



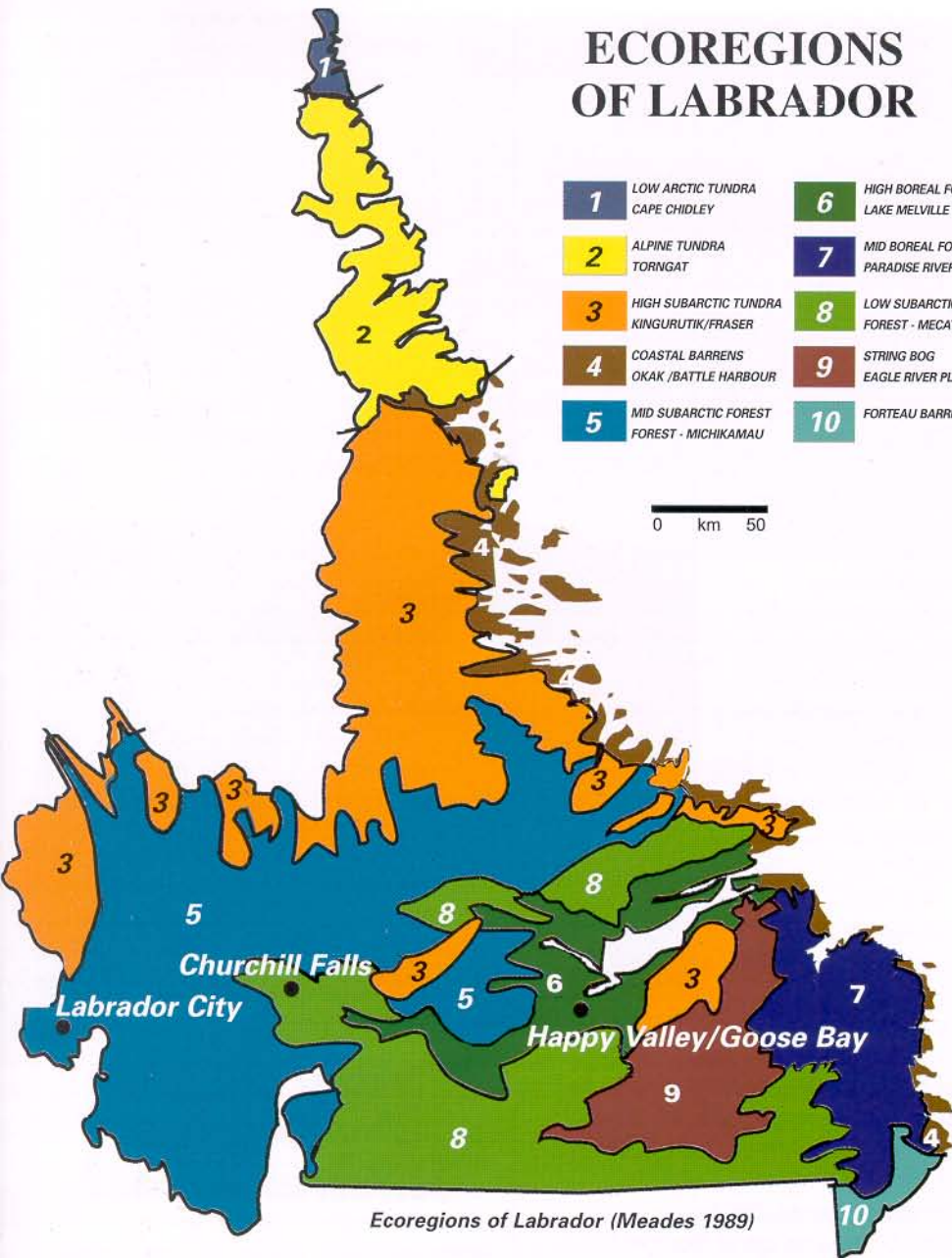
Caring for Our Special Places

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR'S
WILDERNESS AND ECOLOGICAL
RESERVES PROGRAM

ECOREGIONS OF LABRADOR

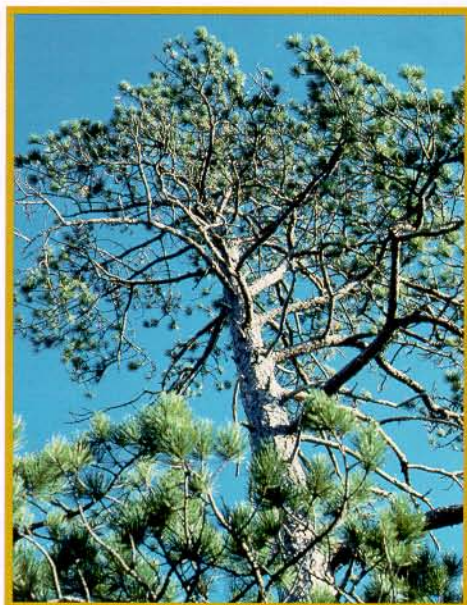
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 LOW ARCTIC TUNDRA
CAPE CHIDLEY | 6 HIGH BOREAL FOREST
LAKE MELVILLE |
| 2 ALPINE TUNDRA
TORNGAT | 7 MID BOREAL FOREST
PARADISE RIVER |
| 3 HIGH SUBARCTIC TUNDRA
KINGURUTIK/FRASER | 8 LOW SUBARCTIC FOREST
FOREST - MECATINA RIVER |
| 4 COASTAL BARRENS
OKAK / BATTLE HARBOUR | 9 STRING BOG
EAGLE RIVER PLATEAU |
| 5 MID SUBARCTIC FOREST
FOREST - MICHIKAMAU | 10 FORTEAU BARRENS |

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ECOREGIONS Describing our Province's Natural Regions

Ecologists have divided the Province into 19 Ecoregions - 10 in Labrador and 9 in Newfoundland. Ecoregions have distinctive, recurring patterns of soil and vegetation which are controlled by regional climate (Damman 1983). One of the primary goals of the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Program is to identify and protect areas which adequately represent each ecoregion.



Red Pine at West Brook

Don Hustins

Four Special Natural Places

AVALON WILDERNESS RESERVE

Less than an hour's drive south of St. John's, ringed by roads, towns and almost half the province's population, 5,000 caribou roam free and wild in the Avalon Wilderness Area.

The Avalon caribou herd lives further south than any other in the world. The rolling barrens and woodlands essential to its survival also provide sanctuary to a variety of wildlife and plants ordinarily found much farther north. And the area is a major attraction to tourists and residents alike, who photograph caribou, pick berries, hike inland, fish and hunt, and camp and canoe within its confines.



Caribou in the Avalon Reserve

Bryan Greene

WEST BROOK ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

This ten square kilometer reserve is comprised of two small stands of trees at the headwaters of West brook in central Newfoundland. It protects the rarest indigenous coniferous tree on the island of Newfoundland: the red pine.

West Brook serves several vital purposes: giving safe haven to significant remaining stands of the rare red pine, preserving an important part of our natural biodiversity, capturing and protecting a good example of the Central Forest Ecoregion (and some of its ecosystems), and providing opportunities for scientific research, public education, and enjoyment.

CAPE ST. MARY'S ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

Washed on three sides by the Atlantic, Cape St. Mary's is one of the most spectacular and accessible seabird colonies in North America. For more than a century, naturalists and lovers of the outdoors have been drawn here by the whirling clamour of 60,000 seabirds.

Protected since 1983, with a modern interpretation centre completed in 1995, Cape St. Mary's welcomes tourists from May to October, and provides sanctuary to wildlife all year round. It boasts the largest easily viewed gannet colony in Newfoundland, the world's most southerly breeding thick-billed murre colony, wintering flocks of common eider and endangered harlequin ducks, and in season bald eagles, ravens, pods of humpback, fin and minke whales, nesting water pipits, and migrating shorebirds.



Fossils at Mistaken Point

MISTAKEN POINT ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

On the rocky cliff-edge of the southeastern Avalon Peninsula are the impressions of tiny marine creatures that lived more than 620 million years ago. They are the oldest multi-celled fossils in North America, and also the only deep-water marine fossils this old found anywhere in the world.

Moreover, the Mistaken Point fossil site is additionally significant because many of the creatures preserved there are soft-bodied, which is extremely rare. About 20 different kinds of deep-water animals are found there.

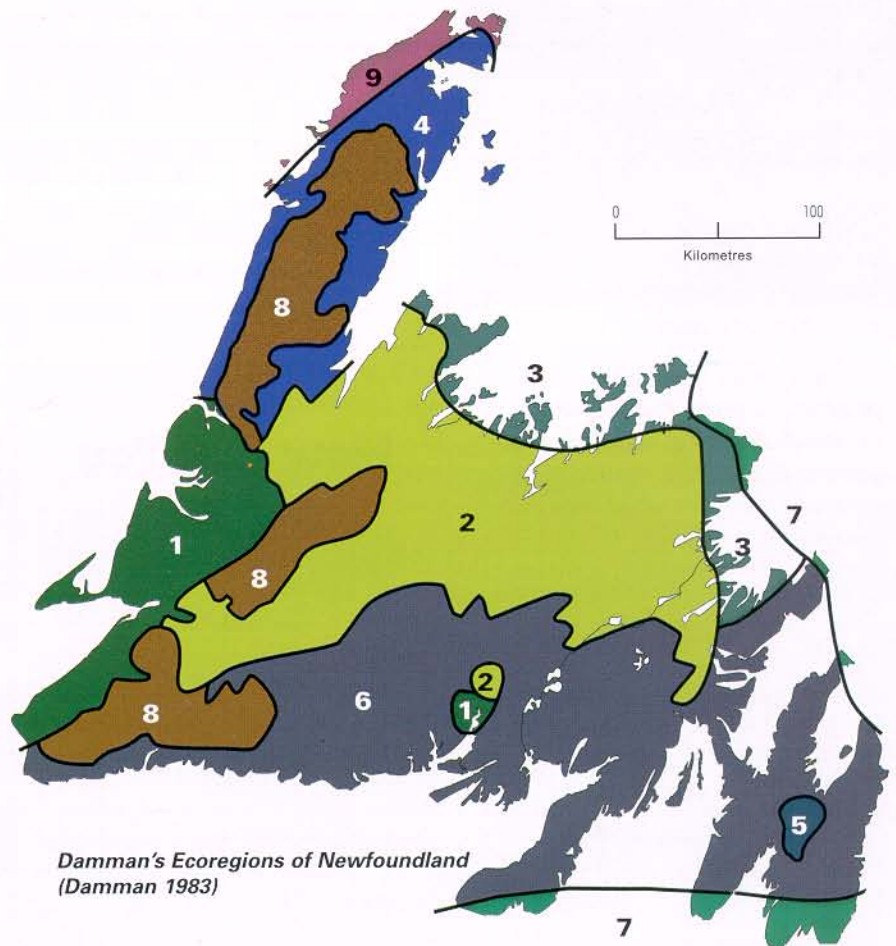
Because of its outstanding international significance and the light it throws on the history of the earth and life on it, the Province has proposed Mistaken Point as a World Heritage Site.



Gannets at Cape St. Mary's

Neil Pratt

ECOREGIONS OF NEWFOUNDLAND



1. WESTERN NEWFOUNDLAND FOREST	6. MARITIME BARRENS
2. CENTRAL NEWFOUNDLAND FOREST	7. EASTERN HYPER-OCEANIC BARRENS
3. NORTH SHORE FOREST	8. LONG RANGE BARRENS
4. NORTHERN PENINSULA FOREST	9. STRAIT OF BELLE ISLE BARRENS
5. AVALON FOREST	



Parks and Natural Areas

Avalon Wilderness Reserve

How Special Are Our Natural Areas?

Forests and rivers, barrens and ponds, wildlife and fish – in Newfoundland and Labrador we have always taken pride in these plentiful natural resources. But after five centuries of settlement, how plentiful are they, in reality?

Not as vast and renewable as we might like to think. In fact, our wilderness is scarce now, and growing scarcer. Roads and cabins, hydroelectric projects and transmission lines, pulp and paper operations, agriculture, mineral extraction and industrial developments, cities, towns, and communities – together they all are having an impact on our remaining wild places.

Much of this growth is important and necessary for our survival. But so, too, is keeping portions of our natural areas just as they are. This natural heritage is part



Noel Pratt

Reserves provide opportunities for outdoor education

of who we are – part of our past, our present, and essential for our future.

Very few Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have remained untouched by our wilderness and wildlife. Caribou, partridge, fish, seabirds, seals, and whales – these species shaped the lives of our first peoples, our first settlers, and all the generations that followed them. And though we most often depended on the sea for our livelihood, we turned to the land for enrichment and enjoyment.

Even today we find identity, solace, and pride in our distinctive natural heritage – the woods and barrens, the sea cliffs and wild rivers and the wildlife and plant life that depend on these habitats: moose, caribou, gannets, puffins, murres, trout, bakeapples, blueberries ... and so much more.

Once we could take the existence of this natural bounty for granted. But no more. Now we must protect special places to preserve the natural heritage that has defined and sustained us.

Some of the world's most spectacular and important coastlines, mountains, waterways, animal populations, rare plants, and fossil sites are found in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Funk Island Ecological Reserve has one of the world's largest colonies of common murres
- Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve has the oldest multi-cellular fossils in Canada and some of the oldest in the world
- The Bay du Nord Wilderness Reserve, the largest wilderness area on the island of Newfoundland, is a stable oasis for about 15,000 woodland caribou that live there
- Burnt Island reserve has 34 species of rare flowers. It is the only known location in the world of the tiny plant *Potentilla usticapensis*
- In southwestern Labrador, the only known natural stands of Jack Pine in the province are protected in the Kapitagas Channel-Redfir Lake Reserve

These and many more such natural wonders are the heritage of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. By preserving them, we make them true renewable resources – sources of adventure, recreation, education, and spiritual refreshment.

Magnificent sites like the Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve also beckon people from all over the world, who leave in awe of the magnificence of our province's natural heritage. As wild places grow scarcer elsewhere, ours will continue to draw more and more tourists and adventurers from Europe, the U.S.A., and other parts of Canada.



Glen Ryan

Reserves protect elements of our coastline

How Do We Protect Our Natural Areas?

The provincial government recognizes the need to protect our significant natural areas. In 1980, the Newfoundland and Labrador Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Act (WER Act) was enacted, to provide strong protection for natural areas designated as wilderness or ecological reserves.

The WER Act is considered one of the best of its kind in Canada. Not only does it ensure that the public has a say in the establishment and management of reserves, but its high level of protection ensures these protected natural areas will always maintain their unique natural qualities.

The Act provides for two different types of protected areas: wilderness reserves and ecological reserves.



Patrick Morris

Funk Island Ecological Reserve

Wilderness Reserves

Wilderness reserves are created in areas that show little permanent evidence of human presence. As reserves, they are kept free from human changes to the natural landscape: new roads, cabins, transmission lines, dams, and mines, for example.

People, however, are not kept out. Within wilderness reserves we can travel, camp, hunt and fish, and otherwise experience and appreciate the natural environment. Wilderness reserves are available for recreation and adventure; within them we can get away from the demands of life in our cities, towns, and communities.

Wilderness reserves also protect species that need large, undisturbed living spaces.

Ecological Reserves

Ecological reserves, usually smaller in area than wilderness reserves, are designed to protect a specific natural phenomenon or process: a seabird colony, a rare plant or animal species, a unique grassland or marsh landscape, a fossil site, or a special forest type – red pine, for example. Ecological reserves are crucial for our understanding of our natural environment, and they provide opportunities for outdoor education. They are also more numerous than larger wilderness reserves.

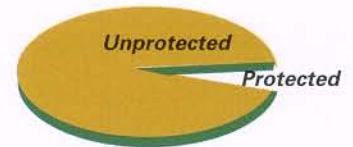
Why Must Our Special Places Be Protected?

If a map of our province was drawn with every road, transmission line, industrial development, agricultural field, and human settlement drawn on it, it would show very few places on the island still "untouched".

Fortunately, this is not the case in Labrador. However, even there the pace of, and opportunities for development are increasing.

The ongoing encroachment on our natural areas emphasizes the necessity of acting to keep representative portions of what remains in a natural state.

At the beginning of 1998, 1.8% of the land area of Newfoundland and Labrador was "protected". This figure included not only existing wilderness and ecological reserves, but also national parks, provincial parks and wildlife reserves.



Does Protecting Areas Impede Development?

No. In fact, protecting natural areas aids wise land-use planning by helping avoid site-by-site conflicts over land use. Creating and maintaining a system of protected areas significantly contributes to sustainable development and a healthy economic and environmental future, by providing a balance between development and conservation.

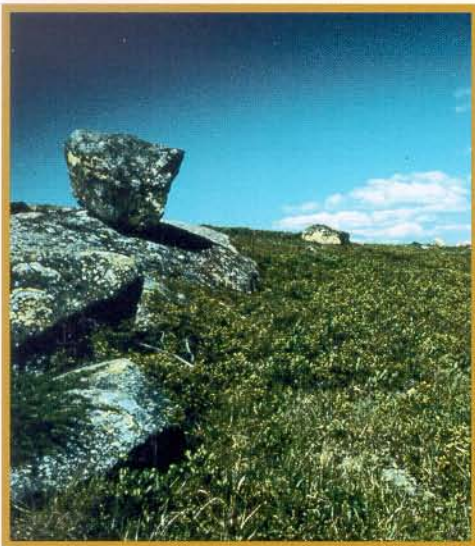
For balance, it is necessary that effort be made to protect a meaningful portion of our natural areas. But even with a full system of parks and reserves to protect natural places, the majority of land will remain available for human settlement and industrial development.

As well, by keeping some of our natural areas "natural", we will continue to attract tourists from all over the world and provide opportunities for ecotourism development.



Kevin Redmond

Canoeing on the Bay du Nord River



Kevin Redmond

Glacial erratic boulder

Is Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Permitted in Reserves?

Yes. One of the reasons wilderness reserves are created is to ensure that we will always have wild places in which we can hunt and fish.

Hunting and fishing is also permitted in some ecological reserves, but in most they will be prohibited. These are reserves like seabird ecological reserves, which are created to protect highly sensitive populations of wildlife.

How Can Reserves Benefit Us?

Protecting natural areas as reserves yields many benefits: some are immediate and some are long-term. These benefits include:

- A major contribution to wise land-use planning and sustainable development
- First-class eco- and adventure-tourism resources
- A resource our own citizens can enjoy and experience through every season of the year
- Healthy natural environments for educational and research activities
- A network of safe havens to help ensure the survival of all our plant and animal species

- Insurance for the future because if we do not protect natural areas now, we may forego future opportunities to set these areas aside.

We recognize that failure to manage our natural resources wisely can result in long term negative impacts for the environment. By having the foresight to set aside natural areas now, we ensure that some wild places will always remain, free from the harmful effects of our activities, however accidental or inadvertent they may be.

Who is Responsible for Wilderness and Ecological Reserves?

The Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Program is administered and managed by Parks and Natural Areas Division of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation. The Division works cooperatively with the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council (WERAC), an independent group of citizens – all volunteers – from all regions of the Province and with a wide variety of backgrounds.

WERAC is appointed by Cabinet to provide advice to the provincial government on the establishment and management of wilderness and ecological reserves. WERAC and Parks and Natural Areas Division work together to ensure that all public and private interests are

fairly heard and considered during the process of establishing a reserve. Though WERAC makes recommendations to Cabinet about establishing reserves, Cabinet itself makes the final decisions.

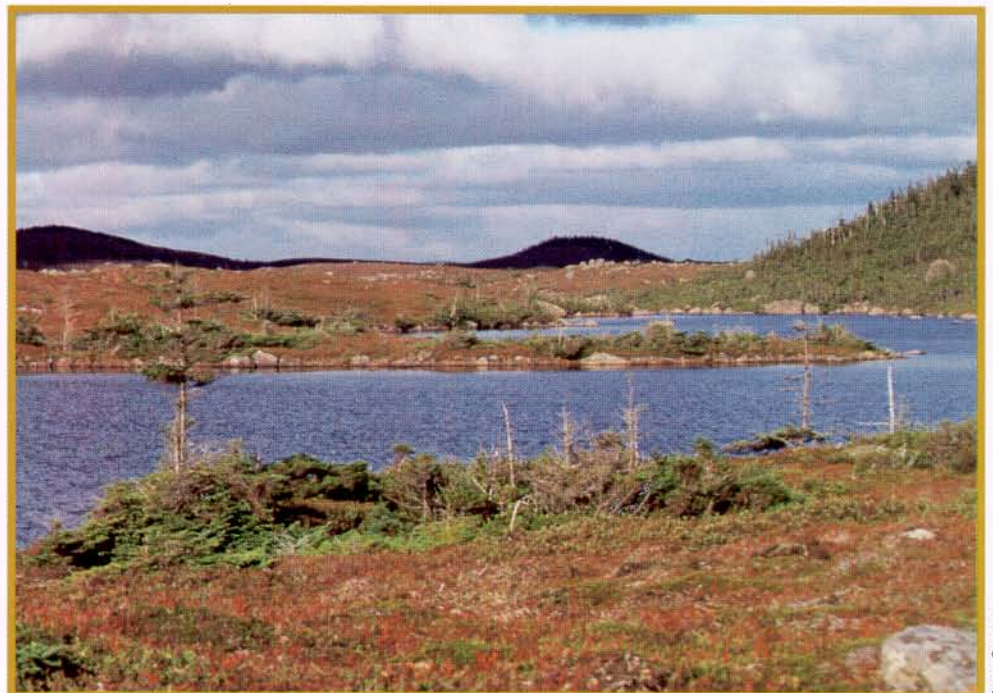
Once a wilderness or ecological reserve is established Parks and Natural Areas Division manages these sites to ensure that resource integrity is maintained.

And as for who cares for our special places – every Newfoundlander and Labradorian has the responsibility to be wise stewards of our special natural areas.

How are Areas Chosen To Be Reserves?

Traditionally, suggestions for reserve areas have come from people who worked or travelled extensively in the province's wild country: foresters, biologists, geologists, and residents who hunt or fish or hike. However, any citizen of Newfoundland and Labrador can suggest a location for a reserve.

Suggestions about areas that would make good reserves should be forwarded to the Wilderness and Ecological Reserves Advisory Council and/or to the Parks and Natural Areas Division.



Avalon Wilderness Reserve

Bryan Greene

How Are Reserves Established?

- 1) When a suggestion for a reserve is received by Parks and Natural Areas Division and WERAC, an initial assessment is made.
- 2) The "study area" is identified on a map and a description of what is significant in the area is sent to other government departments and agencies, for review and identification of potential conflicts.
- 3) Meetings are held with representatives of communities near the study area, to investigate local use of the



Black bear in Bay du Nord

area and gather opinions about the proposed reserve. This important information-sharing step allows residents or their representatives to pass on local knowledge of the area and discuss any concerns.

- 4) The views of people living near the area and the views of affected government agencies are reviewed, then a decision is made whether or not to proceed with making a recommendation to Cabinet about the suitability of establishing the area as a provisional reserve.
- 5) If Cabinet agrees and assigns provisional reserve status, the area receives temporary protection while further assessment and public consultation takes place. "Provisional reserve" status does not mean a reserve is permanent. It just protects the area from damage while the final assessment process takes place.

Public Hearings and A Final Report

The WER Act requires that a preliminary management plan be prepared and public hearings be held following provisional reserve designation. Public hearings are held in communities near the provisional reserve, and everyone with an interest in the area is invited to express his or her views on making the reserve permanent.

After the hearings, the Parks and Natural Areas Division and WERAC assess all the information presented to it and re-examines the suggested boundaries. All the pros and cons must be included with the final recommendation to Cabinet.

Cabinet makes the final decision on permanent reserve creation, fully informed of all concerns, costs, and benefits of the decision.

Establishing a reserve takes time, sometimes several years. But the process – provisional reserve designation paired with thorough consultations – ensures fairness to all parties affected by the creation of a new reserve.

How Can You Make a Suggestion for a New Reserve?

If you believe an area or special natural feature you're familiar with should be protected in a reserve, let WERAC or Parks and Natural Areas Division know (see contact information, below). Including a map of the area and the reasons why you think the area should be protected will help your suggestion be considered.



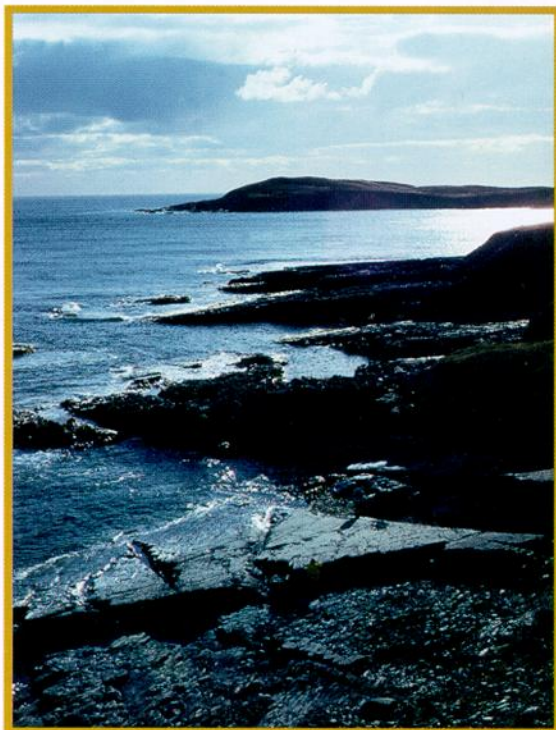
Golden Bay at Cape St. Mary's

**MORE
INFORMATION
ABOUT OUR SPECIAL
PLACES IS AVAILABLE
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www.gov.nl.ca/parks



Mistaken Point

*We do not inherit the land
from our parents,
we borrow it
from our children*

Author unknown



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