Keep it Wild – A Code of Ethics

Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas protect some of our most outstanding, remaining wild spaces. Many of us already know that this wilderness is fragile and can be easily spoiled by the use and activities of those who love it most.

To retain the high quality of our wilderness, we must all accept responsibility for minimizing our impact. A Leave No Trace approach depends more on attitude and awareness than on rules and regulations.

By adopting the guidelines outlined in this brochure, you will become equipped with the skills and habits that will enable you to Leave No Trace and help keep the wilderness wild.

Do Your Part

You can do your part in keeping our Wilderness Areas wild by:

- following the principles and standards outlined in this brochure and making a commitment to Leave No Trace practices.
- notifying staff of the Protected Areas Program or local offices of the Department of Natural Resources of any problems you encounter.

You can also support ecological protection by:

- participating in regional conservation programs and volunteering for local environmental initiatives.
- supporting provincial, national and international initiatives for biodiversity conservation and protection.

Photography & illustrations: NSEL and NSDNR,
unless otherwise noted.
Front cover image: Watercolour painting of Waverley—
Salmon River Long Lake by Alice Reed

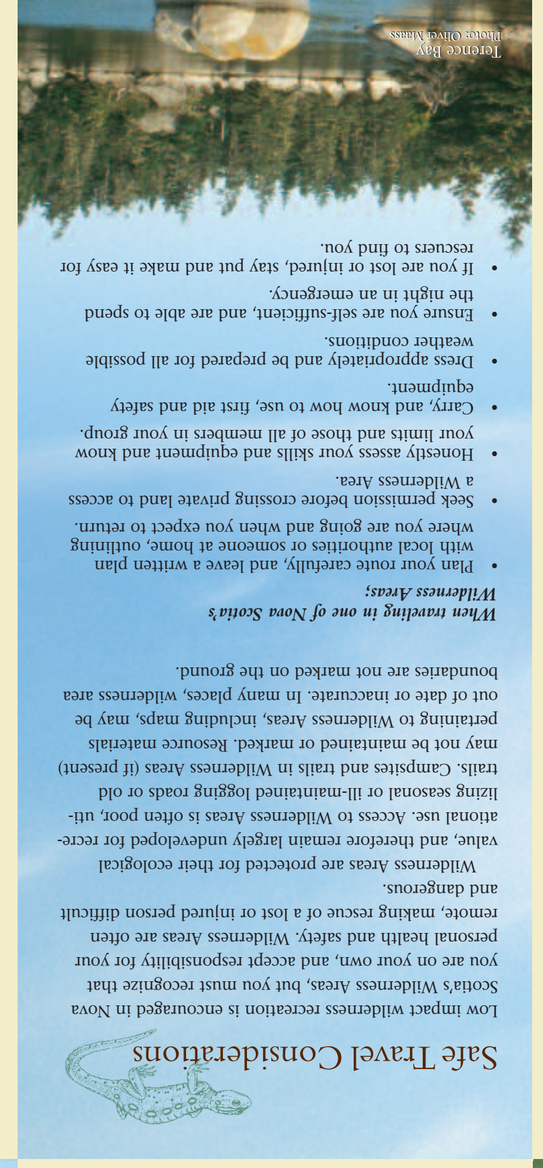
Safe Travel Considerations

Low impact wilderness recreation is encouraged in Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas, but you must recognize that you are on your own, and accept responsibility for your personal health and safety. Wilderness Areas are often remote, making rescue of a lost or injured person difficult and dangerous.

Wilderness Areas are protected for their ecological value, and therefore remain largely undeveloped for recreational use. Access to Wilderness Areas is often poor, utilizing seasonal or ill-maintained logging roads or old trails. Campsites and trails in Wilderness Areas (if present) may not be maintained or marked. Resource materials pertaining to Wilderness Areas, including maps, may be out of date or inaccurate. In many places, wilderness area boundaries are not marked on the ground.

When traveling in one of Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas;

- Plan your route carefully, and leave a written plan with local authorities or someone at home, outlining where you are going and when you expect to return.
- Seek permission before crossing private land to access a Wilderness Area.
- Honestly assess your skills and equipment and know your limits and those of all members in your group.
- Carry, and know how to use, first aid and safety equipment.
- Dress appropriately and be prepared for all possible weather conditions.
- Ensure you are self-sufficient, and are able to spend the night in an emergency.
- If you are lost or injured, stay put and make it easy for rescuers to find you.



Torrence Bay
Photo: Oliver Maass

Gear Up for Low Impact

Maximize your Leave No Trace experience by using the proper equipment.

Your kit should include the following:

- Warm and waterproof clothing, worn in layers
- Small garden trowel - for digging catholes for human waste disposal
- Portable cooking stove and an adequate supply of fuel
- Flashlight and/or candle lantern
- Small strainer - for dish water
- Reusable food containers
- First aid and survival kit with map and compass
- Binoculars - for viewing wildlife from a distance
- Method of water purification
- Collapsible or portable basin for carrying water and washing dishes
- Plastic bags for carrying out waste
- Free-standing tent and a lightweight tarp.

Clean Water for Health

Wilderness users should assume that all surface water in Nova Scotia may be contaminated with Giardia or other water-borne pathogens/diseases.

Choose drinking water from flowing sources, and properly treat it by boiling, filtering or chemical purification.

Avoid future water contamination by practicing Leave No Trace techniques for waste disposal.

Photo: Oliver Maass

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Photo: Oliver Maass

For Additional Information

Maps

- To purchase or copy maps of individual Wilderness Areas, call (902) 424-8633 or email: nsdnrlib@gov.ns.ca.
- Nova Scotia Government Publications sells the following:
  (visit www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/consumer/publications/ or call (902) 424-5200)
  - A Map of the Province of Nova Scotia - 2001 edition (1:1500,000 scale book of maps; shows Wilderness Areas)
  - Topographical Maps (1:50,000 NTS series) (Wilderness Areas are not shown)

General Inquiries

Protected Areas—Provincial Office/Central Region
5151 Terminal Road, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T8
(902) 424-2117

Protected Areas—Eastern Region
Box 714, 295 Charlotte Street
Sydney, Nova Scotia, B1P 6H7
(902)563-2100

Protected Areas—Western Region
60 Logan Road, Bridgewater, NS B4V 3J8
(902) 543-4685

Enforcement, Wildlife or Forest Fires
Any District or Regional Office of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources
For emergencies or to report illegal activities call 1-800-565-2224

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Wilderness Areas in Nova Scotia

Wilderness Areas are protected in Nova Scotia under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*. The purpose of this Act is to provide for the establishment, management, protection and use of wilderness areas, in perpetuity, for present and future generations, in order to achieve the following;

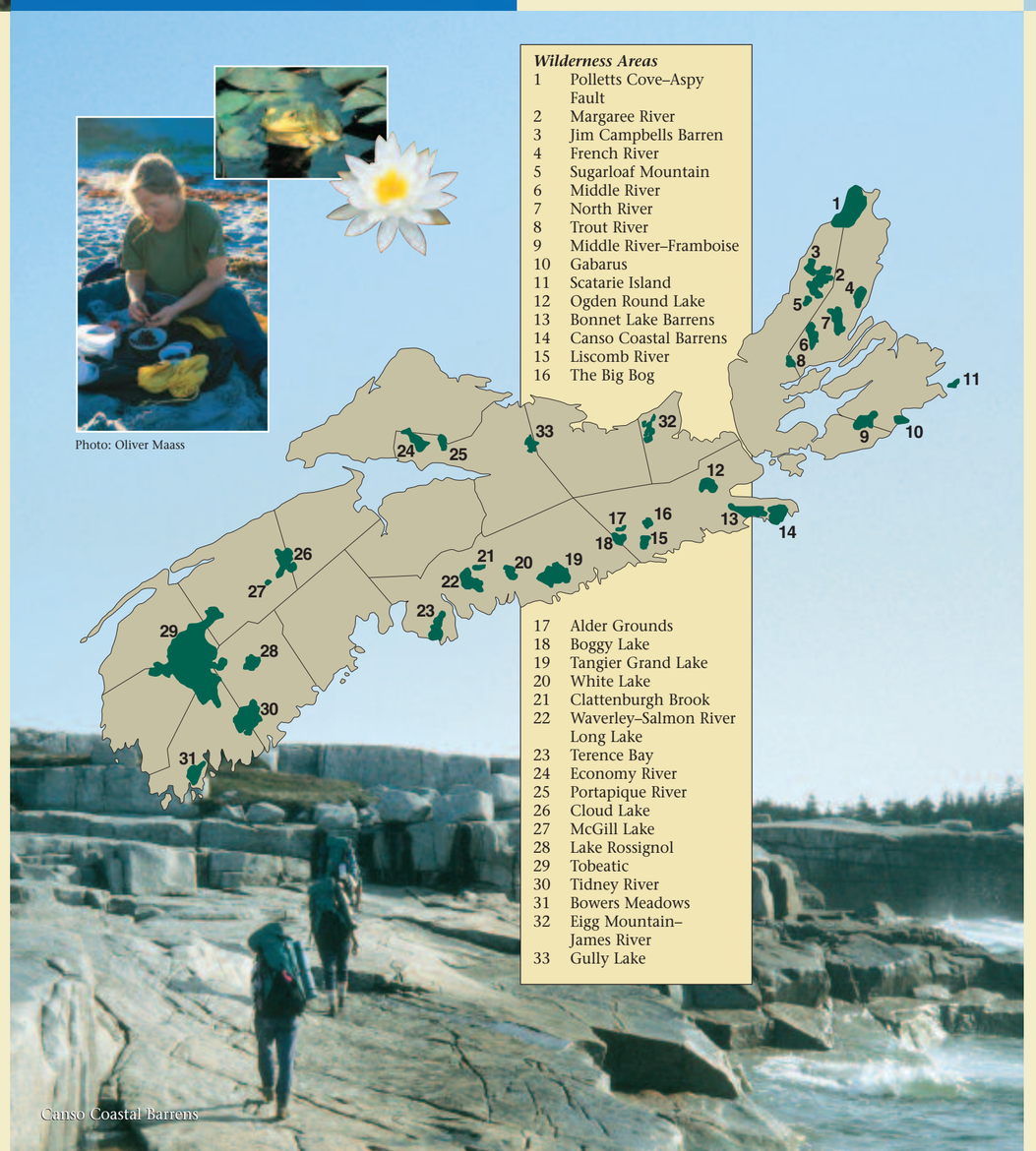
Primary objectives:

- maintain and restore the integrity of natural processes and biodiversity;
- protect representative examples of Nova Scotia's natural landscapes and ecosystems;
- protect outstanding, unique, rare and vulnerable natural features and phenomena,

Secondary objectives:

- provide reference points for determining the effects of human activity on the natural environment;
- protect and provide opportunities for scientific research, environmental education and wilderness recreation; and
- promote public consultation and community steward ship in the establishment and management of wilderness areas,

while providing opportunities for public access for sport fishing and traditional patterns of hunting and trapping.



Our Natural Legacy

Biodiversity refers to the variety of plants, animals, and other living organisms in all their many forms and levels of organization. It includes genes, species, and ecosystems, as well as the processes that link them together.

In applying the science of conservation biology, protecting large natural areas from human disturbance provides our best opportunity to maintain biodiversity and natural processes.

But conserving biodiversity isn't just about protecting plants and animals. It's also about providing for our own health, quality of life, and opportunities for the future.

In an increasingly urban and industrial world, wild spaces are rare and valuable assets for present and future generations. Such spaces offer many benefits, and play an integral role in sustainable land use.

Benefits of Protection

Wilderness Areas protect biodiversity and provide "environmental services" such as improving air quality, creating and protecting soils and providing clean water.

They provide high quality wilderness recreation opportunities and foster healthy lifestyles.

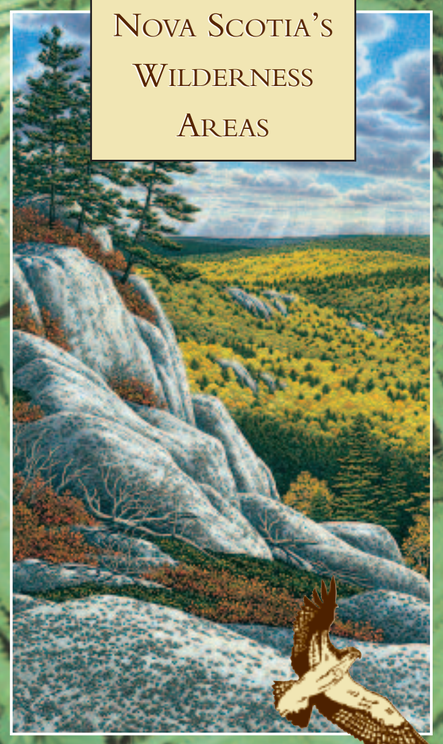
They help diversify local and regional economies through nature tourism and marketing Nova Scotia as a desirable place to live and do business.

They offer places for spiritual renewal and inspiration in an increasingly busy and crowded world.

They serve as laboratories in which to monitor the natural world and learn how ecosystems function and respond to stresses and change.

Keep It Wild

A Guide for Low Impact Recreation in Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas



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