



2022-23 IMPACT REPORT



islandnaturetrust.ca



INT





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Throughout the report you will see QR codes accompanying articles. The codes can be scanned with your **Android or iPhone smartphone camera app** to reach additional online resources.

Simply aim your camera at the code and click the pop-up link on your screen. You will be taken directly to the article or page on your smartphone browser.

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Visit islandnaturetrust.ca/impact to navigate the online version of the Impact Report from a computer.





GORDON MACKAY

President

This past year has been one of continued hope. The COP15 Conference on Biological Diversity held last fall in Montreal resulted in renewed international commitments to halt biodiversity loss, including ambitious land protection targets. Re-affirmed and increased commitments from governments for nature-based solutions to climate change continue to support great conservation work across the globe.

INT, along with other community and provincially based conservation groups, charted record growth in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. It's so encouraging to be a part of the conservation community on PEI. We are unique in our proximity to each other and those that have the means to support our work. True collaboration is achievable; the kind that yields tangible results. As you'll read in the pages of this report, we're working at finding solutions together.

From increased land put under protection, to joint awareness campaigns, to hundreds of kilometers of shoreline monitored for species at risk, we could not have accomplished all that we did last year without partner conservation groups, increased financial support from government, foundations, corporate sponsors and individuals, and of course a robust volunteer force of islanders that share our core values.

Thank you to all who continue to share in our success.

BIANCA MCGREGOR

Executive Director



The 2022-2023 fiscal year was very encouraging for the conservation community as a whole. Environmental alarms are getting louder, bringing a new resolve for action. Government investments continued fueling positive change and elevating private sector support.

Increased awareness coupled with major weather events and other climate change related incidents, acted as catalysts for an uptake in donations to programs such as our Match A Patch campaign. Crowdfunded dollars helped us match contributions from MapleCross Fund and the Province of PEI resulting in a total \$464,000+ raised. This campaign, in tandem with other land protection funding sources, saw an additional 2,400+ acres added to INT's landholdings.

We were deeply moved by the outreach and support from Islanders concerned for the state of our natural areas post-Fiona. The Island's already compromised forested landscape changed dramatically over the course of a day. But out of disaster, grows hope - literally. As the conservation community rallies to figure out how to prepare natural areas for the next storm, initiatives like our Seed Tree Sponsorship program offer opportunities for individuals and businesses to support forest ecosystem resiliency. This past year yielded many examples of unbelievable generosity in the form of time, money and knowledge sharing. Some of our consistent supporters humbly request to remain anonymous, yet silently contribute in big ways that will leave a lasting impression for generations of people and wildlife in this province. There has also been a meaningful increase in unconventional donations such as legacy planning, gifts of securities and the creation of endowment funds that will benefit INT in perpetuity.

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support, and I hope you all take pride in reading about everything that you helped make possible.



SCAN OR [CLICK HERE](#)
TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT SEED TREE
SPONSORSHIP

ACHIEVEMENTS

80+

volunteers
stewarding Natural
Areas and species
at risk habitat

29

new Natural
Areas protected
in perpetuity

12

species at
risk protected

2,405

acres of land
secured

1K+

people engaged
through events and
workshops



VISION

We envision a network of protected natural areas across PEI, sustained by the love and generosity of Islanders today for the enjoyment of Islanders and wildlife tomorrow.

MISSION

To create a legacy of natural areas and wildlife habitats for future generations.

KEY MOMENTS

"UNITING FOR CHANGE:

IN FEBRUARY 2023, WE ORGANIZED AN EVENT INSPIRED BY COP15, TO FUEL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT BIODIVERSITY LOSS IN PEI AND IGNITE SOLUTIONS."

SEE PAGE 26 & 27

"FROM PROSPECT TO PROTECTED:

"FUNDING PARTNER MAPLECROSS MATCHED \$150,000 RAISED FROM THE PUBLIC, ENABLING US TO SECURE VITAL LAND FOR NATURE THROUGH THE MATCH A PATCH CAMPAIGN."

SEE NEXT PAGE

"A STORM'S AFTERMATH:

IN THE AFTERMATH OF POST TROPICAL STORM FIONA WE RECEIVED AN INFLUX IN CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS OUR MEND A PATCH CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING 100K DEFERRED FOR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMMING IN 2023-2024.

SEE PAGE 32-35

"A MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT:

WE PROUDLY ACQUIRED 300 ACRES OF ECOLOGICALLY IMPORTANT LAND IN TYNE VALLEY. THE LARGEST FEE SIMPLE PURCHASE IN INT'S HISTORY."

SEE PAGE 12



SCAN OR [CLICK HERE](#)
TO DONATE

LAND PROTECTION

The 2022/23 fiscal year was record setting for INT in a number of ways. Thanks to Canada's national target to conserve at least 30% of its land by 2030, INT was successful in acquiring funding that bolstered our ability to purchase additional acreage across the Island for protection. This, combined with donations from compassionate land donors, enabled us to secure a total 2,405 acres for protection across PEI – the largest amount of land INT has secured within one year since its inception in 1979! 40 separate parcels that will entail 29 new Natural Areas will be protected in perpetuity under the PEI Natural Areas Protection Act. In addition, INT worked with partnering organizations to secure a further 244.54 acres for future conservation purposes on PEI.

INT is excited about the biodiverse new natural areas and the ecosystem services and natural processes that each of them will forever support. In general, the more diverse an ecosystem is the more resilient and adaptable it is. With this in mind we are proud to have accomplished securement of a variety of habitat types across the province including, but not limited to:

ECOSYSTEMS LEGEND



FORESTED WETLAND AND BOGS

Biodiversity hotspots that filter air and water, help defend against storms and flooding, and are significant carbon sinks. Forested wetlands are forest communities with soils that become saturated for at least a portion of the growing season. In PEI, bird species of conservation concern tend to use forested wetlands. More than 500 acres have recently been secured.



RIPARIAN FORESTS

Connectors and protectors – they exist along stream, river and lake margins and provide crucial natural corridors for birds and mammals to travel on. They can be considered 'living highways' for both aquatic and terrestrial animals alike. We acquired over 9 km of aquatic river and stream habitat this year with riparian forests located along both sides.



COASTAL AND KRUMMHOLZ FORESTS

Coastally influenced forest communities and stunted, wind-blown trees growing in exposed conditions. Coastal forests are protectors that act as a natural erosion buffer and play a key role in protecting interior forests and infrastructure from storm events. Within our new Natural Areas INT secured 1.21 km of coastline in 2022/23 that encompass coastal and krummholz forested habitat.



SALT AND FRESHWATER MARSHES

Providing essential habitat for many organisms and playing a crucial role in the aquatic food web. They also protect shorelines against storms, act as natural pollution filters and function as carbon sinks, sequestering greenhouse gases and playing a role in offsetting climate change. More than 3.5 acres of salt marsh and greater than 100 acres of freshwater marsh were acquired in 2022/23 with additional larger tracts pending and due to transfer in the 2023/24 fiscal year.



UPLAND FORESTS

Forest communities with well-drained soils that do not become saturated for extended periods of time. They support a diverse community of associated plants and animals, and are home to some of our most at risk species such as the little brown bat and the northern long-eared bat. Hundreds of acres of various forest stand types were secured this fiscal.

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES LEGEND

For over forty years INT's 'ask' is a simple but profound one: Help us acquire and protect the natural spaces that sustain our collective wellbeing.

The value of nature to people has long been recognized, but in recent years, the concept of ecosystem services has been developed to describe these various benefits. An ecosystem service is any positive benefit that wildlife or ecosystems provide to people. The benefits can be direct or indirect—small or large.

The natural areas INT acquired in 2022-2023 all provide ecosystem services that Islanders depend on to maintain both healthy lives and defend our communities against the effects of climate change.

Cultural

Non-material benefits obtained from ecosystems



Spiritual & inspirational



Educational



Recreational & aesthetic



Climate regulation & carbon storage



Flood protection



Water regulation & purification



Regulating

Benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes



Pollination



Pest control



Erosion protection & soil retention



Biomass-based energy resources

Provisioning

Products obtained from ecosystems



Food & medicines



Groundwater supply & fresh water



Wood & fibres



Biodiversity



Nutrient cycling



Soil formation

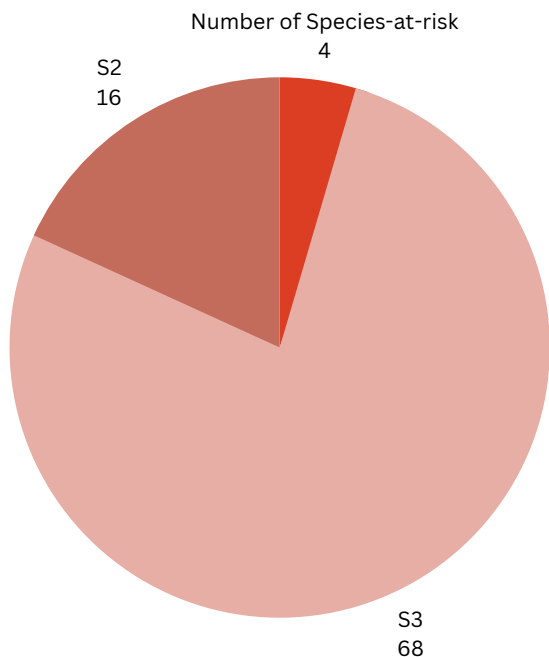
Supporting

Services necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

Each land acquisition undergoes an on the ground assessment to gather baseline data regarding the property's current state, ecological values, and any issues of note requiring future monitoring or management actions. Already our team has tracked a number of occurrences of various species of conservation concern located on the new properties, and our work has just begun! From federally listed species at risk to provincially listed vulnerable and imperiled species, the team often returns with notable findings from our newly acquired lands (Graph 1.). It is rewarding to know that we are having a positive impact on these struggling species and that their habitat within these new Natural Areas will be protected.

Occurrences of Species of Conservation Concern (Graph 1)



Species-at-risk - Wildlife species at risk, classified as extirpated, endangered, threatened, or a special concern through the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA).

S3 Vulnerable - Vulnerable in the province due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation.

S2 Imperiled - Imperiled in the province because of rarity due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the province.

S1 Critically Imperiled - Critically imperiled in the province because of extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer occurrences) or because of some factor(s) such as very steep declines making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the province.

Every new INT property requires significant oversight from INT's stewardship team, including biological inventories, active management to reduce human impacts if they exist on the sites, facilitation or restoration to support biodiverse regeneration, monitoring for and active invasive species management when necessary. INT's goals don't end with securing these new natural areas for conservation, but shift to focus on the efforts required to steward these lands. We are committed and excited to do so!

We want to offer our thanks to our supporters and partners in conservation. We couldn't have done this without you.

BIODIVERSITY LEGEND

The Species-At-Risk our new conservation lands protect:



CANADA WARBLER

The threats to this iconic threatened bird include land conversion of breeding and nonbreeding habitat. In PEI, they are summer breeders in forested wetlands.



RUSTY BLACKBIRD

The rusty blackbird is a migratory songbird species, experiencing population decline and conservation concern primarily due to habitat loss, wetland degradation, and potential contamination from heavy metals.



OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER

The olive-sided flycatcher is a bird species characterized by its distinct "quick-three-beers" song, its population is experiencing declines due to habitat loss in its breeding and wintering areas, compounded by threats from pesticide use and climate change.



EVENING GROSBEAK

The evening grosbeak is a colorful songbird known for its distinctive beak and vibrant plumage, which is endangered primarily due to habitat loss, human disturbance, and changes in food availability.



EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE

The eastern wood-pewee is a small migratory bird species known for its plaintive call, and while it's not currently considered endangered, its populations could potentially decline due to habitat loss and climate change effects impacting its breeding and foraging areas.



BLACK ASH

Black Ash or Wisqoq is an important part of Mi'kmaw culture. Flexible, strong and easy to work with the Mi'kmaw have been using it to make tools for hundreds of years.

INVERNESS NATURAL AREA

Located adjacent to the Portage Wildlife Management Area, this property is characterized by a large section of open water marsh, bog, and forested wetland. The biodiversity within these ecosystems is impressive and complete with ecologically significant species such as black ash, white ash, American elm, and eastern white cedar. The wetlands that are present on this property and the surrounding areas are habitats favoured by species-at-risk such as the olive-sided flycatcher.



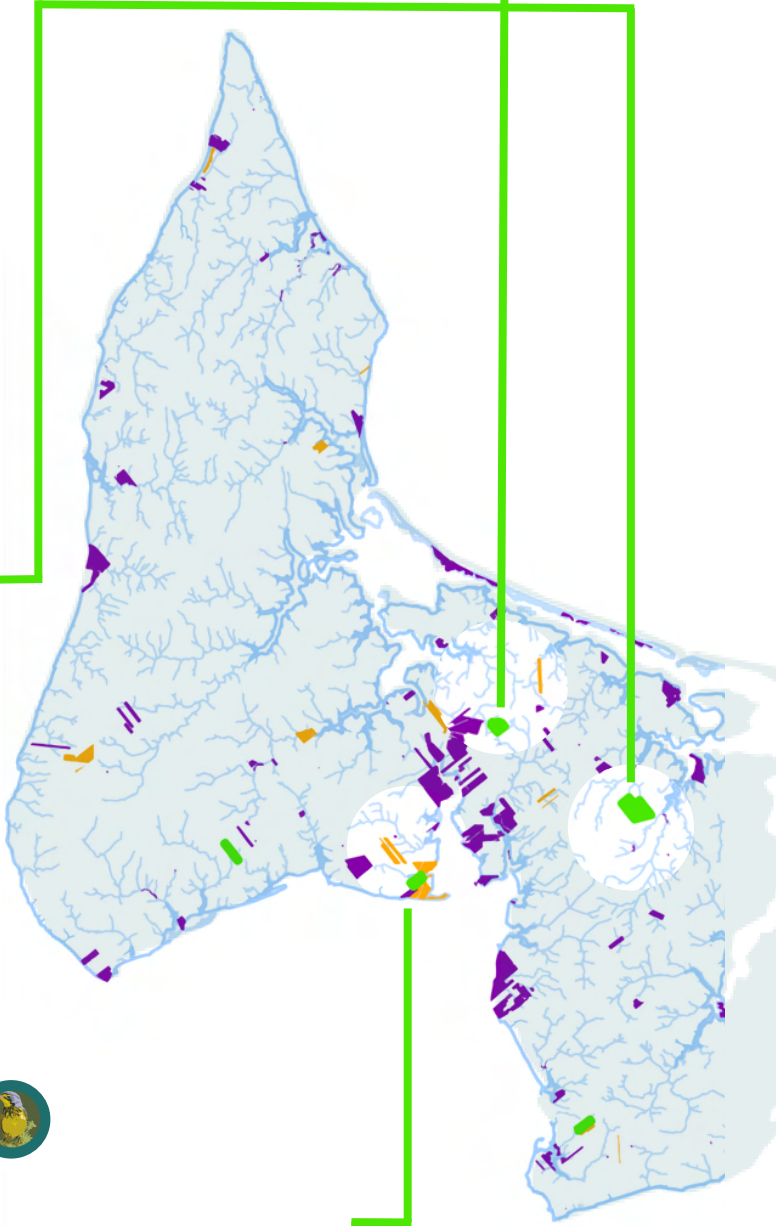
MAPLECROSS-PORT HILL STATION NATURAL AREA

INT's largest acreage purchase in its history. The Port Hill Station Natural Area is a large swath of forested land near the town of Tyne Valley with red maple, yellow birch, and American beech. There are sections of mature forest, treed bog, and riparian freshwater marsh. Once the location of the train station for the town of Port Hill, this region of Prince County contains contiguous forests and wetlands.



ACADIAN MARSHES PERCIVAL RIVER SALT MARSH NATURAL AREA

Part of the largest contiguous tract of salt marsh on the Island, which extends into roughly 1,700-acres of protected lands within the Percival River watershed. 6% of the parcel is comprised of salt marsh where, much like other protected wetlands, it will continue to carry out its critical process of carbon sequestration and storage. The wetlands on this property and the surrounding areas contain ideal habitat for species-at-risk such as the eastern wood-pewee and the Canada warbler.



MAPLECROSS - MORELL RIVER RIPARIAN ZONE

NATURAL AREA

An extension of the existing provincial and INT protected areas, Martinvale-Corraville Wildlife Management Area and Morell River Riparian Zone Natural Areas. Contained within this property are a diverse array of ecosystems including a tributary of the Morell River, an open water marsh, a forested wetland, and a regenerating upland forest. The riparian zone and wetlands on this property provide essential habitat for species-at-risk such as the Canada warbler and the olive-sided flycatcher.



MIDGELL RIVER RIPARIAN ZONE

NATURAL AREA

Contains large amounts of bog and riparian freshwater marsh surrounded by mature forest. The Midgell river is an ecologically significant waterway that is protected by two INT natural areas and a 2,700-acre provincial wildlife management area. This region of central Kings County contains an ecologically rich mix of ecosystems, with mature forests, forested wetlands, open bogs, and riparian marshes along the Midgell River. The federally at-risk Canada warbler has been seen in this region, and black ash has been recorded in the area by ACCDC.



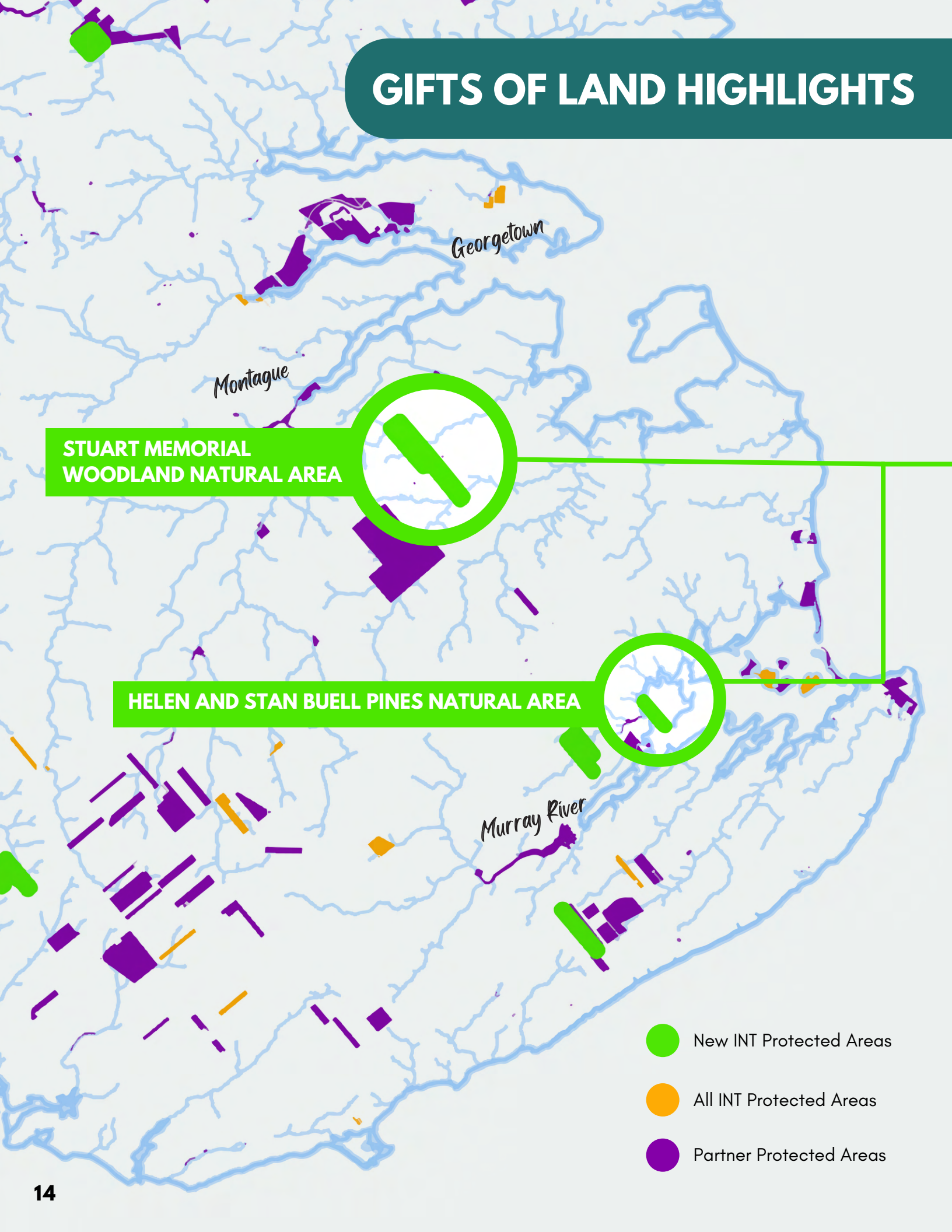
HIGH BANK BOG

NATURAL AREA

Contains lowland forest stands in southeastern Kings County, PEI. The forest found on this property is primarily intolerant mixed wood stands, with a black spruce den and a mature hemlock grove. The southern portion contains a black spruce bog which is ecologically important because of its ability to store large quantities of carbon. This southern border bounds to a network of private and provincially owned natural areas. The large, forested wetland and bog on this property are important ecosystems for species-at-risk such as Canada warbler and the eastern wood-pewee.



GIFTS OF LAND HIGHLIGHTS



**STUART MEMORIAL
WOODLAND NATURAL AREA**

HELEN AND STAN BUELL PINES NATURAL AREA

-  New INT Protected Areas
-  All INT Protected Areas
-  Partner Protected Areas

STUART MEMORIAL WOODLAND NATURAL AREA

Generously donated by Kathy Stuart, this property contains a diverse array of ecosystems; including bogs and tributaries of the Thompson Creek and Montague River, some of which extend into a freshwater riparian marsh. Although once used as a homestead, the protection of this 254.89-acre property will allow it to regenerate and naturalize over time. The open wetlands on this property provide quality habitat for species-at-risk such as the olive-sided flycatcher.



HELEN AND STAN BUELL PINES NATURAL AREA

This property, generously donated by Helen and Stan Buell, contains INT's first native pine forest, as well as mature mixed wood forest in Point Pleasant, PEI. The property hosts coastal bluffs along the Murray River, and spans across the point to Krummholz forest and salt marsh habitat along the Greek River. The mature coniferous and mixed wood forests present on this property and the surrounding areas are critical for species-at-risk such as the eastern wood-pewee.



FUNDERS & LAND DONORS



Thank you to all of our Add-A-Patch land donors: Leonard Gallant, Rosemary Henderson, David and Dessie Dingwell, Geoffrey Paynter & Janet Marshall, Kathy Stuart, Helen & Stan Buell, and the Blair McIntosh Family.

INT would also like to extend our gratitude to those who contributed financially to support our land acquisition efforts: Government of PEI, Environment and Climate Change Canada, MapleCross Fund, Echo Foundation, McCain Foundation, Wildlife Habitat Canada, the Schad Foundation, Consecon Foundation, Charitable Impact Foundation, an Anonymous Foundation, and generous individual supporters of our Match A Patch campaign.

SPECIES AT RISK

SHARING OUR LANDSCAPES



INT is deeply committed to the protection and responsible management of our natural heritage. In our tireless efforts to protect the Island's unique ecosystems and their biodiversity, we coordinate vital programming dedicated to the conservation of endangered and threatened avian species. Our programs are specifically tailored to the protection of species-at-risk according to the threats and pressures each encounters. Province-wide monitoring efforts focus on bobolink, a grassland-nesting species present in agricultural

landscapes, in addition to piping plover and bank swallow, which nest and raise their families in the coastal ecosystem already recognized for its high biodiversity value. In addition to our species-specific initiatives, INT plays a crucial role in preserving forested lands, which serve as vital refuges for numerous species-at-risk (see page 11). Our dedication to these places mirrors our unwavering commitment to the broader mission of conserving the biodiversity of Prince Edward Island.

COASTAL

PEI's beautiful, sandy beaches attract thousands of visitors every year. Our coastline also features soaring sandstone bluffs and cliffs, extensive sand dune systems, barrier islands, and barachois ponds. While these coastal spaces are attractive places for recreation and relaxation, they are also home to a large number of plants, breeding birds and mammals, and migratory shorebirds. By following best practices, we can all share the shore.

AGRICULTURAL

Agriculture is central to our economy and our culture in PEI. Much of the province's native forests have been converted to agricultural fields and farmland, and many wildlife species (including species-at-risk) have had to adapt to this modified ecosystem. We must now adapt our modern practices to allow them to recover and thrive.

FOREST

Forested landscapes are the most vulnerable to loss in Prince Edward Island. This landscape encompasses the province's forested uplands, riparian forests, forested wetlands, and coastal forest (krummholz). Many of our native species-at-risk are forest dwellers and they depend on intact, diverse stands of forest to survive.



**PIPING
PLOVER**

286 visits made to Island beaches to search for returning Piping Plover and monitor their nesting success

153 kilometers of beach shoreline cleaned of marine debris and garbage

736 kilometers of beaches walked to monitor this species-at-risk



BOBOLINK

42 Landowners participated in the ALUS Delayed Hay Program to delay hay cutting to a safe date of after July 15th

533 hectares of hay harvest delayed until after July 15th for Bobolink conservation

296 estimated Bobolink chicks fledged as a result of this delayed hay harvest



**BANK
SWALLOW**

42 new colonies identified along Prince Edward Island's coastline

82 bank swallow colonies surveyed by staff and volunteers

53 kilometers of coastal habitat surveyed for Bank Swallow colonies

LAND STEWARDSHIP FIELD SEASON

It is a significant undertaking to responsibly steward land in the context of protection in perpetuity. It lies at the heart of Island Nature Trust's mandate for land conservation.

Land stewardship, meticulously carried out by our dedicated staff and passionate volunteers at Island Nature Trust, remains a cornerstone of our conservation efforts. This collective commitment ensures the conservation and restoration of vital habitats, safeguarding biodiversity for future generations. Through hands-on activities such as habitat restoration, invasive species removal, and wildlife monitoring, our collaborative endeavors contribute to the resilience and health of Prince Edward Island's ecosystems. With each act of stewardship, we strengthen our connection to the land and reinforce our mission to protect the Island's natural heritage.

native shrubs planted on a coastal property to help stabilize the cliff and shoreline

145



4,990

native trees planted in three separate regenerating agricultural fields

flowering plants added to natural areas to enhance pollinator habitat

31



1,477

pounds of invasive plant species removed from sensitive environments including wetlands, riparian zones, and sand dunes

sites monitored for the presence of invasive insects (hemlock woolly adelgid and emerald ash borer)

6



5,291

pounds of illegally dumped trash removed from our forests at Hessian Farm 1810 Natural Area, Jenkins Complex Natural Area, and Hansen-Maclsaac Natural Area

hours spent clearing fallen, leaning, and hazardous trees, caused by the impact of Fiona, from our trail networks in eight Natural Areas

660

Natural Area name signs installed

17



1

half-burnt remains of a cabin torn down and removed from a Natural Area

new Conservation Guardians added to our network across the Island

8

473

total volunteer hours contributed by Conservation Guardians and other volunteers

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

Volunteers form the bedrock of community stewardship, driving Island Nature Trust's conservation mission to fruition. Their selfless contributions amplify our capacity to protect and preserve the island's ecological treasures. With their hands-on involvement, we cultivate a shared commitment to safeguarding biodiversity. Their dedication exemplifies the power of collective action, propelling us toward a sustainable and thriving future for Prince Edward Island's natural landscapes.

BANK SWALLOW VOLUNTEER MONITORING

Island Nature Trust has been monitoring bank swallow populations in Prince Edward Island since 2013, with efforts intensifying in more recent years. This year, INT staff and dedicated volunteers have successfully completed another season of monitoring bank swallows around the island thanks to partnerships with Environment and Climate Change Canada and PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund!

During 2022, Island Nature Trust staff and volunteers surveyed 53 km of shoreline and located 42 new colonies, bringing the total number located since 2020 to 142. These dedicated volunteers play a pivotal role in monitoring and safeguarding the vulnerable Bank Swallow population and their habitats. Through their passionate commitment, volunteers contribute extensive fieldwork, data collection, and community engagement, which directly informs effective conservation strategies. Their selfless contributions amplify the reach and impact of the Trust's initiatives, highlighting the power of grassroots involvement in preserving these delicate ecosystems and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for the Island's sustainability.





OUR CONSERVATION GUARDIANS

The dedication of our Conservation Guardians is what keeps our stewardship mission alive.

Natural Areas need continued monitoring for human disturbance, invasive species detection, trash removal, and biodiversity monitoring. With Natural Areas spread across the Island, from Nail Pond to North Lake, and a small staff, INT relies on the dedicated support of our volunteer Conservation Guardians.

Thanks to the support of the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund, the Conservation Guardian program continued to thrive and grow this past year. With our growing number of acres, we are always hopeful to see a rise in volunteer efforts to help continue to protect these ecologically rich areas. We want to thank all our Land Conservation Guardians for their dedication and we are thankful for their passion toward land conservation. We look forward to the year ahead and know both familiar and new faces will contribute amazing things for our efforts here at INT.



458

Volunteer hours were contributed by Conservation Guardians.



52

Natural Area monitoring reports were submitted by Conservation Guardians in 2022-2023.



66

active volunteers



SCAN OR [CLICK HERE](#) TO
WATCH CONSERVATION
GUARDIANS IN ACTION

OUR COASTAL GUARDIANS

The Piping Plover Guardian Program was initiated in the early 1990s by a handful of concerned volunteers.

Since 1995, INT has been coordinating the program, which monitors and protects piping plovers on provincial beaches. Piping Plover Guardians protect endangered piping plovers from human disturbances, educate beach users on the plight of the species, and survey beaches on the north and southeastern shores of PEI in the spring and summer.



17

**beach guardians monitoring
Piping Plover nesting sites.**



725.5

**hours contributed by beach
guardians.**



109

**off-leash dogs
observed.**



SCAN OR [CLICK HERE](#)
TO WATCH COASTAL
GUARDIANS IN ACTION

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL INITIATIVES

Throughout the year, we tackled the challenge of invasive species in various ecosystems, making significant strides in their control and mitigation.

Purple Loosestrife Pull at DeRoche Pond Natural Area - August 2022:

Our efforts against the invasive purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) were met with success by working with the Canadian Wildlife Federation's WILD Outside program. Participants removed 110 pounds of the invasive plant from around the pond, ensuring its ecosystem's health and integrity.

To learn more about our ongoing efforts and the impact of purple loosestrife, watch [here](#) or scan the QR code with your smartphone at the bottom of this page.

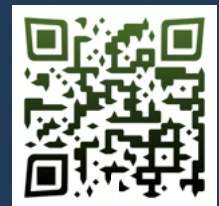
White Sweet-clover Pull at Charles Dalton Natural Area - July 2022:

Teaming up with the Tignish Watershed Management Group, we targeted white sweet-clover (*Melilotus albus*). The removal of over 500 pounds (230 kilograms) of white sweet-clover in a single day was a remarkable achievement, furthering our mission to preserve the coastal dune ecosystem.

Small-flowered Jewelweed Pull at Hennessey Farm Woodland Natural Area - July 2022:

We extended our efforts to combat invasive species to small-flowered jewelweed (*Impatiens parviflora*), an annual flowering plant native to central Asia. The adaptability and lack of competition from native species enabled its spread across various landscapes on PEI. Recognizing the threat it posed to native plant and tree species, we focused on its control at the Hennessey Farm Woodland Natural Area. With the participation of our land stewardship team and two dedicated volunteers, we worked to bring a large patch of small-flowered jewelweed under control. This endeavor required ongoing attention to prevent further spread.

These initiatives underscore our commitment to preserving the island's natural habitats by addressing the challenges posed by invasive species. We extend our gratitude to all involved for their vital contributions to these efforts.



SCAN OR CLICK
HERE TO LEARN
ABOUT LOOSESTRIFE

BEACH CLEANUP



We would like to acknowledge the collaboration of Rustico Surf Club in coordinating the Barachois Beach clean-up in December 2022. Our thanks extend to the volunteers who participated in the effort.

The beach, a nesting place for the endangered piping plover, was adversely affected by debris washed ashore during post-tropical storm Fiona. Through joint efforts and guidance from the provincial department of Forest Fish and Wildlife, numerous large and small items were successfully removed from this ecologically important area.



NEIL BENNETT AUTUMN BIRDING CLASSIC

For 29 years, Island Nature Trust and Nature PEI have united for the Neil Bennett Autumn Birding Classic, a vital fundraiser and birding event. Teams gather pledges, embarking at dawn to spot as many bird species as possible in 24 hours. This citizen science tradition, renamed after Neil Bennett in 2000, celebrates his contributions and aims to document new sightings. Results aid research on PEI's bird species, published in Island Naturalist.

Thanks to the generosity of this year's many donors, the Trust's pledge collectors and team members collected pledges of \$2,630.90.

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

4 years of Passport to Nature

From guided hikes along scenic trails to educational workshops on local flora and fauna, seven Passport to Nature events held this fiscal year encapsulated the essence of environmental stewardship and conservation. Participants had the privilege of exploring protected areas, learning about the vital role these spaces play in preserving biodiversity, and gaining a deeper appreciation for the island's unique natural heritage.

The program is built on inclusivity, with events catering to individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Families, students, and nature enthusiasts alike found meaningful ways to connect with nature and learn about its delicate balance. The initiative promotes a sense of community, uniting like-minded individuals who share a passion for the environment and a commitment to its protection.

Through Passport to Nature, INT facilitates a deeper understanding of the ecological challenges faced by our region. The program's ongoing success is a testament to INT's dedication to education, engagement, and fostering a shared sense of responsibility for our natural surroundings.

As we reflect on the achievements of Passport to Nature in the 2022-2023 year, we are inspired by the impact these experiences have had on Islanders. We look forward to continuing this tradition of connecting people with nature, encouraging a sense of wonder, and strengthening our collective commitment to conservation.

It sometimes feels like a privilege to simply volunteer as a Guardian for the Island Nature Trust. It seems a small but important contribution to the important work of INT. That we have had the opportunity to take part in the various Passport to Nature events is a substantial perk. To be able to spend time in a natural setting with a group of like minded individuals and enjoy the content provided by the knowledgeable and dedicated leaders is simply enjoyable in itself. That the knowledge and insight gained can be applied in our role as guardians makes it more than worthwhile. I would like to extend a large thank you to the INT staff for organizing these events.

CHRIS BRENNAN

330
participants



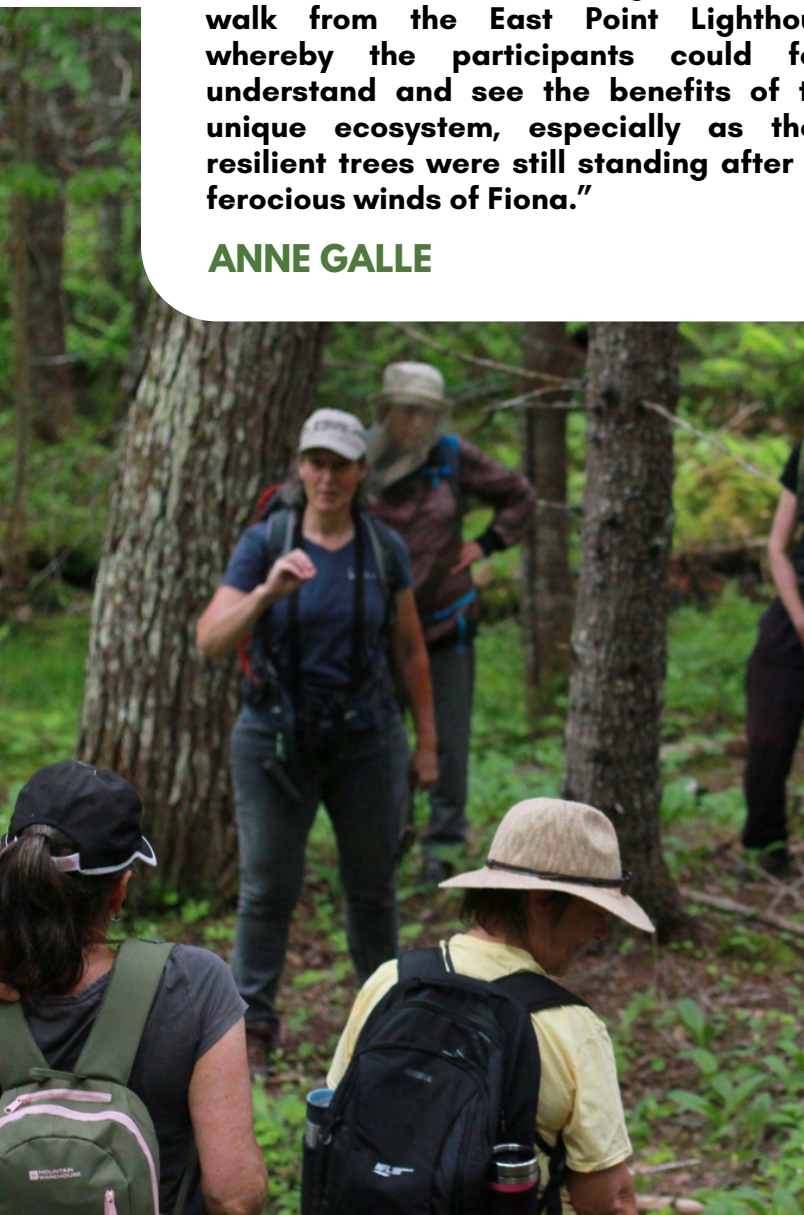
SCAN OR CLICK
HERE TO CHECK
OUT PASSPORT
TO NATURE



"Over the years I have benefited from the learning experiences through the Passport to Nature series. These are events not to be missed!"

All About Krummholz was a guided coastal walk from the East Point Lighthouse whereby the participants could feel, understand and see the benefits of this unique ecosystem, especially as these resilient trees were still standing after the ferocious winds of Fiona."

ANNE GALLE



BIODIVERSITY LOSS IN PEI

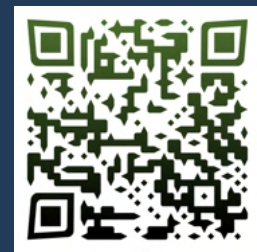
FINDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

On February 16th, 2023, Island Nature Trust hosted an event, **Biodiversity Loss in PEI: Finding Solutions Together**, at the Farm Centre in Charlottetown. This event exemplifies our commitment to prioritizing collaboration with conservation partners. We brought together expert organizations, institutions, and members of the public actively engaged in combatting biodiversity loss across Prince Edward Island and Atlantic Canada, a testament to our shared commitment.

The purpose of the event was to facilitate knowledge sharing among attendees. Eight knowledgeable presenters covered a range of topics, including historical losses of biodiversity in PEI, fostering backyard biodiversity, wetland restoration, and legal protections for species at risk. This gathering not only provided insight from field experts but also served as a local follow-up to COP15, addressing the major results from the biodiversity conference held in Montreal, QC, in December 2022.

Over 80 attendees joined us in person, with many more participating virtually. The event ignited discussions about our collective role in halting biodiversity loss and revealed Islanders' deep concern for environmental issues. The symbolic "tree of action" showcased individual commitments, reflecting the shared dedication to reversing biodiversity loss in our region.

As the event concluded, it was evident that our collective work continues. The insights gained and connections forged will undoubtedly contribute to our ongoing efforts to address ecological challenges within our province.



SCAN OR [CLICK HERE](#)
TO REPLAY THIS
EVENT

INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION

FINDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

ALEIDA TWEDEN - BIODIVERSITY LOSS IN PEI SPEAKER REPRESENTING THE MI'KMAQ CONFEDERACY

"The Mi'kmaq confederacy recognizes that biodiversity loss globally is a significant issue, and here on Prince Edward Island, we have fragmented areas that used to be forest and now are being used for agriculture and residential land.

To hold on to and conserve land and to protect biodiversity, it's important to bring an indigenous lens to the table. Indigenous people live with nature and are part of it, not disconnected from it. Indigenous land stewardship thinks 7 generations ahead by learning to use energy, water, and natural resources for the future in a very sustainable way. We are by nature conservationists."

Listen to the full CBC Radio interview with Aleida and INT's Jo Merth [here](#)

HELENA PERRY - MI'KMAQ PLANT MEDICINE KNOWLEDGE-KEEPER AND MEDICINE WALKS HOST FOR INT'S PASSPORT TO NATURE

"Stewarding Nature has never been so rewarding. At the 2022 Passport to Nature Medicine Walks I was joined by a large group of engaged attendees. I identified medicinal plants, even in Blooming Point's parking lot that have a significant meaning as medicine to the Mi'kmaq People. As a Mi'kmaq Plant Medicine Knowledge-Keeper it is my pleasure, and my calling to show others what it means to be a part of nature, not apart. Some of the topics we covered included explaining 'Etuaptmumk' or the concept and way of living called "Two-Eyed Seeing", which has made a resurgence due to the efforts of Mi'kmaq Elder Dr. Albert Marshall.

On the walk we talked about many plants such as the Atuomkinaqsi (Wild Strawberry) and its many uses; from a tea to alleviate an upset stomach, as a food source, and as a drink made from the berries. We also noted the presence of Beach Sage (or Beach Wormwood), which was a perfect example to explain the types of responsibilities an Indigenous land steward has, one of which is to help struggling native species prosper, in this case by spreading the seeds to encourage growth and prevent erosion of our PEI sand dunes. Another plant I enjoyed talking about was Kl'jimanqsi (Bayberry), a beautiful fragrant bush of which every part of the plant could be used as medicine. This was a great opportunity to talk about the importance of harvesting protocols, recognition of the seasons and how they are tied to harvesting medicines, and how harvesting is a reciprocal gift that is meant to be shared between harvester and plant. We demonstrated this by offering the traditional pinch of tobacco to the plants in the spirit of gratitude. "

FINDING SOLUTIONS

DYNAMIC DEADWOOD WORKSHOPS

Island Nature Trust hosted workshops on best practices for a post-Fiona forest throughout the year. Three workshops were held across PEI: one in Montague, Charlottetown, and Alberton. The importance of coarse woody debris, forest regeneration, and the best approaches for moving forward with personal forest management were covered during the events. These workshops were open to the public and free of charge.

We extend our gratitude to the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund and Forested Landscape Priority Place Initiative for their generous support of these workshops.

CUSTOM DEMONSTRATIVE SIGNAGE

In November, three Island Nature Trust properties were fitted with custom demonstrative signage that highlight management strategies applied on each location, which aim to bolster forest health, maintain wildlife habitat, and create climate change resilient ecosystems.

INT hosted workshops to accompany the initiative. We discussed the importance of planting diverse native tree and shrub species, methods to monitor and manage for invasive species, and silviculture practices that will aid in supporting robust forest ecosystems. Recommendations were provided to woodlot owners on methods that will support wildlife should timber harvest be required, this includes avoiding harvesting between May and August to prevent disturbing breeding birds, retaining snags for wildlife habitat, and using small scale equipment that minimizes damage soil structure. At the Trust, we use silviculture practices to increase forest health. Woody debris is left on site to build soil and provide wildlife habitat!

We thank the PEI Climate Challenge Fund, Forested Landscape Priority Place, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and all of the attendees for supporting and contributing to the Trust and the future of Natural Areas in PEI! We would also like to acknowledge the support received from the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund for the wildlife-related interpretive signage at our Jenkins Complex Natural Area!



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ENHANCING CONSERVATION EFFORTS

In 2022, INT was awarded funding from the RBC Foundation via RBC Tech for Nature. This support paved the way for the implementation of a groundbreaking project, "LandSteward: Artificial Intelligence for Island Community Conservation." INT partnered with Korotu Technology Inc. (Korotu) to develop and launch "LandSteward," an innovative technology utilizing artificial intelligence and remote sensing data. This platform enables us to monitor landscape changes, aligning with INT's vision of a network of protected areas across Prince Edward Island.

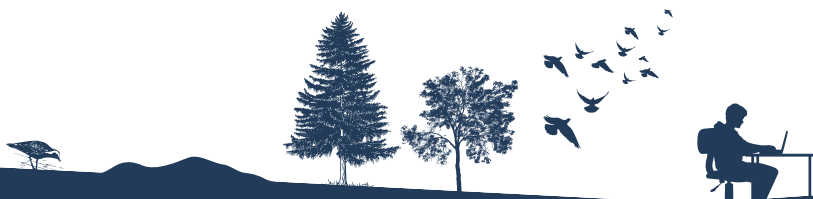
Through this collaboration, INT and Korotu harnessed LandSteward in two primary ways:

Farmland Bird Program - Remote Sensing for Mowing Detection: INT's Farmland Bird Program focuses on protecting the threatened bobolink. LandSteward's remote sensing capabilities helped monitor mowing events, ensuring optimal timing to support bobolink nesting. The tool alerted us to early mowing, allowing timely interventions.

Natural Areas - Carbon Storage Assessment: Understanding carbon storage is critical amid climate change. LandSteward streamlined data collection for assessing carbon in INT's forests. While ground-truthing confirmed accuracy, LandSteward's automation saved substantial time and resources. The tool was used to analyze carbon storage on 80 INT properties across PEI.

LandSteward's success demonstrated the value of technology for INT. Looking ahead, we aim to expand its applications. This includes prioritizing natural areas with high carbon storage and ecological connectivity, using change detection to monitor carbon fluctuations due to weather events, and extending the delayed hay program.

This project thrived due to the support of RBC Foundation, ALUS Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the Province of PEI. Their partnership enabled us to unlock the potential of technology for effective conservation, impacting both our reach and efficiency. To delve deeper into the achievements and prospects of this transformative initiative, read the full article [here](#). Your engagement fuels our commitment to preserving Prince Edward Island's natural wonders.



FINDING SOLUTIONS

PROTECTING PEI'S DUNES

In response to the pressing need for sand dune conservation, Island Nature Trust, Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Parks Canada joined forces in a groundbreaking engagement project in 2022. The initiative aimed to raise public awareness about the importance of beach dune ecosystems as a natural defence against coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change, while encouraging responsible coastal behaviour among beach users.

The project was ignited by observations that despite efforts, sand dunes in PEI were suffering from unwarranted foot traffic. The project's innovative approach stemmed from repositioning public awareness to dunes as vital protective barriers, highlighting their significance in safeguarding the island from the impending threats of climate change.

Key messages were strategically developed to emphasize the dual role of sand dunes: both as a fragile ecosystem and as a guardian against coastal erosion. The messaging emphasized the collective responsibility to preserve these natural defences and provided practical guidelines for responsible beach usage.



TOGETHER

The collaboration's multi-pronged strategy encompassed various mediums to effectively disseminate the message. A proactive media pitch ensured coverage of the sand dune conservation story, combining insights from Parks Canada and Island Nature Trust spokespersons. Informative posters and signage were placed strategically across high-traffic areas administered by Parks Canada reinforcing the need for responsible coastal behaviour.

In the digital realm, a #SandDuneSaturday social media campaign was launched to spotlight individual dunes with compelling imagery and insightful information. This approach leveraged social media's vast reach to promote awareness and engagement. Additionally, a series of public service announcement videos was created, combining informative content with captivating footage of the national park's dunes, distributed via YouTube and social media platforms.

The 2022 collaboration marked a significant stride toward safeguarding PEI's sand dunes. By uniting expertise, resources, and communication strategies, Island Nature Trust, Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Parks Canada paved the way for lasting change in the realm of sand dune conservation and responsible coastal engagement.



**SCAN OR CLICK HERE TO
WATCH THE VIDEO SERIES**



HURRICANE

'It could have been worse!' This sentiment resonates among many Islanders in the aftermath of Fiona, which struck the Island as a potent post-tropical storm on September 23-24, 2022. The storm's impact was starkly apparent, as iconic sand dunes vanished and swaths of forested areas succumbed to the relentless winds. The resulting devastation marked one of the most destructive events in recent Island history. However, Island Nature Trust's response focuses on optimism and a forward-looking approach, aiming to instill hope and resilience in the face of adversity.

Amid the damage, it's crucial to acknowledge the vital role played by nature itself. Ecosystems acted as our guardians, mitigating the worst impacts of post-tropical storm Fiona. While the sight of eroded sand dunes and fallen trees brings a pang of sorrow, these ecosystems are what shielded us from potentially catastrophic consequences.

HOW NATURE

Nature Provides: It's important to recognize that nature did its job! Intact ecosystems shielded us from the worst effects of this storm. There certainly is a sense of sadness when Islanders see their sand dunes eroded and stands of fallen trees, but we must remind ourselves that these natural systems were what protected us from the worst effects of post-tropical storm Fiona. Here is how these dynamic ecosystems have protected us and continue to do so.



The Island's Shield

Our coastline is shielded from potentially catastrophic storm surges by the Island's intact dune systems and krummholz forests. The before and after photos of dune loss on the North shore are shocking, but these iconic ecosystems have protected us all. Home to marram grass and other native plants, healthy dune systems are constantly shifting and act as buffer zones between vulnerable land behind them and the power of the sea.

FIONA

As we assess the aftermath, it's evident that our natural environments are not just beautiful landscapes, but integral components of our resilience against natural disasters. While our Natural Areas regenerate over time, the significance of these ecosystems in our protection must not be overlooked.

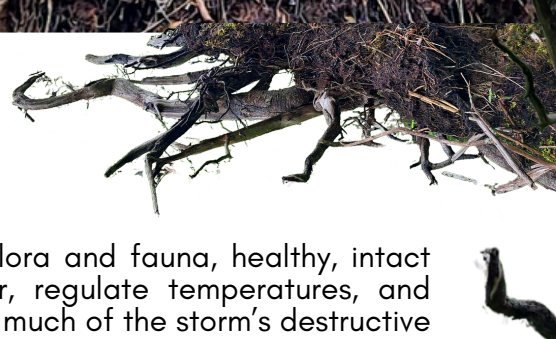
INT acknowledges that the path to recovery necessitates honouring and reinstating the fragile equilibrium between human actions and ecosystems. We extend immense gratitude to our supporters for contributing to our Mend A Patch initiative. These funds empower our stewardship team to effectively steward our precious natural areas.

For a comprehensive understanding of how nature's role during post-tropical storm Fiona shapes our restoration efforts, stay connected with Island Nature Trust's ongoing initiatives.



SCAN OR CLICK
HERE TO CHECK
OUT THE
MEND A PATCH
CAMPAIGN

PROTECTED US



The Island's Shock Absorbers

In addition to providing a home to a wide range of flora and fauna, healthy, intact forest stands prevent erosion, filter and store water, regulate temperatures, and provide cultural benefits. As windbreaks, they absorbed much of the storm's destructive energy during post-tropical storm Fiona. Imagine an island without healthy forest stands - homes would take the full force of the winds. There would be nothing to act as shock absorbers.



The Island's Sponge

One of the many ecosystem services provided by coastal wetlands is protection from storms. They absorb wave energy and slow the speed of wind and flood waters, thus dampening storm surges, before they reach our properties further inland. Flood and wind damage in those areas around our coast where we have in-filled wetlands and built infrastructure can be more prevalent during major weather events.



FIONA AFTERMATH

In the immediate aftermath of post-tropical storm Fiona our team's first priority was public safety. We spent countless hours surveying over 30 kilometers of trails and woods roads on our properties, noting over 1,100 trees downed, hanging, or threatening to fall on or near trails and footpaths. Between October 2022 and January 2023 our staff spent almost 660 hours ensuring our trail systems were safe for the public to enjoy and conducting preliminary surveys to assess the impact of Fiona on our properties.

As the seasons progressed and with the return of breeding birds, we ceased active management, including the use of chainsaws, to avoid unnecessary stress and disturbance. Through the summer we have been focused on visiting as many of our properties as possible to make notes about areas of disturbance, as well as typical monitoring activities such as looking for signs of human disturbance and surveying the biotic community. With the release of the preliminary post-Fiona forestry images by the Province of PEI, our staff and Conservation Guardians have recently begun the process of ground truthing the data to determine which areas of our forests have been impacted significantly. Though in places the impact of Fiona was severe we understand that the natural succession processes of the Wabanaki-Acadian forest, relies on canopy gaps caused by trees blowing over to allow for light to reach the forest floor and seedlings to grow in their place. Our staff have observed significantly more seedlings this season than before, likely due to the increased light penetrating the canopy. This year it isn't an uncommon sight to see a dense mat of sugar or red maple seedlings covering the forest floor!





IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

For the next few years, the path forward will focus on going back to key sites, those impacted significantly by windfall, to conduct the active management that is necessary to restore our forests to a resilient and diverse state. For some sites this will require the creation of a forest management plan, hiring contractors to prepare the site by moving storm debris to the side to allow for regeneration, and planting diverse species of shrubs and trees. The majority of our sites were minimally impacted allowing us to take a hands-off approach and allow the forest to regenerate naturally. The addition of downed trees and woody debris in our forests will create habitat for a variety of wildlife and add nutrients and moisture to the soil.

Our team is committed to stewarding our forests and other protected areas to ensure they are robust and healthy to support our wildlife communities and natural ecosystem functions that benefit all Islanders.

SPONSORSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS

Island Nature Trust is grateful to have the support of many foundations, partners, corporations, and individuals. The generosity of these donors has created a lasting impact on the landscape of our island and we wish to extend our sincere thanks.

As reflected on pages 38 and 39, INT has received sustained support from both the Government of Canada and the Government of Prince Edward Island. This year has marked their greatest funding to date and we have leveraged their donations and matching dollars for the greatest impact.



Government of Canada

Gouvernement du Canada

Foundations

Charitable Impact Foundation
Clean Foundation
Community Foundation of PEI
Consecon Foundation
ECHO Foundation
ECO Canada
MapleCross Foundation
McCain Foundation
PEI Alliance for Mental Wellbeing
Project Learning Tree
RBC Foundation
RBC Tech for Nature
Skills PEI
The Schad Foundation
Venture for Canada
Wildlife Conservation Fund
Wildlife Habitat Canada

Corporate

3rd Annual Barrie Willis Memorial Scotch
Doubles Tournament
Art by Angie A
Bennett Birding Classic
Bookmark
Carr Stevenson MacKay
City of Summerside
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Garnish Jewelry
InFocus Canada
John McCallum
John Sylvester Photography
Lone Oak
Maritime Electric
Phillips Feed Service Ltd.
Pownal Street Press
Red Island Cider

Government

Government of Prince Edward Island
Government of Canada



OUR DONORS



In this section of our Impact Report, we often like to profile a donor who has made a substantial contribution to the Trust and whose cash donation has made a tangible impact. This year, we have instead chosen to thank each and every donor who stepped forward to support the Trust in what was a challenging year in the wake of post-tropical storm Fiona.

In the time of upheaval after one of the worst storms in Canadian history, Islanders woke up to see their beloved landscape changed forever. After assessments began in our natural areas, the Trust issued a call for donations through the Mend-A-Patch Campaign. This campaign, part of the Saving our Island initiative, raises funds for restoration and stewardship work in our natural areas that helped protect us during the hurricane.

With the funds raised through the generosity of our donors, we have been working with our trained staff to facilitate ecosystem regeneration in our natural areas. The staff and board of directors of Island Nature Trust wish to thank every donor who has helped us through this difficult time.

DONORS OF DISTINCTION

Marie Ann Bowden

Margaret Cheverie

Kim Horreht

Gordon MacKay

Robert McSweeney

Thomy Nilsson

Judy Profitt

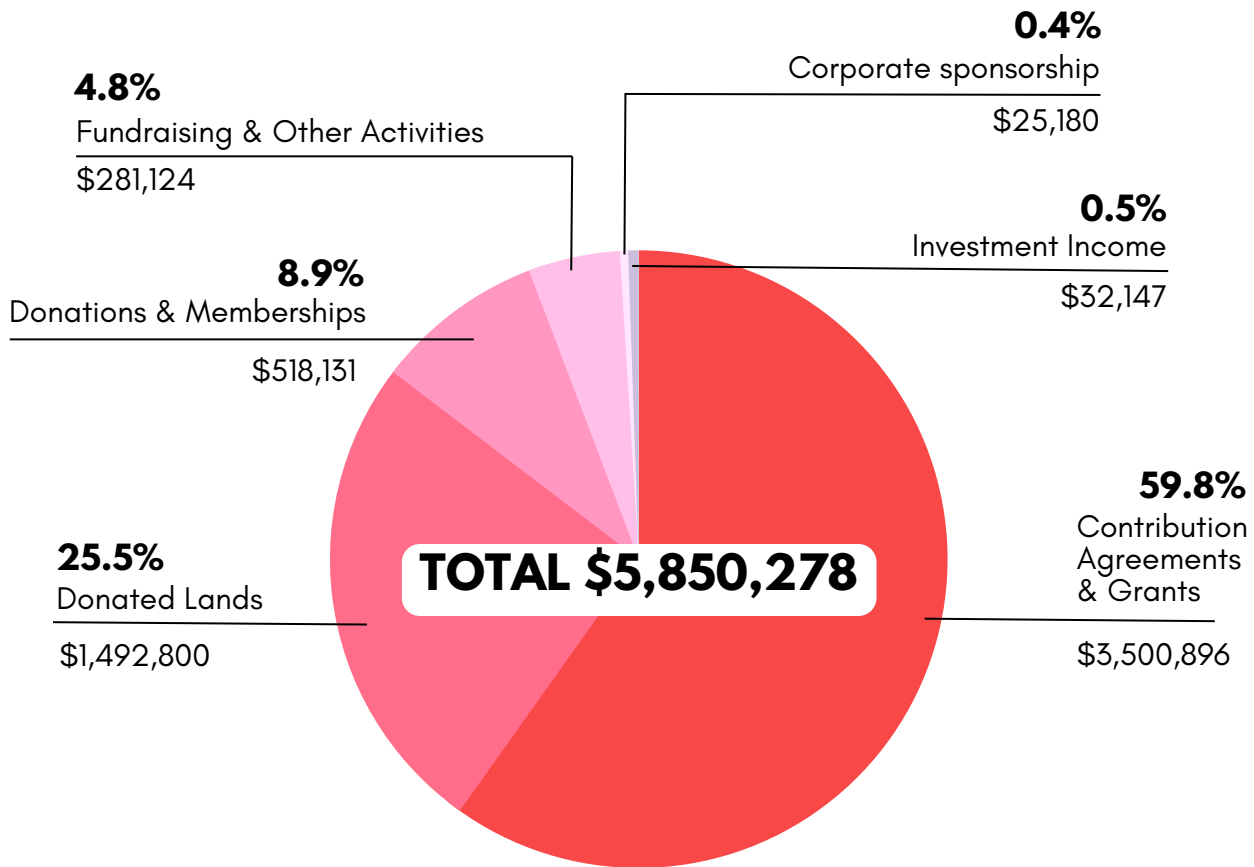
Liz Townsend & Harold Robertson

Patricia Schurman

David & Winnifred Wake

We wish to thank the donors of distinction who have chosen to remain anonymous.

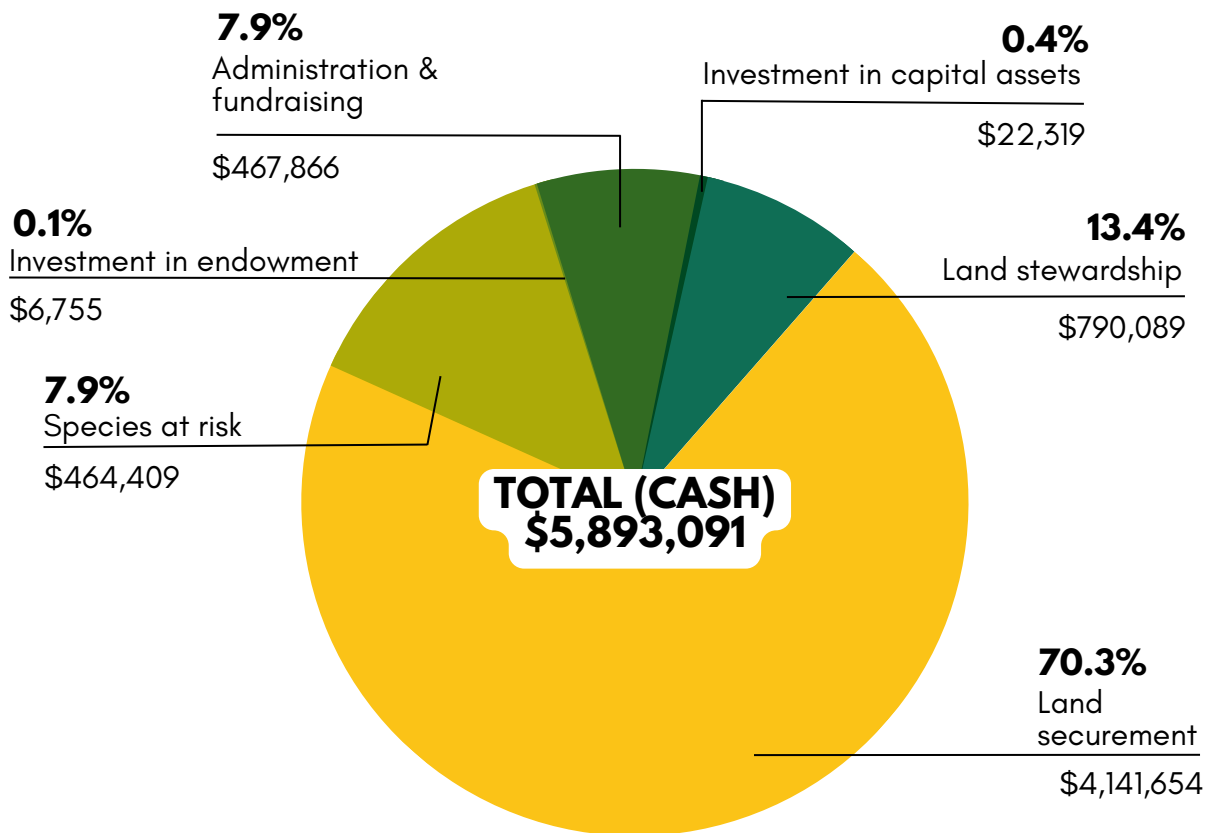
FINANCIALS **INCOME**



This year (April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023), Island Nature Trust invested \$ 5.9 million in land conservation, species conservation, stewardship and operating activities to achieve the many accomplishments highlighted throughout this report. Your support made this level of investment possible. The two largest sources of income in the year were contribution agreements and grants (59.8%) and donated land (25.5%).

Island Nature Trust finished the year in a healthy financial position, with \$ 12.6 million invested in conserved lands. Through the year staff and board members worked to ensure the long-term success of the organization by adding to the endowment and stewardship funds, setting aside 10% of the fair market value of each property acquired in the fiscal year. These practices will support land stewardship in perpetuity to create resiliency against climate change and other impacts.

FINANCIALS EXPENSES



Island Nature Trust's expenditures primarily related to land securement (70.3%), land stewardship (13.4%) and species conservation (7.9%), with administrative and fundraising costs 7.9% of total expenditures.

Financial statements are audited annually by an external auditor, Fitzpatrick & Co. Investments in the endowment and stewardship funds are subject to an organizational policy and are managed by RBC Dominion Securities Inc. Financial operations are overseen by Island Nature Trust's treasurer, as well as a finance committee. If you are interested in reviewing a full copy of the audited financial statements, please contact our office.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023-24

MEETING PROVINCIAL TARGETS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PROTECTED AREAS

In February 2021, the Province of Prince Edward Island set an overall target of 10% land protection, or 140,000 acres. At a little over halfway of this goal, INT continues to be a key contributor to natural areas protection and will be working hard to maximize our input to this provincial goal.

WORKING FOR SPECIES AT RISK

More than 50% of wildlife is declining across Canada. In a province where almost 90% of the landmass is privately owned, it is critical that we act now to protect the species that remain on PEI. We will continue to expand our reach and empower multi-generational Islanders to support species conservation.

STRENGTHENING STRONG CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS

Prince Edward Island is the most densely populated province in Canada. No conservation-minded organization can reach their goals working in isolation. INT is a partner on several multi-faceted conservation initiatives that we hope will show strong successes in the coming year, including a collaboration to create a new Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, an effort to reduce human impacts in PEI's coastal environment, and coordination of a Maritimes-wide drive to secure coastal and riparian wetland for protection.

LEADING ECOSYSTEM-BASED STEWARDSHIP

With over 10,000 acres in INT's care, a milestone reached in June of 2023, we continue to search for resources and diverse knowledge to lead by example in coastal and forest stewardship.



Photo by
Sean Landsman

THE POWER OF DIGITAL ADVOCACY

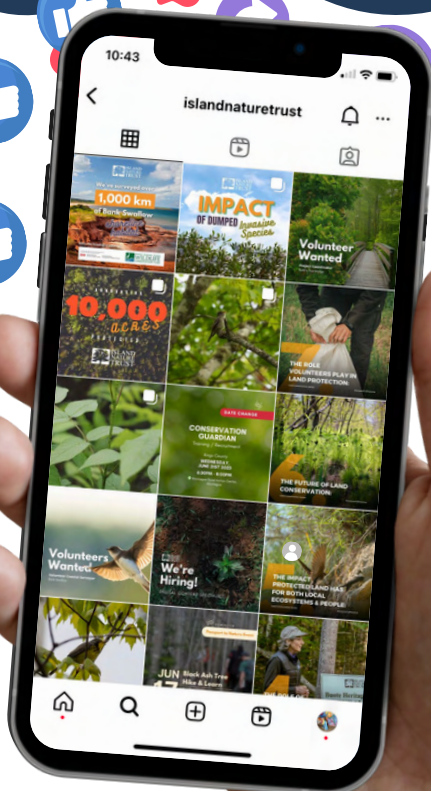
Digital advocacy is the use of technology to create, promote, and mobilize support for INT's conservation mission. By following our social media accounts, visiting our webpage, and sharing our content, you empower INT to make a significant impact in safeguarding our natural heritage for generations to come.

As INT recognizes the vital role our supporters play in safeguarding our natural treasures and in this digital age we are embracing an online approach to nature conservation through digital advocacy. Engaging with our content by liking, commenting, and sharing our posts not only boosts our visibility but also broadens our reach, spreading awareness far and wide. Through the power of online sharing and participation, you can become an advocate for nature conservation, simply by sharing our messaging online.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT
WE'VE REACHED:

 **99K**
people

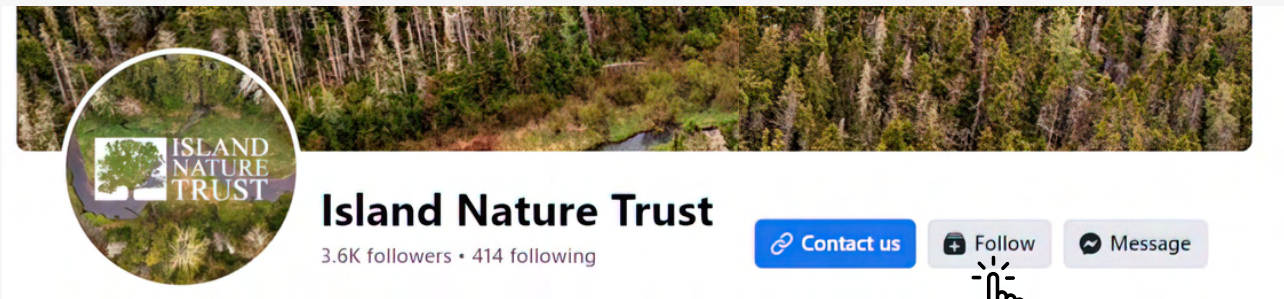
 **19K**
people



How to follow and share our posts on: **FACEBOOK**

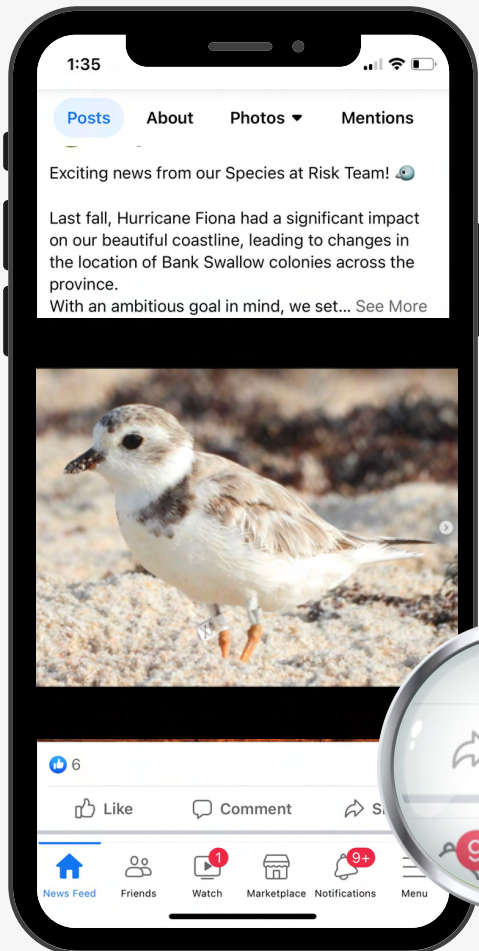


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Click the "Follow" button at the top of the INT page.



3.

Click the "Share" Button on the post you would like to share.

Write something if you wish to comment on the post for your own followers to see.

How to follow and share our posts on:

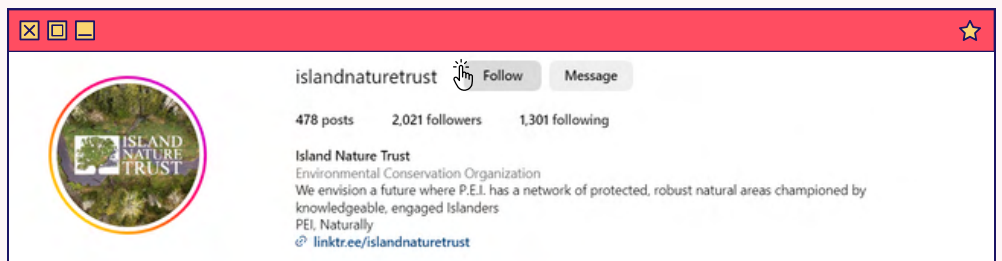
INSTAGRAM



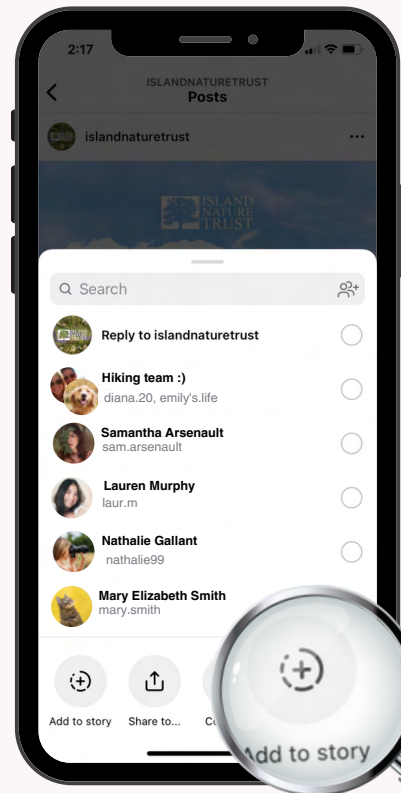
1. Scan this QR code with your smartphone to reach our page [instagram.com/islandnaturetrust](https://www.instagram.com/islandnaturetrust)



2. Click the "Follow" button at the top of the INT page.



3. Click the "▽" button on the post you would like to share.



4. Finally, click the "Add to Story" button.

**NOUS
PARLONS
FRANÇAIS**



有中文版

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