

Expanded Protected Areas of Nova Scotia - PAGE TWO OF THREE

Portapique River Wilderness Area expanded by 974 hectares

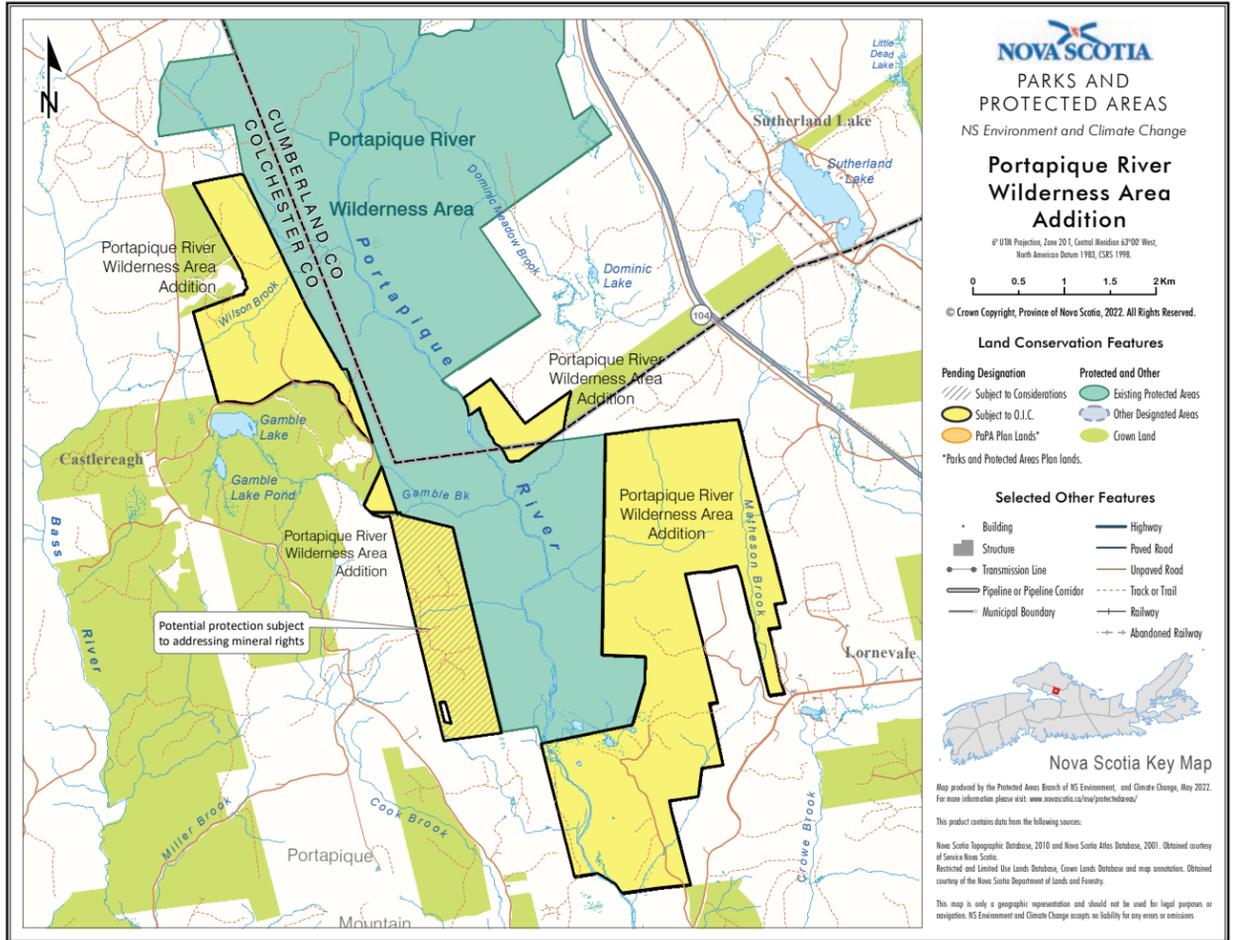
A total of 6,534 additional hectares in Economy River, Portapique River and Wentworth Valley were included as part of a November 10th announcement whereby the Nova Scotia government announced it is investing an additional \$20 million to help protect more of Nova Scotia's land and water and designating another 9,300 hectares of Crown land for the benefit of Nova Scotians and the environment.

Portapique River Wilderness Area is centered around the mixed forest canyon of Portapique River. The canyon and the highly dissected ravines of its tributaries cut through the ancient till-mantled rounded granite of the Cobequid Mountains, the backbone of mainland Nova Scotia. Mature to old-growth coniferous forests, dominated

by red spruce and scattered hemlocks, flourish in the cool microclimate along the lower slopes of the Portapique River canyon and tributaries. Pure hardwood and mixed wood forests, typical of the Cobequids, dominate the mid and upper slopes.

Portapique River is a refuge for the rare blacknose dace, a small fish which occurs only in upland and mountainous streams. Downstream, Atlantic salmon habitat depends on the predictable and clean water flows protected by the wilderness area's undisturbed forests. The wilderness area also sustains quality habitat for endangered mainland moose, which are sensitive to disturbance.

The slopes, gorges and cascades along the river corridor, with their older forests, provide wilderness travel experi-



A typical winter view from deep in the forests of Portapique River Wilderness area will continue for eternity with the Provincial focus on keeping pristine and adding additional areas. (NS Gov Photo)

ences sheltered from the sights and sounds of surrounding land uses. There are currently no managed hiking or backcountry ski trails in this wilderness area.

The "Swinging Bridge" trail, between Castlereagh and Dominic Meadow Brook (Sutherland Lake), is designed

for snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle and off-road motorcycle use. This trail is jointly managed by the Snowmobilers Association of Nova Scotia (SANS), All-terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia (ATVANS) and Nova Scotia Off Road Riders Association (NSORRA) under agreements

with Nova Scotia Environment and Climate Change. This is the only trail open to motorized vehicles.

Portapique River Wilderness Area was designated in 1998 and expanded by about 50% (974 hectares) in 2022.

Designation of an additional 154 hectares adjacent to the area's southwestern boundary will come into effect, subject to the completion of geoscience research and expiration of any mineral rights.

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