



In August, the Nova Scotia Departments of Environment and Natural Resources unveiled their Parks and Protected Areas Plan. The plan charts a course to protect 13% of Nova Scotia's landmass by 2015. To achieve this they will establish 4 new parks, 44 new wilderness areas, and 118 new nature reserves. Also, they will expand 12 parks, 31 wilderness areas, and 11 nature reserves. Most notably for the residents of the Municipality of Chester is the establishment of two new wilderness areas: South Panuke, and Holden Lake. Together these two areas total 8350 ha of land that will now be protected for the enjoyment and use of future generations. Small expansions to the Long Lake, and Blandford Nature Reserves have also been included. Prior to these designations, only 0.3%



East River. Walking upstream along the banks, it is easy to see the path followed by deer and fisherman for decades. It is a well worn tread on the forest floor,

Protecting Places



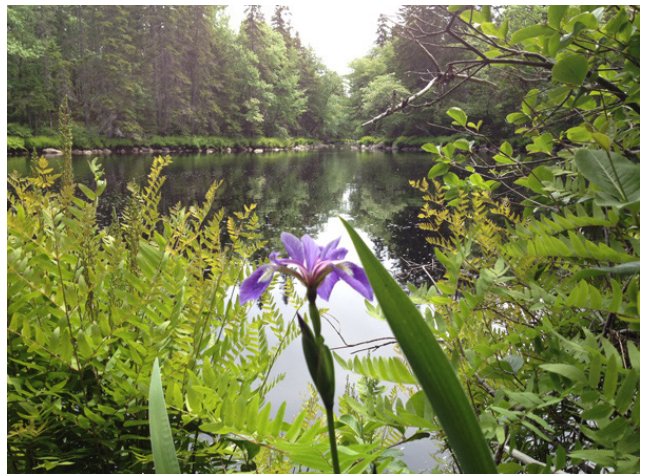
of Lunenburg County was legally protected. Now this total will increase to 4%. This number does not include the other Crown Lands that also exist.

Under the definitions used by the government, wilderness areas protect natural environments while remaining available to support wilderness recreation, hunting, fishing, trapping and other low impact uses. Nature reserves are specifically intended to protect unique or rare species or features, and are primarily intended for education or research.

The South Panuke Wilderness Area includes the lower reaches of the

but in places it disappears and reappears again, and is occasionally interrupted by a fallen tree. Out of reach of the noise of Highway 103, you are immersed in the sound of the river flowing over rocks. More than once a ruffed grouse will startle you as it drums its wing in retreat from your path.

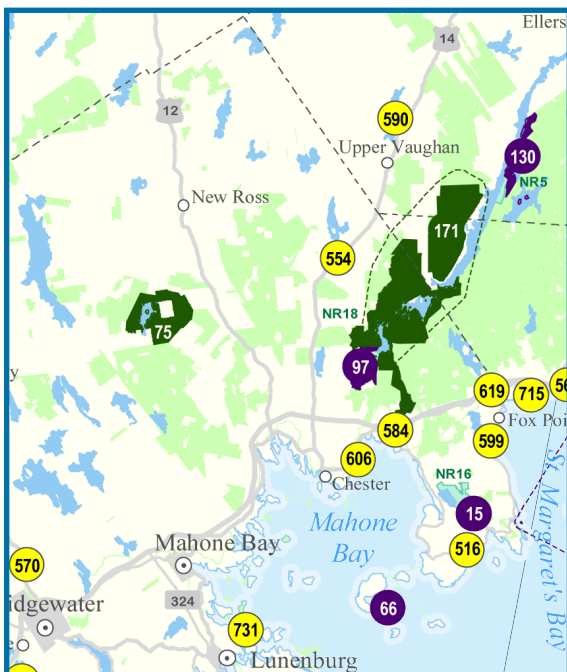
Away from the river, the relative ease of passing through the





land is replaced by thickets of young spruce and gnarly boulder fields deposited by the glaciers thousands of years ago. Curiously, on our latest walk we found several fields of small boulders which appeared to be the dry bed of perhaps where the East River had previously flowed before continental rebound. A better geologist could tell us the true story; nonetheless, the East River watershed is a lovely example of where a diverse set of natural and geological habitats can exist in a relatively small space if you just get into the woods and look for it. The new wilderness areas in particular provide an exciting opportunity to encourage people

to venture into the woods to experience and enjoy nature, and to renew their bodies and spirits. Meanwhile, we keep in mind that the primary goal of the areas is to protect nature and the diversity of non-human inhabitants within. Intact natural processes and clean water and air, whether for our own use or the benefit of the plants and animals that most directly rely on it, is incredibly vital to the future health of our communities and the vitality of the province.



Our Protected Areas

Wilderness Areas:

- 171** South Panuke Wilderness Area, 6847 ha (new)
- 75** Holden Lake Wilderness Area, 1503 ha (new)

Nature Reserves:

- 97** Long Lake Nature Reserve, 386 ha (expansion)
- 15** Blandford Nature Reserve, 20 ha (expansion)

Provincial Parks:

- 554** Card Lake Park, 104 ha (existing)
- 584** East River Park, 0.5 ha (existing)
- 606** Graves Island Park, 50.2 ha (existing)

For more information visit: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/protectedareas/>