



Pictured above is one of the Owls Head Park signs located in Debert area. Donna MacKay is encouraging people to help save Owls Head Provincial Park and is willing to deliver signs for those who will erect them on their property. (Submitted)

Help Save Owls Head Park

By Donna MacKay & Lindsay Lee

Take a moment and think of your favourite park. Maybe it's a hiking trail, a coastal area, part of a snowmobile network, or a great spot for a family picnic.

Now imagine how you would feel if that park suddenly disappeared. What if your elected officials decided that your recreational spaces, the environment, and public fairness were all less important than catering to a rich developer?

That's precisely what happened with Owls Head Provincial Park on the Eastern Shore. Our government officials orchestrated 3 years of secrecy at the behest of a billionaire in order for him to buy 5 miles of publicly owned shorefront (for a mere \$216,000).

Thankfully, that deal is not yet final, because Owls Head Provincial Park is an important component of our protected areas network. Due to its unique ecology, it has a history of promised protections dating back to the 1970s. In fact, many citizens - and even some government officials - believed that it was already legally protected.

Lighthouse Links Development Co. wants to build golf courses on Owls Head Provincial Park, instead of on suitable private land. Rather than dismissing this request (as it should have done), our government secretly removed Owls Head Provincial Park (site 694) from Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan.

The Plan was a result of years of public consultations. And yet, the government deliberately didn't consult with - or notify - the public or the Mi'kmaq when it removed Owls Head Provincial Park from the Plan.

As the Minister of Lands and Forestry, Iain Rankin secretly entered into a Letter of Offer to sell this Tier 1 (top-priority) conservation property. The public found out about the secret delisting and offers to sell the park as a result of a whistleblower, freedom of information requests, and investigative journalist Michael Gorman of the CBC. "It's hard to imagine a golf development without the land being basically carpet-bombed," Gorman later said.

If it can happen to Owls Head Provincial Park, it can happen anywhere in Nova Scotia. That's why there are thousands of red "Stop the Sale, Save Owls Head" signs and stickers popping up on yards and bumpers across the province.

Whether they provide coastal access, camping opportunities, or an array of important environmental benefits, parks and protected areas enhance the lives of Nova Scotians each and every day.

These sites help purify our water, clean our air, provide habitat for species at risk, mitigate climate change, and more. The intro-

LAWNS, GARDENS AND OUTDOOR LIVING

Aviation Centre Watermain Approved

By Maurice Rees

Ian Sinclair Contracting has been awarded a tender valued at \$125,102, excluding HST, for an new watermain to the Debert Aviation Centre. The fire suppression system for the new Debert Aviation Centre requires an upsizing of the existing watermain on Vickers Street. The existing 150mm diameter line will be upsized to 250 mm diameter for a distance of 200 meters

When tenders were opened for the original April 8 tender call prices as received exceeded available funds. Staff reduced the scope of work and re-issued the tender on April 14, 2021. Tenders closed on

April 22, 2021. A total of 15 companies requested the tender documents and six tenders were received by the

closing April 22, 2021.

Results are summarized as follows: Maritime Directional, \$125,102; Ian Sinclair Contracting, \$133,022; Northeast Construction, \$134,125; CF Construction, \$139,025; S.W. Weeks, \$165,000 and Bowser's Construction Ltd, \$172,375. The tender as received from Maritime Directional was incomplete and was rejected. The second lowest tender as received from Ian Sinclair was deemed complete. Work was scheduled to start on May 10th and would take three weeks.

With additional expenditures for the aviation centre and because the watermain upgrade was an additional unexpected item, staff determined it was possible to delay new exterior siding to offset the cost of the watermain.

In addition to the tender

value, other watermain project costs will include materials testing and staff time

(\$5,000) and rebated tax (\$5,701). A total of approximately \$2,500 has already been committed to the project for design fees and staff time to date. Total anticipated project commitment is \$146,223 plus contingencies. Staff recommended an internal contingency of \$15,000 be carried for the construction project. Ian Sinclair Contracting bid was for a total contract amount of \$133,022 excluding HST.

For a tender closing on April 29th, council approved the authority to award a tender at the May council committee meeting for Keywest Court Paving, a County owned road measuring 132 metres in length. Keywest Court in Truro Heights runs into Annabelle. If prices low, may seek to do Annabelle at the same time.

A new sidewalk in Hilden to meet up with anticipated construction of a new firehall was granted permission be approved at the May 13th council committee meeting. The new sidewalk would extend north from the end of the existing sidewalk, for a distance of 825 metres, and end at the Upham Family Outlet.

Councillor Parker, who eventually voted against the motion stating the project was out of rotation, from what had been approved in previous capital budgets. He asked why the Hilden sidewalk was moved ahead of Old Courthouse branch, which was added to Active Transportation budget at a presentation during a Gordon MacIntosh presentation held at the Glengarry.

Speaking on the matter Councillor Taggart asked the cost of maintaining sidewalks including snow and ice and he wanted to ensure source of funds will be active transportation.

duction to Our Parks and Protected Areas even says, "The plan's success has been authored by you: Nova Scotians committed to protecting and conserving our beautiful province for future generations."

The group Save Owls Head Provincial Park/Little Harbour has been trying to do just that. We've been advocating for Owls Head Provincial Park as well as nearly 200 nature reserves, wilderness areas, and provincial parks awaiting designation (formal protection).

As of January 2021, approximately half of what Nova Scotians considered provincial parks were not formally protected. Nova Scotia Supreme Court Justice Kevin Coody wrote, "The public had every reason" to believe that Owls Head Provincial Park was formally protected.

You should be able to tell if the "provincial park" up the road is indeed a protected park.

The government is taking steps to legally protect some of these areas. While it's not official yet, the government recently announced its intention to protect a number of sites, including MacElmon's Pond Provincial Park, and expansions to Economy River Wilderness Area, Portapique River Wilderness Area, and Wentworth Valley Wilderness Area. But there is still a lot of work to do.

Many areas, such as Shubenacadie Provincial Park, Balmoral Mills Provincial Park, and Caddell Rapids Look-off Provincial Park are still without legal protection and there's no word as to when (or if) the government will preserve them.

Most worrisome, Premier Rankin has been asked to reassure Nova Scotians that the government would not secretly delist and offer to sell any other park properties. He refused to give that assurance, which means that all the parks awaiting designation are still in jeopardy.

To become a true environmental leader, and restore the public's broken trust, the government must stop the sale and save Owls Head Provincial Park.

For more information, please visit: <https://saveowlshead.org> Contact: Lindsay Lee & Donna MacKay to get a yard sign: <https://saveowlshead.org/action-center/>

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