

ENVIRONMENT

# Nature Trust doubling protected spaces before 2025

SALTWIRE STAFF

Wild and early, too.

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced Wednesday that it has already reached its goal — set in 2020 and called the Twice the Wild campaign — of doubling its protected lands across the province by 2025.

The network of protected lands now stands at more than 30,000 acres (12,140 hectares), which the trust calls "a major milestone in nature conservation and an exciting win for all Nova Scotians."

Executive director Bonnie Sutherland "credited the campaign's success to a historic public investment in nature conservation, incredible community support, and unprecedented collaboration," the trust said in a news release.

The goal was achieved with the protection of the Eastern Shore's "stunning" 760-acre Barren Island, which Sutherland called one of the trust's largest-ever acquisitions and "one of our last, large ecologically intact coastal islands" in the province.

SAVING LAND

Launched in September 2020, Twice the Wild was what the Nature Trust calls its "bold response to the urgent global call to action in the face of alarming biodiversity loss, and the growing climate crisis."

"Saving land is one of the most important, most tangible ways to save biodiversity, and provides nature-based solutions to climate change and its devastating impacts from wildfires, floods and coastal erosion."

The trust aimed to protect another 15,000 acres of Nova Scotia's most important natural areas — as much land as it saved in its first quarter century — in just a few years.

The initiative has protected more than 80 new conservation lands, including remote islands in southwest Nova Scotia that harbour colonies of rare sea birds, the mountain wilderness of the Mabou Highlands and ecologically rich St. Mary's River, and, in HRM, the Blue Mountain Wilderness Connector and



The Nova Scotia Nature Trust has protected more than 80 new conservation lands, including the mountain wilderness of the Mabou Highlands (shown). **NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST PHOTO**

Purcells Cove Backlands.

"These new conservation lands protect unique landscapes and ecosystems, safeguard critical homes for wildlife including rare and endangered species, and preserve essential corridors between protected areas," the Nature Trust said. "They are protected for nature, but for people too, providing wonderful areas to hike and paddle, fish and explore nature, and much-needed public access to Nova Scotia's treasured coast."

"They also sustain the essential services nature provides, from sequestering carbon and preventing floods to filtering pollution from the air and water."

FEDERAL COMMITMENTS

Sutherland credited "the his-

toric federal and provincial commitments to and investments in nature conservation" with making the success of Twice as Wild possible.

Ottawa has committed to protect 30 per cent of Canada's land and inland waters by 2030 and has helped fund conservation efforts of land trusts. The Nova Scotia government has committed to protect 20 per cent of the province's land by 2030.

"We applaud the historic federal and provincial commitments to and investments in nature conservation that made the Nature Trust's ambitious goal to double protected space for nature in Nova Scotia possible," Sutherland said.

The Nature Trust credited its collaboration with other land trusts, Mi'kmaw and other conservation partners in helping to protect wild

spaces. It also acknowledged a \$1 million donation from the Sobey family, through the David and Faye Sobey Foundation and Paul and Marsha Sobey.

"The Sobey's' incredible million-dollar Twice the Wild campaign leadership gift was game-changing," said Sutherland. "Their gift created excitement and momentum, catalyzing a wave of generosity and inspiration to protect Nova Scotia's natural legacy."

"Just as nature itself doesn't belong to any of us, neither does the success of this campaign," Sutherland said. "Twice the Wild was a shared vision, realized through the generosity of many, many people and organizations. We are honoured to be able to safeguard that legacy."

Sutherland noted that the Nature Trust launched Twice the Wild to do its part in

meeting the huge crises facing our planet and our future. While proud to reach that goal, and thankful to all who made it possible, she noted that much more needs to be done. The threats to nature continue to grow. The impacts of climate change are rapidly accelerating.

"While we celebrate an enormous achievement today, nature desperately needs us to do more. To save more, to move faster, and to work together like never before. You can count on the Nova Scotia Nature Trust to step up to do just that. More big, bold plans coming soon!"

The Nature Trust detailed its Twice the Wild achievement at a live-streamed news conference. The announcement is available to watch at <https://nsnt.ca/> and on Facebook.

FIXED DATE

## Houston says election could come sooner than July 2025

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HALIFAX — Every four years on the third Tuesday of July. That's when Nova Scotians are to head to the polls for a provincial election, according to amendments to the Elections Act introduced by Premier Tim Houston and the Progressive Conservative government shortly after they won the 2021 election.

Following the introduction of a fixed election date, the next provincial election is

slated for July 15, 2025.

But during a media availability on Wednesday, Houston wouldn't say if he was sticking to the fixed election date.

"The election will be when the election is," Houston said when a reporter asked when the next election would be.

The question comes as the Progressive Conservatives started rolling out its candidates for the province's electoral districts last week. So far, it's been announced that Houston and MLAs John Lohr, Brian Wong, Brad Johns, Tim Halman, Kent

Smith and Danielle Barkhouse are seeking re-election.

Houston said the party is nominating candidates to allow Nova Scotians to learn about who they want to represent them.

According to a poll by Narrative Research released on June 6, half of decided voters said they would vote for the PCs if an election were held today.

He emphasized that the provincial election is about Nova Scotians having their say.

"When it becomes time for people to have their say, I

think it would be pretty self-ish for me to say no, no, you have to wait because it doesn't suit the political legislation that was passed at the time," Houston said.

In 2021, Houston had a different tone when his party introduced the legislation.

"Nova Scotian voters need to have confidence in their electoral system," Houston said at the time.

"Having a fixed date will mean predictability, transparency and it will limit any perceived advantage by the government to control the timing of the next election."



Premier Tim Houston: "The election will be when the election is." FILE

## BermudAir adds new Wednesday flights from Bermuda and Halifax

SALTWIRE STAFF

HALIFAX — BermudAir is increasing its flights between Bermuda and Halifax to twice a week.

Starting July 10, the airline

will add a Wednesday flight to its schedule, complementing the existing Saturday service.

The new Wednesday flight will depart from Bermuda at 8:30 a.m. and arrive at Halifax Stanfield International Airport at 10:55 a.m. in Atlantic

Standard Time.

The return flight will leave Halifax at 11:40 a.m. and land in Bermuda at 1:55 p.m.

This schedule mirrors the current Saturday service.

"We're delighted to be increasing our Halifax flights

after launching service in May," said BermudAir founder and CEO Adam Scott.

"The response to this route has been remarkable. Our inaugural flights were basically full, and bookings have

been solid ever since. After a 10-year absence of direct flights, this shows both the opportunity and demand on this route, and we're happy to help fill that previous service gap for Bermuda residents and visitors."