

*Preliminary  
Management Plan*  
May 2009

# Cape Split Provincial Park Reserve



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## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Cape Split provincial park reserve is a nationally-recognized landmark located near Scots Bay, Kings County, Nova Scotia. Almost surrounded by the Bay of Fundy, the 427.5 hectare property includes significant natural and cultural heritage values and one of the most prominent coastal hiking trails in Nova Scotia.

The purpose of this management plan is to define a vision and management philosophy that will guide park management decisions for Cape Split provincial park reserve over the next 20 years. In addition, the plan identifies the actions necessary to support that vision and philosophy.

The park has adopted four principal management objectives. The first is to protect biodiversity and natural processes as well as important cultural values. Secondly, the park will provide opportunities for a variety of high quality, nature-based outdoor recreation experiences which emphasize spectacular coastal hiking. Thirdly, the park will provide opportunities for exploration, education and appreciation of the site's heritage values through interpretation, information and outdoor education programs. Fourthly, the park will serve as a nationally and provincially significant tourism icon for Nova Scotians and out-of-province visitors.

Management priorities will be directed toward retaining and enhancing the park's natural and cultural heritage. To that end the park has been classed as a Natural Environment Park and most of its lands included within a Resource Conservation Zone. Notwithstanding this commitment to the protection of heritage values, the Department of Natural Resources will provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and nature-based education which do not conflict with the management emphasis on protection of heritage values.

In keeping with the importance placed on the protection of significant park values, only limited development will occur. The primary focus of that development will be on the provision of an outstanding coastal day-use hiking trail and associated facilities and services which support that use. To that end, a system of inter-connecting trails totaling approximately 20 kilometres is proposed. At the western end of the Scots Bay Road, parking and trail-head access, orientation and interpretive information and toilets will be provided. Viewing areas will be located at key locations and a limited number of toilets will be strategically located in association with the trails.

An emphasis will be placed on interpreting and understanding the diverse natural and cultural heritage values of Cape Split provincial park reserve. Interpretive efforts will focus on self-directed opportunities, including brochures, on-site interpretive panels and publications.

Maintaining ecological integrity is an important goal of the park management plan. To that end, the Department will undertake a variety of measures to minimize visitor impacts. Implementation of park zoning, collection of baseline data, monitoring visitor impacts, and implementation of appropriate management techniques will be used to maintain ecological integrity.

Implementation of the park development concept is proposed over two phases. The Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources will play a lead role in facilitating implementation of this plan, while other potential partners may play a leadership role in implementing specific projects.

The goal of park development is to establish an operational park that provides a basic level of visitor facilities and services and is managed to ensure visitor safety and the protection of park values. Until Cape Split provincial park reserve is operational, the Department will ensure interim management and operational decisions are consistent with this plan.

Phase I of park development is intended to address key public safety issues, ensure protection of park values, acquire the resources necessary to implement park development and establish formal arrangements to use adjoining lands for park purposes. Phase II is intended to initiate delivery of facilities and services (access, orientation and information, trails, etc.).

Successful implementation of the phased development approach will depend largely on the availability of resources.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

Cape Split provincial park reserve is located near the community of Scots Bay, Kings County, Nova Scotia, approximately 26 kilometres north of Kentville (Figures 1 and 2). The 427.5 hectare property encompasses much of the western portion of the Blomidon Peninsula, a nationally-recognized landmark that juts several kilometres into the Bay of Fundy. The park reserve includes one of the most prominent hiking trails in Nova Scotia.

Early efforts to protect Cape Split date to the 1940s when the Annapolis Valley Board of Trade proposed that the Blomidon - Cape Split area be designated as a National Park. In the following years other similar proposals were also made. In 1964 the Province began to acquire lands at the eastern end of the Blomidon Peninsula and in 1973 the 767 hectare Blomidon Provincial Park was established.

In 1974, a 440 hectare section of Cape Split was identified by the Canadian Committee for the International Biological Programme (IBP) as a site of ecological significance. This area corresponds almost exactly with the current boundaries of Cape Split provincial park reserve. The IBP report described Cape Split as “a rugged cape of near-vertical cliffs, rising 400 feet [122 metres] from the sea. The undulating surface of the Cape has a primarily deciduous forest with a rich herbaceous flora. Rare arctic-alpine plants are found on the towering headland, which is washed by the world’s highest tides”. In 1976 Parks Canada identified Cape Split as a Natural Area of Canadian Significance.

In 1995, the Municipality of the County of Kings made a detailed submission to the Province’s Public Review Committee for the “Proposed Systems Plan for Parks and Protected Areas in Nova

Scotia,” recommending that Cape Split be protected. As a result of this and other submissions, one of the Committee’s specific recommendations was that the Province “should pursue negotiations to acquire Cape Split for designation as a protected area.”

In 2002 the Province acquired the 280 hectare western end of Cape Split and in 2007 purchased several adjoining properties totalling 147.5 hectares. Administrative responsibility for the 427.5 hectare property has been assigned to the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for management through the provincial parks program.

To ensure management of Cape Split provincial park reserve is consistent with the intent of the provincial parks program, DNR has prepared this park management plan. The plan’s purpose is to define a vision and management philosophy that will guide decisions for Cape Split provincial park reserve over the next 15 to 20 years. In addition, the plan identifies the actions necessary to support that vision and philosophy.

The management plan is based on the Department’s legislative mandate under the *Provincial Parks Act and Regulations*, its Provincial Parks Policy, other Provincial and Departmental policies and guidelines, together with the park’s heritage and outdoor recreation values. The term heritage values, as used throughout this document, encompasses both cultural heritage and natural environments.

### **3.0 VISION**

The foundation of this park management plan rests on the park vision, a brief statement that presents the broad long-term direction for the park. This vision describes the park management philosophy and what the park will be like in the future.

#### **Vision**

Cape Split provincial park reserve will ensure the long-term protection of a nationally recognized landscape icon and provincially-significant natural area while providing high-quality day-use opportunities for compatible nature-based outdoor recreation and education. In keeping with the emphasis placed on protecting natural values, limited facilities and services will be provided and park use will be ecologically-sustainable.

### **4.0 PARK VALUES**

Cape Split provincial park reserve contains a range of exceptional park values that are based on the property’s location as a rugged peninsula in the midst of the Minas Basin, the presence of several rare or threatened plant species, old forest, prehistoric sites, rare and semi-precious minerals and outstanding opportunities for nature-based outdoor recreation, education and tourism.

## **Natural Heritage**

Natural heritage values include natural features and processes that create the bio-physical and aesthetic setting that gives Cape Split its underlying character and value. Cape Split is the most ecologically-intact portion of the North Mountain, rivalled only by nearby Blomidon Provincial Park. It is also one of the most important undisturbed natural areas on the Bay of Fundy and for these reasons was identified as a Natural Area of Canadian Significance by Parks Canada.

## **Geology**

Cape Split is located on the Blomidon Peninsula which is an extension of the North Mountain. The peninsula has an inclined block geological formation with precipitous 100 metre cliffs on the Minas Basin coastline. The rare minerals (zeolites) and semi-precious minerals (agates, amethyst) are found in the amygdaloidal basalt. Overlying the basalt is the Jurassic Scots Bay formation in which fossil fish and dinosaur prints can be found. These sediments are present in six small inlets in Scots Bay.

Cape Split's geology has produced scenery that is unique and unmatched elsewhere in the region. The coastal cliffs offer panoramic views of the tide-swept coastline below and of regional landmarks such as North Mountain, Spencers Island, Cape d'Or, Isle Haute, and provincial parks at Cape Chignecto and Five Islands. The very end of the cape features spectacular sea stacks and basalt pinnacles.

## **Marine Environment**

The dramatic forces of the Bay of Fundy are ever-present, exemplifying one of the most spectacular tidal phenomena in the world. Several cubic miles of sea surge past the Cape four times daily. Cape Split provincial park reserve offers an excellent site for experiencing and learning about tides and tidal processes.

## **Flora**

A number of studies have been undertaken on the flora of the Cape Split area. In 1971, a study undertaken through the International Biological Programme described Cape Split as containing an "exceptional example of rich, deciduous woodlands [and] rare arctic-alpine plant species, ...." Most unusual is the unique association of Arctic-alpine and boreal disjunct flora on exposed, unstable cliff faces and talus slopes along the Blomidon - Cape Split peninsula. These are remnant populations which survive in isolated colonies.

Better known is the striking array of spring flora, such as purple trillium, Dutchman's breeches and spring beauty, that is prevalent in the rich, deciduous woodlands which are best developed in the higher elevation areas. Lower elevations and wetter areas include classic examples of the Bay of Fundy coastal conifer forest of red spruce, mixed with yellow birch, balsam fir and a few other species.

In 2003, DNR contracted the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre (AC CDC) to conduct an inventory of the vascular plants on the 280 hectares of Crown land that had been recently acquired at Cape Split. Although numerous botanists had made casual plant collections along the trail to Cape Split, prior to the AC CDC fieldwork, no systematic plant inventory had been undertaken at Cape Split.

The forested habitats and accessible coastal habitats were thoroughly surveyed by AC CDC, but due to the difficulty of access, cliffs were not well covered. Including seven existing records from AC CDC databases, over 300 vascular plant species were recorded in or adjacent to the Cape Split property. Of these, DNR has identified two as “Red Species”(at risk of extirpation/extinction) and six as “Yellow Species” (species which may require special protection to prevent them from becoming at risk). The most significant species recorded was Large Toothwort (*Cardamine maxima*), which represents the third record for Nova Scotia and the first record south of the Minas Basin.

## **Fauna**

Cape Split offers excellent opportunities for bird watching, thanks to the diversity of its habitats, the coastal setting (shore birds and nesting sites), and a strategic position along spring and autumn migratory routes. The North Mountain also gives a funnelling effect to the movement of migratory birds, particularly hawks and owls as they head towards Brier Island in the fall.

## **Cultural Heritage**

The Cape Split area has an extensive history of human use, beginning with early aboriginal peoples. Between 1988-1990 an archaeological survey was conducted of the western Minas Basin area under the auspices of the Nova Scotia Museum. In the Scots Bay - Cape Split area six prehistoric sites were identified, with the one at Clam Cove over 2,000 years old. The main attraction of the area in prehistoric times was the cryptocrystalline mineral deposits which were used to make stone tools.

Cape Split has a special significance to the Mi’kmaq population of the Maritimes, other than as a former source of stone for tools. In Mi’kmaq folklore, Cape Blomidon was the home of Glooscap, a benevolent being who watched over his people. In one of the Glooscap stories he breaks a beaver dam that stretched from Cape Split to Spencers Island. The point where he broke the dam was at the tip of Cape Split.

When the Scots Bay area was first settled by Europeans around 1764, it was covered in dense forests. Lumbering, milling and shipbuilding were important industries in the community until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were at least eight sawmills that operated in the area between 1783 and 1927. There were also two shipyards and a ship’s blacksmith shop that operated between 1850 and 1918. At least 22 vessels were constructed here.



A steam mill with a circular saw operated during the 1920s at Clam Cove. The site consisted of the mill, a cookhouse/bunkhouse, and a barn for horses. The buildings were taken in by barge at high tide and sawed lumber was removed by the same method.

Abram Jess' 1941 history of Scots Bay mentions that there was once a large clearing of land on Cape Split called "Lady Cove Clear" (now overgrown), but it is not certain whether this land was used for agriculture or pasture.

Clam Cove was a popular location for the "Sons of Temperance" picnics in the late 1800s, partly because of the abundance of clams and lobsters.

Today Scots Bay is mainly an agricultural community and Cape Split remains a popular destination for hikers.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

With its dramatic coastal scenery and relatively undisturbed forest setting, Cape Split has long been a popular hiking destination. In 1999, for example, an estimated 16,000 people hiked the Cape Split trails. This relatively high level of trail usage occurred even though Cape Split was privately-owned at that time, no facilities or services were provided and little marketing and promotion was undertaken.

### **Outdoor Education**

Cape Split provincial park reserve includes a variety of heritage values that could form the basis of an outdoor education program. The property's dramatic setting as a peninsula in the midst of the Bay of Fundy, relatively natural setting and long history of human use provide opportunities to develop educational programs on geology, the marine environment, early human use and flora and fauna.

### **Tourism**

The dramatic coastal setting of Cape Split provides opportunities for tourism that are unmatched in the region. Precipitous cliffs offer commanding views of the world's highest tides and dramatic views of the rugged Bay of Fundy coastline, the park reserve's relatively undisturbed natural environment provides opportunities for bird watching, rock hounding, nature appreciation and an ideal setting for hiking. The property also provide opportunities to better understand and appreciate Nova Scotia's 's rich natural and cultural heritage.

## **5.0 PARK OBJECTIVES**

The primary management objectives for Cape Split provincial park reserve focus on protecting the site's natural and cultural heritage values, including natural processes, ecological functions, and

selected cultural sites; maintaining or restoring biodiversity; providing opportunities for compatible forms of outdoor recreation; and developing nature-based interpretive and outdoor education opportunities. Cape Split provincial park reserve will also contribute to the Province's *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act* commitment to legally protect 12 percent of Nova Scotia's land mass by 2015.

The following are the key management objectives for Cape Split provincial park reserve:

### **Protection**

*To protect biodiversity and natural processes as well as important cultural values of Cape Split provincial park reserve.*

Park management will place particular emphasis on protecting both representative and rare ecosystems and flora as well as cultural heritage values and wildlife habitat that are significant in a local, regional or provincial context.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

*To provide nature-based, day-use experiences which emphasize spectacular coastal hiking as well as other high-quality passive outdoor recreation opportunities, including photography and nature appreciation.*

The park will be managed to provide high-quality outdoor recreation activities such as hiking, viewing, nature appreciation and photography, where those activities do not compromise the ecological integrity of the park's natural values.

As part of the Department of Natural Resources' commitment to maintaining ecological integrity, the planning, design, and construction of park trails and infrastructure will incorporate sustainable development strategies and environmental protection measures. Key aspects of this ecologically sustainable design approach include limited new park development, a requirement that new infrastructure support park goals and objectives and the use of existing trail alignments where appropriate.

### **Heritage Appreciation**

*To provide opportunities for exploration, education, and appreciation of the park's heritage values through interpretive, information, and education programs.*

Heritage appreciation programs will emphasize significant natural and cultural heritage features and themes relating to conservation, geology and landscape development, flora, fauna and human settlement and use.

Two broad interpretive themes - Natural History and Cultural Heritage - have been identified for Cape Split provincial park reserve. In turn, these can be further divided into sub-themes - geology, flora, fauna, marine environments and pre-contact and European settlement and use. These themes help celebrate the park's underlying characteristic as a relatively natural area that protects important heritage features and values while providing opportunities for outdoor recreation, interpretation and outdoor education.

## **Tourism**

*To serve as a nationally and provincially significant tourism icon for both Nova Scotians and out-of-province visitors emphasizing outstanding opportunities to discover, experience, and enjoy a spectacular coastal setting.*

The park will be managed and promoted to serve both Nova Scotians and out-of-province visitors. In addition, it will complement and enhance regional tourism infrastructure, opportunities and strategies, in particular those that emphasize natural heritage themes. Visitation levels will be monitored to ensure protection of biodiversity and natural processes.

## **6.0 PARK CLASSIFICATION**

Cape Split provincial park reserve, by virtue of its outstanding natural and cultural heritage values, will be managed as a "Natural Environment Park" as defined by the Provincial Parks Regulations. A natural environment park incorporate representative natural landscapes with outstanding recreational opportunities. This classification emphasizes the protection and conservation of natural and cultural heritage features. Outdoor recreational use and infrastructure development will occur within the context of maintaining the natural character and quality of the environment.

In keeping with its classification as a Natural Environment Park, Cape Split provincial park reserve will also be assigned a World Conservation Union / IUCN classification of *Category II*: a protected area managed primarily for ecosystem protection and recreation. *Category II* properties are primarily managed to protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems; exclude exploitation or habitation inimical to the purpose of designation; and, provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

## **7.0 PARK ZONING**

Park zoning allocates park lands and waters on the basis of the importance attached to their protection as heritage resources and to their capability and suitability for recreational use and

associated facility and service development. Zoning defines the degree of protection, conservation, and development that may occur within respective park areas. The Provincial Parks Regulations establishes three park zones: Environmental Protection, Resource Conservation, and Recreation Development. The first two are protection oriented, while the third allows for more intensive development and use.

The Resource Conservation and Recreation Development zones will be used at Cape Split provincial park reserve (Figure 3).

### **Resource Conservation Zone**

The Resource Conservation Zone includes those areas of the park containing significant natural, cultural, and recreational features and landscapes that require a high standard of conservation. This zone permits activities and land uses that do not conflict with or compromise the inherent natural character and aesthetic qualities of the park.

The Resource Conservation Zone also incorporates and protects small, scattered sites with highly sensitive or significant natural or historic sites and features. These sites and features may otherwise warrant inclusion within an Environmental Protection Zone but due to the limited landbase involved, have been incorporated into the Resource Conservation Zone. Planning for any activities or land uses within the Resource Conservation Zone must consider the full range of protection options as the priority.

Almost the entire park will be included in the Resource Conservation Zone.

### **Recreational Development Zone**

A Recreational Development Zone includes an area of a park that is capable of supporting the development of facilities and services associated with outdoor recreation activities and more intensive visitor use. This zone is used to focus park facilities and services, as well as public use, within the most appropriate park areas without compromising protection-oriented values of the park.

The Recreation Development Zone will be limited to the proposed parking area situated just inside the park boundary near the western end of the Scots Bay Road. This area will include provisions for parking, information/orientation signage and toilets.

Parking capacity will be an important consideration for managing visitor numbers and, consequently, their impact on park values and visitor experiences. Construction of the parking area will be phased over time, with provision for a modest number of vehicles initially.

## **8.0 ECOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE CLASSIFICATION**

The Department of Natural Resources uses an Ecological Land Classification (ELC) system to group geographic areas based on similar ecological criteria, including both biotic and abiotic components.<sup>1</sup> Nova Scotia has been divided into 39 ecodistricts that have been judged distinctive on the basis of broad-scale elevation, macro climate as influenced by elevation, coastal proximity, geology and landforms. Ecodistricts are generally mapped at a 1:250,000 scale and are used by DNR to evaluate ecological representivity. Ecological representivity is important in parks and protected areas planning as a measure of the extent to which those areas encompass ecological variety or biodiversity.

Cape Split provincial park reserve occurs in the North Mountain Ecodistrict - a narrow ridge that parallels the Bay of Fundy shoreline from Cape Blomidon to Brier Island. Within the park the ridge has a maximum elevation of approximately 240 metres. Two ecosystem types occur within the bounds of the park reserve. Well drained, moderately textured soils over hummocky terrain cover the over-whelming majority of the park. This ecosystem is dominated by temperate tolerant deciduous forests. Along the Minas Basin shoreline is found a second ecosystem consisting of well drained, moderately textured soils on steep slopes or canyons covered in various combinations of temperate, boreal and mixed forests.

A band of predominantly mature deciduous forest dominated by sugar maple and yellow birch covers the northern section of the peninsula. A band of open, white spruce-dominated forest with extensive deadfall, typical of the Fundy coast, occurs along the southern shore of the property. Small areas of open headland and beach communities, including some interesting seepage meadows over bedrock, are found along this shore. The only extensive area of open habitat is present at the tip of the point. There are fairly extensive seepage areas in deciduous and mixed forest near the top of the plateau that feed several small creeks, and there are a few small areas of conifer-dominated swamp forest in the southwestern part of the area.

## **9.0 MANAGING FOR ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY**

Cape Split provincial park reserve will be managed as a Natural Environment Park, so protection of the property's ecological integrity is of paramount importance. Ecological integrity is a measure of the condition of biodiversity in a given area and means that native species are present at viable levels and the ecological processes are present to support the continued viability of those species. Biodiversity is a fundamental indicator of ecological integrity. Retaining or enhancing the integrity of both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems will be an important consideration in all park management decisions.

In a more practical manner, an ecological system will be considered to have integrity if:

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<sup>1</sup> . Ecological Land Classification for Nova Scotia. Vol. 1 – Mapping Nova Scotia's Terrestrial Ecosystems. Report DNR 2003-2. N.S. Department of Natural Resources, 2003.

- its structure and function are intact;
- its native components and processes are likely to persist;
- human use and facilities are compatible with the park ecosystem's finite capacity to sustain use in type, amount and timing.

Ecological integrity must be maintained to ensure the sustainability of both the natural environment and the human uses of the park. The scientifically-based monitoring needed to retain ecological integrity will also provide research opportunities that will enhance the park's educational and interpretive values.

## **10.0 PARK CONCEPT**

The park management plan provides a framework for the conservation of broad park values, the protection and preservation of significant and sensitive park features, and the provision of opportunities for compatible, nature-based, recreational and educational activities as well as associated facilities and services.

Opportunities and issues addressed by the park management plan incorporate a review of background materials, field work and information received during public information sessions.

### **Park Development Concept**

Park development provides the facilities, infrastructure and appropriate opportunities necessary to ensure appreciation and enjoyment of the park. In light of the classification of the property as a Natural Environment Park, and the consequent emphasis on the protection of park values, only limited facilities and services will be provided at Cape Split provincial park reserve (Figure 4).

The focus of park development is to provide facilities and services that primarily support opportunities for outstanding coastal day-use hiking. This plan therefore includes provision for the following: parking and trail-head access, orientation and interpretation information, a network of hiking trails, viewing opportunities at key points along the trails and a limited number of strategically-placed toilets.

Proposed development may be cancelled or modified, and visitor uses restricted or prohibited, where it is determined that the impacts are inconsistent with the intent of the park management plan. Existing trails will also be examined to determine whether they are consistent with the intent of the management plan.

### **Public Access**

Public access, in the form of trail head parking, will be provided within Cape Split provincial park reserve near the western end of the Scots Bay Road. This area will also include toilets and orientation and interpretive information.

## **Accessibility**

Due to the rugged and sometimes steep terrain, it will not be possible to meet standards necessary to accommodate mobility-challenged visitors.

## **Trail System**

### Background

This management plan recognizes that a properly designed and constructed system of trails can provide opportunities for outdoor recreational pursuits which are also compatible with objectives for environmental protection, nature-based education and the encouragement of active and healthy lifestyles. To that end, this plan proposes a trail system that embodies the following principles:

- environmentally sustainable
- constructed to provincial park standards
- provides opportunities for quality nature-based outdoor recreation
- provides access to interpretive and educational opportunities
- encourages an active and healthy life-style
- provides opportunities to connect with a future regional trail system linking to Blomidon Provincial Park
- non-wheeled only

Figure 4 provides a conceptual trail plan for Cape Split provincial park reserve. This concept proposes a system of four separate but inter-connecting trails. Where appropriate, existing trails will be upgraded with some new links constructed. Some existing trails will be closed. This conceptual trail plan will be adjusted as more detailed trail corridor planning is completed.

In addition to providing access to Cape Split, this system of inter-connecting trail offers a number of shorter loops that would appeal to those not inclined or able to complete the several hour return hike to Cape Split. A fourth trail system is also proposed that would connect to Blomidon Provincial Park. These trails total approximately 20 kilometres in length. Shoreline access will not be provided or encouraged.

1. **Cape Split Trail** - beginning from the proposed parking area, over a distance of 1.7 kilometres the Cape Split trail climbs 125 metres to an elevation of 140 metres. It then follows gently undulating terrain that gradually drops to about 80 metres at the western tip of Cape Split. A majority of the trail passes through a predominantly mature deciduous forest dominated by sugar maple and yellow birch.

Rest areas and viewing opportunities will be provided at strategic locations along the trail. At Cape Split, a viewing area will provide visitors with safe and spectacular views of Cape Split, the Minas Channel, Bay of Fundy and surrounding landmarks. Interpretive information and toilets will also be provided at Cape Split.

2. **Scots Bay Trail**- begins from the Cape Split Trail approximately 1.25 kilometres west of the parking area and drops down close to the Scots Bay shoreline near Lady Cove. A connector trail is proposed to begin from this general area, climbing to rejoin the Cape Split Trail about mid-way to Cape Split. The Scots Bay trail continues west, generally following the Scots Bay shoreline.

This trail passes through a predominantly white spruce-dominated forest. Small areas of open headland and beach communities, including some interesting seepage meadows over bedrock, are found along this shore. Rest areas and viewing opportunities will be provided at appropriate locations.

3. **Minas Basin Look-off** - begins from the Cape Split Trail approximately 0.40 kilometres from the parking area and climbs to the highest point within the park (approximately 152 metres) where views of the Minas Basin and Cumberland and Colchester counties can be enjoyed.

Rest areas will be located along the trail and a viewing area established on the height of land. A portion of this trail may be located on private lands, subject to an agreement with the landowner.

4. **Blomidon Trail** - this trail would connect Cape Split provincial park reserve with Blomidon Provincial Park located approximately 6.0 kilometres to the east. All of the land between Cape Split provincial park reserve and Blomidon Provincial Park is privately owned and agreements would have to be reached with each landowner before this trail could become a reality.

Public access to the shoreline will not be provided for safety reasons.

## **Trail Standards**

In developing a system of inter-connected trails, different construction standards may be applied to different trail segments. The use of different standards often reflects the expected types and/or levels of use, the physical condition of the trail alignment, the sensitivity of surrounding values and/or an attempt to provide distinctive experiences for trail users.

It is anticipated that the Cape Split Trail will be the most heavily-used trail section. The current trail is approximately 2.0 - 2.5 metres in width and has a number of wet areas as well as sloped sections with serious erosion problems caused by water run-off. This trail will be constructed to a width of approximately 1.5 - 2.5 metres with a soil tread on well-drained areas and Class "A" gravel or wetland structures where poorly drained areas must be crossed.



The remaining trails will be constructed to a width of 1.0 - 1.5 metres with a soil tread.

### **Trail Development Priorities**

Trail development will occur as resources permit. The following trail development phases are arranged in order of priority.

**Phase One** - completion of the Cape Split Trail. This would involve construction of a parking area and associated facilities and the upgrading or realignment of the existing trail to Cape Split.

**Phase Two** - completion of the Scots Bay Trail and connector to the Cape Split Trail. Completion of these trails will provide two looped trails offering alternate routes to or from Cape Split. Completion of the connector trail will also provide a shorter looped trail experience for those who may not wish to undertake the longer hike to Cape Split.

**Phase Three** - construction of the Minas Basin Look-off Trail. Completion of this looped trail would provide access to the highest point of land within Cape Split provincial park reserve. The trail also provides the option of a relatively short hike for those not wishing complete the other trails.

**Phase Four** - completion of the Blomidon Trail would connect Cape Split provincial park reserve with Blomidon Provincial Park.

## **11.0 OPERATIONAL POLICIES**

A park operating plan will be prepared to provide the necessary information required to operate the park on a day-to-day basis. In addition to addressing the following operational policies, the park operating plan will include such topics as budget, staffing, public health and safety, maintenance schedules and enforcement.

The park operating plan will identify requirements necessary to operate Cape Split provincial park reserve under two scenarios: (1) on an interim basis prior to park development occurring and, (2) as per the Development Concept.

### **Cultural Heritage**

Cultural heritage sites and features of particular interest are primarily associated with aboriginal sites scattered along the park' Scots Bay coastline. Heritage resource management efforts will focus primarily on the protection of these sites. While limited management intervention may occur, the majority of heritage sites will not be actively managed. Regardless of the degree of active management, all heritage sites will be protected by the Provincial Parks Act and provisions of this management plan.

### **Geocache**

There are a number of geocaches located within Cape Split provincial park reserve. When conducted properly, geocaching is an appropriate activity within most provincial parks. Geocache sites will be identified within the park and those not properly located will be removed. All geocache sites must meet the requirements of the Department's Geocaching Policy.

### **Enforcement**

DNR will develop an Enforcement Plan that determines a general level of resources necessary to provide an enforcement presence at Cape Split provincial park reserve.

### **Off Highway Vehicles**

The use of motorized vehicles is not consistent with the Provincial Parks Act or park management objectives, especially the emphasis on protection and non-motorized travel. Consequently, except for park management and emergency purposes, off highway vehicles will not be permitted in the park.

### **Fire Management**

As part of fire suppression efforts, a fire ban will be enforced throughout the park. All uncontrolled fires will be aggressively fought.

## **12.0 SPECIAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

### **Private Inholdings**

Within Cape Split provincial park reserve are three private inholdings. The existing Cape Split Trail alignment appears to follow the boundary of two of these properties. In considering potential options for the realignment of the Cape Split Trail, preferred alternate alignments may cross these properties.

The Department of Natural Resources will pursue acquisition of the private inholdings where it is determined that the public interest would best be served by having these properties managed as part of Cape Split provincial park reserve. Alternatively, the Department may explore a management agreement with one or more of the property owners so that management of the private lands does not conflict with park objectives.

## **13.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

This park management plan will be implemented in two phases. The pace of implementation will depend on available resources. The Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural

Resources will play a lead role in facilitating implementation of this plan, while other potential partners may play a leadership role in implementing specific projects.

Before implementing park development, mechanisms will be put in place to monitor visitor impacts on the park's heritage values. This monitoring will be used to help in designing visitor management strategies.

The goal of park development is to establish an operational park that provides a basic level of visitor facilities and services and is managed to ensure visitor safety and the protection of park values. Until Cape Split provincial park reserve is operational, the Department will ensure interim management and operational decisions are consistent with this plan.

Although the plan has a 20-year time frame, it will be reviewed every 5 years or as otherwise required. In this way, adjustments can be made should conditions change substantially, or if significant new information becomes available.

### **Implementation - Phase I**

Phase I of park development is intended to address key public safety issues, ensure protection of park values, acquire the resources necessary to implement park development and establish formal arrangements to use adjoining lands for park purposes.

1. Identify and mitigate potential public safety hazards (e.g. damaged trees adjacent to public use areas, fall hazards).
2. Establish ecological and cultural benchmarks and implement a monitoring program to determine park visitor impacts.
3. Identify levels of support (funding, staffing, etc.) adequate to address ongoing issues, including asset and visitor management and service delivery, in each of the Implementation phases.
4. Develop an enforcement plan.

### **Implementation - Phase II**

Phase II is intended to initiate delivery of facilities and services (access, orientation and information, trails, etc.). Implementation will depend on availability of resources. Before implementation, all development proposals will be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the intent of the management plan.

1. Initiate development of the park entry road and associated parking area.
2. Initiate a phased development of the trails (see pages 14-15 for order of priority) and associated facilities and services.

3. Develop the following park orientation information:

- a park brochure
- an orientation kiosk and associated information at vehicular access points
- orientation signage at key pedestrian access points

## **14.0 PLAN REVIEW**

The vision and objectives of this plan are intended to guide the management of Cape Split provincial park reserve for the next 20 years. The Department of Natural Resources will undertake a review of the park management plan every five years, or sooner if required. In considering any significant deviation from this plan, the Department will provide opportunity for public review and comment.