




P.O. Box 1749
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Item No. 9.1.1
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee
June 11, 2015


TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

ORIGINAL SIGNED

SUBMITTED BY:

 _____
Jane Fraser, Director, Operations Support

ORIGINAL SIGNED

 _____
Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: April 14, 2015

SUBJECT: NS Nature Trust 100 Islands

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

ORIGIN

Recommendation Report, entitled "NS Nature Trust 100 Islands", dated February 5, 2015, which appeared before Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee on March 5, 2015, agenda item 9.1.2, with the following recommendation (Attachment 1): *It is recommended that Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee not recommend to Regional Council, the approval of a donation, nor a grant of funds, nor a grant of land, to the Nature Trust's 100 Wild Islands Campaign.*

March 5, 2015, motion that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee refer the matter to staff to prepare a report in consideration of the suggested alternatives: *Deputy Mayor Nicoll noted that there were alternative courses of action within the [updated] correspondence from Nova Scotia Nature Trust and suggested that these alternatives be explored by staff through a supplemental report to be brought back to the Committee by May.*

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 79, (1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for (av) a grant or contribution to (v) any charitable, nursing, medical, athletic, educational, environmental, cultural, community, fraternal, recreational, religious, sporting or social organization within the Province.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Section 63 (1): The Municipality may sell or lease property at a price less than market value to a non-profit organization that the Council considers to be carrying on an activity that is beneficial to the Municipality.

Administrative Order Number 50 - Respecting The Disposal of Surplus Real Property.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee not recommend to Regional Council, the approval of a donation or grant of funds to the Nova Scotia Nature Trust's 100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign, in response to the Nature Trust's request of March 2015.

BACKGROUND

This supplementary report responds to the salient differences between NSNT's July 2014 and March 2015 proposals (more detail, below), namely:

NSNT REQUESTS	NSNT PROPOSAL July 2014	NSNT PROPOSAL March 2015
Municipal Grant / Donation	\$500,000	\$180,000 Maximum Based on matching contributions from Halifax residents and businesses
Deadline	Municipal commitment sought by November 2015	Proposed matching contribution period: Mar.01, 2015 – Mar.01, 2016
Remittance	Remit over 2 years	Remit over 3 years (2016-2019)
Grant of Land	Request for other non-financial municipal support	Specific request for the 1-acre parcel on Gerard Island

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) made a presentation to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) in July 2014, requesting municipal support for NSNT's 100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign. In response, a recommendation report dated February 5, 2015 (along with a private and confidential report), appeared before ESSC on March 5, 2015 (Attachment 1), in which municipal staff recommended against donation or grant of financial support and land grant.

Immediately prior to the March 5, 2015 ESSC meeting, NSNT submitted a second, updated proposal for ESSC's consideration (Attachment 2.) The standing committee did not discuss the municipal staff report, dated February 5, 2015. Rather, ESSC referred NSNT's March 2015 proposal to municipal staff for supplemental response, resulting in this report, dated April 14, 2015.

This, *current* report (April 14, 2015) differs from the *original* report (February 5, 2015) in two ways:

- 1) The original report recommended against a land grant in response to NSNT's initial request for an unspecified contribution of municipal land in the general area. NSNT then (March 2015) made a *specific* request for a one-acre Gerard Island parcel. The specific request has now been referred to the Administrative Order 50 process (respecting the disposal of surplus real property), which does not require ESSC approval;
- 2) In absence of a clear policy framework by which to evaluate and prioritize NSNT's request, a maximum grant of \$180,000 is not recommended hereby (i.e., consistent with the recommendation in response to the original \$500,000 request).

More specifically, the difference between NSNT's two proposals is:

NSNT Proposal - July 2014

The first NSNT request (July 2014) sought a municipal donation or grant of \$500,000. NSNT advised that such grant or donation would be matched by a private donor toward NSNT's fund-raising goal of \$1,200,000. A donation commitment was sought by late 2016 with a proposed 2-year remittance period (e.g., 2 annual payments of \$250,000 each.) The February 5, 2015 municipal report recommended against providing a donation or grant.

NSNT Proposal - March 2015

NSNT's updated request (March 2015) is in two parts:

1. Financial Contribution

NSNT now seeks a maximum municipal donation or grant of \$180,000. NSNT explains the reduction in municipal request—from \$500,000 to \$180,000—is due to recent successes in fund-raising.

More specifically, NSNT proposes the municipality challenge local residents and businesses to make campaign donations, between March 1, 2015 and March 1, 2016, which would then be matched by the municipality, to a maximum of \$180,000. Ultimately, NSNT proposes that if Halifax residents/businesses and the municipality each raise \$180,000 (together, \$360,000), then it would leverage a matching contribution of \$360,000 by a private donor. NSNT's final goal of \$720,000 would be reached, and the campaign goal of \$7,000,000 would be achieved. NSNT also proposes that a municipal donation could be spread over three (3) years (e.g., \$60,000 per year), starting in 2016.

In its March 2015 request, NSNT further suggests that, based on the Islands' environmental importance, the NSNT project meets ESSC's mandate^{♦♦}, thus warranting financial support. While environmental significance is a key tenet of ESSC, its Terms of Reference overtly reference promotion of "policies" and "policy structures", by which to "address amount, use and protection of parks, forests, and open spaces" (see underlined wording in footnote on p.3.)

It should be noted that in January 2015, Halifax and the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's made contributions of \$2,500 and \$250, respectively, in support of Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores Association (DEANS)[†]. DEANS initiated mainland Nova Scotia's first Strategic Tourism Expansion Program (STEP)^{*}, the Bay of Islands[§] project. Atlantic Canada

^{♦♦} ESSC Terms of Reference:

Purpose

1. (1) The purpose of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee is to provide advice to the Council relating to the Environment and Sustainability including Solid Waste Resources, energy security and sustainable parks, forests (urban and rural) and open spaces and water resource management. (2) The other purposes of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee are to: (c) promote policies appropriate to protect water resources, parks, open spaces and green environment in HRM.

Parks and Open Spaces

5. The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee shall: (a) encourage the appropriate policy structure to address amount, use and protection of parks, forests (urban and rural) and open spaces for the use and enjoyment of the residents of HRM.

[†] DEANS serves 12 municipal units within the counties of Antigonish, Guysborough, Pictou, and eastern Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

^{*} STEP is a comprehensive process that guides citizens, businesses and community leaders through a series of well-tested, strategic "steps" aimed at creating a sustainable tourism plan that incorporates products, services and experiential tourism. It helps provide community residents and entrepreneurs with an understanding of how practical destination development occurs, about industry trends and the art and science behind experiential tourism development.

Opportunities Agency's (ACOA's) Tourism Atlantic develops and substantially funds STEP initiatives in all four Atlantic Canada provinces.

This municipal donation was made in support of tourism, marketing and economic development along the eastern shore, extending beyond the 100 Islands area, the subject of this report. Such financial support is not a surrogate for municipal policy decisions on behalf of standing committees or councils, whether community or regional, and is rather characterized as a non-substantive, good-will gesture.

2. Land Grant

NSNT's July 2014 proposal invited municipal support in other ways (i.e., in addition to financial contribution), but they did not specifically request donation of the one-acre Gerard Island parcel (Attachment 3.) NSNT's March 2015 proposal, however, specifically requested donation of the Gerard Island municipal parcel (subject to legal verification.) The one-acre parcel (PID 40028193) is wooded and vacant.

Municipal staff has referred the parcel for disposal under Administrative Order 50 (AO50), Respecting the Disposal of Surplus Real Property. This AO50 referral does not require ESSC approval.

DISCUSSION

The Discussion section in the previous report, "NS Nature Trust 100 Islands", dated February 5, 2015 (Attachment 1), states:

Policy Alignment

The Nature Trust's current objectives overlay, and complement, the near-50-year-old provincial intent of establishing, first, a national park, and later a provincial park, in the area. A recent (2013) Government of Nova Scotia initiative named, "Our Parks and Protected Areas: A Plan for Nova Scotia", supports the NSNT campaign.

The provincial plan intends to: 1) Update Nova Scotia's park system to secure and strengthen its long-term success; and 2) Increase Nova Scotia's legally protected landmass to at least 12 percent by 2015. The collaborative goal, between the Nature Trust and the Province, is to designate approximately 4,000 acres of provincial crown islands and headlands (both wilderness and provincial parks) for protection.

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) policy includes such broad aspirations as the health of the local economy, providing opportunities for public recreation, protection of natural corridors, environmental sustainability, land and water resource preservation, and growth/settlement pattern management.

The campaign's objectives are bolstered by the existing Eastern Shore (East) Municipal Planning Strategy, which states: "Existing coastal park areas and other crown owned coastal lands and islands within the Plan Area will be recognized through appropriate zoning. The zoning will support only those uses which are consistent with long term park objectives and will provide for overall protection of coastal lands including islands."

From a recreational standpoint, the population adjacent to the 100 Wild Islands coastline is sparse, and as such, there is a low incidence of municipal investment in recreation infrastructure along the

[§] The Bay of Islands includes the 100 Wild Islands, but extends further east to include other counties and municipalities. Other STEP projects have been completed in other Atlantic Canada provinces.

30 kilometres adjacent to the campaign area. However, recreation opportunities are concentrated in communities on both ends of the campaign area, namely Sheet Harbour (11 km north of Taylor Head Provincial Park), Malay Falls (22 km north of Taylor Head Provincial Park), Lake Charlotte (10 km south of Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park), and Musquodoboit Harbour (17 km south of Lake Charlotte). These communities host municipal recreation opportunities such as trails, playgrounds, sportfields, arenas, parks, and aquatic programs at private fresh water beaches (i.e., at Lake Charlotte and Malay Falls.)

Securing the islands would support leisure activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching, and wilderness camping, among others, and may be regarded as opportunities for growing ecotourism along the eastern shore. Other than at the Bollong Park Ballfield, 19088 Highway 7, Spry Harbour—where one could launch a canoe or kayak from shore—there are no other municipally-owned properties offering direct access to the ocean. There are; however, other public and private boat launches within the campaign area.

Conclusion

Despite the environmental benefits of preserving the 100 Wild Islands, the municipality's participation ought to be rationalized against the fact that there is currently no budget allocated for this matter. As well, any municipal contribution would be made in absence of a broad-scope municipal plan for open space distribution and financial allocation, which is now being developed as the "Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan (GPOSPP)."

The GPOSPP will assist Regional Council in determining an economically and environmentally sustainable strategy for the equitable maintenance and distribution of parks and open spaces throughout the municipality. High level GPOSPP policy objectives are anticipated to be before Regional Council by 2016. One outcome of this plan is to provide Regional Council with recommendations regarding municipal open space acquisitions. Until the GPOSPP is approved by Regional Council—and barring any interim deliberation by Regional Council about the merits of individual, un-prioritized park and open space acquisitions, donations or grants—it would be premature to recommend a donation or grant worth \$500,000, relative to those open space acquisition funds already approved or anticipated through approved master plans. Furthermore, the value of such unbudgeted donation or grant would set-up an opportunity-cost scenario, potentially preventing or postponing the acquisition of lands already approved as priorities.

Although the Nova Scotia Nature Trust reduced its funding request (see 1. *Financial Contribution*, above), municipal staff's recommendation against providing a financial contribution remains unchanged from that offered in the February 5, 2015 report (see above excerpt and Attachment 1).

As indicated above, municipal staff is developing a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan (GPOSPP) that will establish a comprehensive decision-making framework including guiding principles, policy objectives, and criteria for identifying, valuing, and protecting lands through public investment and land-use planning. In the absence of this plan, there is no mechanism by which to evaluate or prioritize these lands (i.e., islands), to determine if they meet objectives. Also, apparent provincial and federal support of the 100 Islands campaign does not stand as rationale in lieu of clear municipal objectives, which inevitably may not overlap with provincial or federal objectives and support.

Furthermore, there is no approved methodology by which to more specifically prioritize third-party funding campaign initiatives against approved capital acquisitions for municipal purposes, for which municipal funds would otherwise be used.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report's recommendations. Should, however, ESSC recommend to Regional Council that a donation, or grant of funds ought to be made,

(i.e., outside of the Community Grants Program), then Regional Council would have to consider which current land acquisition priorities ought to be set aside in order to reassign funds to this cause, given that there is no current budget for this initiative.

Also, refer to the Discussion section ('July 3/14 Motion: Proposed Land Acquisitions') of the report, entitled "NS Nature Trust 100 Islands" (ESSC Item no.9.1.2, March 5, 2015.)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no negative environmental implications identified and associated with the goals of the NSNT 100 Wild Islands Campaign. Human interaction with sensitive habitats will be managed through NSNT's impending management plan for the 100 Islands, and the Nature Trust's island preservation objective will help ensure responsible stewardship of these natural assets.

ALTERNATIVES

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee may recommend to Regional Council to *approve* a donation or grant of \$180,000, or another amount. See Financial Implications Section of this report for additional information.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Recommendation Report, February 5, 2015
Attachment 2 – NSNT's Updated Proposal
Attachment 3 – Gerard Island

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Rudy Vodicka, Coordinator, Corporate Real Estate, Operations Support,
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Report Approved by: _____
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Report Approved by: _____
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Financial Approval by: _____
Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 902.490.6308

Attachment 1 – Recommendation Report, February 5, 2015
ESSC SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT – NS Nature Trust 100 Islands



P.O. Box 1749
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3A5 Canada

Item No. 9.1.2
Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee
March 5, 2015

TO: Chair and Members of Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original signed

Jane Fraser, Director, Operations Support
Original signed

Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: February 5, 2015

SUBJECT: NS Nature Trust 100 Islands

ORIGIN

July 3, 2014, motion of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) as MOVED by Councillor Watts, and seconded by Councillor Rankin, that ESSC refer the presentation by NS Nature Trust to staff and request a staff report including the following information:

- Look at what requests are currently before Council for the acquisition of land with dates and amounts of lands being considered and the financial costs to those commitments;
- To look at what previous commitments to similar campaigns HRM has been involved in with the NS Nature Trust; and,
- Identify any municipal lands that may be located in the area.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, Chapter 39, Section 61 (5) (a); The Municipality may acquire property, including property outside the Municipality, that the Municipality requires for its purposes or for the use of the public.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee not recommend to Regional Council, the approval of a donation, nor a grant of funds, nor a grant of land, to the Nature Trust's 100 Wild Islands Campaign.

BACKGROUND

Nova Scotia Nature Trust's (NSNT's) Executive Director, Bonnie Sutherland, made a presentation to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) about their campaign to preserve over 100 islands along the Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM's) eastern shore. This report responds to three specific questions posed in ESSC's motion of July 3, 2014, and further includes information about the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, its '100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign' (www.100wildislands.ca), and NSNT's request for municipal support.

Nova Scotia Nature Trust

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust (the Nature Trust or NSNT) was formed in 1994 with the intention of conserving ecologically significant lands. The Nature Trust is an incorporated charitable organization and is designated as a conservation organization under the Conservation Easement Act of Nova Scotia. Their mission is, "To protect Nova Scotia's outstanding natural legacy through land conservation." (source: <http://nsnt.ca/aboutus/>)

Through donations by private landowners and collaboration with government, NSNT has acquired properties ranging from woodlands and islands, to coastal and lakeshore sites. Such holdings preserve unique and significant natural features including old forests, wetlands, rare plant communities, and animal habitats, for the benefit of the public. When acquisition is not an option, the Nature Trust advances the use of conservation easements as a tool for protecting private lands. Easements protect the natural values of the property in perpetuity, while allowing the owner to retain title. After a property has been acquired, or an easement placed on it, the Nature Trust then becomes the permanent steward of that land, working to ensure ecological integrity is protected 'forever'.

Other primary land trusts in Nova Scotia include the Federal Government, the Province of Nova Scotia, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (Atlantic), and the Halifax Regional Municipality. Toward this end, NSNT maintains an extensive stewardship program that involves Nature Trust staff, professional biologists, government, landowners and volunteers.

The 100 Wild Islands Area

The archipelago of '100 Wild Islands' represents approximately 7,000 acres of near-shore islands along Halifax's Eastern Shore, between Taylor Head Provincial Park, to the north, and Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park, to the south (see Attachment 1). The span between Provincial parks is over 30 kilometres along Highway 7.

This series of islands include boreal rainforests, bogs, barrens, white-sand beaches, coves, 250 kilometres of undisturbed shoreline, over 100 species of seabirds and songbirds, both migratory and year-round residents, among other fauna and flora. It is described by the campaign as, "one of the last remaining intact and ecologically rich island groups of its size in North America", and which, "have been largely undisturbed by humans for over 10,000 years."

In addition to environmental, park and open space benefits, the islands are deemed (by the Nature Trust) to be an asset through which ecotourism, economic development, and health and wellness objectives, may be leveraged along the eastern shore. The Nature Trust indicates that the tourism sector, ACOA, and the eastern shore Chamber of Commerce, are engaged in promoting the area and the islands.

Protected To-Date

Of the 7,000 acres of land the NSNT strives to protect, approximately 4,000 acres of crown land within the archipelago has already been secured with Provincial agreement, and which is specified in the Provincial parks and conservation plan: "Our Parks and Protected Areas: A Plan for Nova Scotia". Approximately 3,000 privately-owned acres has been, or will be, secured, as per Nature Trust's campaign information. NSNT has already succeeded in protecting several islands, including Ship Rock Island, Shelter Cove, Borgles Island, and a significant portion of Gerard Island, where the municipality owns (subject to legal verification) a 1-acre parcel (see Attachment 2, Item 1 in table A.)

The Campaign

In order to preserve the entire 3,000 privately-owned island-acres, the legacy campaign (www.100wildislands.ca) seeks to achieve its goal through purchases, donations, and conservation agreements/easements with island owners. The Nature Trust's overall financial goal is \$7 million, of which \$4.6 million has been raised, to-date. A primary NSNT donor and entrepreneur originating from Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia, Mr. Paul Gauthier, has pledged to match new donations dollar-for-dollar, over-and-above his contribution of \$3,500,000, to-date¹. Under this scenario, NSNT's current goal seeks to raise \$1,200,000 in order to leverage matching funds from Mr. Gauthier, to achieve the needed balance of \$2,400,000.

Request for Municipal Funding Support

The Nature Trust approached the municipality's Environmental and Sustainability Standing Committee in July 2014, with a presentation and a request for a \$500,000 donation/grant. The requested donation was also proposed to be spread over a maximum of two years. A challenge to Halifax citizens to match the municipal amount was also proposed, with the prospect of having donations matched by Mr. Gauthier until 2016. NSNT's intent; however, is to achieve its current goal of \$1,200,000 by November 2015.

Other types of municipal support that were proposed include municipal land donations or sale of municipal property to the Nature Trust. Municipal acquisition and development of coastal land were also suggested, thereby allowing greater public access for the launching of watercraft in order to access the islands. As well, a vacant one-acre parcel on Gerard Island, that is owned by the municipality (subject to legal verification), was mentioned by the Nature Trust as a potential donation (see Attachment 2, Number 1 in Table A.)

DISCUSSION

July 3/14 Motion: Proposed Land Acquisitions

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee's motion of July 3, 2014, requested three specific information items, the first being land acquisition requests currently before Council that are:

- a) Either, acquisitions currently being investigated or analysed by municipal staff, in response to standing committee or regional council direction. Lands bearing this status are being considered for their capacity, or potential, for open space or trail acquisition. This status requires municipal staff to inform or provide recommendations to Regional Council;
- b) Or, properties that municipal staff are working to acquire, through offers and negotiation with other land owners, as directed by Regional Council.

Table A of Attachment 1 to the Private and Confidential Information Report, NS Nature Trust 100 Islands, dated February 5, 2015, provides potential property acquisitions as per the above criteria.

If Regional Council were to consider a donation to the 100 Wild Islands Campaign, there would be an impact—an opportunity cost—in that other municipal park or trail acquisitions, that are prioritized and budgeted, may be postponed or even, perhaps, pre-empted, as a result. Also, refer (below) to the Conclusion sub-section of this report's Discussion section, as well as this report's Financial Implications section.

¹ Nova Scotia Nature Trust press release, "Nature Trust Honours Paul Gauthier's 100 Wild Islands Legacy", October 23, 2014, Source: <http://nsnt.ca/newsevents/?id=326&category=>

July 3/14 Motion: Commitments to Previous Campaigns

The second item requested in the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee motion sought information about similar campaigns which Regional Council supported in the past:

1. **Troop Island** – This is a 29-acre island on the eastern side of St. Margaret's Bay, in the Glen Margaret community. A municipal donation of \$150,000 was approved on August 10, 2010. The source of funds was the Q107 Parkland Development Reserve Account, via the Parkland Acquisition Account (CPX01149). Funds were, in part, generated by the St. Margaret's Bay Stewardship Association (SMBSA) with assistance from other funding partners, including the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust. The Nova Scotia Nature Trust (NSNT) holds title to the island, which was purchased for approximately \$620,000.
2. **Micou's Island** – Micou's encompasses 22 acres and is located in the St. Margaret's Bay area near French Village. A municipal donation of \$100,000 was approved on March 27, 2007. The source of funds was Q107 - the Parkland Development Reserve Account. Municipal funds were donated to SMBSA's fund-raising efforts. Title is held by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (NSDNR), who also contributed \$500,000 toward the island's acquisition. It was purchased for approximately \$780,000.
3. **Young's Island** – This is an 84-acre island in Musquodoboit Harbour. A municipal grant of \$25,000 was approved on June 10, 2014, derived from the Community Grants program. Additional contributions came from: Federal Government Natural Areas Conservation Program (\$99,210), Provincial Government Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust (unconfirmed at time of application), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (International) \$11,000, and a private land donation (\$151,000 land value equivalent.) The Nature Conservancy of Canada (Atlantic Region) holds title to the island, among other nearby islands. It was appraised at \$504,000.

July 3/14 Motion: Municipal Land In The Area

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee motion also requested information about land that the municipality owns in the area:

Within the campaign area (i.e., between the two provincial parks), ownership information derived from the provincial land ownership database, Property Online, indicates that six parcels are apparently owned by the municipality, and are listed in Table A, Attachment 2.

In addition to municipal properties within, and adjacent to, the campaign area, municipal parcels are also located north and south of the campaign area/provincial parks:

Approximately 11 kilometres north of Taylor Head Provincial Park, in the community of Sheet Harbour, the municipality owns several parcels of land supporting the following public amenities: sportfields, an arena, a refuse transfer station, a fire hall, schools, tourist information, and a playground. The nearest municipal beach (fresh water) is approximately 15 kilometres north of Sheet Harbour, at Malay Falls, which is leased from Nova Scotia Power Incorporated.

To the south of Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park, near Lake Charlotte, three municipal properties accommodate a ball field, a fresh water boat launch, and a vacant parcel, none of which have ocean frontage. The municipality also operates an aquatic program at Webber's Campground Beach on Lake Charlotte.

Policy Alignment

The Nature Trust's current objectives overlay, and complement, the near-50-year-old provincial intent of establishing, first, a national park, and later a provincial park, in the area. A recent (2013) Government of Nova Scotia initiative named, "Our Parks and Protected Areas: A Plan for Nova Scotia", supports the NSNT campaign. The provincial plan intends to: 1) Update Nova Scotia's park system to secure and strengthen its long-term success; and 2) Increase Nova Scotia's legally protected landmass to at least 12 percent by 2015. The collaborative goal, between the Nature Trust and the Province, is to designate approximately 4,000 acres of provincial crown islands and headlands (both wilderness and provincial parks) for protection.

The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (RMPS) policy includes such broad aspirations as the health of the local economy, providing opportunities for public recreation, protection of natural corridors, environmental sustainability, land and water resource preservation, and growth/settlement pattern management.

The campaign's objectives are bolstered by the existing Eastern Shore (East) Municipal Planning Strategy, which states: "Existing coastal park areas and other crown owned coastal lands and islands within the Plan Area will be recognized through appropriate zoning. The zoning will support only those uses which are consistent with long term park objectives and will provide for overall protection of coastal lands including islands."

From a recreational standpoint, the population adjacent to the 100 Wild Islands coastline is sparse, and as such, there is a low incidence of municipal investment in recreation infrastructure along the 30 kilometres adjacent to the campaign area. However, recreation opportunities are concentrated in communities on both ends of the campaign area, namely Sheet Harbour (11 km north of Taylor Head Provincial Park), Malay Falls (22 km north of Taylor Head Provincial Park), Lake Charlotte (10 km south of Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park), and Musquodoboit Harbour (17 km south of Lake Charlotte). These communities host municipal recreation opportunities such as trails, playgrounds, sportfields, arenas, parks, and aquatic programs at private fresh water beaches (i.e., at Lake Charlotte and Malay Falls.)

Securing the islands would support leisure activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, bird watching, and wilderness camping, among others, and may be regarded as opportunities for growing ecotourism along the eastern shore. Other than at the Bollong Park Ballfield, 19088 Highway 7, Spry Harbour—where one could launch a canoe or kayak from shore—there are no other municipally-owned properties offering direct access to the ocean. There are; however, other public and private boat launches within the campaign area (see Attachment 1).

Conclusion

Despite the environmental benefits of preserving the 100 Wild Islands, the municipality's participation ought to be rationalized against the fact that there is currently no budget allocated for this matter. As well, any municipal contribution would be made in absence of a broad-scope municipal plan for open space distribution and financial allocation, which is now being developed as the "Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan (GPOSPP)."

The GPOSPP will assist Regional Council in determining an economically and environmentally sustainable strategy for the equitable maintenance and distribution of parks and open spaces throughout the municipality. High level GPOSPP policy objectives are anticipated to be before Regional Council by 2016. One outcome of this plan is to provide Regional Council with recommendations regarding municipal open space acquisitions. Until the GPOSPP is approved by Regional Council—and barring any interim deliberation by Regional Council about the merits of individual, un-prioritized park and open space acquisitions, donations or grants—it would be premature to recommend a donation or grant worth \$500,000, relative to those open space acquisition funds already approved or anticipated through approved master plans. Furthermore, the value of such unbudgeted donation or grant would set-up an opportunity-cost scenario, potentially preventing or postponing the acquisition of lands already approved as priorities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report's recommendation. Should, however, ESSC recommend to Regional Council that a donation, or grant of funds, or grant of land, ought to be made, then Regional Council would have to consider which current land acquisition priorities ought to be set aside in order to reassign funds to this cause, given that there is no current budget for this initiative.

If Regional Council were to approve such donation or grant, a thorough analysis would need to be undertaken by municipal staff, resulting in a subsequent report recommending specific cost implications, changes in priority, and appropriate funding sources. In particular, an assessment would be needed to discern the impact of committing funds to this initiative in the absence of a Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan and priority criteria.

See, also, the above Discussion section of this report, entitled, 'July 3/14 Motion: Proposed Land Acquisitions'.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no negative environmental implications identified and associated with the goals of the NSNT 100 Wild Islands Campaign. On the contrary, preserving islands and their ecosystems is deemed to be a positive step in terms of the islands' (and surrounding marine habitats') environmental health, sustainability, and conservation. Human interaction with sensitive habitats will be managed through NSNT's impending management plan for the islands, and the Nature Trust's island preservation objective will help ensure responsible stewardship of these natural assets.

ALTERNATIVES

The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee (ESSC) could, alternatively, recommend to Regional Council, to approve a donation or grant of \$500,000, or another amount, or a grant of land. See Financial Implications Section of this report for additional information.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Map – 100 Wild Islands Campaign Area
Attachment 2 – Table A - Municipal Lands Near Campaign Area

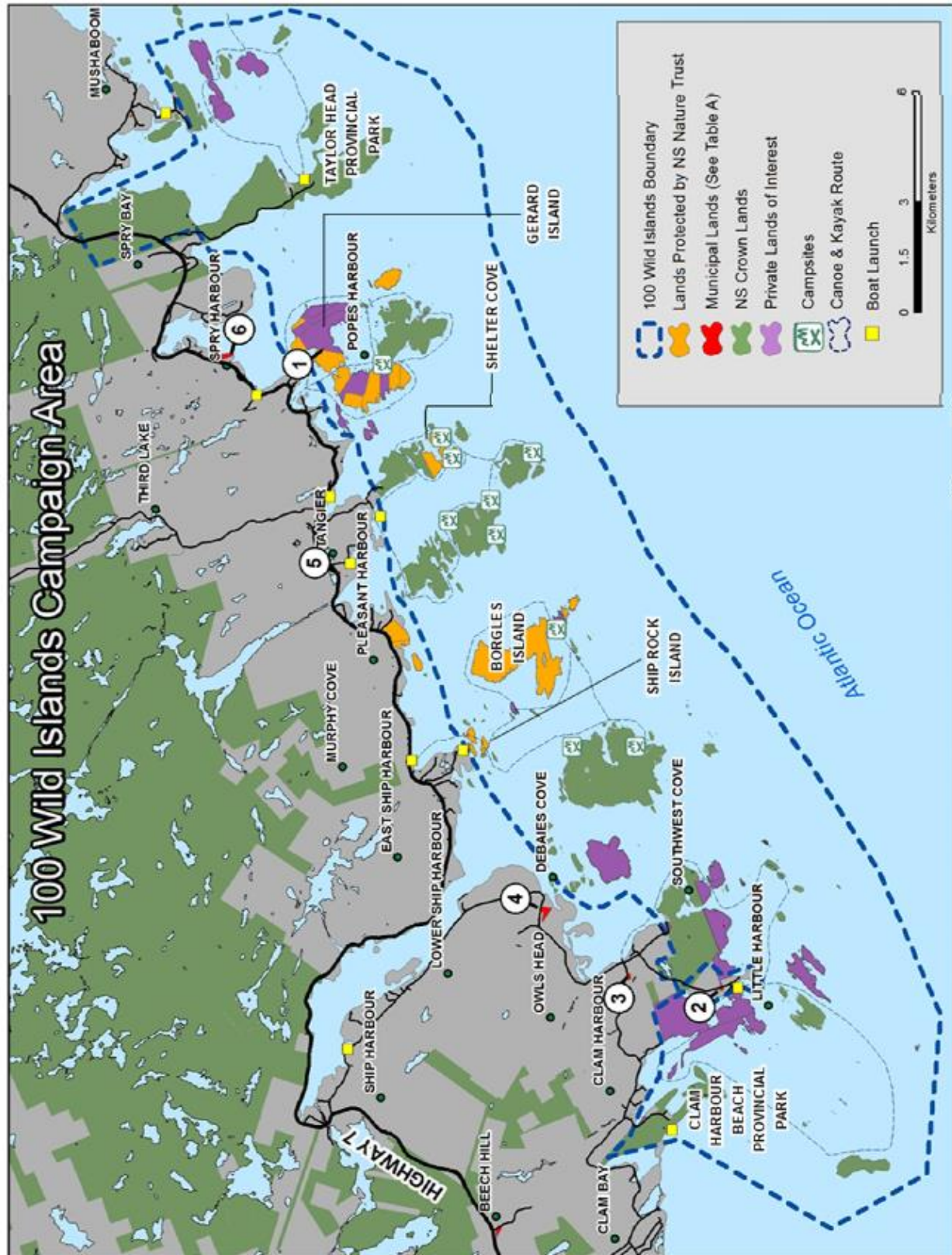
A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/commcoun/index.php> then choose the appropriate Community Council and meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210, or Fax 902.490.4208.

Report Prepared by: Rudy Vodicka, Coordinator, Corporate Real Estate, Operations Support, 902.490.5582

Report Approved by: Original signed
Peter Stickings, Manager, Corporate Real Estate, Operations Support, 902.490.7129

Report Approved by: Original signed
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Financial Approval by: Original signed
Greg Keefe, Director of Finance & ICT/CFO, 902.490.6308



Attachment 2 Table A – Municipal Lands Near Campaign Area
ESSC REPORT – NS Nature Trust 100 Islands

Numbers 1 to 6, below, correspond to the numbered/circled parcels on the map in Attachment 1.

Numbers Correspond to Map in Attachm't 1	Parcel Label	Land Category	Parcel Assets or Public Uses	PID No. & Civic Address	Parcel Area
1	Gerard Island	Open Space / Vacant (Not Oceanfront)	Unknown	40028193	1.0 Acre
2	Gorden J. Stevens Ball Park	Open Space / Sportfield (Not Oceanfront)	Ball field with fence & wooden dugouts	40189946 520 Little Harbour Rd., Little Harbour	2.1 Acres
3	Robert Jamieson Harbourside Elementary School	Open Space / Play Area (Not Oceanfront)	Paved play area at rear of school	00555516 2743 Clam Harbour Rd., Owls Head	3.2 Acres
4	Vacant lot Debaie's Cove	Open Space / Vacant (Not Oceanfront)	Scrub spruce and low bushes	40288821 Debaies Cove Rd., Debaies Cove	20.0 Acres
5	Lakefront Consolidated School	Open Space / Play Area & Sportfield (Not Oceanfront)	Playground & soccer field associated with school	00554782 17286 Highway 7, Tangier	1.3 Acres
6	Bollong Park Ballfield	Open Space / Sportfield (Oceanfront)	Ball field with fence, backstop & dugouts	00428060 19046 Highway 7, Spry Harbour 40028698 19088 Highway 7, Spry Harbour	0.6 Acres + 7.0 Acres

Attachment 2 – NSNT’s Updated Proposal ESSC SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT – NS Nature Trust 100 Islands

Nova Scotia Nature Trust—100 Wild Islands Legacy Campaign Proposal for Halifax Regional Municipality

Update for the Environment and Sustainability Committee--March 2015

The 100 Wild Islands

Off Nova Scotia’s Atlantic shores lies one of our least known, yet greatest natural treasures – a wild and beautiful group of pristine coastal islands and headlands encompassing over 7000 acres of diverse coastal habitats.

Bookended by Clam Harbour and Taylor Head Provincial Parks, this archipelago is home to over 100 Wild Islands. Only an hour from Halifax, untouched white sand beaches and idyllic sheltered coves, dramatic, windswept headlands and ancient rainforests provide refuge for a rich diversity of birds and other wildlife. The islands offer unparalleled opportunities for education, recreation, research and discovery. One of the last vast, wild and ecologically rich coastal archipelagos on the planet, its protection provides a world class ecotourism and economic development asset for Nova Scotia.



This incredible natural treasure is located wholly within Halifax Regional Municipality. We hope that you, the members of the Environment and Sustainability Committee, will encourage the Municipality to show its leadership in environment and sustainability by supporting this initiative. We offer this **updated** proposal for your consideration.

Environment Committee Mandate

The Nature Trust’s 100 Wild Islands campaign proposal is before your committee because only you have the mandate to advise Council on how best to protect the environment and to advance sustainable parks, forests and open space. Our project delivers significant environmental and open space protection, as well as healthy living, recreation and tourism opportunities. The effort is already widely supported by the federal and provincial governments, corporate sector and private donors from Nova Scotia and far afield. No doubt many who already enthusiastically endorse this nationally significant environmental initiative will look to your environmental leadership in also supporting this important initiative.

We understand that Council must consider recommendations of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee, and that the Finance and Audit committee is responsible for determining budget implications and funding options for recommended projects. We hope that your decision will not be swayed by staff concerns about the land acquisition budget and lost opportunities for land purchases by the Municipality. Funds for this initiative do not necessarily need to come from the land acquisition budget (especially where the land is *not* being purchased by the Municipality). Our request is simply for funding support for a major environmental opportunity, similar to other community initiatives. Our project clearly meets the Committee’s environmental mandate, and we hope you will recommend Council support based on its environmental significance.

The staff report also expresses concern that the project is not in the current budget. We believe we can help resolve that challenge. Our fundraising initiative is a long-term one, with many major partners spreading support over multiple years. The Municipality’s contribution could be budgeted and transferred in future fiscal years, so the current budget need not obstruct your recommendation of funding support.

100 Wild Islands is a very significant environmental initiative, and support by the Municipality makes good financial sense. The Municipality would only be making a relatively small investment (see below for modified request) in an initiative bringing land worth many millions of dollars into protection, land with important environmental conservation and open space recreation opportunities that benefit the Municipality and its citizens significantly. And unlike if the Municipality had purchased all of the islands, there are no long-term budget and staffing implications with ongoing land and infrastructure management. The project offers irreplaceable environmental benefits, while leveraging significant economic, health and other benefits to the Municipality and its citizens and with negligible financial implications for the Municipality.

Halifax Regional Municipality Priorities

Healthy Communities

The Municipality's priorities for 2015/16 for Healthy Communities include providing access to facilities and natural assets that enable a range of choices for structured and unstructured leisure and recreation activities. A second priority is that "Halifax is a leader in Energy and Environment Initiatives."

The 100 Wild Islands project meets the objectives of both priorities. The islands provide a unique, as yet largely untapped opportunity for outdoor recreation, both structured and unstructured (sailing, kayaking, hiking, boating, birdwatching, camping, eco-tours and more). The federal and provincial governments, regional and local tourism/development organizations and community members are already jumping on board to explore new opportunities for recreational and tourism development that this protected islands initiative opens. Being only an hour from downtown, the islands as well as future trail, access, camping and other recreational and tourism infrastructure, will create excellent opportunities for the Municipality to foster and support active living and healthy lifestyles of its residents (and largely funded by other entities).

Municipal partnership in our initiative will demonstrate environmental leadership and also leverage tremendous benefit towards encouraging healthy, active living for its residents.

Economic Development

The "Now or Never" report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building our New Economy calls for bold, innovative and collaborative approaches to expand economic growth while ensuring environmental sustainability. Our islands initiative is an exciting and ambitious game-changer for Nova Scotia, with globally significant conservation benefits, and also potential to support the urgent priorities of stimulating economic and population growth. A new world-class protected area an hour from Nova Scotia's capital offers incredible potential for tourism positioning, branding and developing new tourism and recreational products and opportunities at the provincial, municipal and local levels. Having 100 Wild Islands protected just beyond the city is also an asset that contributes to the unique quality of life and lifestyle that Nova Scotia offers. Promoting such an asset can help in retaining population and attracting people and capital to our province and to the Municipality.

There are clear spin-off opportunities of protection and promotion of the 100 Wild Islands for the residents of the eastern shore in particular. With the help of an ACOA STEP grant and an economic development grant from the Municipality, residents are already exploring best options for rural economic development along the coast, centred on the 100 Wild Islands. The Municipality's Economic Strategy supports and encourages such entrepreneurship, recognizing that rural economic development is an integral component of the Municipality's overall economic prosperity.

The Municipality has already endorsed and financially supported the local economic development initiative generated by the 100 Wild Islands project. Supporting the actual protection of the islands demonstrates the Municipality's commitment both to environment and to economic development within the Municipality and for Nova Scotia more broadly.

Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan

The proposal for the Greenbelting and Public Open Space Priorities Plan (GPOSPP) states that "protecting the environment is both a core principle of the Regional Plan, and a core value for Halifax citizens." Priorities include identifying ecologically sensitive areas and protecting untouched wilderness that can sustain wildlife, plants and fish, as well as scenic views, in a network of natural spaces.

While we understand that the plan is not yet complete, the 100 Wild Islands project is an irreplaceable opportunity that meets the proposal's broad objectives. Not acting on this unique opportunity simply because the plan is not complete does not make sense, in light of the small investment by the Municipality, especially relative to the \$15+ million in land protected to the benefit of the Municipality and its residents and the scale of significance of the project. There is also no commitment required for long-term investment in Municipal infrastructure or ongoing human resource investment (as there would be if the Municipality were acquiring the lands). Should the GPOSPP identify the 100 Wild Islands area a priority, the islands will already be protected.

There is no other island wilderness of such vast scale and high ecological significance within the Municipality, nor even within the province or the country—this opportunity is truly unique. From a greenbelting and open space perspective, there is an exciting development since our presentation to your committee. We are working to protect land that would provide a much-needed direct linkage between the 40,000 acres Tangier Grand Lake Wilderness Area and the 100 Wild Islands. The site could encompass a picnic/pull-over area on the coastal highway, interpretive signage, boat access to the 100 Wild Islands, and trail and river access between the coast and this currently inaccessible yet fantastic inland wilderness area. A truly a unique wilderness recreation opportunity within the Municipal boundaries.

The impact of protecting the 100 Wild Islands is profound for environmental and open space protection, and will no doubt be a very positive asset to any future greenbelting and open space plan.

Campaign Success to Date

The Campaign goal is \$7 million. We have already raised \$5,560,000 to date, with support from across Nova Scotia, Canada and the US. Notable donors include Environment Canada, the Province, Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, TD Bank Group, RBC, Mountain Equipment Coop, David Wilson, Jim Lawley, Colin MacDonald, the O'Regan family, Paul Scott, Dave Hebb, the John and Barbara Poole Family Funds and the McCain family. With Cole Harbour native and entrepreneur Paul Gauthier's generous match of every dollar donated, we have only \$720,000 left to raise.



Rationale and Request for Municipal Support

The 100 Wild Islands project offers a unique opportunity to protect environmentally important open space for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations. It connects the Municipality's environment, healthy community and economic development objectives. We seek a small investment that will leverage protection of well over \$15 million in conservation lands. There are no on-going costs as would be the case if the Municipality acquired the islands, as the Nature Trust and the Province bear all future management costs. In addition, the community is already working to develop a tourism plan for the area, encouraging private investment to expand tourism and recreational infrastructure. Much of the usual Municipal investment required to maximize benefits of such an initiative for citizens, and to meet Municipal environmental, open space, recreation, tourism and development goals, will be leveraged through significant private, provincial and federal investment.

The campaign has resonated deeply with other levels of government, the business community and citizens across the province and beyond, with tremendous support in place already for the campaign. We now look to the Municipality for its leadership in and commitment to environmental sustainability.

HRM: Inspiring the Community and Bringing the Campaign to Goal

We kindly request that the Municipality provide up to \$180,000 in support. We propose the Municipality offer this funding as a match for every dollar donated by a business or resident of the Municipality between March 1, 2015 and March 1, 2016 (up to a maximum of \$180,000). Inspire the community to work together with the Municipality and the Nature Trust to protect this important part of the treasured coastal legacy that defines and shapes our city, province and country!

With both your support and community donations being matched one to one by our campaign benefactor, the leveraged financial impact of your investment is \$720,000.

Payments could be spread over a 3 year period (*beginning in 2016 if necessary*). The annual payment would be just \$60,000, with no ongoing costs as the Nature Trust will bear all property management responsibility.

We also encourage the Municipality donate or sell for one dollar, the 1 acre school lot on Gerard Island (with no value to the Municipality), to become a part of the 100 Wild Islands legacy.

With tremendous support and engagement from all other levels of government, the corporate sector and community, the Municipality's absence as a campaign supporter would be notable. The *Now or Never* report challenges all Nova Scotians, including Municipalities, to take action: to embrace the significant opportunities before us; to do things differently and to change old attitudes; to transform Nova Scotia into a dynamic and creative province, capable of taking bold measures and risks, and of coming together as a unified community to build a better future. We urge you to be bold. To look beyond reasons not to act, and instead to show environmental leadership. To champion a community-led example of the kind of multi-partner, innovative and cooperative initiative we need in Nova Scotia and in the Municipality if we are to succeed in protecting our environment and building a sustainable and prosperous future. We urge the Municipality to proudly lead the 100 Wild Islands campaign to the finish line!

Nova Scotia Nature Trust

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Attachment 3 – Gerard Island

ESSC SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT – NS Nature Trust 100 Islands

