



Adventure in every step

March 22, 2016

The Honourable Stephen McNeil
Premier of Nova Scotia
One Government Place, 7th Floor
1700 Granville St
PO Box 726
Halifax, NS B3J 2T3

Dear Premier,

Hike Nova Scotia would like to thank and congratulate our province on reaching its goal of protecting 12 per cent of our landmass. We urge the government to uphold the protections put in place on wilderness and protected areas through the Natural Resources Strategy, the Parks and Protected Areas Plan and similar government strategies regulating the use of these lands.

We live in a beautiful part of the world, rich in wildlife and awe-inspiring landscapes. Our natural environment provides us with clean air and water and invigorates us as humans – body and soul. The government has publicly, officially and legally decreed that we will preserve 5,500,000 hectares of parks and protected spaces for all Nova Scotians, for this generation and for those to come.

This accomplishment is the result of careful steady work from within government and the non-profit conservation sector.

It is also important to thank and recognize all those Nova Scotians who provided input and feedback and participated in the long consultation process that guided us as a province to this historic milestone.

The goal was set in 2007, as part of the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, the aim of which was to blend environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. The goal was reached on Dec. 29, 2015 with the designation and expansion of 65 parks and protected spaces across the province.

These protected spaces will allow Nova Scotians and visitors more opportunities to connect with nature through low-impact recreation – healthy activities that improve our physical health and mental well-being.

A broad network of places for hiking, walking and snowshoeing will contribute to local and regional economies, foster eco-tourism opportunities and enable us to market Nova Scotia as a wild and pristine destination.

Hike Nova Scotia also recognizes the importance of protecting lands and wildlife, not just for the use or enjoyment of humans, but also to protect vulnerable and rare components of our natural world for their own sake. We fully support and applaud the protection of spaces that most, if not all of us, will never see or hike through.

Other spaces also protect our cultural heritage. Still others will allow researchers and conservationists unparalleled opportunities for study.



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All of them will play a role in allowing more Nova Scotians and visitors to our province to explore, learn about, reconnect to and, most importantly, care about, and for, our natural heritage.

Hike Nova Scotia believes the parks and protected spaces of Nova Scotia will assist us in our long-term goal of creating a culture of hiking in our beautiful province. Therefore, we ask that you resist the pressures put on various government departments by special interest groups to weaken the legislation and regulations that have been thoughtfully developed by you, your staff and the public. There are other lands that can be accessed by these groups; there is no reason to increase their access and impact on the precious 12 per cent of protected lands.

Again, we thank you for your commitment to protect wilderness. We believe the most important way to show our gratitude is to continue to encourage and inform Nova Scotians about sustainable and environmentally friendly ways to get out and connect with nature.

Come join us for a walk and see for yourself what all the fuss is about.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Garnet McLaughlin", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Garnet McLaughlin,
Hike Nova Scotia President

Cc:

The Honourable Margaret Miller, Minister of Environment
The Honourable Lloyd Hines, Minister of Natural Resources
The Honourable Tony Ince, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage
The Honourable Leo Glavine, Minister of Health and Wellness