



## Land Acquisitions Target Properties with Natural Assets

### Department of Natural Resources

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The province will help protect and preserve an additional 699 hectares (about 1,727 acres) of prime Nova Scotia property for recreational and tourism opportunities, coastal access, inland waterways, and wildlife habitat this year.

Islands in Mahone Bay, St. Margarets Bay and North Harbour, and parcels of land in Guysborough and Queens counties, are among the properties that are being added to the province's existing Crown lands.

"These lands will help Nova Scotia protect endangered species and return some of this province's precious coastal property to Nova Scotians' hands," Premier Rodney MacDonald said today, Feb. 22, at a news conference in Mahone Bay. "These lands will provide recreational and environmental benefits to Nova Scotians today and into the future."

Natural Resources Minister David Morse said it was important that the province seize the opportunity to complete these additional acquisitions this year so the lands were not lost to development.

"Nova Scotia has one of the lowest proportions of Crown land in Canada -- only Prince Edward Island is smaller," said Mr. Morse. "Much of our culture was shaped by our proximity to the sea and to our natural habitat. These special purchases reinforce our province's commitment to the environment and to ensuring that future generations benefit from our rich culture and traditions."

The new Crown purchases confirmed today were:

-- Coveys and Backman Islands, 61 hectares (150.5 acres) in Mahone Bay, Lunenburg Co. Both islands have high potential for recreational use and will expand the province's limited coastal access on the South Shore of Nova Scotia.

-- Little Indian Island (also known as Micou's Island), St. Margarets Bay, Halifax Co., a nine-hectare (22 acre) island that features natural wetlands and is also of recreational value.

-- Sheep Island, North Harbour, Victoria Co., a 7.3-hectare (18 acre) area that is home to colonies of great blue heron and terns.

-- Twelve hectares (30 acres) at McGowan's Lake, Queens Co. that includes ponds that provide valuable habitat for overwintering of Blanding's turtles, which have been identified in the area. Nova Scotia declared the Blanding's turtles endangered in 2000.

-- George Eddy Company Limited lands, 442 hectares (1,092 acres) located on the St. Mary's River, a popular salmon river, in Guysborough County. The lands are in an area well known to residents and international visitors for its pristine beauty and recreational opportunities -- including fishing, canoeing and hiking -- and has been used as a site for studies of wood turtles.

"We want to thank the partners, like the Mahone Island Conservation Association and the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association, who are helping to ensure the future of some of these properties through stewardship agreements," said Mr. Morse.

"We also want to thank private land donors and corporations like the George Eddy Company Limited for helping us protect against development in areas that provide Nova Scotians with fine examples of the natural assets we treasure."

Negotiations on the remaining 167.5 hectares (414 acres) of special acquisitions are expected to be completed by March 31. The special purchases are expected to cost a total of \$5.36 million, which includes \$3.11 million for the six acquisitions announced today.

Negotiations also continue on the purchase of properties announced in May 2006 as part of an agreement with Bowater Mersey Paper Company.

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FOR BROADCAST USE:

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Premier Rodney MacDonald says the acquisitions will help protect endangered species and return some of this province's precious coastal property to Nova Scotians' hands.

Natural Resources Minister David Morse says Nova Scotia has one of the lowest proportions of Crown land and it was important to seize the opportunity for these properties so the lands were not lost to development.

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