a moment to fill out the form below and return it to the address above with your membership fee. You can also renew and pay easily online at: [www.islandnaturetrust.ca](http://www.islandnaturetrust.ca) Thank you for your support!

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Student (\$10)  Single (\$20)  Family (\$25)  Life (\$500)  Donation \$: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Tax receipts will be issued for all donations)*

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[islandnaturetrust.ca/about/staff/](http://islandnaturetrust.ca/about/staff/)

## ENGAGEMENT



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Engagement Coordinator

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## FARMLAND BIRDS



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Farmland Birds Coordinator

[landbirds@islandnaturetrust.ca](mailto:landbirds@islandnaturetrust.ca)

## WHO ARE WE...?

Island Nature Trust is a non-government, not-for-profit organization dedicated to protection and management of Natural Areas on Prince Edward Island (Canada). We acquire lands to be held in trust for future generations, manage these lands as an example of appropriate and sustained use, and help private owners voluntarily protect their lands. We work with government and private landowners to create a true natural areas network on Prince Edward Island, consisting of core protected areas connected by corridors.

### Contact Us:

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Find Us Online: [www.islandnaturetrust.ca](http://www.islandnaturetrust.ca)



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