

## **Recent Case Studies that Illustrate the Need to Identify, Value and Protect our Natural and Cultural Geoheritage in Atlantic Canada<sup>1</sup>**

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To some geoscientists who are trained to understand the significance of geology and Earth history, the formal recognition of geoheritage can seem unnecessary. But, as argued elsewhere, geoscientists cannot expect support for our work and of the value of geological resources if we do not make the effort to inform the public and government of their significance. Worldwide, the best approach to achieve these ends is through the recognition of our geoheritage. Since beginning the exercise of formally identifying geoheritage assets across Nova Scotia, several instances have occurred that underscore the importance of such an undertaking both to the geoscientific community and to the broader public. Some of these cases have had positive outcomes, at least one has not, and for yet another time will tell. These include: i) the aborted development of a large monument and infrastructure on the geoheritage site at Green Cove, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, after heated opposition; ii) demolition of the cultural geoheritage site at Crystal Cliffs by Saint Francis Xavier University, without public consultation; iii) the debasement by graffiti of the exceptional geological exposures at Cape Dauphin, Cape Breton, and adjacent Kluscap's Cave, highly sacred to the Mi'kmaq, which has not been brought to public attention until now; and iv) the relocation of the cairn at Moose River, commemorating the 1936 Moose River mine rescue, a case where the value of a site has been acknowledged by the mining company, although its relocation is not without debate in the community. These case studies indicate that ignorance and lack of public scrutiny can lead to negative outcomes (cases ii and iii), whereas shared knowledge and public awareness do not (cases i and iv). The formal recognition of geoheritage sites puts an onus on the geoscience community, private sector, public, and governments alike to value our natural and cultural geological heritage.

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<sup>1</sup>43<sup>rd</sup> Colloquium and Annual Meeting of the Atlantic Geoscience Society, Program with Abstracts; *Atlantic Geology*, v. 53, p. 134-135.