

Request for Council's Consideration

<input type="checkbox"/> Included on Agenda (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Thursday)	X	Added Item (Submitted to Municipal Clerk's Office by Noon Monday)	<input type="checkbox"/> Request from the Floor
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Date of Council Meeting: Tuesday, May 13, 2014

Subject: District Capital Funding-Nature Conservancy of Canada

Motion for Council to Consider:

That Regional Council approve a payment of \$5,000 from District 2, District Capital Funds to the Nature Conservancy of Canada to be used to pay down an internal loan, taken by the group in order to purchase the Fishing Lake property, located within the boundaries of HRM. The total cost of the project is \$722,300 with funding coming from the Federal government, the Provincial government and private interests.

Reason:

The Nature Conservancy of Canada is a registered Canadian charity that acquires ecologically sensitive lands. Their first project with HRM was the protection of 203 acres at Hemlock Ravine in 1977. Since then, the Nova Scotia program has gone on to protect over 31,000 acres in Nova Scotia across 41 different project areas. The Fishing Lake project is a large 465- acre in- holding within the Ship Harbour-Long Lake Wilderness Park that is recognized as being one of the highest priority properties for wilderness conservation in the province. The Nature Conservancy's loan ensures that the property is protected for its ecological values in perpetuity; the benefit to the community is also one of extensive outdoor recreation.

I have applied to use \$5,000 from my District Capital funds but finance has declined because the request relates to a payment of debt (unprecedented) and land ownership. The land was purchased by the Nature Conservancy on March 17, 2014 and has since been turned over to the Government of Nova Scotia because the land purchased is between two provincially managed wilderness areas so from a management perspective, it makes sense to have it managed in the same manner. The Nature Conservancy has retained a Conservation Easement, which is a registered partial interest created by statute that gives the group the legal authority to monitor the use of the land so it remains protected forever.

Outcome Sought:

Council approves a payment of \$5,000 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada to be applied against the loan taken by the group in order to purchase the Fishing Lake Property.

Councillor David Hendsbee

District 2



April 8, 2014

Councillor David Hendsbee
c/o Molly Trussler, Council Constituency Coordinator
7859 Highway #7 – Railway Museum
Musquodoboit Harbour, NS

Dear Councillor Hendsbee,

Fishing Lake Property, Eastern Shore Forest and Coast Natural Area

Further to our recent discussions, I am writing to request support of \$5,000 from your capital funds reserve towards the acquisition of the Fishing Lake property located within the boundaries of the Halifax Regional Municipality.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading national non-advocacy land conservation organization with a mandate to acquire and protect areas of natural diversity for their intrinsic value and for the benefit of our children and those after them. Since 1962, NCC and our partners have helped to conserve more than 2.6 million acres (1 million hectares) of ecologically significant land from coast to coast.

NCC has a strong Nova Scotia program with a local staff of five to undertake and complete conservation initiatives within the province. Our first project in Nova Scotia was in 1971 at Sight Point in Cape Breton, and our first partnership project with HRM was the protection of 203 acres at Hemlock Ravine in 1977. Since then the Nova Scotia program has gone on to protect over 31,000 acres in Nova Scotia across 41 different project areas.

The Fishing Lake project is a large 465-acre (188.18 hectares) in-holding within the Ship Harbour-Long Lake Wilderness Area that is recognised as being one of the highest priority properties for wilderness conservation in the province. Found in the heart of some of the last remaining wilderness within the boundaries of Halifax Regional Municipality, the site is situated within a region of extensive Acadian forest cover interspersed with river and lake systems. The property is almost entirely surrounded by protected conservation land, making it a strategic and urgent acquisition that will help provide connectivity between the White's Lake Wilderness Area and the Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area.

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Prince Edward Island Office
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Toll free/Sans frais 1-877-231-4400 • Email/Courriel: atlantic@natureconservancy.ca

The property contains 440 acres of conifer dominated Acadian forest and contains lakeshore wetland habitat along the shores of the majestic Fishing Lake. The property is more than 4 kilometres from end to end, supports wide-ranging mammals and is home to many mature forest dependent bird species. The vast forested landscape also harbours some endangered species including a remnant population of *Mainland Moose*. Nearby, there are occurrences of rare lichens and bryophytes, including the delicate and sensitive *Boreal Felt Lichen*, an endangered species found in greater abundance in this region, than anywhere else on continental North America. The area is also home for *Wood Turtle*, a species of special concern.

As well as knowing the Fishing Lake property is being protected for its ecological values in perpetuity, the benefit to the community is also one of extensive outdoor recreation and volunteer opportunities. Fishing Lake is awash in wilderness character and offers tremendous back country canoeing, kayak fishing and hiking opportunities. The site is used regularly as access is available off a maintained back road (Lays Lake road). Protection of the Fishing Lake property will ultimately inspire Haligonians to enjoy the nature in their own backyard. NCC also engages Haligonians/Nova Scotians through our Conservation Volunteer (CV) program, an annual series of hands-on stewardship events that provide enjoyable and accessible volunteer opportunities in the outdoors and on NCC sites across the country.

Total project costs for the Fishing Lake project are \$722,300. In order to meet the closing deadline of March 18th, 2014, NCC took out an internal loan to complete the acquisition. Currently there is \$59,000 outstanding on the loan. This balance needs to be paid off by the end of the NCC fiscal year (May 31, 2014). Any contribution from your capital reserve fund would be applied against this loan and NCC would be happy to provide any necessary paperwork to support that your donated funds were used for the stated purpose. I attach a two pager and map by way of additional information.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Original Signed

Craig Smith
Nova Scotia Program Manager

Fishing Lake

Eastern Shore Forest and Coast Natural Area, Nova Scotia

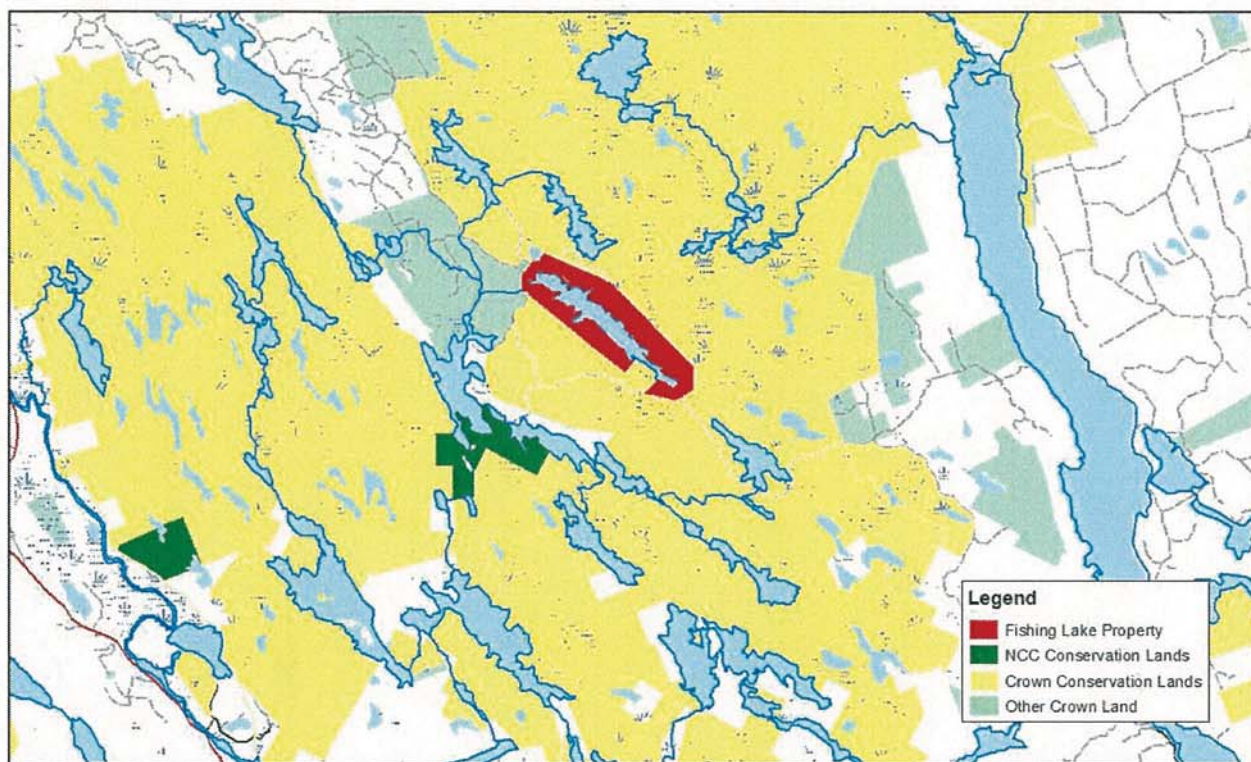


Fig.1. Fishing Lake property

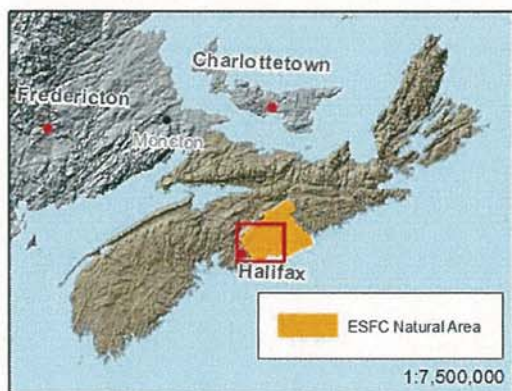


Fig. 3. Nova Scotia

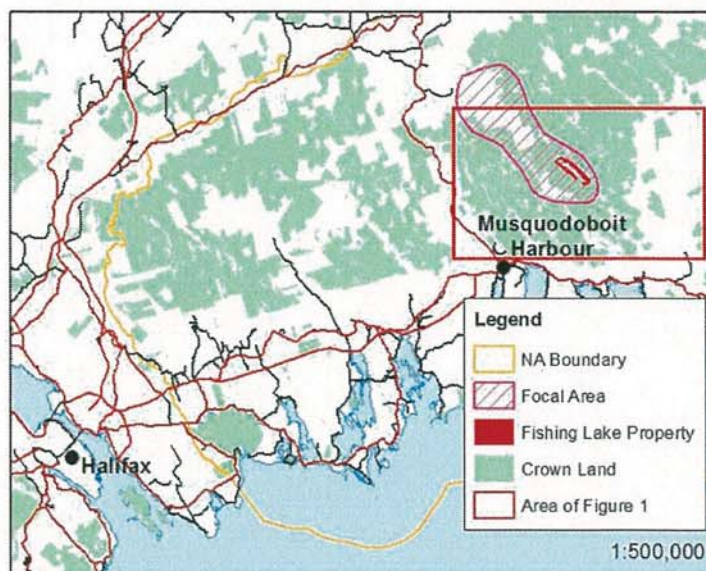


Fig. 2. Musquodoboit Harbour area showing location of the White Lake Corridor Focal Area