



## The Blue Mountain NEWS



Susies Lake, David Jack

### Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes 2020 Wrap Up

#### From the Board

It's been a crazy year for all of us in 2020 and, like other groups, the Friends of BMBCL have adjusted. We put our plans for a series of community hikes and events on hold because of the COVID limits on gatherings and our Annual General Meeting remains postponed. These are everyday challenges in 2020 but our Board is also excited by the positive activity at Halifax Council and the huge jump we've witnessed in new visitors to the BMBCL Trails!

In this year-end newsletter\* we want to bring you up to date on our ongoing stewardship efforts, our lobby work during the municipal election and some of the priority items we are working on.

The BMBCL Regional Wilderness Park is 33 kilometers in circumference and that means there are many neighbourhoods and communities that surround it and no shortage of opportunities and threats that arise. We hope this update keeps you in the loop and we welcome your feedback, ideas, suggestions and concerns. If you would like to get more involved, please let us know! Please e-mail us at [bluemountainbirchcovelakes@gmail.com](mailto:bluemountainbirchcovelakes@gmail.com)

\*All pictures can be enlarged by clicking on the image.

#### 4th Annual BMBCL Art Exhibit 14 Bells Gallery, Hydrostone Market

There's still time to visit 14 Bells Gallery in the Hydrostone Market and see the Blue Mountain Artist's exhibit! It is on until Friday, December 18th. Some of the work can be seen below.



There is also an on-line viewing available  
c/o [this link](#).

Blue Mountain Pine, Don Pentz

This is the fourth annual 'Paint the BMBCL Regional Park Event' and we are delighted to partner again this year with CARP and 14 Bells!

An event like this takes many volunteers to make it successful and we would be remiss if we did not thank Don Pentz, who is both a participating artist and a member of Friends of BMBCL. Don took the lead this year in planning the art exhibit along with Cheryl Bell, the owner and curator of the 14 Bells Gallery.

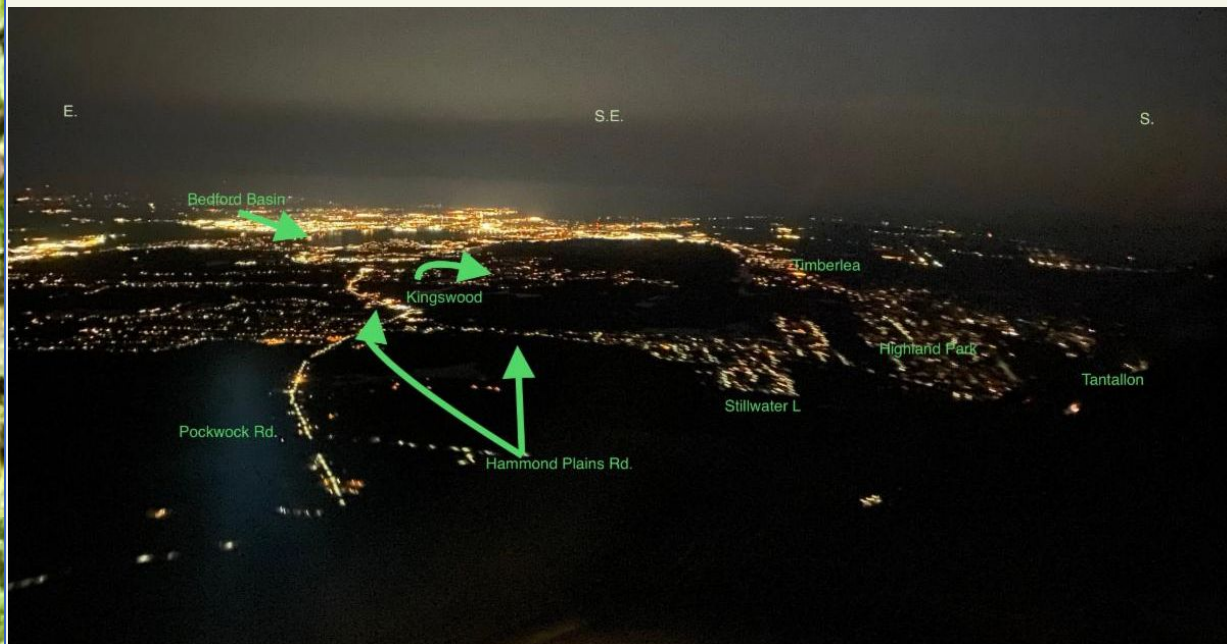


The artists visited the Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes area during the summer and in the fall facing some very challenging painting conditions. The Hobson's Lake area was one of the painting sites, while Charlie's Lake and Susie's Lake were also painted by the travelling artists.

These paintings raise public awareness concerning the proposed wilderness park whose fate is still vulnerable and uncertain. The beauty of this fragile area is reflected in these paintings as is the commitment of the artists to help see these lands preserved.

We are so fortunate to have the participation of amazing artists from across Nova Scotia: Geoffrey Grantham, Ron Hazell, Ron Kuwahara, Joy Laking, Susan Paterson, Don Pentz, Thomas Rand, Bill Rogers and Gail Sutherland.

Thank you to Cheryl Bell and all who made this event possible in this challenging year. Private viewings are available upon request by contacting the gallery at (902)- 406-2355



### BMBCL by Night

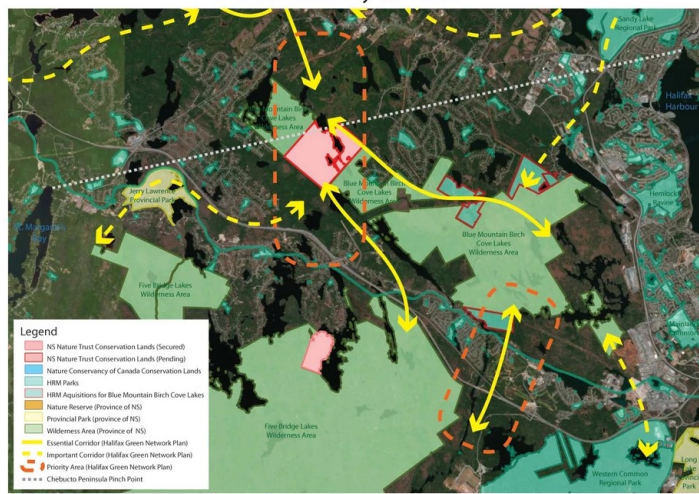
Thank you to Ian Marshall, who took this photo as he flew into the Halifax International Airport. He was struck by the darkness below which is our BMBCL Wilderness. The lights and community names on the photo help to point out the neighbourhoods and development around the BMBCL.

**Wildlife Corridors  
Design Charette**



A wildlife corridor design charette (group planning event) was held under the auspices of the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust on November 25th, 2020. The Friends of BMBCL were among the approximately 30 people who participated. We joined local community stakeholders, provincial government staff, subject matter experts including representatives from the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, Ecology Action Centre, CPAWS and other wilderness protection leaders.

Chebucto Peninsula 'pinch point' Protected Areas and Connectivity Corridors



Together, this group undertook a design charette in an effort to build on the wildlife corridor work found in the [Halifax Green Network Plan](#) (HGNP). This proved to be a tremendous success as it took advantage of the incredible depth of knowledge of local groups and professionals engaged in wildlife protection work.

The objective was to identify a continuous wildlife corridor option from the Chebucto Peninsula to the greater mainland area -- starting at the Herring Cove/Purcell's Cove Backlands and extending through the Five Islands Wilderness Area, across Hwy 103 through the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area and then into the mainland to link with the Ingram River proposed wilderness as well as to the Sackville River via Bedford's Sandy Lake area.

Using GIS (Geographic Information System) data layers, Green Network Plan (GNP) data layers and wetland data layers (some of which wetlands do not show up in the GNP), potential wildlife corridors began to appear. Mapping cleanup is now underway and maps showing the potential corridor option will be publicly available soon. This will be great information to help us advocate for wilderness connectivity and support wildlife in our province.

## Maskwa Update

After considerable deliberations involving multiple stakeholders, the Maskwa parking lot is once again open to hikers. With the increased use of all HRM natural areas and parks during Covid, we expect to see continued growth in visitations across all of the BMBCL, especially over the holidays. For those of us who will be using the Maskwa leasehold for access to the Kearney Lake trails we ask the following:

1. Please be respectful of Maskwa's buildings and immediate grounds as they remain OUT-OF-BOUNDS and closed to non-members.
2. Practice LEAVE NO TRACE principles and pack out everything you take in, including your organics! We can all help out by keeping this area (and all of the BMBCL) clear of all types of waste.
3. On these and all trails, apply the social distancing rules of Covid as the pandemic continues.
4. Keep your speed down on Saskatoon Drive. This is a narrow, residential road that was not designed for heavy use. A max speed of no more than 35 km/hr is recommended.
5. If you see the parking lot is full please go elsewhere - there is minimal room on Saskatoon Drive and space must be left for service vehicles and first responders.
6. If you see any suspicious activity in or around the parking lot, please let Maskwa know, c/o [info@Maskwa.ca](mailto:info@Maskwa.ca)

The BMBCL is under a lot pressure as a now popular destination for hikers. Let's all do



our best to build positive relationships with the established neighbourhoods and organizations that are found on all sides of this future, regional wilderness park.

## More on Leave No Trace

In [this news feature from Global News](#), you can learn more about the impact of what we leave behind as evidenced by this coyote scat containing plastic pieces, found near Blue Mountain. This again serves to remind of the importance of looking after our natural places, especially where plastics are known to have such a long-lasting impact on our environment. If you'd like to learn more about Leave No Trace in Canada, see [here](#).



Coyote Scat on Logging Road, near Blue Mountain, Cassie Kent



Photo: Charlies Lake "Waiting for Winter" Richard Vinson

**CONTACT US:** If you have requests, ideas, comments, concerns... please let us know c/o our [website](#) or email: [bluemountainbirchcovelakes@gmail.com](mailto:bluemountainbirchcovelakes@gmail.com)

**PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS:** All editions, 2018 to 2020 can be viewed [on our website](#).

