

# Tobeatic Wilderness Area Draft Management Plan

April, 2004



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**Draft Management Plan**  
Tobeatic Wilderness Area



## Minister's Message

*Welcome to the Tobeatic Management Planning Exercise. Your participation in this project is important, as we work together to develop a Management Plan for one of Nova Scotia's most outstanding wild places - Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

*Nova Scotia Environment and Labour is proud to lead the protection and management of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Wilderness Areas are cornerstones in defining our province's character and in securing our unique wilderness heritage today, and for future generations.*

*In this Draft Management Plan, we recognize the ecological integrity and unique wilderness heritage of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, and strive to improve stewardship through partnership, communication, and education.*

*This document is the result of the hard work and creativity of many people, each with a unique background, interest, and expertise. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the dedicated volunteers that serve on the Tobeatic Advisory Group. Over the past two years this group has worked closely with the Department to provide valuable advice. This Draft Management Plan reflects much of the advice we received from this group. It also reflects the important public comment provided through the initial round of public consultation completed in autumn 2002. Together your input helps us to better plan and manage Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

*I encourage you to participate in this part of the public consultation, whether it be through attending one of our Open Houses, submitting a completed Worksheet, or learning more about Tobeatic Wilderness Area at a local library information display.*

*I welcome your comments, and assure you that all of your ideas will be considered in the completion of the Management Plan for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Morash', with a stylized, cursive script.

*Kerry Morash  
Minister of Environment & Labour*



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Tobeatic Wilderness Area

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# Our Tobeatic

Our Tobeatic is a peaceful place where nature dominates. Beautiful forests, barrens, lakes, rivers and wetlands, are protected here, providing natural habitats for wildlife.

Our Tobeatic is a place of true wilderness, with expansive landscapes, diverse ecosystems, and unique sites. While some features are resilient and enduring, others are sensitive and require special respect.

Our Tobeatic is a place of history where we connect to Nova Scotia's heritage. People feel a part of ancient times by walking a footpath, following an old canoe carry, or enjoying a look-off used by generations of people before.

Our Tobeatic is a place for sharing the company of family and friends, and making lifelong bonds with others. From elders to young people, wisdom is passed on to future generations to continue rich wilderness heritage traditions.

In our Tobeatic, we appreciate feeling moss underfoot while walking in an ancient forest, and hearing a canoe part the waters of a quietly winding stream. We enjoy working a line for trout on a stillwater pool, and studying moose tracks while crossing an autumn barren. We value the wilderness experience, whether it is pausing to look across a frozen meadow, smelling campfire smoke rise as camp is made after a long day, or lying back to take in the sights of a summer night sky.

The rugged and remote reaches of our Tobeatic provide challenging adventures, and demand self-reliance of wilderness travellers. For those that seek it out, its solitude offers relaxation and rejuvenation, inspires creativity, and imparts a sense of humility and awe.



## Executive Summary

Tobeatic Wilderness Area is an important natural area in Nova Scotia. It is an expansive region of forests, barrens, lakes, and rivers that protects parts of five natural landscapes in the interior of southwestern Nova Scotia.

As the largest protected area in the province, Tobeatic Wilderness Area makes a significant contribution to the protection of biological diversity, and secures an important part of our wilderness heritage. It is enjoyed for the outstanding wilderness recreation experience that rewards those who seek it out.

This management plan guides the application of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* in protecting and managing the natural, cultural, and wilderness values of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. The plan enhances natural ecosystem and landscape protection, addresses the maintenance and restoration of natural processes, and improves the protection of outstanding natural features. It also directs the coordination of scientific research and environmental education, encourages public participation and community stewardship, and considers continued opportunities for high quality wilderness recreation, sportfishing, and traditional patterns of hunting and trapping.

The management plan is built around four guiding principles: *ecological integrity; wilderness heritage; stewardship; and partnership*. Supported by a “best practice” approach to wilderness area management, these principles and nine management goals act as a foundation for the management framework. This framework gives direction and sets priority actions under four major themes: ecosystem protection; recreation management; complementary land management; and implementation.





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**Photos and Images**

Cover:

Painting: *Fire in the Sky* - Tobeatic Wilderness Area, by Alice Reed

Photos: Oliver Maass

Modern photos:

Nova Scotia Environment & Labour, Department of Natural Resources, and Oliver Maass

Archival photos:

Page 7 - *Tuesday 9th, Indian Guides, Lake Jolly, Wright's Mill* (c. 1893). Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management

# 1.0 Protecting & Managing Nova Scotia Wilderness Areas

## 1.1 A Rich and Diverse Place

Nova Scotia is a biologically rich and unique province. Despite its relatively small size, Nova Scotia hosts a significant array of natural features. Its diverse landscape is the result of its geographic position, and its varied geological and glacial history. A rich mosaic of flora and fauna inhabit Nova Scotia, including at least 6,000 organisms ranging from northern boreal to southern Alleghenian species, and from coastal plain to arctic-alpine species. Unique natural ecosystems and communities have emerged from the interaction of these varied living and non-living elements.

## 1.2 Nova Scotia Protected Areas Program

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour (NSEL) plays a lead role in the important and challenging task of securing and managing natural areas. The Protected Areas Program is comprised of four main elements: Wilderness Areas; Nature Reserves; Canadian Heritage Rivers; and private land stewardship. Each of these elements contributes to the protection, commemoration, and stewardship of natural, cultural, and recreation values. Currently Nova Scotia protects 31 Wilderness Areas, seven Nature Reserves, and two Canadian Heritage Rivers (Figure 1).

## 1.3 Wilderness Areas

Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas comprise roughly 5% of land in the province. Wilderness Areas are significant natural areas that protect representative examples of natural landscapes, native biological diversity, and outstanding natural features. They are used for scientific research, education, and a variety of recreation and nature-tourism related activities such as hiking, canoeing, tenting, sportfishing, and hunting. Existing sites were identified through the completion of a multi-year system planning exercise and a comprehensive public review process. This work culminated with passage of the Wilderness Areas Protection Act in December 1998, and the formal designation of 31 Wilderness Areas.

### 1.3.1 Management

NSEL is responsible for the administration of protected Wilderness Areas. Field management, land administration, and enforcement responsibilities are shared with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Ongoing management of all provincial Wilderness Areas is carried out consistent with the provisions of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, and any applicable plans, policies, or standards. Provincial management approaches for Wilderness Areas have been initiated relating to public consultation, management planning, campsite leases, vehicle use, scientific research, wildlife management, hiking trail development, wilderness recreation, fire suppression, disposal of unauthorized structures, enforcement, and ecosystem management.

NSEL initiated a public outreach campaign in 2001 featuring *Keep It Wild*, a guide to help users learn about standards for safely using and enjoying Wilderness Areas. This brochure

features “Leave No Trace” principles specially adapted for Nova Scotia, and includes user information for safe travel, and recommended equipment. The guide also contains details from the *Order on Camping and Lighting of Fires in Designated Wilderness Areas*, which stipulates conditions for the safe and responsible use of camp sites and camp fires.

Present activities that contribute to the management of Tobeatic Wilderness Area include boundary signage posted at major access points, regular enforcement and patrol, communication and outreach to users, consultation with stakeholders, partnership with neighbouring landowners, private land stewardship for major inholdings, and scientific research.

### **1.3.2 Planning**

Public participation in planning is an essential component of the Protected Areas Program. Consultation and collaboration initiatives are important for policy development, area management, and system planning. Staff communicate regularly with organizations and individuals to discuss management issues and opportunities.

Management planning is an opportunity for the NSEL to work cooperatively with the public to effectively achieve Wilderness Area objectives. The basic structure for managing Wilderness Areas is laid out in the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*. However, the Act does not necessarily provide all of the detailed management direction for the unique values of individual Wilderness Areas.

A management plan is a document that guides the strategic direction of a specific Wilderness Area. Working within the context of the legislation, a management plan sets out goals, objectives, and priorities for all aspects of management. Ultimately, the management plan guides the delivery of shared benefits of Wilderness Area designation, through the development of partnerships for implementation.

## **1.4 Tobeatic Management Planning Exercise**

The Tobeatic Management Planning Exercise was designed to include a significant amount of public participation in planning, to build partnerships for implementation. A central element of the planning exercise is the Tobeatic Advisory Group (TAG), a 26-member body assembled to represent the range of interests in Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Membership is balanced to include organizations from all parts of the five counties, and to include representative groups of conservation, recreation, industry, and government interests.

The Minister of Environment and Labour launched the management planning exercise in March 2002, at the initial meeting of the Advisory Group. Through a facilitated consensus process, these local stakeholders consider issues, and provide advice on the content of the management plan. The first working sessions of the Advisory Group identified the major themes and sub-themes to be addressed in the management plan. Further meetings allowed members to broadly discuss these themes, and reach agreement on goal and objectives.

In October 2002, NSEL published the newsletter *Focus on the Tobeatic* to provide background information and solicit public input. During the comment period, government received 171 written submissions. This information was compiled in a *Summary Report on Public Comment*,

which was released in winter 2003.

The Tobeatic Advisory Group worked throughout 2003 to discuss principles and develop priorities addressing all major themes. Several specialists provided insight to the Advisory Group to assist in resolving challenging topics. Incorporating significant background information, this draft plan reflects TAG input, public comments, and “best practices”.

TAG members will consider public comment on this Draft Management Plan and provide advice on the content of a final Management Plan, which will be prepared by NSEL staff for approval by the Minister of Environment and Labour.

## 2.0 Context and Values of Tobeatic Wilderness Area

### 2.1 Provincial Significance

Tobeatic Wilderness Area is Nova Scotia's largest protected area, accounting for roughly one-third of the total protected lands in the province. It spans 104 131 hectares in southwestern Nova Scotia, including parts of Annapolis, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Queens counties. Its remoteness, ecological integrity, and relative inaccessibility contribute to its status as the largest most significant remaining wild region of the Maritimes. It is valued for many reasons, by many people.

Tobeatic Wilderness Area is an important natural area to safeguard the native biodiversity of Nova Scotia. It protects representative natural landscapes and several outstanding natural features. It also plays a key role in securing part of Nova Scotia's rich wilderness heritage. Generations of outdoor users have enjoyed the exceptional recreation opportunities provided in the Tobeatic region. Its wilderness heritage includes historic canoe travels through interconnected lakes and rivers, renowned trout fishing, challenging hunting, and remote exploring.

### 2.2 Representation of Natural Landscapes & Ecosystems

Representation is a central principle of Nova Scotia's Protected Area System Plan. It refers to the science-based approach of protecting typical examples of the province's natural landscapes and ecosystems. A natural landscape is characterized by its ecosystems and elements, such as the local variety and distribution of landforms, plant communities, and unique climate, and natural disturbance patterns.

Portions of five natural landscapes lie within Tobeatic Wilderness Area (Figure 2) - Shelburne River Plain, Roseway River Glacial Plain, South Mountain Rolling Plain, Tusket River Drumlins, and Fisher Lake Drumlins.

Tobeatic Wilderness Area protects a great diversity of ecosystems (Figure 3). It secures 11 distinct ecosystem types within the Shelburne River Plain, six within the Roseway River Glacial Plain, and seven within the South Mountain Rolling Plain. These ecosystems include barrens, conifer forests, mixed forests, bogs, fens, flats, and drumlins. Many ecosystems are largely undisturbed, with most native species, and natural processes intact. This high degree of ecological integrity contributes to the significance Tobeatic Wilderness Area holds for biological diversity and wilderness protection within the region, and Nova Scotia.

### 2.3 Natural Values

Tobeatic Wilderness Area protects expansive wild lands, unique glacial landforms, river headwaters, rich old forests, large undisturbed wetlands, extensive barren and semi-barrens, and significant wildlife habitat.

#### Large & Connected Wild Lands

At more than 1040 km<sup>2</sup>, Tobeatic Wilderness Area is recognised as the largest remaining wilderness area in the Maritime provinces. Together with the adjacent Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada (Kejimikujik NP & NHS), this large, relatively

undisturbed region is provincially and regionally significant because of its ecological and wilderness values. Tobeatic Wilderness Area contains a highly diverse complex of ecosystems and habitats, which support native biodiversity. The area is of sufficient size to accommodate species that are intolerant of human disturbance and habitat fragmentation, and increases the possibility that ecosystem functions will be continue unimpaired.

### Glacial Landforms

Tobeatic Wilderness Area contains many outstanding examples of glacial landforms. Prominent features include outwash plains, eskers, kames, drumlins, moraine ridges and irregular hummocks, and erratics. These features are especially common within the Shelburne Glacial Plain Natural Landscape, and can often be distinguished by their rich forest cover.



### River Headwaters

Tobeatic Wilderness Area contains the headwaters of nine river systems in southwest Nova Scotia: Sissiboo, Tusket, Napier, West, Caribou, Clyde, Roseway, Jordan, and Shelburne Rivers. Headwaters play a critical role in maintaining the health of lakes and rivers and all their associated habitats. These river systems also provide many high-quality, interconnected wilderness travel routes.

### Old Forests

Tobeatic Wilderness Area includes a number of old forest areas, including old-growth hemlock forests at Sporting Lake and North Bingay Lake, old-growth mixed forest at Dish Lake, and old-growth white pine forest at Big Pine Lake. These diverse forest ecosystems are significant because they provide habitat for many unique plants and animals. Few old-growth forests remain in Nova Scotia.

### Wetlands

A variety of large, undisturbed wetlands are found in the Tobeatic region, including bogs, fens, marshes, and swamps. These wetlands are found in areas of poor drainage, depressions, kettles, swales, slow-moving streams, and along lake shores.

Wetlands provide habitats for many forms of wildlife and are an integral part of the global water cycle. In their natural state, wetlands play an important role in storing and regulating the release of large quantities of water. Wetlands also act as an important filtering system that removes suspended sediments from water as it flows through. Wetlands provide rich wildlife habitat, and many species exploit the food and cover contained within them.

### Barrens and Semi-Barrens

The largest concentration of barren and semi-barren in the province is found within the boundaries of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Many of these ecosystems contain unusual or unique floral species or natural communities. Most of the barrens are the result of human fires. Repeated burning has resulted in the loss of productive soils, impacts on aquatic systems, and the invasion of shrubs that slow the recovery to pre-fire conditions.



### Significant Wildlife Habitat & Rare Species

Tobeatic Wilderness Area protects wildlife habitat within a relatively large, interior wilderness setting. This is important for species that require large, undisturbed expanses of habitat in which to live, breed, and forage, or hunt. A number of high-level predators occur in Tobeatic Wilderness Area, including fisher, otter, and bobcat. The many wetlands and waterways provide habitat for aquatic mammals like otter, mink, muskrat, and beaver.



The area supports a large black bear population, and the largest moose population on mainland Nova Scotia. Moose is a listed endangered species in Nova Scotia. Other rare species known to inhabit Tobeatic Wilderness Area include Blanding's turtle, several species of coastal plain flora, and lustre moss.

The marten, once eliminated from mainland Nova Scotia due to habitat loss and over-trapping, may inhabit Tobeatic Wilderness Area as a result of a re-introduction program conducted in Kejimikujik during the late 1980s.

## **2.4 Cultural Values**

Significant cultural values are secured within Tobeatic Wilderness Area. These heritage values are connected to ancient Mi'kmaw sites, land use by British and Acadian settlers, outdoor recreation, and Nova Scotia's first tourism and wildlife management programs.

### Mi'kmaw heritage

Tobeatic (*Toobeadoogook* or *Tupsie'katik*) is considered a sacred place by the Mi'kmaq, Nova Scotia's first peoples. In earlier times, Mi'kmaw lived throughout southwestern Nova Scotia, including the Tobeatic region. Their oral histories and petroglyphs tell of frequent travel for hunting, fishing, and trade, using coastal sites during summer, and large inland lakes in winter months. Many ancient cultural features are evident in the Tobeatic region including encampment sites, footpaths, canoe routes, and burial sites. Initial archaeological research completed in the region supports ancient Mi'kmaw use of the land dating to at least 4500 years ago.



### European Settlement

During the early settlement of Nova Scotia by the French and British, the Tobeatic region was a remote hinterland. Small communities were established at New France, Milford, and Ohio, but the Tobeatic region remained largely inaccessible. Despite its remoteness, small parcels of Crown land in the Tobeatic region were granted to several families. Land grants frequently included a town parcel on the coast, and an inland parcel. Some inland grants were for wetlands and river meadows used to pasture livestock and harvest meadow grass for winter feed. Modern land ownership in the region reflects these early grants.

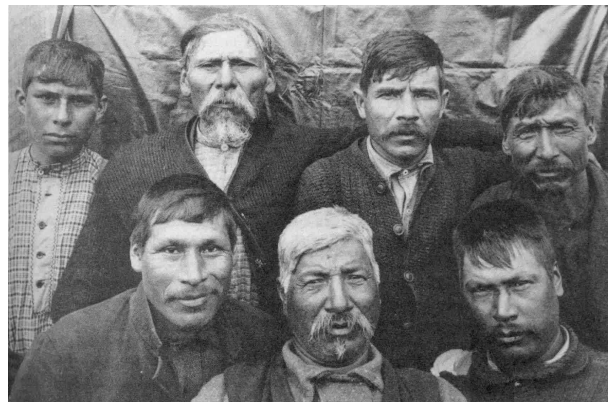
### Military Interest

The Old Annapolis-Shelburne Road was cut in 1784 to join the military outposts of Shelburne and Annapolis Royal. This route led north from Shelburne into the wilderness. From the Upper Ohio area, it continued along a ridge of high ground from Berry Lake north across the foot of Bald Mountain, on between Silvery and Skudiak Lakes, along the east shore of Roseway Lake to the northern part of Shelburne county, and then through southern Digby county towards Annapolis Royal.

Later known as Pell's Road, named after a prominent Loyalist merchant, the route was an important connection between the Atlantic and Fundy coasts. Little more than a footpath for much of its length in the Tobeatic region, the route supported family settlements and commercial buildings elsewhere. The ruins of a collection of buildings near Wainwright Lake are thought to be of military origin. The road fell into disrepair and became impassable by the early 1800s. Today the "Soldier's Rocks", west of Wainwright Lake, remain and mark this past use.

### Sporting and Guiding

For many, the "golden age" of the Tobeatic region was in the late 1800s, when outdoor recreation was flourishing. Local guiding businesses promised rugged adventure and bountiful game to clients. Local Mi'kmaq and other resident guides challenged paying clients or "sports" on extended fishing and hunting excursions into the wilds of Tobeatic country.



*The Tent Dwellers* is a popular written account of one such trip that began at Milford House, in Annapolis county, and led from Kejimkujik Lake west to the Shelburne River, and further on to the Tobeatic lakes. The route chronicled in the story is one that many wilderness travellers still enjoy today.

### Wildlife Management

The Tobeatic region has long been recognized by the province as an area worthy of special attention. *Tobeatic Park* was established as a Game Sanctuary in 1927. At that time, tourism, trout angling, and canoeing were the focus of management.

Rangers patrolled the major routes of the sanctuary to provide assistance to visitors and enforce wildlife regulations. Several ranger cabins were constructed to support this work. The ranger cabins at Buckshot Lake, Sand Beach Lake, and Tobeatic Lake remain as hallmarks of this era.

In 1968, the Department of Lands and Forests adjusted the original Game Sanctuary boundary, re-designating the new area as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to more adequately address wildlife protection, and to support game research. The WMA is a current designation administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The WMA includes both public and private lands, and overlaps with the central and eastern portions of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

## **2.5 Wilderness Values**

Tobeatic Wilderness Area protects significant wilderness values which connect present-day users to a rich outdoor heritage, and hold important social meaning for many people. It is a place that is enjoyed by a range of users for wilderness activities. For some, it is a favourite destination for spring angling on a quiet lake, walking the barrens on the fall hunt, or visiting a favourite camp. For others, it is a place to canoe a chain of waterways across landscapes marked by giant boulders and pockets of old forest.

### Wilderness Recreation

The Tobeatic has a long and valued tradition as a wilderness. Wilderness travellers from across Nova Scotia, and visitors from Canada and abroad, treasure the remoteness of Tobeatic Wilderness Area and the sense of adventure that it offers.

The size of Tobeatic Wilderness Area provides the best opportunity in the Maritimes for multi-day wilderness excursions (Figure 4). Travellers seeking the physical challenge and solitude provided by wilderness are drawn by the area's well-earned reputation.

The Tobeatic region is Nova Scotia's premiere wilderness-canoeing destination, linking from Kejimkujik NP & NHS via the Shelburne River to major routes on the Roseway, Jordan, Sissiboo, and Tusket rivers. With over 100 lakes to discover and many streams to explore, there are innumerable possibilities for long-distance travel. Tenting, hiking, and wildlife viewing are also enjoyed by wilderness travellers in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.



### Sportfishing, Hunting, and Trapping

A tradition of angling, hunting, and trapping are a part of the recreation heritage of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Since 1927, special limits for hunting and trapping have been in place for lands that now make up the eastern portion of the Wilderness Area. This part of the Wilderness Area remains specially regulated for hunting and trapping, supporting only a six-day hunt.

Even though fish and game populations have diminished from earlier days, sportfishing, hunting, and trapping are still enjoyed today by many users. The relatively undisturbed wildlife habitat and the low hunting and angling pressure provide many unique opportunities, with deer and trout as the most commonly sought species.

### Wilderness Experience

Tobeatic Wilderness Area holds social value to many people, including those who may never visit the region. As a large wild area, it holds a special existence value, as a place where nature dominates and native species and ecosystems exist largely undisturbed by human activity. It is an important place to journey into undeveloped backcountry, explore natural areas, and enjoy the solitude of being away from it all. For visitors to Tobeatic Wilderness Area, its quiet streams, ancient forests, and wide-open barrens provide challenge, and inspire reflection and rejuvenation.

## **2.6 Regional Relationships**

Tobeatic Wilderness Area is located in the interior of southwestern Nova Scotia. Nearby communities include Bear River to the north, Weymouth to the northwest, Kemptville to the west, the Ohios to the south, and Caledonia to the east. The larger regional centres of Annapolis Royal, Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne, and Liverpool support businesses that provide goods and services to users of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

Within the region, there are several large land owners, and other designated lands that protect natural, cultural, or wilderness values, and are relevant to Tobeatic Wilderness Area (Figures 5 & 6).

### Kejimkujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada

Kejimkujik was established as a national park to recognize natural heritage and outdoor recreation values of national significance. The park protects 38 100 hectares in the upper Mersey River watershed. An active ecosystem science program contributes significantly to species-at-risk recovery, and monitoring pollution such as mercury and acid rain. More recently, the area was designated as a National Historic Site of Canada, to commemorate the significance of the Mi'kmaw cultural landscape of the area. Kejimkujik is a federally protected area, managed by the Parks Canada Agency. The national park lies directly adjacent to Tobeatic Wilderness Area, sharing a portion of its eastern boundary.

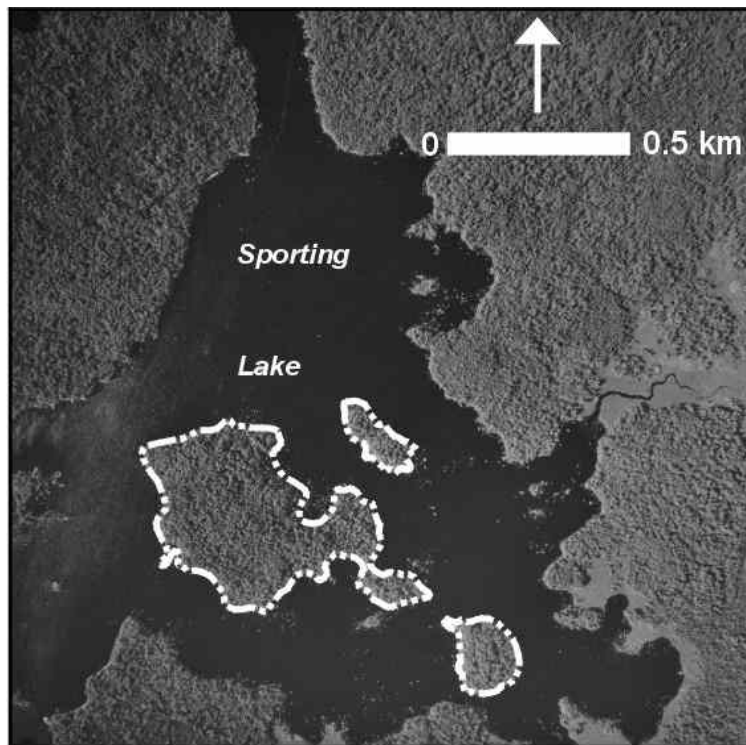
### Sporting Lake Nature Reserve

Located on one large island, and two smaller islands in Sporting Lake, Sporting Lake Nature Reserve protects outstanding old-growth forest within the northwestern portion of Tobeatic Wilderness Area (Figure 7).

This special place has a high level of protection in order to preserve some of the last remaining old-growth coniferous forest in Nova Scotia. These forests include mixed and pure stands of old-growth eastern hemlock and white pine.



This 25-hectare site has been protected since 1990 as a Nature Reserve under the *Special Places Protection Act*. Due to its sensitivity to human disturbance, camping, campfires, wood-cutting, littering, and hunting are not permitted.



**Figure 7. Islands of Sporting Lake Nature Reserve**

### Tidney River Wilderness Area

Tidney River Wilderness Area (TRWA) straddles the Queens - Shelburne county line north of the village of Sable River. This wild area protects 17 800 hectares within the Sable-Broad River Basin natural landscape. TRWA is located 10 km southeast of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, in an adjacent watershed. It consists of flat, basin-like terrain that drains to the Atlantic coast. It features large expanses of poorly drained flats, with isolated hills and eskers rising above the surrounding bogs and swales.

### Lake Rossignol Wilderness Area

Lake Rossignol Wilderness Area (LRWA) is a 4123ha natural area located in northern Queens county near the village of Caledonia. The Wilderness Area lies on the northeastern shore of Lake Rossignol, on the Mersey system just south of Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada. It contributes to the mosaic of protected lands in southwestern Nova Scotia along with Kejimikujik, and Tobeatic, and Tidney River Wilderness Areas. LRWA features climax shade-tolerant deciduous and coniferous forests, a unique pine-ash wooded swamp, and a large wetland complex with a raised bog. The Wilderness Area represents parts of two natural landscapes - LaHave Drumlins and Lake Rossignol Hills. It offers excellent wilderness travel and recreation opportunities associated with canoeing, fishing, hunting, and camping.

### Shelburne Canadian Heritage River

The Shelburne River flows through the heart of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. The Shelburne was recognized for its high degree of ecological integrity, natural heritage resources, and recreational opportunities by its designation as a Canadian Heritage River in 1997. The designation does not involve any specific regulations, but recognizes the outstanding values of the river, and encourages sound management through an approved plan.

This remote river system is linked to several other rivers and numerous lakes by traditional travel routes, as well as to Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site of Canada. Approximately 30 km of the Shelburne River corridor, and nearly 75% of its watershed, are included in Tobeatic Wilderness Area. This includes all of the undisturbed headwaters and upper reaches of the river, from Buckshot Lake to Irving Lake (Figure 8).

### Tobeatic Wildlife Management Area

Regulations of the provincial *Wildlife Act* established the Tobeatic Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in 1968. The Department of Natural Resources continues to administer the WMA to support experimental wildlife research and a six day primitive hunt. The western portion of the WMA overlaps with Tobeatic Wilderness Area. This includes the lands bounded by West Roseway River north to the Shelburne River, south to Roseway River and the West Branch Jordan River.

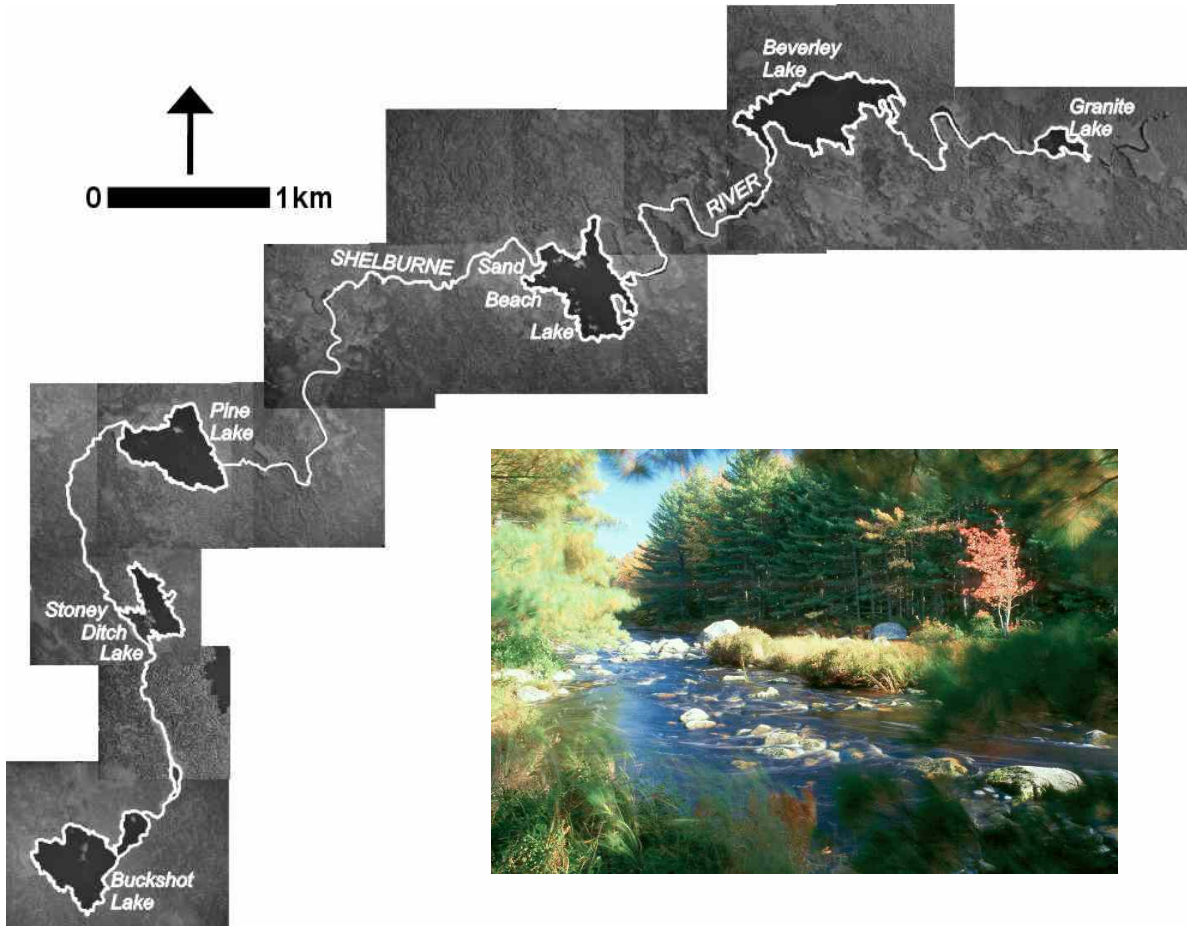
### Indian Fields Provincial Park Reserve

Crown land adjoining the southwestern boundary of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, is managed by the Department of Natural Resources as Indian Fields Provincial Park Reserve. Although not currently designated under the *Parks Act*, this 1618ha area is reserved for future development and management as a provincial park.

Indian Fields Provincial Park Reserve is easily accessed from highway 203, and borders roughly 3 km of the Roseway River. It includes a portion of Barclay Brook and several other intermittent streams that drain the Shelburne Barrens. The central feature of the Reserve is a chain of seven lakes stretching from Clamshell Lake west to Auger Lake, across the watershed divide between the Roseway and Clyde river systems. A canoe carry connects wilderness travel between these two major routes. The area is a popular summer destination for many recreational users.

Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve

Southwestern Nova Scotia was recognized as a biosphere reserve in 2001. The title acknowledges existing efforts in conservation, sustainable development, and region-wide cooperation among voluntary partners. Key goals include ecosystem science, research, monitoring, and communication. Tobeatic Wilderness Area is within the area included in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, and helps fulfill the conservation requirement of the distinction.



**Figure 8. Upper Shelburne River**

## 3.0 Protecting Tobeatic Wilderness Area

### 3.1 Guiding Principles

Management of Tobeatic Wilderness Area is directed by four guiding principles, which are reflected throughout the management framework.

**Ecological Integrity:** The integrity of natural processes and biodiversity is the primary consideration for management decisions.

**Wilderness Heritage:** Wilderness heritage is an important element that will be protected, maintained, restored, and celebrated.

**Stewardship:** Greater stewardship will be achieved through actively engaging users in conservation measures.

**Partnership:** Partnership is the key to successful implementation.

### 3.2 Management Goals

The following management goals provide the overall direction for the management framework for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

1. Implement a high level of ecosystem protection and management.
2. Develop, use, share, and promote scientific understanding.
3. Protect, share, and promote cultural and social values.
4. Facilitate safe and responsible wilderness recreation and use.
5. Encourage and integrate complementary land use and management.
6. Support appropriate tourism, development, and marketing.
7. Foster understanding and appreciation through communication and education.
8. Develop long-term strategic partnerships.
9. Secure full implementation of the management plan.

### 3.3 Best Practices

NSEL employs a range of best practices for planning and managing Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas. The following approaches to wilderness management provide examples of

best practices that are used in managing Tobeatic Wilderness Area.<sup>1</sup>

- Manage wilderness as the most pristine land use (relative to developed, harvested, and settled lands).
- Use a holistic, comprehensive approach rather than managing separate parts.
- Use non-degradation as a guide to maintain or restore conditions.
- Manage human influences in Wilderness Areas.
- Adopt a nature-centred approach to produce values and benefits.
- Favour wilderness-dependent activities.
- Use written plans with specific objectives for management.
- Set carrying capacities (as necessary) to prevent unnatural change.
- Focus on threatened sites and damaging activities.
- Apply only the minimum tools and regulations to achieve objectives.
- Involve the public in planning and implementation.
- Monitor wilderness conditions and experience opportunities.
- Consider wilderness in relation to adjacent land management.
- Consider sustainable use of wild living resources as a conservation tool with social and economic incentives.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Hendee and Dawson, 2002, Wilderness Management: Stewardship and Protection of Resources and Values, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.



## 4.0 Management Framework for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

This management framework has been developed to set management direction and a strategic approach for Tobeatic Wilderness Area. It addresses four major themes: *Ecosystem Protection*; *Recreation Management*; *Complementary Land Management*; and *Implementation*. For each theme, a broad objective statement directs the approach and sets a desired outcome. A statement of intent, and priority actions are outlined for each topic to clearly describe how objectives will be achieved.

The management framework will be applied upon approval of the Tobeatic Management Plan, and will be reviewed every five years. NSEL will host an annual workshop to report on progress, and identify emerging priority actions. The framework may be updated at any time, to ensure priority actions meet management requirements.

On an annual basis, NSEL will direct available resources to address priority actions outlined in the management framework. The management framework features a high degree of public involvement through user stewardship, and cooperation with community groups and corporate partners. Where appropriate, NSEL will work with partners to co-ordinate projects and identify additional resources.

### 4.1 Ecosystem Protection

**Objective:** To implement ecosystem management measures supporting native biodiversity, so that the integrity of natural processes and biodiversity (ecological integrity) is maintained or restored.

#### 4.1.1 Biodiversity

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*NSEL will apply a high level of ecosystem protection to protect biodiversity, and maintain or restore the natural conditions of ecosystems.*

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Biodiversity refers to the variety and variability among living organisms and their surroundings. Tobeatic Wilderness Area is an important place for biodiversity in Nova Scotia.

Tobeatic Wilderness Area is the largest remaining wilderness in the Maritime provinces which, together with the adjacent Kejimikujik, is provincially and nationally significant for protecting biodiversity. The region is important for supporting natural ecosystem functions, and sensitive species.

Due to its remoteness, many parts of Tobeatic Wilderness Area have not been studied. Limited information is available regarding species occurrence and distribution. Tobeatic Wilderness Area is known to harbour rare and endangered



species, including moose, Blanding’s turtle, and several coastal plain plants. However, the occurrence and extent of rare species is largely unknown.

NSEL contributes to provincial and national biodiversity objectives in cooperation with DNR, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and community and corporate partners.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Continue working towards a comprehensive biodiversity inventory to identify the species, genetic variability, habitats, and ecosystems of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- (b) Support recovery of species at risk through active participation in Recovery Team activities, and the identification of critical habitat for endangered species found in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

#### **4.1.2 Scientific Understanding**

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*NSEL will support research and monitoring in collaboration with partners, to provide information for ecosystem management.*

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The foundation of ecosystem management is having a solid scientific understanding of natural ecosystems and relevant human influences. These include the social, economic and historic significance of natural areas. Such an understanding can be achieved by conducting and supporting research, monitoring and evaluating natural processes and stressors, and taking a collaborative and inter-disciplinary approach which recognizes and applies new knowledge and best practices.



Research provides the foundation for making informed decisions for managing and protecting natural and cultural heritage. Through research, baseline conditions are established, which allows accurate measurement and understanding of adverse effects. Appropriate action may then be taken to protect or restore natural ecosystems and cultural sites.

Monitoring and reporting are also essential to making management decisions related to ecosystem protection, and for sharing important information within appropriate regional, national, and global networks.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) In collaboration with academic, agency, and community partners, develop an improved research capacity for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

- (b) Evaluate information gaps and set research priorities.
- (c) Encourage new research projects in collaboration with regional partners and established networks of community and academic organizations.
- (d) Share information with partners to maximize the utility of research findings. Where possible, use findings of relevant research in the region to aid management.
- (e) Develop a framework for a comprehensive monitoring program to identify key ecosystem functions, structures, and stressors that require monitoring. Develop monitoring and reporting activities with regional agencies, and corporate and community partners.
- (f) Review and evaluate data from the environmental effects monitoring program for mineral development at Flintstone Rock, adjacent to Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

#### 4.1.3 Ecosystem Management

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*NSEL will adopt and apply an ecosystem management approach to protect or restore ecological integrity. Ecosystems will be managed with minimal interference to natural processes, and management interventions will be directed as narrowly as possible.*

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Ecosystems protected in Tobeatic Wilderness Area are integrated in the landscapes in which they occur, and are subject to varying degrees of human influence. As such, ecosystem management measures will be identified and implemented, so that ecological integrity is maintained or restored.



Ecological integrity is a condition of ecosystems with all natural components and processes intact. These include the type and number of native species and biological communities, rates of change, and supporting processes.

The ecological integrity of Tobeatic Wilderness Area is affected by several factors including adjacent road density, land use in its headwaters, air pollution, distribution and occurrence of native species, and human use within the Wilderness Area.

The most immediate stressors are the intensive human activities surrounding Tobeatic Wilderness Area, such as forestry, mining, hydro-electric generation, tourism development, road construction, and cottage development. Despite these stressors, the Wilderness Area has maintained a relatively high degree of ecological integrity.

Ecosystems will be managed with minimal interference to natural processes. Active intervention may be required to sustain critical habitat for species that are rare or endangered. Restoration activities to support the recovery of ecological integrity will be identified and implemented to re-establish and/or maintain natural conditions.

Some natural processes which occur in Tobeatic Wilderness Area may have implications for neighbouring lands if left to function naturally, particularly if they occur near the boundaries. Such processes include those of natural and human origin, including cycles in insect populations, and forest fires. These may be managed more aggressively than other natural processes, to limit adverse effects for neighbouring landowners.

The Minister of Environment and Labour has delegated authority for suppression of forest fires to the Minister of Natural Resources. Woods closure orders issued by DNR apply to Wilderness Areas.

The introduction of exotic species, or those not naturally occurring in Tobeatic Wilderness Area, will be prevented to the degree possible. Where such species are found will be addressed in co-operation with relevant agencies, within resource constraints, according to the degree of risk to native species or natural processes. Addressing exotic species may involve long-term restoration.

Management interventions will be directed as narrowly as possible, and will follow adaptive management principles. This involves applying a rigorous experimental design, carefully monitoring results, and acquiring new scientific knowledge to improve current and future decision making.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Identify stressors to biodiversity preservation and the maintenance of ecological integrity, and where possible, identify and support measures to mitigate or eliminate such stressors.
- (b) Develop an integrated ecosystem management approach for the Tobeatic with other agencies such as DNR (Wildlife Division), NS Fisheries and Agriculture (Inland Fisheries), Parks Canada, and Fisheries and Oceans (Habitat), so that agency roles are coordinated.
- (c) Monitor and document major natural disturbance events that occur in, or affect, Tobeatic Wilderness Area, to improve understanding of such events.
- (d) Work with partners to understand regional activities related to water use and protection, and develop an integrated water quality strategy which includes the natural water quality and quantity benchmarks for watersheds.
- (e) Identify known and potential stressors for priority watercourses, and develop a practical monitoring program. Based on findings, implement measures to protect or restore water quality and quantity.

## 4.2 Recreation Management

**Objective:** To responsibly develop and manage recreation opportunities, so that users can enjoy wilderness experiences that are part of the outdoor heritage of Nova Scotia.

### 4.2.1 Outdoor Heritage

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*NSEL will identify, protect, and share the outdoor heritage of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, so that users can connect with the important cultural history of the region.*

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Tobeatic Wilderness Area connects present-day users to a rich part of Nova Scotia's outdoor heritage. Traditions of wilderness travel, canoeing, tenting, hiking, hunting, trapping, and angling have been enjoyed in different parts of the Tobeatic region over many years. Evidence of past use can be seen today as canoe carries, ranger cabins, tenting sites, and hiking routes.

To protect and manage cultural values like our outdoor heritage, research is required to fill information gaps in our understanding of the human heritage of the area.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Identify and document sites and features with heritage values in the Wilderness Area, and those associated with the broader region.
- (b) Evaluate heritage sites and consider restoration measures to protect or commemorate identified values. Priority sites for consideration are the old ranger cabins at Buckshot and Sand Beach Lake (with DNR), and outside the Wilderness Area at Tobeatic Lake (with Bowater). Site clean-up and commemoration will be completed for deteriorated old ranger cabins within the Wilderness Area.
- (c) Identify cultural heritage research needs, and encourage new research projects in collaboration with regional partners and established networks of community and academic organizations. Seek supplementary funding resources to support research priorities.
- (d) Encourage archival research to compile information on the cultural heritage of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- (e) Investigate opportunities with local museums, heritage societies, and other partners for developing heritage interpretation materials for outreach and education.

### 4.2.2 Wilderness Experience

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*NSEL will administer activities and projects in a manner that ensures high-quality wilderness experiences are provided for users.*

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The scale of the natural surroundings and the sense of remoteness are special features of Tobeatic Wilderness Area that allow users to enjoy genuine wilderness experiences. Such a

wilderness experience is central to the desire of many people who visit Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

The wilderness character of Tobeatic Wilderness Area will be maintained so that users can experience solitude, tranquillity, and closeness to nature in a natural environment. High quality opportunities for wilderness recreation activities will provide users a sense of self-reliance, challenge, and reward.

Human activities with adverse environmental effects will be managed, reduced, or eliminated over time to restore conditions necessary for enjoying a high-quality wilderness experience. Permanent structures will be minimized.

Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Survey users to determine the range of valued experiences, and the associated locations and features that contribute to these experiences.
- (b) Consider the quality of wilderness experience in making decisions for ecosystem management, recreation management, and complementary land management activities.

**4.2.3 Wilderness Recreation**

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*NSEL will support a range of wilderness recreation experiences for the interests and abilities of users. Recreation management will consider the associated site impacts, natural and cultural values, and wilderness character of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

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Tobeatic Wilderness Area offers users high quality wilderness recreation opportunities. Wilderness recreation includes non-motorized outdoor activities that have minimal environmental impact, including nature-based tourism. Responsible use, site impacts, public safety, and enjoyment must be considered in providing recreation opportunities.

Trails, routes, access points, and tenting sites to support wilderness recreation will be managed to consider the wilderness character and carrying capacity of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. These will also serve to improve biodiversity protection and minimize the impact of human use, and will not significantly diminish the wilderness experience enjoyed by visitors.

A wilderness standard will be used to provide safe opportunities for enjoyment and appreciation of the area. Hiking trail development will minimize the use of built structures, and integrate existing trails and routes. Wherever possible, designated tenting sites will be selected from those traditionally used by wilderness travellers in order to minimize the

construction of new sites.

Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Establish a self-serve user registration system, and investigate the feasibility of establishing a mandatory user registration system, to provide information and encourage personal responsibility for safety.
- (b) To provide basic user information, Wilderness Area signage will be posted, focussing on known access points as a first step towards more complete boundary demarcation.
- (c) Further user information will be provided at main access points such as Indian Fields, Lake Joli-Sixth Lake, and Pebbleloggitch Lake, or staging areas such as Silvery Lake, McGill Lake, East Branch Tusket River, Fifth Lake Landing, and Sporting Lake Stream.
- (d) Evaluate hiking route opportunities, including those at Billy's Hill, Rocky Daniels country, Indian Fields and Bald Mountain. Investigate the feasibility of a long-distance backcountry hiking route to provide a unique wilderness experience for users.
- (e) To improve public safety, work with partners to establish clearly marked portages on major canoe routes. The Sissiboo, Shelburne, Roseway, East Branch Tusket, and West Branch Jordan Rivers will be included in route marking. All other canoe routes will remain unmarked.
- (f) Partner with neighbouring landowners to establish recreation corridors that connect to canoe routes or hiking trails within the Wilderness Area.
- (g) Designate established tenting sites along the Shelburne River at Sand Beach Lake, Beverley Lake, Granite Falls within the Wilderness Area, and at Irving Lake, Sand Lake, and Lake Rossignol with Shelburne Canadian Heritage River partners.
- (h) Designate established shoreline tenting sites on Sporting Lake, Big Pine Lake, and Silvery Lake to protect the natural values associated with the Nature Reserve and Sites of Ecological Significance in these locations.
- (i) In conjunction with others agencies and community partners, develop a recreation risk-management strategy with established protocols for search and rescue and emergency evacuation.

#### 4.2.4 Sportfishing and Traditional Patterns of Hunting & Trapping

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*NSEL will work closely with partners to address opportunities for sportfishing and traditional patterns of hunting and trapping as sustainable activities in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

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Tobeatic Wilderness Area provides opportunities for sportfishing and traditional patterns of hunting and trapping. Anglers, hunters, and trappers must comply with all provincial statutes while in the Wilderness Area.



The regulations associated with the current Tobeatic Wildlife Management Area (WMA) will be maintained in that portion of Tobeatic Wilderness Area included in the WMA (West Roseway River, north to Shelburne River, south to Roseway River, east to West Branch of Jordan River). Consistent with the current WMA regulations, the six-day primitive hunt with muzzle loader and black powder will continue, and no other hunting or trapping may occur in this portion of the Wilderness Area.

Due to the associated public safety and ecological integrity risks, the practice of baiting animals (bear, deer, etc.) for hunting will not be permitted in Tobeatic Wilderness Area. As such, applications to develop a bear-baiting station will not be approved, and the use of drop apples, carrots, and other bait for deer hunting is not permitted.

As a result of research, and in coordination with appropriate partners, sportfishing, hunting, and trapping will be specially managed as required for the protection of wildlife populations and the maintenance of ecological integrity. For example, tools like unique season limits, gear restrictions, bag limits, and temporary bans or closures may be applied.

##### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Encourage research that estimates wildlife population numbers and health to provide information for management decisions.
- (b) Work with DNR Wildlife Division and local and provincial hunting, trapping, and angling groups to gain information on these activities in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- (c) In partnership with DNR, initiate a communication and mandatory reporting program for all trappers active in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- (d) Evaluate the sustainability of sportfishing, trapping, and hunting in Tobeatic Wilderness Area as it relates to the protection of wildlife populations rare species, the maintenance of ecological integrity, and implications for other users.



- (e) Apply special management for sportfishing, hunting, and trapping based on research findings and sustainability evaluation.
- (f) Continue to support the work of NS Fisheries and Agriculture, Parks Canada, and Trout Nova Scotia to develop special management for trout in the upper Mersey watershed.

#### 4.2.5 Vehicle Use

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*NSEL will manage vehicle use to maintain the natural and cultural values, and wilderness character of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, recognizing continued use of the Crown road from Indian Fields for public access.*

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Under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, “vehicle” means a motor vehicle, and includes an all-terrain vehicle, a snowmobile, a motor boat, a motor vessel, and an aircraft. Generally, the Act prohibits vehicle use to protect Wilderness Areas from potential damage. The Act does, however, provide discretion to licence vehicle use on specific routes in certain circumstances.

Unauthorized vehicle use in Tobeatic Wilderness Area is wide-spread, and causes significant adverse environmental effects, diminishes unique and broadly valued wilderness heritage values, creates considerable public safety and liability concerns, and presents significant challenges for management and enforcement. As such, a broad trail designation and vehicle-access licencing program for Tobeatic Wilderness Area can not be reasonably applied or sustained while achieving the vision and management goals outlined in this plan.

To maintain natural and cultural values, support management, and restore the unique and outstanding wilderness character of the area, vehicle use is not permitted in Tobeatic Wilderness Area except in limited circumstances, through a licence for access on an approved route which is issued to:

- a private land inholding owner, for access to their land;
- a valid campsite leaseholder, to assist in the removal of structures prior to lease expiry; or
- a scientific researcher under the terms of a scientific research licence where it is demonstrated that such vehicle use is necessary for undertaking approved research projects.

All reasonable alternatives, and environmental and recreational impacts will be evaluated in the decision to issue a vehicle-access licence. Proposed vehicle routes that may have an adverse environmental effect on wetlands, watercourses, sensitive ecosystems, and/or wildlife will not be authorized.

Vehicle use is permitted by enforcement officers, provincial employees, or delegated persons for the responsible management of the Wilderness Area.

#### Crown Road to Silvery and McGill Lakes

NSEL acknowledges the history of vehicle use on the Crown road from Indian Fields to Silvery and McGill Lakes, and recognizes public interest in continued vehicle access for sportfishing, hunting, trapping, and wilderness recreation along this route.

This old road is managed by DNR, and does not lie within the Wilderness Area (Figure 9). As such, NSEL supports the continued use of vehicles on this road in a manner which is consistent with the DNR Crown Road Policy. NSEL will continue to work with DNR to address issues related to this interior access route.

#### Motor Boat Use

As vehicles, motor boats are not permitted in Tobeatic Wilderness Area. However, this restriction only applies to waterways which fall within the legal Wilderness Area boundary. Anglers and other motor boaters are not restricted from using motor boats on waterways that are not fully contained within the Wilderness Area boundary. These sites generally have better access, and support many of the sportfishing opportunities associated with Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- Clearly communicate and provide appropriate notification to known users concerning vehicle-use directives, opportunities for public access, and road and trail closures to ensure understanding and encourage compliance.
- Work with owners of private land inholdings on a case-by-case basis regarding access licencing to private properties.
- Work with DNR to address environmental, enforcement, and public safety issues related to use of the Crown road from Indian Fields to Silvery and McGill Lakes.
- Retire unauthorized trails and routes in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- Work with partners and interested users to discuss alternate routes for vehicle use outside Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

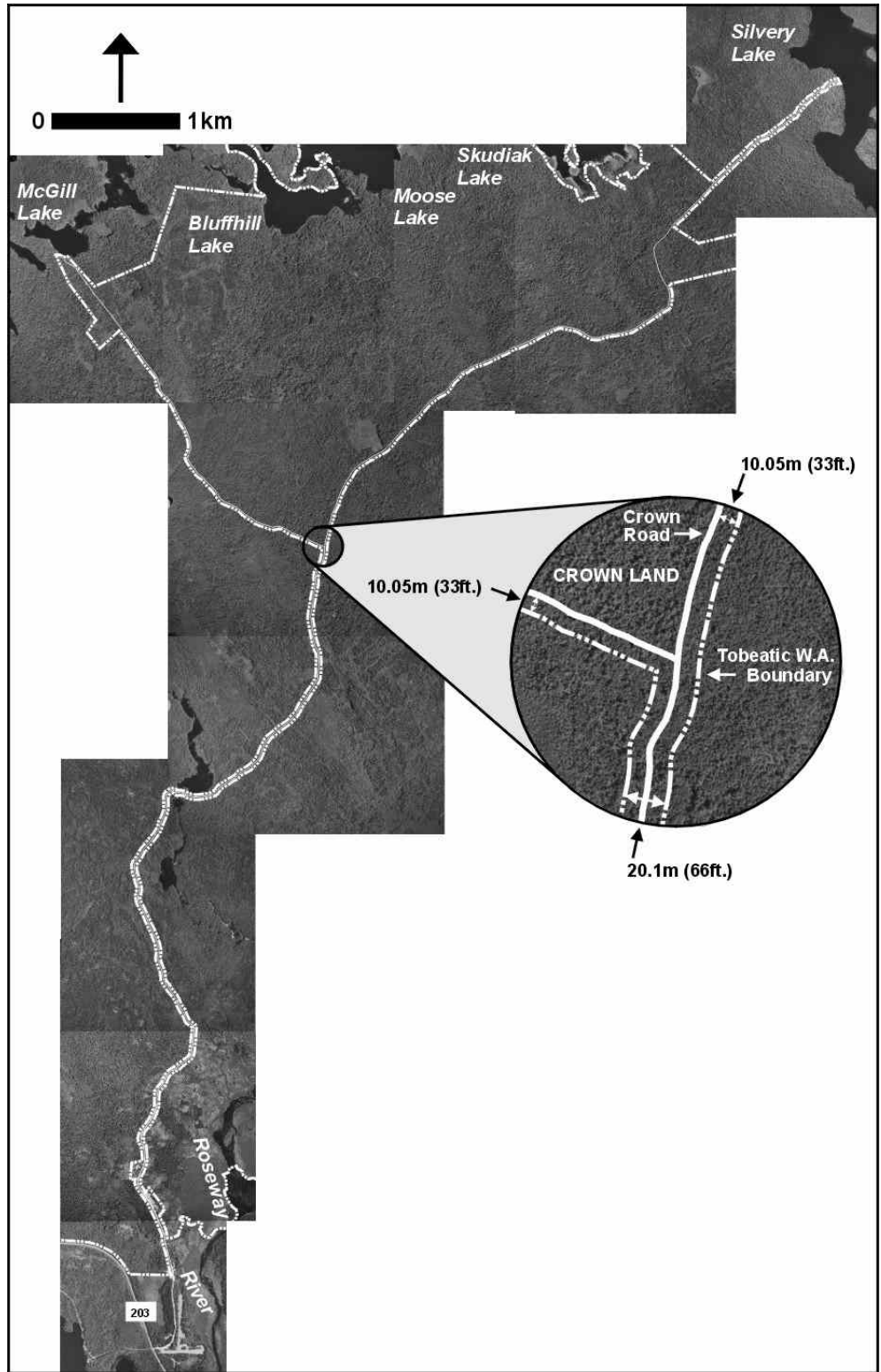


Figure 9. Crown Road to Silvery and McGill Lakes

## 4.2.6 Campsite Leases

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*To increase ecosystem protection, support management, and restore the unique and outstanding wilderness character of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, NSEL will retire all campsite leases by 2010. Lease holders recognized by NSEL will be given an opportunity to apply to DNR for an alternate lease site on Crown land.*

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Campsite leases are legally established campsites, with a camp structure, located on small parcels of provincially owned lands. Leases allow the holder to maintain a simple building for use as a hunting or fishing camp, or similar recreational purposes, for personal use. Leases were established under the Crown Lands Act with a ten-year term and an option to apply for lease renewal.



The *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* recognizes the 31 campsite leases in Tobeatic Wilderness Area as legal existing interests, and requires that these sites be used in a way that ensures minimal environmental impact on the Wilderness Area. The Act also states that leases may continue until their expiry, lawful termination or cancellation, and may be renewed according to legislation and policies.

While many lease holders are responsible environmental stewards, the continued presence of campsite leases and the associated permanent private structures in the Wilderness Area presents significant challenges to management and protection. For many people, lease sites detract from the wild character of the Wilderness Area. Lease camps also provide interior destinations for lease holders and others, concentrating human impacts on trails and sites that were not selected based on their capacity to sustain such use. Some lease sites are also known to adversely affect sensitive wildlife habitat, attract illegal vehicle use, and increase the presence of garbage in otherwise pristine locations.

Campsite lease management is particularly difficult in Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Isolated lease sites require significant resources for monitoring and inspections. It is difficult for conservation officers to address compliance concerns associated with leases. Many lease holders rely on vehicle access for lease use and maintenance. With such vehicle access now prohibited (see Section 4.2.5), the continued presence of leases would present significant maintenance challenges to lease holders, and could encourage increased levels of illegal vehicle use.

NSEL recognizes that some lease sites and structures may be part of the wilderness heritage of the Tobeatic region. However, the continued presence of leases and their associated structures in Tobeatic Wilderness Area can not be reasonably sustained while respecting the

guiding principles and management goals outlined in this management plan. Therefore, to increase ecosystem protection, support management, and restore the unique and outstanding wilderness character of Tobeatic Wilderness Area, NSEL will retire all campsite leases by 2010.

Campsite leases will be honoured for their current term but will not be renewed upon expiry. For leases that expire prior to April 1, 2006, a grace period is established until that date to provide leaseholders a reasonable opportunity to remove belongings and camp structures. For the remaining leases that expire between April 1, 2006 and December 31, 2009, the date of expiry will apply as the effective retirement date of the lease.

To assist in structure removal, vehicle use to lease sites may be licenced for removal of belongings and camp structures. As an incentive for meeting the terms of lease retirement, NSEL will provide a financial honorarium upon satisfactory removal of structures and site clean up.

Tobeatic Wilderness Area lease holders recognized by NSEL will be given the opportunity to apply to DNR for an alternate lease site on Crown land.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Contact recognized holders of campsite leases to:
  - notify of the decision to honour leases for their current term, and not renew leases upon expiry; and
  - provide lease holders an opportunity to apply to DNR for campsite lease relocation to an alternate lease site on Crown land. Applications will be considered within existing resources and land use commitments.
- (b) Work with valid holders of campsite leases and provide a grace period for removal of structures, including temporary licenced vehicle use for this purpose.
- (c) Provide a financial honorarium incentive for the satisfactory removal of the camp structure and all associated materials, garbage, or other items.
- (d) Improve compliance monitoring and enforcement to minimize adverse effects associated with lease sites.

#### **4.2.7 Nature Tourism**

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*NSEL will work with tourism partners to support appropriate nature tourism for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

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As the largest protected wilderness in the Maritimes, Tobeatic Wilderness Area holds great potential for nature tourism in Nova Scotia, and has the capability to attract resident and international visitors seeking authentic wilderness experiences. Its size and remoteness provide many unique nature tourism opportunities for both day-use and extended-stay travellers. Together with the established destination of Kejimikujik National Park, Tobeatic

Wilderness Area can contribute in a major way to nature tourism in the region.

Nature tourism can allow a broader group of people to learn about and enjoy Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Opportunities for regional economic benefit associated with the Wilderness Area may also be identified, extending interest in the protected area to a wider audience. In any case, tourism must respect natural and cultural values and consider carrying capacity, so that an appropriate level of use is achieved for the Wilderness Area.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Identify current and anticipated recreation activities that support, or hold potential to, support nature tourism for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- (b) Work with tourism industry partners to discuss commercial recreation practices, focussing on consistent marketing and establishing ethical and operational standards for outfitters.
- (c) Work in collaboration with the Department of Tourism, Culture & Heritage with input from regional and specialized tourism associations, to form a tourism strategy and opportunity analysis for day-use and guided interior experiences.
- (d) Work with tourism industry partners to ensure accurate information is available to interested organizations.

### 4.3 Complementary Land Management

**Objective:** To engage neighbouring land managers, and private land owners so that greater voluntary stewardship measures are applied for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

#### 4.3.1 Adjacent Lands

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*NSEL will collaborate with neighbouring land managers to encourage voluntary, complementary management for lands adjacent to or affecting Tobeatic Wilderness Area.*

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Protected areas are influenced by the regional context within which they occur. Many stressors to the integrity of natural or cultural values can originate beyond protected area boundaries. Such is the case with stressors in southwestern Nova Scotia, including acid deposition, climate change, and introduction of exotic species. In some cases complementary management of adjacent lands plays an important role in mitigating the effects of stressors on protected areas.

The boundary of Tobeatic Wilderness Area is nearly 550 km in length, and is shared with a number of land managers (see Figure 6). Lands adjacent to the Wilderness Area include woodlands owned by the Bowater Mersey Paper Co., Ltd. and J.D. Irving, Limited, federal Crown land protected within Kejimikujik, and provincial Crown land administered by DNR. Land uses carried out on or near the boundary of Tobeatic Wilderness Area include forest

harvesting, hydro-power generation, tourism development, mining, and cottage development.

Lands adjacent to or affecting Tobeatic Wilderness Area are a focus for voluntary complementary management, and may hold potential to act as functional buffers and connectivity corridors. Management tools and approaches that address biodiversity objectives will be applied with the voluntary co-operation of partners. Such partnership may lead to the identification of ecologically important adjacent lands to apply “best practices”, establish demonstration sites, or initiate land transactions through voluntary trade or sale.

Adjacent lands that are particularly important to Tobeatic Wilderness Area include those with portions of significant natural, cultural, or recreational values not adequately protected within the Wilderness Area, and those lands that serve an essential function in the delivery of Wilderness Area benefits.

The current boundary alignment excludes some significant elements, such as portions of ecosystems, key links of recreation routes, and historic features. Such exclusion creates boundary-related, site-specific issues within the Wilderness Area, where the values for which the Tobeatic was designated may be diminished or management opportunities not optimized. In some instances, addressing such critical adjacent lands would benefit the protection and management of important values of the Wilderness Area. Boundary evaluation in the context of minimizing potential impacts of adjacent land use can address site-specific issues related to effective management, and/or improved protection of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Work with Crown land managers and industry partners in forestry, tourism, hydro-power, mining, and real estate to develop complementary management measures for adjacent lands.
- (b) Work with partners to address landscape-level ecological processes within the region, such as connectivity.
- (c) Develop a Tobeatic Wilderness Area boundary evaluation process for the purpose of minimizing potential impacts of adjacent land use, and optimizing the management of the Wilderness Area. This process will include an opportunity for public participation, consider a complete range of management tools, and be concluded within two years of the Minister’s approval of this management plan.

#### **4.3.2 Inholdings**

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*NSEL will work with owners of private land inholdings, to encourage a stewardship role and the consideration of options for the future that are complementary to the objectives of the Wilderness Area.*

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Inholdings are lands that are surrounded by Tobeatic Wilderness Area, or by the Wilderness

Area and a watercourse. While these lands are not governed by the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*, they may contribute to important natural, cultural, or wilderness values of the Wilderness Area.

At the time of designation in 1998, there were 14 private land inholdings amounting to 820 hectares within Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Through partnerships, NSEL has acquired 45% of the total land in private ownership. For example, large inholdings at Stewart Brook and Sheepfarm Stillwater, once owned by the Bowater Mersey Paper Co., Ltd., have been purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada in partnership with the province of Nova Scotia, for designation as part of the Wilderness Area. Presently, there are 11 small inholdings covering 467 hectares remaining in Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

Private land stewardship continues to be a priority for Tobeatic Wilderness Area. In this regard, NSEL will encourage voluntary purchase agreements and other options such as the development of conservation easements to address the stewardship interests of private landowners.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Complete inholding landowner contact program to provide information to landowners on a range of options including conservation easement and tax incentive opportunities, and work with landowners to develop and encourage a stewardship role.
- (b) Create a stewardship recognition award for landowners.
- (c) Continue working with DNR in their role to administer land negotiations and transactions on a priority basis.
- (d) Seek funding partners to establish an acquisition fund for purchasing inholdings through voluntary sale, recognizing Tobeatic Wilderness Area as the foremost wilderness in the Maritimes.

## **4.4 Implementation**

**Objective:** To use an approach of partnership, participation, outreach, and enforcement, so that management goals are fulfilled.

### **4.4.1 Partnership**

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*NSEL will cooperate with government, industry, academic, and community partners to address priority management actions.*

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Protected areas management relies on cooperative solutions to address complex challenges. Partnerships for implementation often lead to the most secure and cost-effective long-term solutions, and can offer shared benefits to the parties involved.



Partnership is the primary mechanism for NSEL to implement the management framework for Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

Active involvement of community partners will be pursued to engage people and organizations in a long-term positive relationship. This will include creating public participation opportunities and information exchange to develop a sense of ownership and to improve awareness of the stewardship needs of Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Identify and evaluate a full range of partnership-based options for increasing resources to implement the management plan.
- (b) Establish partnerships with tourism associations and regional development authorities with an interest in Tobeatic Wilderness Area to develop projects of shared interest, and accrue benefits to local businesses.
- (c) Collaborate with First Nations partners to identify cultural values associated with Tobeatic Wilderness Area, support the use of traditional knowledge, and investigate opportunities and provide support for First Nations involvement in aspects of area management.
- (d) Participate in regional planning exercises, such as Integrated Resource Management (DNR), and review of the park management plan for Kejimikujik.
- (e) Continue active partnerships with neighbouring corporate partners with an interest in land management (Bowater Mersey Paper Co., Ltd., Nova Scotia Power, Inc., JD Irving, Limited) and consider new opportunities for corporate partnership.
- (f) Collaborate with municipal units to develop and support projects of shared interest related to Tobeatic Wilderness Area.
- (g) Participate in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve in research, monitoring, education, and training with respect to the conservation and sustainable use of resources.

**4.4.2 Public Participation**

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*NSEL will establish opportunities for public participation in future planning, management, and implementation activities.*

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Opportunities for public participation are important to engage people in planning and management of protected areas. For Tobeatic Wilderness Area, this approach has been used successfully to provide advice on the development of the management plan.

Participation is also important to improve public awareness of protection measures for the area, and to achieve stewardship goals. Options to support ongoing involvement will be

evaluated to establish the most appropriate mechanism for public participation.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Develop and implement a “Wilderness Watch” program to improve stewardship and involve users in monitoring and reporting.
- (b) Continue active liaison with community groups and major stakeholders to involve partners in project development.
- (c) Host an annual public workshop to solicit input and provide an update on the implementation of the management plan.
- (d) Support an information-sharing network to support collaboration and information exchange among regional partners. Consideration will be given to the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve Association providing this function.

#### **4.4.3 Outreach**

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*NSEL will improve public understanding and appreciation through regular communication with local communities and stakeholders, and the development of high quality educational materials to interpret natural and cultural heritage.*

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Communication is an important way for NSEL to continue existing relationships and build new ones with interested people and organizations.

Active stewardship can be encouraged and supported by increasing public understanding of the wilderness values and conservation requirements of Tobeatic Wilderness Area. Environmental education, focussed on natural history and cultural heritage themes can also benefit Tobeatic Wilderness Area.

#### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Implement an outreach strategy, building on the “Keep It Wild” campaign, that includes notices and articles in local papers, an annual open house workshop, and regular liaison with community groups.
- (b) Develop wilderness recreation communication materials for access points, canoe routes, hiking trails, and other elements, as required.
- (c) Support the development of interpretation materials for both on-site and off-site programming.
- (d) Support the use of Tobeatic Wilderness Area as an outdoor classroom for active and experiential learning.

#### 4.4.4 Enforcement

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*In partnership with DNR, NSEL will use a range of enforcement tools to address immediate violations and achieve long-term compliance.*

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Protected area management relies on a flexible and adaptive approach to enforcement to address immediate violations and achieve long-term compliance. The remote nature of protected areas presents unique challenges for enforcement, and demands creative approaches.

Where appropriate, public participation may be sought to assist in education, monitoring, and reporting efforts. For Tobeatic Wilderness Area, emphasis will be placed on building stewardship through education and awareness. However, all necessary enforcement tools will be employed to protect Wilderness Area values, and ensure compliance.

##### Priority Actions for Tobeatic Wilderness Area

- (a) Post appropriate signs to encourage compliance and ensure public awareness of Wilderness Area protection measures.
- (b) Continue to develop and apply an integrated enforcement approach for Tobeatic Wilderness Area, in partnership with DNR Enforcement Division
- (c) Identify enforcement issues requiring improved tools, such as new regulations or standards, and develop these tools as a priority.
- (d) Conduct an annual workshop with enforcement partners to review regional enforcement priorities.
- (e) Work with DNR to provide appropriate training for officers, to better meet the specific requirements of wilderness enforcement.

# Appendix

## Appendix 1 Glossary of Terms used in the Draft Management Plan

### **Biodiversity**

The variety of life, from genes and species to communities, ecosystems, functions, and processes.

### **Ecological Integrity**

Ecological Integrity refers to the capability of an ecosystem to maintain natural processes and the diversity of native species over time. An ecosystem has integrity when its native components and processes are intact, and it is deemed characteristic for its natural region - including the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities, rates of change, and supporting processes.

### **Ecosystems**

A community of organisms and all of the physical elements of their environment, and the linkages or interactions between them.

### **Exotic Species**

Species that have been moved beyond their natural range as a result of human activity, and may affect resident native species (competition, predation, etc). Also known as alien or introduced species.

### **Habitat**

The locality, site, and particular type of local environment occupied by an organism.

### **Natural Processes**

Processes that support life, such as solar irradiation, climatic processes, geologic processes, and ecological processes, such as water cycles, fire cycles, wildlife population dynamics.

### **Restoration**

The processes or actions to restore an area or ecosystem to a specified state or condition; may be accomplished through natural processes (passive management) or by human manipulation (active management).

### **Stewardship**

Active involvement in environmental and/or cultural protection that ensures values can be passed on with integrity to those who follow us.

## Appendix 2 Additional Information & Contacts

Additional information on Wilderness Areas is available on the Protected Areas Branch web site at [www.gov.ns.ca/enla/pareas](http://www.gov.ns.ca/enla/pareas). Information is also available in the following publications:

- *Keep It Wild* - a guide for low impact recreation in Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas
- *Protecting Wilderness* - a summary of Nova Scotia's Wilderness Areas Protection Act

Wilderness Areas are mapped in the Fifth Edition (2001) of *The Nova Scotia Atlas* - available in most bookstores.

### General Inquiries

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