

More Land, Water Protected in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia has a new nature reserve protecting wetlands, forest and migratory bird habitat in Digby County.

The designation of the Toy Makers Marsh Nature Reserve was announced in May, along with two expanded nature reserves and seven expanded wilderness areas. Together, they protect 836 hectares of Nova Scotia's land and water, and 5.2 kilometres of its coastline.

The Province also opened consultation on 13 proposed new or expanded wilderness areas and nature reserves. If approved for designation, the proposed sites will protect an additional 1,946 hectares of land and water. Four of the sites open for consultation were purchased by the Department using federal funding under the Canada-Nova Scotia Nature Agreement.

Funding programs that support the Province, municipalities and land trust organizations to meet their protected land and water goals include:

Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust – created in 2008 by the Province using offshore oil and gas royalties to provide funding to land trust organizations to acquire and protect privately owned natural areas that are ecologically significant, threatened and/or irreplaceable; in 2022, the government added an additional $20 million, $17.7 million of which has been provided to land trust organizations to date, including the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, which protected more than 1,000 hectares at Cape LaHave Island, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, which expanded the Musquodoboit River Nature Reserve.

Canada-Nova Scotia Nature Agreement – federal funding available in Nova Scotia from 2024 to 2026; the province and land trust organizations used this funding to acquire about 8,000 hectares of land.

Canada Target 1 Challenge – federal funding available to provinces and territories from 2019-2024; in Nova Scotia, it has helped protect 38,664 hectares to date, including Island Lake Wilderness Area spanning Halifax Regional Municipality and Hants County (3,917 hectares, designated in 2023); Owl's Head Provincial Park, Halifax Regional Municipality (267 hectares, designated in 2022); Upper Ohio Conservation Lands, Shelburne County (Nature Conservancy of Canada project; 1,121 hectares); and Mabou Highlands Conservation Lands, Inverness County (Nova Scotia Nature Trust project, 271 hectares).

Quick Facts: The Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act set a goal to protect 20 per cent of Nova Scotia's land and water by 2030; an interim target of 15 per cent by December 31, 2026, was set in the Collaborative Protected Areas Strategy; a wilderness area protects large, intact land and freshwater ecosystems and natural landscapes, ideal for canoeing and hiking, as well as hunting, trapping and recreational fishing and a nature reserve protects special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and natural processes; scientific research and education are the primary uses of nature reserves and only low-impact recreation is permitted.

Notes from our Provincial Capital

Taking Action on Women's Health

By Hon. Michelle Thompson

(Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness, recently gave a crucial update on women's health in Nova Scotia. Premier Tim Houston offered her the opportunity)

For too long, many women have felt they needed to advocate harder, wait longer or try to navigate a more complicated path to get the healthcare they need. Our government is taking action to ensure women are heard, their health is prioritized, and they can get the care they need, when they need it.

Over the past few years, our government has laid the foundation for this work by building up healthcare. Our investments have resulted in more doctors, more nurses and more ways to access care. It's because of this work that we have the resources to take action on women's health.

Our government has created a new dedicated Women's Health Program within the Department of Health and Wellness, and a new Provincial Women's Health Clinical Collaborative. The Collaborative will include representatives from Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health and the Department. Together, they will work to improve women's health and ensure women's health remains the priority it should be.

A new Women's Health Summit will bring together patients, healthcare providers, community organizations, advocates, researchers and health-system leaders because we want the voices of those who use and deliver this care at the table. Our three areas of focus are menopause care, breast screening and gynecology



Michelle Thompson

We are working to increase access to breast screening services and reduce mammography wait times. A review has already started and will specifically look at booking and waitlist management, scheduling, standardizing services, and equipment and workforce opportunities. Work is already underway to increase capacity and make more appointments available in areas with longer waits so more people can be seen, faster.

We are also creating a Menopause Centre of Excellence which will open in Spryfield this winter. This is just the first step. We will build on this centre to expand services across the province. And we are funding a new Women's Health Research and Innovation Grant to support new ideas to improve care for women, with an initial focus on menopause care. These are tangible, short-term actions that will create real results for women in Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia went from having some of the worst healthcare metrics in Canada to leading on doctor attachment and certain surgery wait times. With that same focus, we will ensure that women have access to the care they need and deserve.

Michelle Thompson is Minister of Health and Wellness

Notes from our Provincial Capital

Residents are demanding answers

Over the past 6 months there has been lots of announcements regarding investments and their economic impact on Nova Scotia. Beginning with approvals and new mining start ups, Defence spending with over $3-Billion in spending announced for Nova Scotia, in some cases work has begun. More recent $100-Million in a federal announcement to do research on wind speed, map and drill the ocean floor to inform decision making on the massive N S Offshore Wind project.

However, the recent data centre announcement for Port Hawks bury is the largest private sector funded project in the history of Nova Scotia

There is little question that this will concern some residents. With that in mind I have chosen to do some research and ask some questions. Before I begin, I wish to say that over the years that I have been evolved in government at either the Provincial or Municipal level I have often noticed what I call duelling scientists. Regardless of the issue you will always have people that will quote "science" or "scientific research" to defend their position.

With that in mind, I am doing my research on what is refereed to as open AI. With these AI sites you basically ask the question and these sites review all available publicly available information and summarizes it to you to read. Once you have reviewed this information, I recommend asking more detailed information from their initial response.



Tom Taggart

I asked for the Pros and Cons of AI Data centres.

Pros: Economic: Catalyst, Last year $27 billion in Pennsylvania another $25 billion in Loudoun County. In 2024 Texas data centres paid 3.2 billion in local taxes. Additionally, AI states received local infrastructure upgrades that are paid for by the business but often benefit the broader community.

Con's: Extremely high electricity consumption. The US currently estimates that in recent years data centres increased the overall national electricity usage by 4.4% and that is expected to grow.

There is no question that data centres consume a very significant amount of electricity. It is my understanding that initially the power for phase one of this NS data centre will be supplied by the NSP grid while green wind energy projects that are currently being constructed in Colchester, Hants and Guysborough counties come online.

It should be noted that in Nova Scotia it is the responsibility of the wind power producer to pay for any upgrades

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Notes from our Provincial Capital

The MOST program is an amazing program

The fall legislature session is over. Here are a few items of interest to you.

Independent Review to Assess Tying Nova Scotia Power's Earnings to Performance

The Province is considering a new regulatory model for Nova Scotia Power to help improve affordability, reliability and accountability in Nova Scotia's electricity system.

Legislation introduced September 9, outlines an independent review of performance-based regulation, an approach that ties a utility's earnings to its performance rather than its costs. The Nova Scotia Energy Board will lead the review.

Under the current cost-of-service model, Nova Scotia Power is allowed to recover approved operating costs, capital investments and a return on equity. The board's review will assess performance-based regulation, its potential benefits and risks, and how it could be adapted for Nova Scotia's system. The review will consider: the protection of ratepayers and the maintenance of reasonable rates; performance measures related to sustainable development, energy efficiency and emissions reductions; performance measures related to efficiency, cost-effectiveness, safety, reliability, resilience, innovation, customer service, quality of system operations, and management; impacts on different classes of customers; Nova Scotia Power's opportunity to earn a fair rate of return and how a new model would impact capital spending, cost recovery and risk.



Dave Ritcey

Nova Scotia Power has been tracking and reporting reliability and storm response performance measures data since 2016, providing good baseline data and experience for the review. The board will provide recommendations on design and implementation. Once the review is completed, the government will make a decision on performance-based regulation and determine the next steps.

The review process is expected to begin 30 days after the bill comes into force, and the final report will be made public. This review is another part of the govern-

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