



2023-24 IMPACT REPORT



islandnaturetrust.com



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.

Don't have a smartphone?

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





GORDON MACKAY

President

As Island Nature Trust celebrates its 45th year, we are reminded of the incredible journey we've undertaken since 1979. Over these four and a half decades, the Trust has grown into a cornerstone for conservation on Prince Edward Island, thanks to the unwavering dedication of our volunteers, the commitment of our Board, and the tireless efforts of our staff. Together, we have worked hand in hand to protect and conserve the natural beauty and biodiversity that make our Island so special.

Our achievements would not have been possible without the incredible support of our donors, and partner organizations. Your passion and generosity are the lifeblood of our efforts, enabling us to continue our mission with strength and determination. For this, we are deeply grateful.

As we look to the future, the importance of our work only grows. With the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss looming large, the role of Island Nature Trust in conserving our natural heritage is more critical than ever. We remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting the Island's rich ecosystems for generations to come.

Thank you for standing with us as we continue this vital work. Together, we can ensure that Prince Edward Island remains a sanctuary for nature, both now and in the years ahead.

MELISSA CAMERON

Executive Director



We are so pleased to share our annual impact report and the achievements of Island Nature Trust in 2023-2024. As the Trust celebrates its 45th anniversary, our team has reflected on the legacy of the work that staff and volunteers have accomplished. The vision and drive of the founding members continues to inspire work at the Trust today and our current staff have achieved some wonderful accomplishments this past year.

Prince Edward Island's landscape is rich and teeming with life. At the Trust, we have a unique opportunity to explore and document this rich biodiversity. Our staff ecologists have spent a great deal of time this year documenting the natural legacy of our island. From flora to fauna, this impact report will share with you some of the important data captured in both our natural areas and on the island as a whole. This work is done through the generous and sustained support of our many partners and donors and our thanks goes out to them for their commitment to protect and conserve PEI.

The outcomes of conservation are felt all around us and yet sometimes we take them for granted. Clean drinking water, purified air and carbon storage are some of the ecosystem services that you can read about in this report. As our planet warms and we feel the effects of climate change, we are aware of the other benefits of protected natural spaces; the peace found when on a nature walk, the community shared during outreach activities and the legacy created for all of us that are a part of nature.

This report shines a light on the important achievements of this past year, and we hope that the momentum created continues to inspire you to support Island Nature Trust as we work to further protect and conserve the natural heritage of Prince Edward Island.

ACHIEVEMENTS

185

volunteers
stewarding Natural
Areas and species
at risk habitat

21

new Natural
Areas protected
in perpetuity

14

species at
risk protected

1405

acres of land
secured

29

INT hosted public
events



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

CORRIDORS OF CONNECTIVITY:

THE JUDSON FAMILY'S 117-ACRE LAND DONATION EXPANDS THE CROWN POINT – WJIKIJEK NATURAL AREA, PROTECTING COMMUNITIES FROM STORM SURGES WHILE CONSERVING VITAL CULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL TREASURES.

[SEE PAGE 14](#)



5 YEARS OF PASSPORT TO NATURE:

SIX ENGAGING EVENTS CONNECTED ISLANDERS WITH NATURE, FOSTERING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY THROUGH INCLUSIVE GUIDED HIKES, WORKSHOPS, AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

[SEE PAGE 26](#)



FLITT'S CALL – INSPIRING YOUTH:

A CHILDREN'S BOOK AND ACTIVITY GUIDE DISTRIBUTED TO 1,527 SECOND GRADERS ON PEI SPARKS ECO-LITERACY AND A LOVE FOR NATURE, EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTORS.

[SEE PAGE 28](#)



LAND PROTECTION

Island Nature Trust was founded in 1979 and acquired its first land for protection in 1982. In its 45th year as an incorporated, private charitable land trust, INT holds 11,406 acres of land comprised of 111 distinct Natural Areas.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, INT acquired 23 new parcels totaling 1405 acres (568 hectares). INT will formally protect these properties through either the PEI Natural Areas Protection Act or the PEI Wildlife Conservation Act. In addition, INT worked with partnering organizations to secure a further 687 acres for future conservation purposes on PEI.

INT is thrilled about the newly protected Natural Areas and the ecosystem services and natural processes we will support indefinitely. Generally, more diverse ecosystems are more resilient and adaptable. With this understanding, we are proud to have secured various habitat types across the province, including, but not limited to:

ECOSYSTEMS in our Natural Areas

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, forest bird species of conservation concern tend to use forested wetlands. More than 105 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. They can be considered 'living highways' for both aquatic and terrestrial animals alike. We acquired over 7.8 km of 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 5.1 km of coastline in 2023/24 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. 95 acres of salt marsh and more than 76 acres of freshwater marsh were acquired in 2023/24.

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

in our
Natural Areas

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 2023–2024 all provide ecosystem services that Islanders depend on to maintain both healthy lives and defend our communities against the effects of climate change.

The ecosystem services chart below provides a comprehensive overview of potential benefits protected areas can provide.

Cultural

Non-material benefits obtained from ecosystems



Educational



Recreational & aesthetic



Spiritual & inspirational



Flood protection



Water regulation & purification



Climate regulation & carbon storage



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

Regulating

Benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes



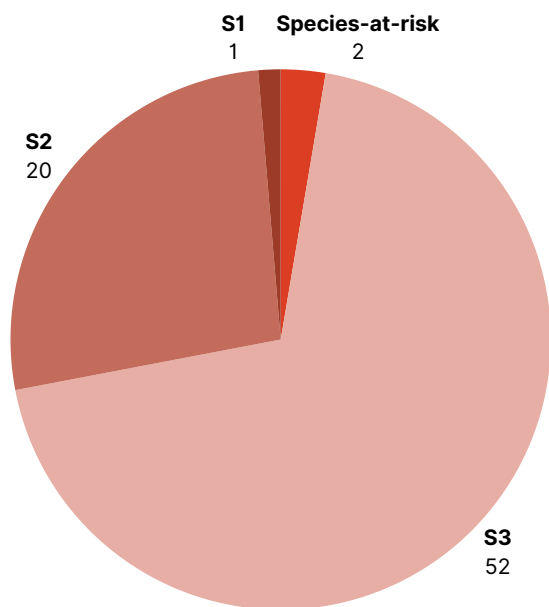
Supporting

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 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 in our Natural Areas

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 wisqog 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.

FOLEY'S POND NATURAL AREA

52.86 acres, Prince County, Central Kildare

The Foley's Pond Natural Area is comprised of three parcels surrounding Foley's Pond in Prince County. This property is characterized by a variety of ecosystems spanning from the Gulf of St. Lawrence coast to the barrachois pond, as well as an inland mixed wood forest block in Greenmount-Montrose. The forest is dominated by a variety of mature maple and spruce, but also contains provincially rare species such as white ash and eastern white cedar. The property hosts suitable habitat for the federally at-risk Canada warbler and eastern wood-pewee. These parcels expand on Island Nature Trust's existing Foley's Pond Natural Area.

MOUNT ROYAL NATURAL AREA

65 acres, Prince County, Mount Royal

Located in an agriculture dominant region south of O'Leary, PEI, this Natural Area contains lowland forest that surrounds several tributaries of the Trout River; one of the most prolific rivers for Atlantic salmon in Prince County, PEI. This property contains a rare balsam poplar swamp and a mature riparian forest with towering yellow birch and sugar maple. The ecosystems present in this parcel support the federally at-risk Canada warbler and eastern wood-pewee.

MAPLECROSS – NEBRASKA CREEK NATURAL AREA

94 acres, Prince County, Southwest Lot 16

The MapleCross - Nebraska Creek Natural Area contains several ecologically significant ecosystems in the Miscouche bog region of Prince County, PEI. This property contains significant riparian forest and salt marsh along the Grand River and Nebraska Creek ; in addition, the property contains other wetlands such as cedar-black ash-maple swamp and forested bog. These ecosystems provide habitat for the federally at-risk Canada warbler, eastern wood-pewee, and wrinkled shingle lichen. The parcel expands on Island Nature Trust's existing Nebraska Creek Natural Area, Joyce Gaudet Natural Area, and Miscouche Bog Natural Area.



FARMINGTON WOODLANDS

NATURAL AREA

75 acres, Kings County, Farmington



The Farmington Woodlands Natural Area hosts a variety of ecologically significant ecosystems in Kings County, PEI. This parcel contains a black spruce bog, mature sugar maple forest, and multiple tributaries of the Naufrage River, some of which expand into open-water marsh. INT staff observed the federally at-risk Canada warbler on this property as well several provincially rare bog orchids and marsh species. This 75-acre property expands on Island Nature Trust's existing Farmington Woodlands Natural Area, now totalling 374 acres.

PISQUID RIVER

NATURAL AREA

100 acres, Queens County, Avondale



Located in the same forest block as the 1135-acre Dromore Wildlife Management Area, this 100-acre property expands on conservation efforts along the Pisquid River in eastern Queens County. This parcel is characterized by a regenerating Wabanaki (Acadian) forest that surrounds several tributaries of the Pisquid River with expansive freshwater marsh and red maple swamps. These ecosystems provide habitat for the federally at-risk Canada warbler and Atlantic salmon.



DIRTY RIVER HEADWATERS

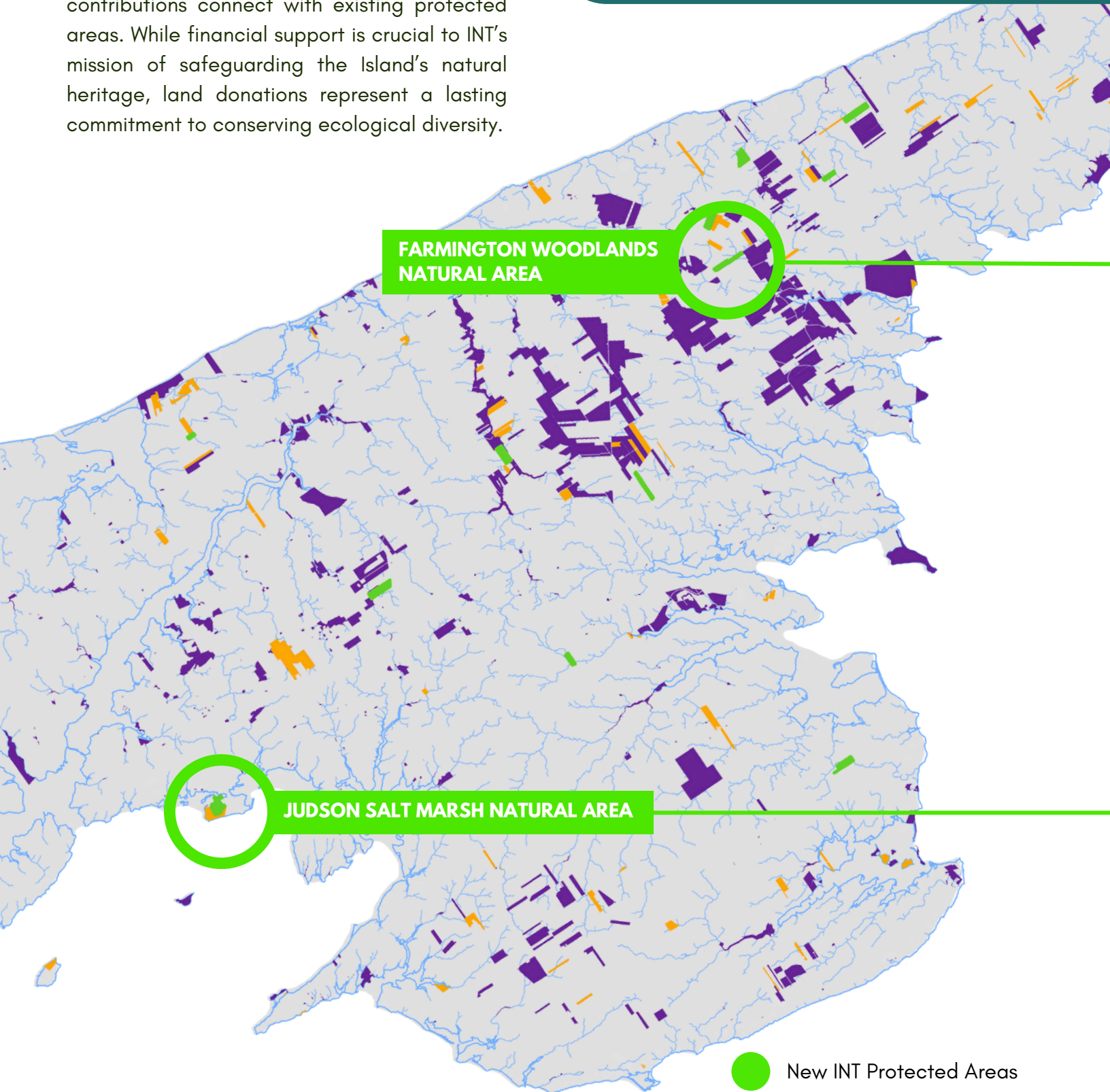
NATURAL AREA

70 acres, Kings County, Cambridge

Located in a relatively unprotected region of southeast Kings County, this property contains extensive open and forested wetlands that drain into Llewellyns Creek and the Dirty River in southeastern Kings County. The forests surrounding the wetlands contain mature red maple, red spruce, and white birch. The ecosystems present on this parcel support the federally at-risk Canada warbler (*Cardellina canadensis*).




Island Nature Trust relies on land donations to protect the natural landscapes of Prince Edward Island, especially when these contributions connect with existing protected areas. While financial support is crucial to INT's mission of safeguarding the Island's natural heritage, land donations represent a lasting commitment to conserving ecological diversity.

KEY GIFTS OF LAND



**FARMINGTON WOODLANDS
NATURAL AREA**

JUDSON SALT MARSH NATURAL AREA

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

FARMINGTON WOODLANDS NATURAL AREA

The Farmington Woodlands Natural Area in Kings County, Prince Edward Island, in addition to the purchase highlighted on the previous page has been expanded by the generous donation of a 58.5-acre parcel by George W. and Maureen Mason. This addition enhances the existing 374-acre Natural Area, further safeguarding the region and its waterways.

The property features a diverse forest mix, including balsam fir, red maple, red pine, white pine, larch, and cedar, providing a sanctuary for various plant and animal species. The area supports a blend of forest and riparian ecosystems, with provincially rare tree species like eastern white cedar and American beech. A waterway on the property feeds into the Fortune and Naufrage Rivers, linking to a significant wetland complex managed by Ducks Unlimited. This expansion is vital for maintaining the ecological integrity of the Fortune River complex.



"I hope others will see the value in protecting natural spaces."

Tax benefits make it attractive for landowners interested in conservation, providing a viable alternative to private sales."

JUDSON SALT MARSH NATURAL AREA

The Judson family donated the 117-acre Judson Salt Marsh Natural Area in Alexandra. This donation enhances the already protected 182-acre Crown Point - Wjikijek Natural Area, a coastal headland southeast of Stratford. The area is a natural barrier that protects nearby communities from storm surges and high tides, while also being a cultural and ecological treasure.

Crown Point holds significant historical value, with connections to both Mi'kmaq and Acadian history, including possible burial grounds and remnants of Mi'kmaq camps and French battlegrounds. The area's diverse ecosystems include mixed wood coastal forests and salt marshes that support at-risk species like the Canada warbler.



"Our entire family has actively worked to protect the land and keep it in its natural state."

When we were approached by the INT, we decided the timing was right for us to donate the land to ensure its continued protection."

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) must adapt to this modified ecosystem. We can assist them by changing our 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**

58

Island beaches visited and 235 surveys completed to monitor returning piping plover and their nesting success

1.85

chicks produced per monitored pair in 2023, which is above the breeding rate of 1.57 recorded in 2022

9

nesting beaches monitored and protected from human-related disturbance



BOBOLINK

95

percent of fields enrolled in the ALUS Delayed Hay Program delayed hay cutting to a safe date of after July 15th

484

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

337

estimated bobolink chicks produced as a result of this delayed hay harvest



**BANK
SWALLOW**

6

focal colonies monitored weekly from May through August to establish local breeding timelines

163

bank swallow colonies surveyed by staff and volunteers

526

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.

Baseline Documentation Reports completed for INT Natural Areas

30



630

total planted wildflowers, shrubs, and trees of diverse species on five different properties across PEI with volunteers and partner organizations

of all INT Natural Areas visited to conduct general monitoring or biological inventories

70%

new interpretive signs created for our properties with public footpaths

11



1058

pounds of invasive species (white sweet clover, purple loosestrife, and Japanese knotweed) from Natural Areas with partner organizations

new gates erected at INT Natural Areas to prevent dumping and motor vehicle access

3



2359

pounds of illegally dumped trash removed from INT Natural Areas

Natural Area name signs installed

9



307

hours of volunteer time facilitated through Conservation Guardian visits, training, and volunteer opportunities including beach clean up and tree planting

acres marked with boundary signs to denote a total of 8 protected areas

472


16

new training sessions conducted for new Conservation Guardians

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 conserve 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 began surveying for bank swallow intermittently in 2013. Ten years later, 2023 marked the beginning of a more standardized process of surveying for bank swallow in the region. In partnership with the Atlantic Canada Bank Swallow Working Group, Island Nature Trust launched a new survey protocol for monitoring this species. The new protocol aims to identify bank swallow colonies and potential nesting habitat by establishing survey routes all along PEI's coastline. Routes range between 0.5km-10km and are surveyed for potential threats to bank swallow, suitable nesting habitat, and active bank swallow colonies.

Together with nine partner watershed groups and fifteen volunteers, Island Nature Trust surveyed 526km of PEI's coastline and identified 163 active bank swallow colonies in 2023.

This was a phenomenal step towards the goal of surveying the entire coastline of PEI for bank swallow. In the 2024 field season, we have high hopes that the areas which were not surveyed in 2023 will be covered this year, thus completing a full census of the Island and contributing to our knowledge of this charming species.

Island Nature Trust would like to thank our many exceptional volunteers, partner groups, Environment and Climate Change Canada, and the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund for making this work possible.

COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP

ENGAGEMENT IN OUR NATURAL AREAS

Since its launch in 2016, the Conservation Guardian Program has been the driving force behind much of the public engagement with Island Nature Trust Natural Areas. This program has consistently provided invaluable support to INT's Stewardship Staff, achieving ongoing success in involving the community.

Despite the challenges posed by post-tropical storm Fiona, which temporarily paused volunteer events from September 2022 to April 2023, INT staff remained resilient. The storm's impact rendered some forests impassable, leading a few volunteers to step back from the program. However, INT successfully reassigned dedicated volunteers to less-impacted properties, ensuring continued engagement. While certain events, such as public dumpsite cleanups and tree/shrub planting, were postponed, the commitment to conservation remained strong.

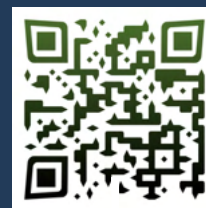
In 2023-2024, 76 Conservation Guardians were assigned to 54 Natural Areas, nearly half of INT's total Natural Areas. INT conducted 16 training sessions, welcoming 21 new Guardians, and received 61 reports across 33 different Natural Areas – crucial contributions to INT's stewardship success.

INT staff also organized three public Conservation Guardian recruitment sessions, a krummholz restoration planting, three value-added events, and a shoreline cleanup with a corporate partner. These efforts culminated in 307 volunteer hours, highlighting the community's dedication to conservation.

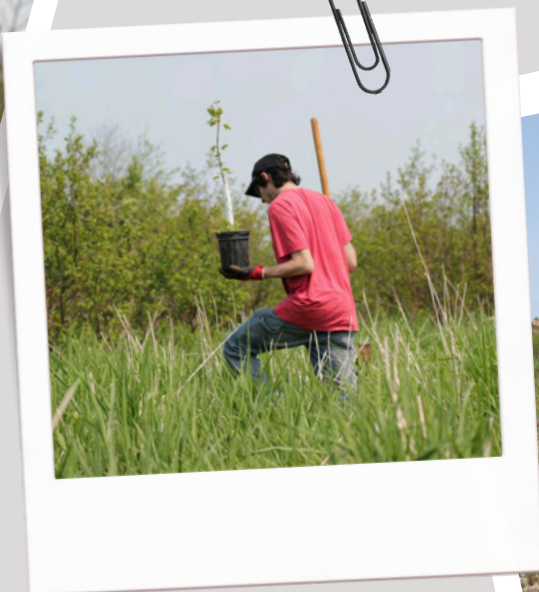
Moreover, INT continued valuable partnerships with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and PEI Invasive Species Council for purple loosestrife management at Deroche Pond, with Tignish Watershed Management Group for white sweet clover management at Charles Dalton Natural Area, and with Kensington North Watersheds Association for tree and shrub planting at Sinclair and Joyce Mackay Natural Area. Additionally, INT supported the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group by providing Buote Heritage Woods Natural Area for two public interpretive walks.

THIS NATIVE PLANT, **FIREWEED**, IS A GREAT ALTERNATIVE TO PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE.

CONSIDER PLANTING IT OR ENCOURAGING IT TO GROW IN YOUR NATURAL SPACES.



SCAN OR CLICK
HERE TO LEARN
ABOUT LOOSESTRIFE



Thank you to
all of our
Guardians &
volunteers!





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 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.



307

volunteer hours were contributed by Conservation Guardians.



61

Natural Area monitoring reports were submitted by Conservation Guardians in 2023-2024.



76

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.

INT has continued to expand the program as our organization evolved and Coastal Guardians now monitor piping plover and bank swallow across provincial beaches and shorelines. Coastal Guardians protect endangered piping plovers from human disturbances, educate beach users on the plight of the coastal ecosystem, and survey beaches on the in the spring and summer.



17

coastal guardians monitoring piping plover nesting sites.



107

hours contributed by coastal guardians.



73

off-leash dogs observed.



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



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 \$3,468.05 in pledges.



DONOR RECOGNITION EVENT GOVERNMENT HOUSE

ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

5 Years of Passport to Nature

229 participants
in 2023-2024

From guided hikes along scenic trails to educational workshops on local flora and fauna, six Passport to Nature events held this fiscal 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 conserving 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 2023-2024 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.



SCAN OR CLICK
HERE TO CHECK
OUT PASSPORT
TO NATURE



FINDING SOLUTIONS

FLITT'S CALL: A TALE OF RESILIENCE AND CONNECTION TO NATURE

Island Nature Trust led the collaboration that brought Flitt's Call, a children's storybook written by Kara Griffin with illustrations by artist Shawn Larson, to life. Published by Acorn Press, the book tells the story of Flitt, a bank swallow facing environmental changes on Prince Edward Island. The narrative served as a gentle call to action, emphasizing the deep connection between people and nature, and encouraging a love for the natural world as the foundation for conservation.

In the 2023/24 school year, INT worked with The Public Schools Branch to distribute 1,527 copies of Flitt's Call and an accompanying Activity Guide to second-grade students across 37 schools in PEI. Each school also received two additional copies of both the book and guide for their libraries. This initiative, made possible by funding from the PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being and Environment and Climate Change Canada, fostered eco-literacy and inspires the next generation to protect the environment.

The official launch of Flitt's Call took place at the Haviland Club on November 25th, 2023, featuring a reading by the author. Griffin's commitment to conservation was further demonstrated by her pledge to donate author royalties to INT for the next five years.

Flitt's Call is available for purchase online through [Nimbus](#), [Bookmark PEI](#), and [Indigo/Coles](#).



"I've always loved nature, and this book is an extension of that love. I hope it inspires people to fall in love with the natural world and, from that place of love, be moved to protect it."

Kara Griffin, Author of Flitt's Call

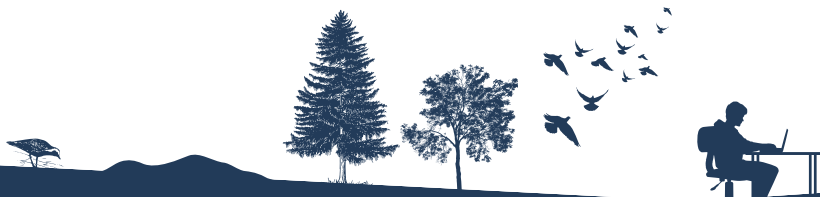


ADVANCING CONSERVATION WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECH: ISLAND NATURE TRUST AND KOROTU TECHNOLOGIES DRIVE INNOVATION IN PEI'S ECOSYSTEM

In 2023, Island Nature Trust and Korotu Technologies, continued work on our remote sensing project funded through RBC Tech for Nature. This past year we expanded the program to answer new questions. The program monitored important bobolink habitats on working hay fields and was used to assess how different forest types responded to the stress of post-tropical storm Fiona. This work continues into 2024-2025 with another round of funding provided by RBC Tech for Nature.

To support the Farmland Birds Program and the conservation of bobolink on PEI, INT deployed "GrasslandWatch", a web application aimed to observe the mowing events of agricultural fields to understand land management practices. INT-Korotu succeeded in monitoring mowing events on over 100 fields, this work showed the potential to scale up the compliance monitoring capability of INT's small species at risk team with enhanced data processing, report generation within a day over multiple properties, and increased reliability of reporting. This work continues into 2024-2025 with ground truthing and fine tuning of the application.

In 2023, INT and Korotu worked on a second web application, "ForestChangeWatch", a software tool that automated the detection of changes to forests. ForestChangeWatch aimed to estimate carbon stores in different stand types and monitor forest disturbances on properties across PEI. INT and Korotu successfully deployed the pilot ForestChangeWatch software which tracked when forest change occurred, and its intensity. In the future, this software is expected to allow more frequent monitoring of hard-to-reach locations and rapid assessment/prioritisation of responses to larger disturbances (such as Post Tropical Storm Fiona).



FUNDERS & 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 32 and 33, INT has received sustained support from both the Government of Canada and the Government of Prince Edward Island. INT has leveraged their donations and matching dollars for the greatest impact.



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Gouvernement du Canada

Foundations

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DONORS OF DISTINCTION

Island Nature Trust is deeply grateful to our Donors of Distinction, whose extraordinary generosity has played a vital role in our mission to protect and conserve the natural beauty of our island. This year, we honor those who have contributed land and significant financial resources, ensuring that these precious areas are safeguarded for the benefit of future generations of people and wildlife.

Land Donors:

Marie-Ann Bowden
Bruce Craig
Judson Family
George Mason
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Kevin Stanton
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Robin and Eileen Wood Endowment for Land Acquisition and Stewardship

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

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of individuals whose donations collectively make a profound impact. Every contribution, regardless of size, is instrumental in helping us acquire and steward Natural Areas across the Island. Together, we are building a legacy of conservation that will endure for years to come.

"As I get older, I realize the importance of leaving behind a legacy that reflects my values. This donation is my way of contributing to a sustainable future, ensuring that these natural spaces remain protected and cherished."



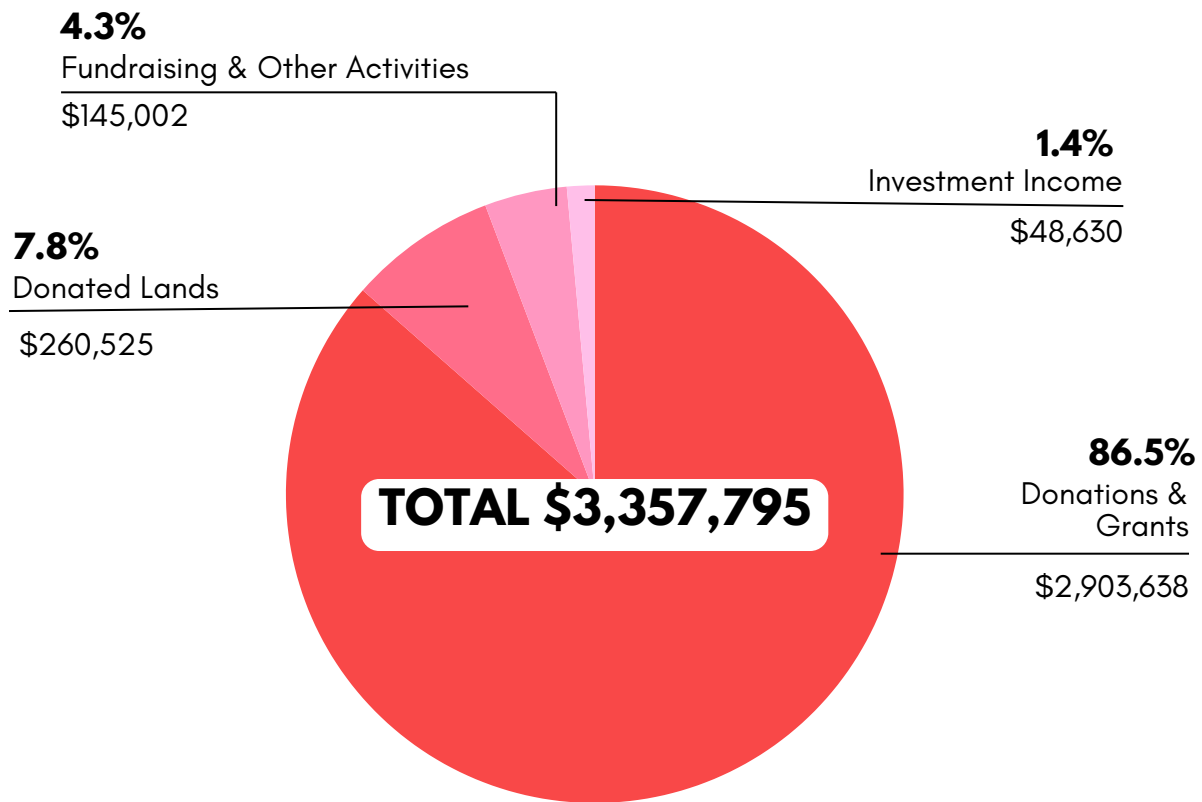
George
Mason
Land Donor

"By donating land to INT and returning home to witness the rich array of colors and the breathtaking shading that our Island's forests offer, it became evident that this endeavor would not only bring me joy but also bring happiness to many other Islanders when they experience the beauty of our forests in the autumn."



Marie-Ann
Bowden
Land Donor

FINANCIALS **INCOME**

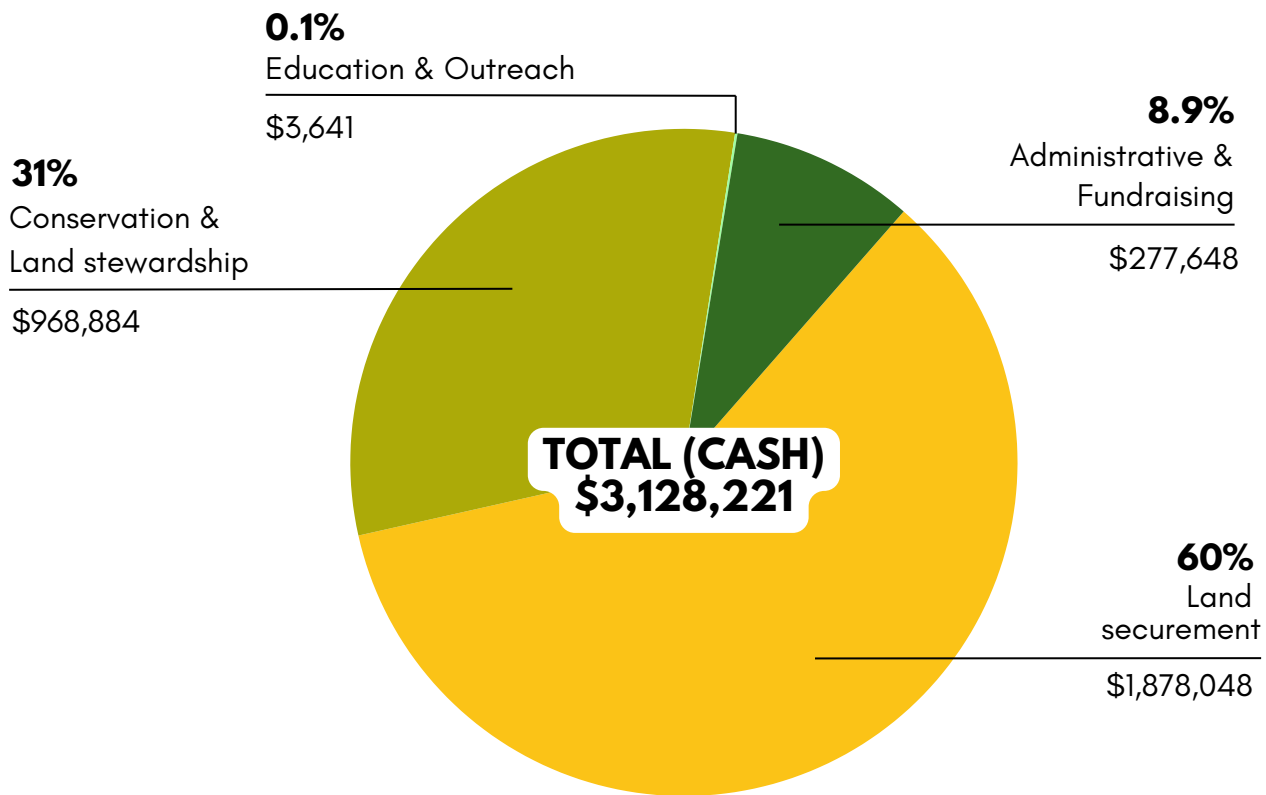


This year (April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024), Island Nature Trust invested \$ 3.36 million in land conservation, species conservation, stewardship and operating activities to achieve the many accomplishments highlighted throughout this report. Your support made this level of investment possible. The two largest sources of income in the year were donations and grants (86.5%) and donated land (7.8%).

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 and create resiliency against climate change and other impacts.

Figures presented are based on draft audited financial statements at the time of printing.

FINANCIALS EXPENSES



Island Nature Trust's expenditures primarily related to land securement (60%), conservation & land stewardship (31%), with administrative and fundraising costs (8.9%) 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 the Finance Committee. If you are interested in reviewing a full copy of the audited financial statements, please contact our office.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024-25

LEADING ECOSYSTEM-BASED STEWARDSHIP

With over 11,500 acres in INT's care, we are dedicated to advancing our mission by seeking resources and diverse expertise to lead in coastal and forest stewardship. Our commitment drives us to collaborate with conservationists, and community members, implementing innovative strategies and best practices. By fostering partnerships and integrating research, we aim to enhance the resilience and health of our protected areas, ensuring they thrive for future generations.

MEETING PROVINCIAL TARGETS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PROTECTED AREAS

In February 2021, the Province of Prince Edward Island set an overall target of 7% land protection, or 98,000 acres. At nearly three-quarters of the way to 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 continued collaboration to create the new Pituamkek National Park Reserve, 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.



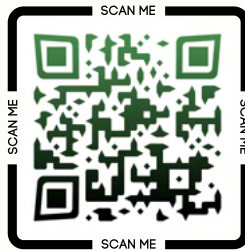
ISLAND
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With Kids CHAMPION FOR NATURE aeyo?



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Melissa Cameron, Executive Director

Simon Andrea, Land Acquisition Manager

Kaylee Busniuk, Land Stewardship Manager

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Kelly Bush, Office Coordinator

Jenna Cahill, Coastal Coordinator

Sarah Hirtle, Coastal Coordinator

Kayle Laverty, Farmland Birds Coordinator

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