

Directors' Report (2016–17) – Nature Nova Scotia Annual General Meeting – May 28, 2017

Since our last report on May 29, 2016, the board of Nature Nova Scotia (NNS) has been dealing with new as well as ongoing issues. Memberships are increasing in some clubs, other memberships remain steady, and new volunteers are coming forward. A general interest in nature and provincial environmental issues has NNS and many of our participating member organizations attracting new people interested in learning about and dealing with environmental challenges.

Nature Nova Scotia currently has six active organizational members and about 205 federate and individual members.

Nature Nova Scotia's website has undergone steady improvements – thanks to Larry Bogan and with input from other board members – including more information and links. Larry is looking for a successor to take over his position as webmaster. Board meeting minutes are posted once they have been approved. A blog site is open for member contributions. Larry has also established a Facebook page, which has been adopted by some NatureNS e-mail list members as a site for posting photos.

The Canadian Nature Network remains in limbo. Your president represents the Nova Scotia naturalist community and forwards any information from Nature Canada and its president, Stephen Hazell, to NNS board members. We have been working with Nature Canada on an initiative to increase protected areas in Canada to 17 percent. Over the past year, Jim Wolford has represented NNS on Nova Scotia's Wildlife Habitat Conservation Fund. Joan Czapalay has stepped down from representing Nova Scotia on the Nature Canada board and serving as secretary of Nature Canada. Thank you for your years of service, Joan!

We have maintained watching briefs on a number of policies of importance to the province. Larry Bogan keeps the board up to date on the Nova Scotia Coastal Coalition, which was dealing with coastal development. Unfortunately, that initiative is stalled.

Nature Nova Scotia joined the Coalition to Restore Acadian Forest Tracts on the Bowater land acquired by the NDP government in 2014. We became a member of the newly formed Healthy Forests Coalition (HFC) in 2016. Several planning meetings have been held in 2016 and 2017. The forest industry continues to exert a nature-indifferent influence over the Liberal provincial government. The industry dominance with respect to the use of recently acquired Crown (public) lands has become a hot issue. Management responsibilities for 1.4 million acres of public forest land in central and western Nova Scotia have been handed over to the newly formed forest industry group WestFor. The industry foxes continue to oversee this public chicken coop.

NNS vice president Donna Crossland published an article in the opinion section of the January 14, 2017, *Chronicle Herald* entitled "Satellites reveal the clear-cut truth." Your president authored an article in the February 21, 2017, *Chronicle Herald* opinion section entitled "Public forests should not be private resource." The forest industry responded vehemently to both articles with false claims designed to confound public understanding.

The board generated a biomass policy in 2016 as a response to Nova Scotia Power's announcement that it was increasing biomass content in its energy “renewables” from 2.8 percent to 7 percent in the next four years (2020). The biomass plant at Point Tupper is no longer running 24/7, but much of its wood supply still comes directly from forests clear-cut to be burned. The electricity produced has an energy efficiency of less than 21.5 percent. Biomass burning is more polluting than burning coal, yet the government continues to call it “green” energy. Much of the hardwood from clear-cuts is being chipped for shipment overseas, a low-end use for a potentially valuable commodity that has much value to nature. Vice-president Donna Crossland and I met with the Premier again about biomass and forestry issues on September 2, 2016. Donna and I also met with the new Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Julie Towers, in Halifax on February 24, 2017.

Nature Nova Scotia has maintained a close working relationship with the Young Naturalists Club. YNC is a member club of Nature Nova Scotia, and YNC coordinator Robin Musselman is a director of Nature Nova Scotia. We provided financial help for families attending the 2017 Celebration of Nature weekend.

Although she is no longer a member of the NNS board, Sue Abbott has kept us abreast of developments with Important Bird Areas and the activities of Bird Studies Canada.

The board meets face-to-face three times a year in addition to the AGM. The next meeting will be in New Glasgow on September 10, 2017. Any member of NNS is welcome to attend. Board meetings provide an opportunity for club representatives to give updates on the activities of their respective clubs. We continue to use the Internet to link long-distance board members.

Between face-to-face meetings, the board continues to function online on an active e-mail forum. We generally keep each other up to date on environmental happenings in Nova Scotia, with Jim Wolford alerting us to environmental assessments in the province. We also maintain an awareness of environmental issues across Canada.

Board members who attend or monitor various meetings – either through their own clubs, or jobs, or directly for Nature Nova Scotia – report on activities. David Patriquin should be commended for attending a Department of Natural Resources forestry meeting on behalf of NNS this past year, and producing a timely report.

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Our 2017 AGM is being held on May 28 in South Milford, NS.

Thanks to all the NNS directors for their enthusiasm and participation. And to Doug Linzey for editorial help with this report!

Reporting on behalf of the board,
Bob Bancroft, president, Nature Nova Scotia
May 28, 2017