

The Blue Mountain NEWS



December, 2019 Edn. 7

Halifax NW Trails Assoc hike to Susies Lake, Photo: Heather Leslie

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 planned regional, wilderness park for Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Friends of Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes - Mission Statement:

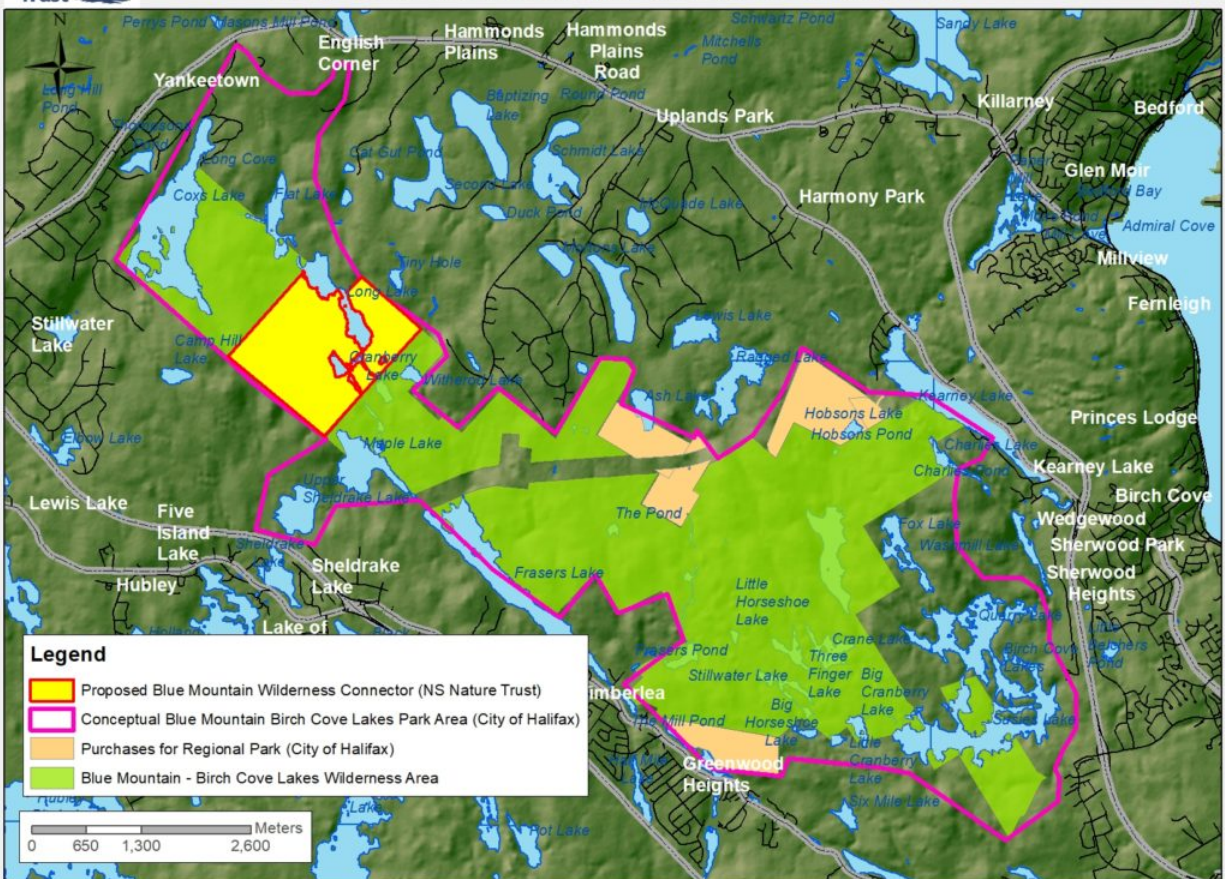
*To support and promote the creation and development of the
Blue mountain Birch Cove Lakes regional park and
to encourage the stewardship and appropriate use of the area.*

NATURE TRUST ANNOUNCES BLUE MOUNTAIN CONNECTOR CAMPAIGN!

On October 16, 2019 the Nova Scotia Nature Trust announced a new initiative to acquire 232 hectares of key, BMBCL property, now referred to as the 'connector' block. This property exemplifies everything the BMBCL is known for: pristine lakes, wildlife sanctuary, and ecological diversity. At Friends, we are extremely pleased to be working with the NS Nature Trust in support of the campaign, "[Save the Wild Blue](#)". Learn more about the property and how you can get involved by visiting the Nature Trust [website](#).



Proposed Blue Mountain Wilderness Connector



We'd like to recognize and thank local media for the coverage of this campaign and, in particular, Jason Baxter at CTV for taking the time to visit the area with Nature Trust representatives and Friends members. You can view the CTV news video [here](#). A related, CP article received national distribution, including the [Winnipeg Free Press](#), demonstrating the wide draw of the BMBCL.



Photos: Heather Leslie

MEETINGS CONTINUE

We have reported previously on the many meetings that we initiate with the key players involved in the BMBCL. With a change in ministers, one such meeting was held recently with Nova Scotia Environment. Friends will continue to initiate priority meetings where issues (and proposed solutions) have been identified that directly or indirectly impact the future regional park.



L to R: Mary Ellen Donovan, Env. Minister, Gordon Wilson, Diana Whalen



BANC LANDS

Many will have seen the excavation that has been underway for the past year along the BANC boundary with the Wilderness Area at the Bayers Lake Business Park. In the 2013 deed from the City to BANC, there were a number of conditions including being protective of the natural vegetation along their boundary with the Wilderness Area. Those



conditions also attempted to ensure that any buildings near the southern boundary were somewhat sympathetic to the concept of park viewshed protection. Friends is now engaged with the City to better understand what the current vision is for ensuring sympathetic construction, including natural vegetation protection along the park's southern boundary.

ANNAPOLIS LAWSUIT UPDATE

One of the three main complaints the Annapolis Group set forth in its litigation filed in January, 2017 is that - HRM *de facto* expropriated 765 acres of Annapolis property located in the area of Susie and Quarry Lakes. Earlier this year, HRM applied to the Supreme Court to have the *de facto* expropriation argument struck.



Photo: Susies Lake, Mike Bayer

On November 20, 2019, Justice Chipman **decided against** the City, dismissing HRM's application and awarding the Annapolis Group \$7,500 in court costs. Justice Chipman stated that he was "of the emphatic view that the issue of *de facto* expropriation must be left - along with the other two main claims of Annapolis for the trial judge, who will

have the benefit of the complete record for adjudication". Friends understands that the litigation discoveries are ongoing, and that it will be several years before the matter goes to trial.

SUSSEX DRIVE EXTENSION

The goal of establishing the BMBCL Regional Park is being challenged by development pressures on all sides. Currently, a complex exchange of public lands held by the Dept. of Transportation & Infrastructure (TIR) on Maple Lake, and the Dept. of Lands & Forestry, near the end of Sussex Drive, is under consideration. That exchange will permit the extension of Sussex Drive in Haliburton Hills Subdivision to connect with Exit 4 on Highway 103.

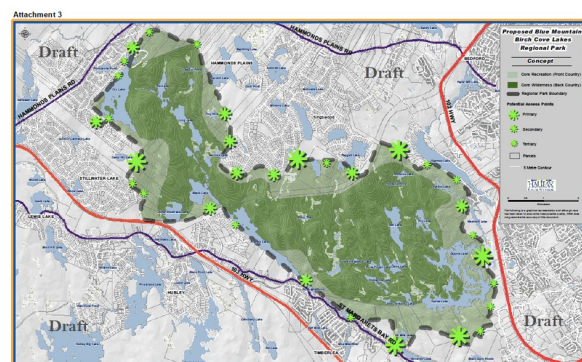


If these transactions proceed as proposed, Friends believes that subsequent road and subdivision development would impact negatively on the western sector of the BMBCL planned regional park that is protected by provincial wilderness legislation. This area is recognized in HRM's 2014 regional plan as future 'core wilderness' and is highlighted in HRM's Green Network Plan as a *critical wildlife corridor* that connects the Chebucto peninsula with the province's mainland interior.

Friends has identified options and written to the Ministers of Lands and Forestry and TIR to request a 'pause' on decisions related to this land exchange. The intent is to allow time for a thorough review, in order to ensure that the values and sensitivities of the wilderness area and wildlife corridor are recognized and addressed in full. Numerous related meetings have been held with senior departmental staff and at the ministerial level. Our Planning Committee is placing a high priority on continuing to engage with government officials as well as on community consultations.

PARKLAND ZONING

The Halifax Charter allows the municipality to zone land for both "public" uses (including parkland) and "transportation reserves". The Charter provides that the city then has one year to acquire the land, failing which, an alternate zoning for the land has to be applied.



Map of conceptual park presented by HRM at public meeting, May 31, 2012

However, in the case of land zoned as a transportation reserve, the city has 5 years in which to acquire the property before an alternate zoning has to be applied. The practical reality is that a one year time frame for parkland acquisitions is far too short for the taking of such decisions which require discussions with the land owners, the community and budgetary allocations. The Sandy Lake - Sackville Rivers Association has written the Province asking for an amendment to the Charter to allow a 5-year

time frame for park acquisitions - the same as for transportation reserves. Friends has written the province and the city in support of the amendment.

TRIPS BY TRANSIT GOES CAMPING

Another organization taking advantage of the BMBCL Wilderness Area is [Trips by Transit](#) who took a small group into Susies Lake for a well-planned overnight, October 26-27. Trips by Transit came to Friends for advice about the area, and we followed up with an on-site session with [Mark Young](#), board member and expert on matters relating to staying comfortable outdoors. Looks like the group had a great time!



STEWARDSHIP

Although the primary mission of Friends has been and remains, to support and promote the formation of the regional, wilderness park, we are aware of the need for stewardship of the area. One of the challenges in building a stewardship program for the BMBCL is that the area is owned or controlled by multiple parties with differing regulations and guidelines for use. Those parties include:

- > *N.S. Environment, Protected Areas Branch:* BMBCL Wilderness Area;
- > *Halifax Regional Municipality:* parcels of land designated as part of the future regional park (as highlighted on this [map](#) c/o NS Environment);
- > *Dept. of Lands and Forestry:* Crown lands, adjacent or close to the Wilderness Area;
- > *Private landowners:* esp. key lake frontage and 'front country' buffer zones
- > *Other govt. departments:* Not all govt. lands are "Crown", such as the property controlled by Dept. of Transportation & Infrastructure for the proposed Hwy 113.



Friends is continuing to discuss and evaluate how best to deal with stewardship while at the same time, addressing the many other priorities we see as essential to making this park a reality. Members will be kept up-to-date of any stewardship decisions as we move forward.

PARADE OF LIGHTS



Congrats and a big thank you goes out to our board members and volunteers who worked on and participated in the annual, Halifax Parade of Lights on Nov. 16. With a view to increasing the overall public exposure to Friends and our mission, this canoeing oriented theme certainly made a 'splash' along the route. What's not to like about a candy cane canoe? (Canoe being carried by team leader and board member, Ian Guppy with much appreciated assistance from Roger Stein.)



BMBCL CARDS AVAILABLE

There's still time to get BMBCL Christmas cards out to all of your friends and family, and remind them how important the future regional park is to all of us. HalifaxTrails.ca is donating \$1 from every sale to Friends. Thanks for this kind gesture goes to Friends member and supporter, Greg Taylor, who runs the site. Need we say more? (We also have art cards - see ART SHOW.)



CARP SUPPORTS BMBCL

The Nova Scotia chapter of CARP continues to work with Friends in getting the word out there about the BMBCL. Friends was present at this year's Christmas social with our team of volunteers addressing questions and signing up new members. Thanks goes to

CARP for making this possible and for the donation.



L to R: Heather Leslie, Mary Ann McGrath, James Boyer, Diana Whalen, Wendy Macdonald

PLEIN AIR ART EXHIBIT

With the CARP Environment Committee taking the lead, Friends and Halifax NW Trails Assoc once again produced the 3rd edition of the BMBCL, Plein Air art exhibit, in place for all of November at the Keshen Goodman Library. Congratulations and thank you to all who participated and to the event coordinator, James Boyer.



Joy Laking Art Card, Hobson Brook

Special mention and a thank you goes to artist and contributor, [Joy Laking](#), who donated 100 art cards for sale at the event with all proceeds going to Friends. CARDS STILL AVAILABLE: We only have 18 cards left (\$5 ea.) so... [contact Friends](#), and let's get them out there!



L to R: Gail Sutherland, Coun. Richard Zurawski, Sunetra Ekanayake, Marci Kingsland, Joy Laking & Don Pentz.

MEET A BLUE MOUNTAIN ARTIST!

Don Pentz has spent most of his life hanging out in his favorite neighbourhoods - the outdoors of Lunenburg and Queens counties. An accomplished canoeist and outdoorsman, Don has always drawn his inspiration from the land, typically

the rough granite coastline rocks (the seams, stains, and texture) or the lakes and forests of Keji country. Don is one of our exhibiting painters for 2019, and he brings with him quite a resume.

Don's work has been exhibited throughout Canada and the United States, England, Japan, France, China and Cuba. In 1976 he was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) and to the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC) in 2002. In 2007 he was inducted into the Visual Arts Nova Scotia Honour Roll. As well as being a painter of abstract images, Don also enjoys doing small watercolour sketches on location. You can see Don's work, [here](#).



KEY LINKS FOR BMBCL INFORMATION:

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



FOLLOW FRIENDS! We have an active Facebook page with more than 1000 followers, plus Instagram and Twitter. Have a look there too for more news.



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

NEWS Ed: Richard Vinson

Background: White Pine, found throughout the BMBCL

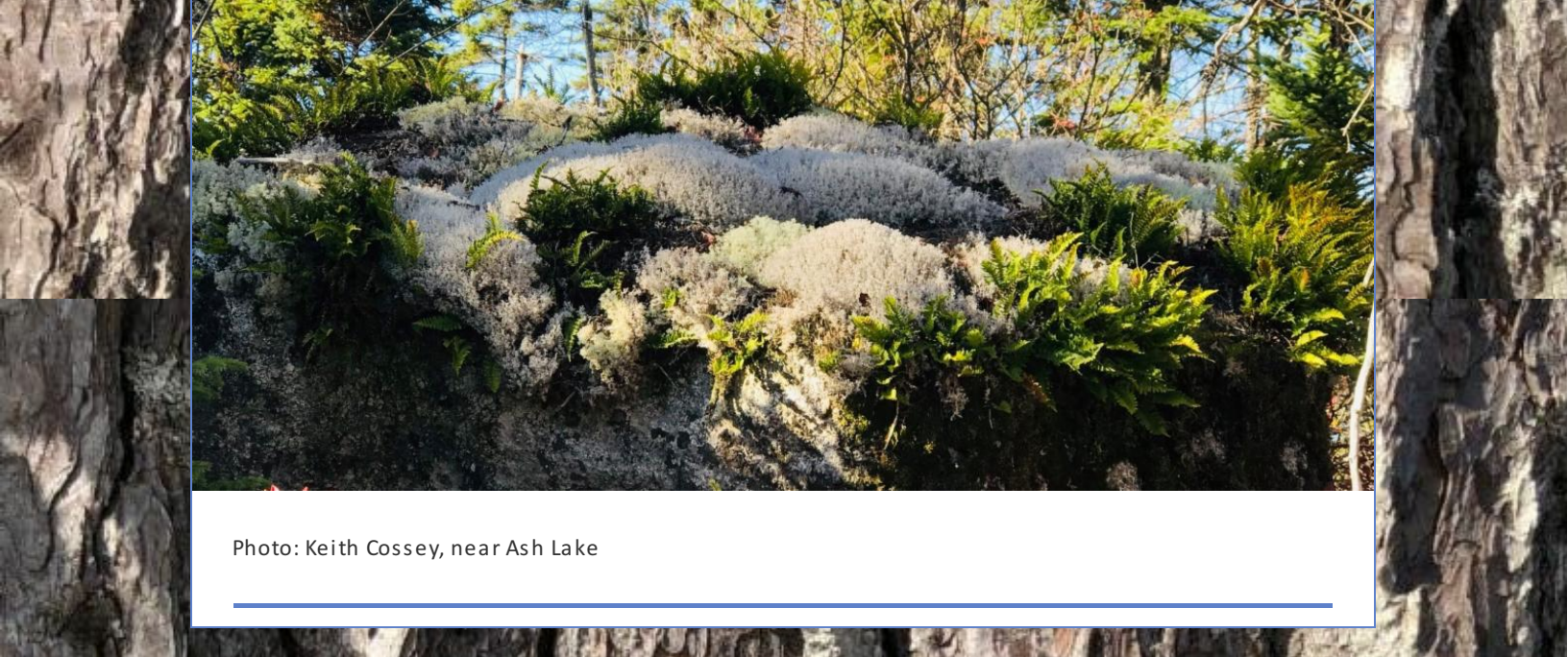


Photo: Keith Cossey, near Ash Lake
