



2022-2024

STRATEGIC PLAN



AKA the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists

www.naturens.ca

OUR HISTORY



Nature Nova Scotia is the federation of nature groups in Nova Scotia which, collectively, provide Nova Scotians with opportunities for networking, education, research, and advocacy action for nature. We were created in 1990 under our registered name, the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists, as a Nova Scotia society and registered charity. Nature Nova Scotia (NatureNS) was adopted as our operating name and brand after strategic planning work in 2005.

In November 2019, the NatureNS Board participated in a strategic retreat where it charted a change of course for our education- and networking-focused operations. At that time, the nature network was engaged in a legal action regarding the province of Nova Scotia's failure to enforce its own Endangered Species Act, and the board discussed the potential of increased activism as a tool for both increasing our impact and growing the nature network.

Recognizing that nature in Nova Scotia and elsewhere is in decline due to human activities, the Board decided that Nature Nova Scotia should continue to offer the traditional “nature enjoyment” activities that have always appealed to our naturalist supporter-base, but that we should also become more proactive to create a stronger voice for nature.

To accomplish these goals, we resolved to:

- 1. Undertake an engagement organizing experiment where we would attempt to grow the nature network through strategic volunteer engagement and the use of new digital infrastructure (including a refreshed website with more tools, hiring a central coordinator, new social media platforms, and hosting events designed to educate our public audience while gaining new followers).**
- 2. Engage the nature network (including both existing organizational members and new NatureNS supporters) in action for nature, organizing petitions, mail campaigns, and other initiatives that strengthen the voice for nature.**

When we initiated this strategic shift, the mission statement of Nature Nova Scotia was reviewed and accepted as:

“The purpose of the Federation of Nova Scotia Naturalists is to further communication and cooperation among naturalists and natural history societies in Nova Scotia; to promote public interest in nature and conservation; and to work together with others and share ideas on the provincial level to conserve and enhance the natural state of our environment.”

As part of the mission statement, the board also outlined activities that would be considered acceptable NatureNS priorities:

"The Federation may:

- 1. Promote the enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of nature for members and the general public by
 - a. Education through such vehicles as lectures, meetings, and field trips.*
 - b. Collecting and disseminating knowledge relating to the natural history and biological diversity of Nova Scotia.*
 - c. Supporting and fostering the creation of nature centres and nature education programs.**
- 2. Carry out studies and research and present briefs related to the conservation and enhancement of nature and biological diversity.*
- 3. Take actions to restore and conserve native species and their essential habitats.*
- 4. Cooperate with like-minded people and organizations to develop and carry out projects for conserving the integrity of natural ecosystems and representative natural areas."*



WHO WE ARE TODAY

FOCUS AREAS

Protected Areas

Species At Risk

Sustainable Forestry

Urban Nature

Wildlife

Our activities over the last 2 years

- Annual Celebration of Nature conference
- MakeRoomForNature federal petition and email campaign
- Species At Risk judicial review
- NatureTalks webinar series
- Biodiversity Act social media explainer series
- Singing Season federal petition and email campaign
- Species At Risk email explainer series
- Core Habitat for the Mainland Moose petition and lawn sign campaign
- Ecological Forestry petition and email campaign
- Protect Ingram River email explainer series
- Plover Pledge beach steward challenge
- Save Owls Head appeal fundraiser

OUR NATURE NETWORK

14 Organizational Members

10 Associate Members

57 Individual Members

Thousands of Supporters

Natural history
clubs, nature
organizations, and
private citizens
united for nature

A photograph of a forest floor covered in green moss and brown leaves, with patches of snow. A white ruler is placed horizontally at the bottom of the image, showing measurements in centimeters from 1 to 9.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Nova Scotians care about nature, as demonstrated by their support in our recent campaigns (most notably the 38,000 signature-strong petition to halt forest harvests in moose habitat in the Napier River-Fourth Lake area.)

We gained several new organizational members over the last 2 years, which each bring a new audience for us to reach and people-power and skills for us to access through collaboration on projects and participation in the board or committees.

Granting bodies and private citizens believe in us enough to offer us financial support, allowing us to hire part-time staff in 2020 and maintaining them through 2022.

However,

Our veteran supporters, their organizations, and their supporters are aging and moving on from action and volunteerism in nature, forcing us to engage new audiences we are unfamiliar and inexperienced with.

OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

New digital organizing tools expand our reach and ability to track participation and engagement in our activities.

Nova Scotians will donate to see action taken on a nature issue they care about.

There are many other conservation- and environment-focused organizations in Nova Scotia and many experts we can rely on for context and consultation.

Ample funding opportunities for temporary/student staff increase our capacity to take on networking, education, research, and advocacy projects while permanent staff focus on organizing work.

However,

Funding sources are unstable and limit our ability to grow. Regular donations would allow us to become financially self-sufficient, transitioning grant revenue to project costs to maximize our impact. But, regular donations require relationship building and strategic campaigning that we lack the capacity to coordinate.

Aging volunteers are not being replaced by new ones and the few volunteers we do bring in are not effectively moving up the engagement and leadership ladders.

There are many nature issues requiring attention in Nova Scotia and we risk losing sense of our mission and over-extending staff and volunteer capacity by becoming involved in too many activities.



THEORY OF CHANGE

Growing the nature network requires an investment in our infrastructure. We know that Nova Scotians want to learn more about nature, connect with like-minded people, and that they will take action on the nature issues we share with them, but we lack the capacity to reach, track, and engage them in activities that have the most impact.

Our goal is to engage more Nova Scotians in connecting, learning about, and acting for nature.

We can achieve this through:

Increasing staff capacity: maintaining permanent executive staff to supervise project-level staff and volunteers

Moving supporters up the engagement ladder: prioritizing the recruitment, training, and empowerment of volunteers into leadership roles

Implementing digital organizing tools: online and automated membership, event registration, and action-taking

Taking action on issues that Nova Scotians care about: centering our advocacy work on issues likely to result in greater supporters



OBJECTIVES

EXPAND CAPACITY

Recruit staff, volunteers, and new organizational members and support member groups in their growth

GROW SUPPORTERS

10,000 followers (email, social media subscribers) and 1,000 supporters (members, donors, petition-signers, and volunteers) by end of 2024

IMPROVE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Events, social media explainer series, publications

EMPOWER ACTION

Petitions, mail/email campaigns, citizen science



MEASURING SUCCESS

METRIC

SCHEDULE

2022 2023 2024

Supporters (members, donors,
action-takers)

500 750 1,000

Followers (subscribers, event
participants)

5,000 7,500 10,000

Member Organizations

23 25 27

Events

12 15 20

Petitions

2* 2** 2

Mail/Email/Paid Promo
Campaigns

3 5 7

Publications

0 1*** 2

*Designate Mainland Moose Core Habitat, Ecological Forestry Now

** TBD, will likely focus on Species At Risk and Protected Areas

***Gaps in Wetland Protections, planned for Feb 2023