

The Blue Mountain NEWS



Hiking Leadership Course Participants: L-R James Boyer, Heather Leslie, Bruce Higgins, Steve Abott, Ian Guppy, Izzy Clarke, Kym Paquette, Anjeanette LeMay (Instructor), Mark Young, Graeme Webb, Dave Gordon, Linda McLaren

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.*

SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

Well, we are living in interesting times. We're all looking to come out the other end of the Covid 19 pandemic with a renewed focus on working to make the BMBCL Park a reality. For the duration of this health crisis (and beyond!), we will be continuing our advocacy work with an emphasis on the need for a park plan and support for the NS Nature Trust, Wild Blue campaign. Also, our Board continues to promote membership while we self- isolate.

You can help to support our mission by sharing this newsletter and asking family and friends to join ([on our website](#) at no cost). Our growing membership demonstrates the level of public support that is so important to our advocacy work.

Thanks to each of you for sharing our vision for the regional park. Good wishes and good health to you all!

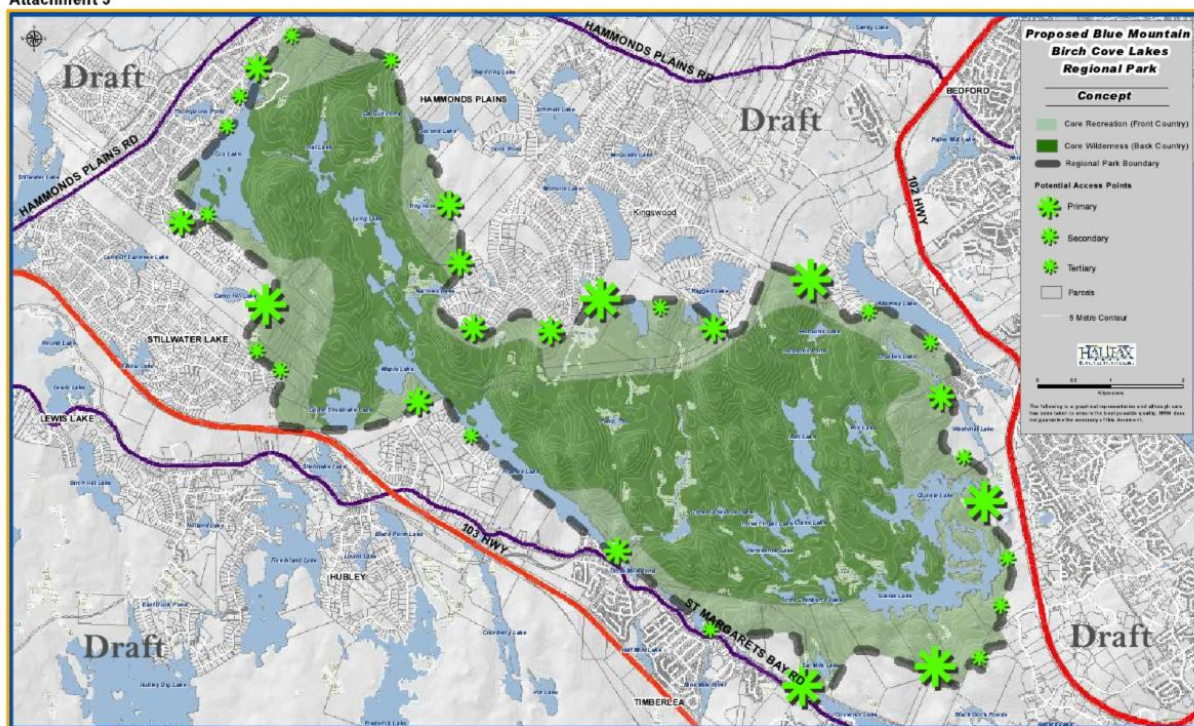
Diana Whalen & Mary Ellen Donovan

BMBCL PARK NEEDS A PLAN!

As we continue with our meetings with HRM staff and council, one of our key points is the need for a master plan for the BMBCL Regional Park. To the best of our knowledge, there is no *current* plan either conceptual or otherwise that has been formulated by HRM Parks & Recreation. Without a plan, and with so much growth around the perimeter of the BMBCL, how can we know that *primary and secondary access points* are guaranteed for the future? For example, although the Collins Road trail head is a popular access point, it has no official standing or recognition with HRM.

To date, some of the developers have either planned or designated acreage that would provide access that *might* be suitable, but shouldn't those locations be included in a master plan that originates with HRM? The map below was part of a [2012 city report](#) that did include access points, so it's not like this hasn't already been considered. Our discussions with HRM are ongoing, and we would like to thank staff for making the time available to hear us out - let's hope those meetings yield the kind of results that we can all endorse.

Attachment 3



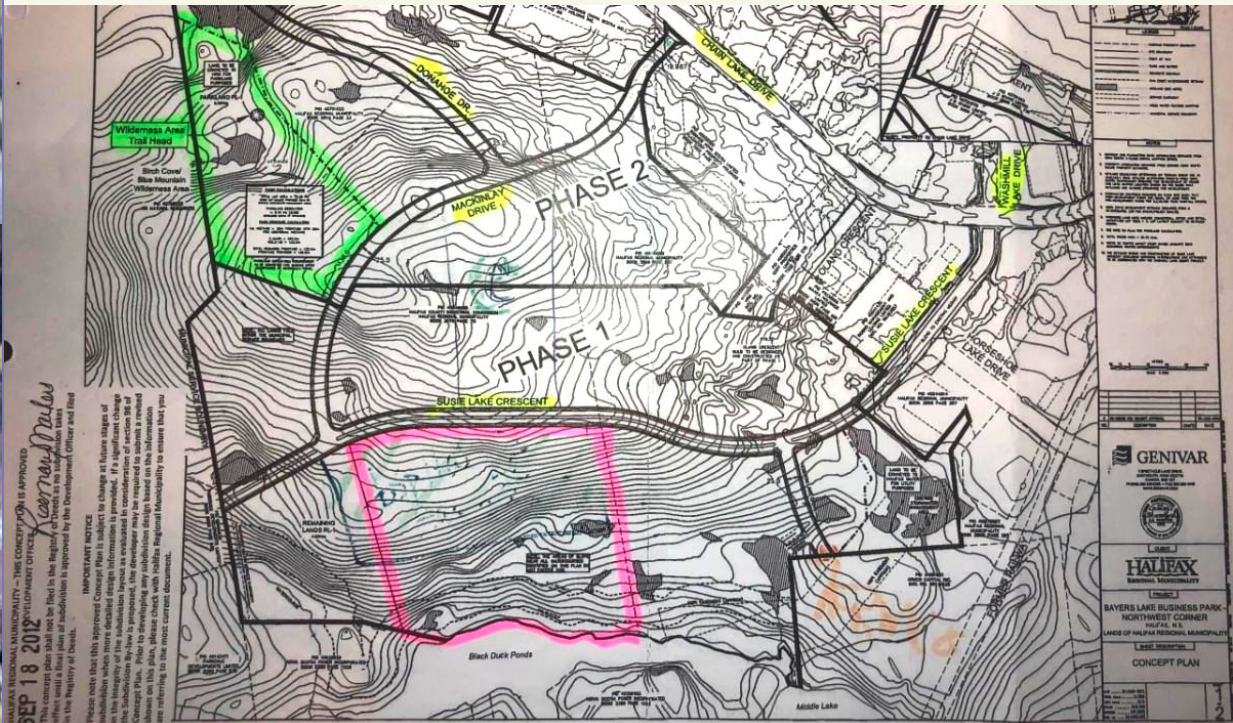
Proposed Access Points, BMBCL Regional Park - Conceptual Plan & Objectives, Sept. 6, 2012
Staff Report to HRM Council, c/o Environment & Sustainability Standing Committee

Recognize the NEWS background? See below for the answer!

ACCESS POINTS TO THE BMBCL

The BANC lands are located in the northwest corner of Bayers Lake Industrial Park and will be the location of the new [QEII Community Outpatient Centre](#) as well as other commercial developments. As part of the BANC development, a trail head

was supposed to be located there as per a 2012 HRM approved, subdivision concept plan (shown below). The location of that trail head is now excavated (see pic above) and appears to be scheduled for development. At this time, we have no further indication that a trail head will be located there. Again, without a plan, access points remain an unknown.



BANC Lands, Bayers Lake Green = Proposed trail head Pink = Site of new QEII Outpatient Centre.

HRM Approved Concept Plan, Sept, 2012 NOTE: This plan has been updated - see [QEII report, P.197](#)

Furthermore, a "Conceptual Regional Park Entrance" near Black Duck Brook in the [Brookline subdivision](#) (Parks of West Bedford) was originally in a [plan](#) recommended for approval by HRM staff. That subdivision is now in the construction phase, and based on available schematics, that access point no longer exists. Brookline subdivision is immediately north of the [Hobson Lake block](#) acquired by HRM in 2018. These and other, primary/secondary access points are critical to the future of the BMBCL regional park, all of which would be major components of a master plan.

MASKWA LOT CLOSED

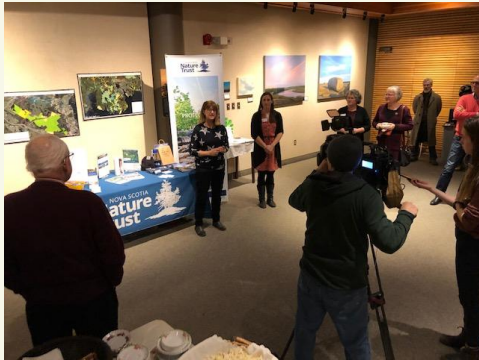
As a result of trail users not abiding by the current, provincial restriction on 'drive & park' as well as the implications of vehicle access on privately leased land, the club has had to close their parking lot at the end of Saskatoon Drive, effective March 29. Maskwa feels it's extremely important to follow the Premier's requests which urge Nova Scotians to



stay close to home and self isolate. The lot will remain closed within the current ban period and any determination to re-open is subject to guidance from the province and the aquatic club. The trails remain open for local residents who are able to walk to them from their homes.

WILD A BIG SUCCESS!

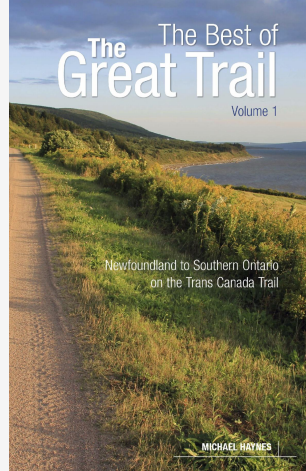
If attendance and sales are an indication of a successful event then WILD fits the bill! At least 200 people visited the Chase Gallery on opening day, plus many more through the month of February. To date, WILD has raised about \$5000 for the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. The organizer, Shelagh Duffett commented... "It was a pleasure to work on a project that combined fundraising, awareness building and artistic license all wrapped around the beautiful Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes area." Funds raised are going towards the purchase of the critical 'connector block' adjacent to the Cox Lake section of the BMBCL Wilderness Area.



Friends is continuing to endorse the Nature Trust, WILD BLUE campaign. You can get involved too by writing a letter of support to your HRM councillor - we have a sample for you ready to go! You'll find the letter and background on our "Opportunities" page on our website [here](#).

MEMBER 500 AND COUNTING

In less than 12 months, Friends has attracted more than 500 members, and we are continuing to grow. In recognition of No. 500, our Membership Chair, Anne Vaughan, and our Co-Chair, Mary Ellen Donovan, presented Steve Maly with a copy of Michael Haynes book, The Great Trail (Vol. 1 Eastern). Steve, welcome to Friends and thank you for your support! Stay tuned... our next announcement will be for member #1000! Why not invite someone to [JOIN](#) who you know will also support the creation of HRM's BMBCL Regional Park?



HIKING LEADERSHIP COURSE

On the weekend of February 27, eleven of our members and the course instructor got together at Maskwa Aquatic Club for a 3-day, hiking leadership course sanctioned by Hike Nova Scotia and the Outdoor Council of Canada. The course involved both indoor and outdoor training, and the candidates were able to take away new skill sets related to hike planning, safety, equipment, group management and more - all of which was taken in with great enthusiasm! Friends is fortunate to have this group now available to lead our hikes, and we hope that our members will soon be able to venture forth on new adventures in the BMBCL under their guidance.



MAP LICHEN 1000 YEARS+ OLD

Thanks to Dave Gordon, we have some great pics of [map lichen](#) from the Hobson Lake area. A common lichen in cold climates, some varieties of map lichen found in the Arctic have been dated at 8,600 years old. Map lichen is one of the candidate species being proposed for the National Lichen of Canada c/o the Canadian Museum of Nature. And, we've got it right here in the BMBCL! If you find a lichen or other plants... remember to enter them into [iNaturalist](#) for others to see (and confirm). Hint: *You can find some map lichen right at the Collins Road cul-de-sac.*



MEMORIES OF BIRCH COVE LAKES

Once again, having a look at some of the history of the BMBCL, we know that visitors to Susies and Quarry Lakes have enjoyed the area for many years. Below, this family made regular trips in the 1930s-40s to their camp on Susies and has been kind enough to share the pictures. To the right, a more recent picture was taken in 1969 at Quarry Lake. Let's hope that families will continue to build fond memories of the BMBCL lakes and lands for many years to come.

If you have early pictures of the BMBCL that you'd like to share, let us know, and we'll continue with this series.



LOOK TO NATURE IN TIMES OF STRESS

As we continue to be inundated with news of Covid19, maintaining our personal well-being becomes even more important. We have written before on the benefits of spending time in natural environments, and this continues to be a theme of interest to not only us as participants but also to those in the 'helping' professions. This comprehensive article, published on [PositivePsychology.com](https://positivepsychology.com), documents a wide volume of research that describes those benefits. As one of the studies quoted points out...

"Outdoor activities such as hiking, gardening, or bird watching, enhance the nature-human connection and acts as a catalyst to happiness".



NEWS BACKGROUND

If you were thinking red squirrel, you're correct! Common to the softwood and mixed wood forests of Nova Scotia, these are the softwood cone husks left behind in those piles we've all seen on their favourite stumps and hangouts. In addition to seeds, they also eat fruit, bark, insects, mice, bird eggs, and nuts from oak, beech, and hazel trees. They even are known to harvest mushrooms and hang them in trees to dry. As part of the predator cycle, they are frequent prey for hawks, owls, martens, fishers, bobcats, lynx, weasels, and coyotes. Yes, they can sometimes be a nuisance but are an essential part of our forest ecology.



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: Seed husks, c/o Red Squirrel



Early spring paddle at Cranberry Lake, Doug Smith
