

The Blue Mountain NEWS

Susies Lake, Mike Bayer

Edition 3: December 2018

This newsletter is produced by the Friends of Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Society. It is all about the Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area and the proposed regional park for Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Friends of Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes: Mission Statement

To support and promote the creation and development of the Blue mountain Birch Cove Lakes regional park, and to ensure the stewardship and appropriate use of the area.

WE'RE OUT THERE!

We're continuing to build relationships with our various stakeholders, including Nova Scotia Environment (NSE). As administrators of the provincial Wilderness Areas, we know that working with key staff at NSE will be a long term commitment if we are to be successful in fulfilling our mandate. We look forward to future meetings with NSE staff and welcome their involvement in the BMBCL Society!



Mary Ellen Donovan, Secretary; Co-Chair Mark Young; Minister NSE, Margaret Miller; Co-Chair, Diana Whalen

HRM COUNCIL

Have you voiced your support recently for the proposed regional park to your councillor? Council members need to know that we remain committed to seeing this park become a reality. Our long term planning includes regular contact with [council members](#) to hear their thoughts on the park and where they see it as a current and future asset to HRM. Councillor Walker and our Co-chairs met in

early December to go over the BMBCL outlook.



HISTORICAL NOTES - SAWMILLS

Many of you will know that most areas of Nova Scotia have, at some time, been harvested for timber. The BMBCL is no exception and if you have a sharp eye on your walks, you'll see the evidence in a lot of places. We know that there were at least two active sawmills on the edge of the BMBCL: one at Maple Lake near Timberlea and another in what is now Kingswood subdivision, at McQuade Lake. In fact, as recently as 1959, there were 53 sawmills listed as active in Halifax County - five of which were in Hammonds Plains and one in Timberlea. Products from those mills included lumber, shingles, ties, box shooks and lathes. We would need to do some more research to get the backgrounds on the Maple & McQuade Lakes mills - any historians out there?



Stump near Charlies Lake



Sawdust at Maple Lake

MEET A BLUE MOUNTAIN ARTIST!

Over upcoming NEWS editions, we'll be featuring profiles on some of the painters who contributed to the Blue Mountain art exhibit this past September. In this edition, meet Gail Sutherland.

The raw beauty of Nova Scotia's landscape

has been the subject and inspiration for most of Gail's paintings so it was no surprise that she eventually found herself painting in the BMBCL. She was introduced to the area by one of our directors, James Boyer (also a painter!) who organized an outdoor, i.e, 'Plein Air', event in the spring of 2016 for a group of a dozen or so artists. This then resulted in their first art exhibit in 2017 which was held at Keshen Goodman Library, hosted by CARP Nova Scotia and the Halifax North West Trails Association.

Gail's painting, *Tumble* (above), was a result of subsequent outings to the Susie Lake area (painting is facing west from Flag Pole Hill). *Tumble* won 3rd prize in the International Watercolour Society's, *150 Ways to Celebrate 2017* (Canada) contest. It was also featured on the cover of the Halifax Art Map 2018-19 and in the International magazine "The Art of Watercolour". As a result of this work, the BMBCL has received even more exposure - a source of pride for Gail. She believes that we are at an environmental crossroads, and protecting our wilderness areas may be one of our most important legacies.



Since that first Plein Air show in 2016 the number of artists has grown, and as a result of their outings in the BMBCL, a group has now been formed entitled the "Blue Mountain Artists". The group hopes to raise even more awareness through the annual, Blue Mountain Artist's exhibit and encourages readers to join them in 2019 on one of their Plein Air outings. Well Gail, we may just take you up on that. Thank you for your dedication, and congratulations on your successful promotion of one of HRM's premiere landscapes! For more information about Gail please visit [her website](#).



CANOE TRIP LIVES ON

Having HRM CAO Jacques Dube and Mayor Savage join us for an October canoe outing on Susies Lake will remain one of the highlights for 2018. We were pleased to see Mayor Savage include photos of this canoe experience in his recent speech to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce! Our co-chair Diana Whalen recently met with the CAO and

Mayor at City Hall to present them with photos which we hope will continue to remind them of the superb canoeing experience that's possible in the Birch Cove Lakes!

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE PROPOSED

PARK?

For 2019, we look forward to learning about additional properties acquired by HRM to form the park. We have been told by HRM staff that they are continuing to work with selected property owners and are taking a proactive stance on specific blocks. However, with only one property announced in 2018, it is apparent the path to the day the park actually becomes a reality is one that, like many of the BMBCL trails, has its ups and downs. For the Friends of BMBCL, we will continue to work with stakeholders to do our best to fulfill our mission. We encourage all supporters to continue to spread the word about what a special place this is and how important preserving the properties surrounding the Wilderness Area is for generations to come.



KEY LINKS FOR BMBCL INFORMATION:

- > Ecology Action Centre: [Historical Timeline](#)
- > Halifax Regional Municipality: [Proposed Park](#)
- > N.S. Dept. of Environment: [BMBCL Wilderness Area Description](#)
- > Our HRM Alliance: [Call to Action](#)
- > Halifaxtrails.ca: [Blue Mountain](#)



NOTE: We have an active Facebook page with almost 900 followers, plus Friends is now on Instagram and Twitter. Have a look there too for more news.



CONTACT US: If you have requests, ideas, comments, concerns... please let us know at: bluemountainbirchcovelakes@gmail.com

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'Claw Tree', west side of Hobson's Pond, ...just off the trail to Ash Lake
