

## FACTSHEET

### **Atlantic Coastal Plain Plant Species At Risk: A provincial and national priority for recovery and stewardship**

Nova Scotia harbours some of the most endangered plants in Canada. These plants that include beautiful wildflower species like the Plymouth Gentian, Pink Coreopsis and Redroot are found, in Canada, only on a small number of lake shores in southwest Nova Scotia. In the United States some of these plants tend to occur from Cape Cod south along the Coastal Plain to Florida. However, most populations of these species are in very serious trouble there.

Attention and early conservation efforts on these species was initiated in the 1980's by Dr. Paul Keddy at University of Ottawa, the Tusket River Environmental Protection Association and the Museum of Natural History. The conservation and recovery of Atlantic Coastal Plain plants is now both a high priority for Canada and Nova Scotia. Eight species are now protected under the *Nova Scotia Endangered Species Act* and recovery and stewardship activities are well underway. These plants are found in a variety of wetland habitats but most are lakeshore or bog species. These species are at risk for a complex of reasons including changes to the watercourses, development and land use change. Disruption of the shoreline through raking and mowing, as well as wharves and shoreline modification seem especially important.

The desire to recover these plants has required a concerted effort to inventory many potential locations where the plants may occur, research on the environmental effects on the plants and their reproductive biology as well as stewardship efforts by dedicated groups and individuals. All this work on species at risk is done, or coordinated by the members of the Atlantic Coastal Plain Recovery Team. While the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources has a key role to play leading and coordinating the team. The team relies on the skills and resources of a good number individuals and groups including Acadia University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Museum of Natural History, Department of Environmental and Labor, Nova Scotia Nature Trust, Nova Scotia Power, Kejimikujik National Park and many others.

Recovery work has confirmed that these plants have a very restricted distribution whereas research has shown some of these plants have limited reproductive ability. Stewardship efforts by the Nova Scotia Nature Trust are very innovative and are proving to be very significant. Through contacting a large number private landowners and other volunteers the Trust has rallied awareness and support for the conservation of these species at risk and their habitats.

For more information on Atlantic Coastal Plain Plants and recovery efforts, as well as digital photos, visit the website: <http://conservation.acadiau.ca/coastalplainflora>

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