

Final Report to the Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund

NCC – Conserving the Scotian South Shore, N.S. **June 2009**

1. Project Goals and Objectives

- i. To protect critical wetland and upland habitat along the Scotian South Shore by acquiring 277 acres at Port Joli and 796 acres at Deep Cove.
- ii. To steward lands secured by establishing a local volunteer stewardship committee at Deep Cove and complete a management plan for lands conserved by NCC.

2. Outline of Work Completed

The preceding are the major project activities completed by NCC as outlined in the NSHBF grant agreement.

- May 1st, 2008: Accepted Agreement of Purchase and Sales for the MacLean (275 acres) property at Port Joli
- June 6th: Warranty Deed executed for the Menger property (725 acres) at Deep Cove
- June 27th : Report on Title submitted by Kelly L. Greenwood, Burchell Hayman Parish for the Menger property
- June 30th : Registration of the Menger PIDs (60433661 and 60423555) in the Land Registry System
- February 16th: Accepted amendment to the Agreement of Purchase and Sales for the MacLean property extending the closing date from March 31st to April 30th, 2009.
- February 29th : Warranty Deed executed for the MacLean property
- May 7th : Report on Title submitted by Kelly L. Greenwood, Burchell Hayman Parish for the MacLean property
- May 5th : Registration of the MacLean PIDs (70065941, 70066535, 70070438, 70256789, 70256805, 70256821, 70256839 and 70256847) in the Land Registry System
- April 7th: Executed Grant of Right-of-Way and Utility Easement Agreement affecting the MacLean property (PIDs 70065941, 70066535, 70066683, and 70070438)

3. Results

3.1 Project Description

Port Joli Focal Area

Land Acquisition Activities:

Located on the south-western shores of Nova Scotia, NCC's Port Joli Focal area contains a rich variety of coastal habitats (i.e. beach/dune, eel grass flats, inter-tidal mud flats and small islands) which create an important staging and wintering area for Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*). An Important Bird Area, Port Joli Harbour is one of four Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (MBS) in the region that supports 30-40 percent of the 10,000 overwintering Canada Geese in Atlantic Canada. Together these four areas create 990 Hectares acres of habitat for Geese and American Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*).

The 275-acre MacLean property is part of a large representative mixed forest upland that acts as critical buffer to the Port Joli Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The mixed forest uplands provide key habitat for terrestrial mammals such as the American Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) and Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). The acres conserved also have over 3,000 feet of diverse shoreline that includes a large (20 to 30 acre) coastal wetland dominated by Common Reed (*Phragmites*) which is used as a staging and roosting site for waterfowl including American Black Duck and Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*), and other migratory birds such as the Red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). Other coastal habitats include beaches, eelgrass flats and a long peninsular headland extending into the harbour. Building on the 200.5 acres conserved by NCC to date, the acquisition of the MacLean property has resulted in NCC creating a 475-acre buffer along the undeveloped western shoreline of the Port Joli Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Conservation work is ongoing to expand NCC's land assembly initiative at Port Joli. NCC is currently negotiating the acquisition of an additional 200 acres.

Please note, an extension of the closing date was granted for the MacLean property, allowing NCC to raise the final funds required for the purchase.

Land stewardship activities:

A baseline inventory of the MacLean property is to be completed by August 2009 which will include a complete inventory of species/habitat found on the property. The baseline will be merged with a property management plan that will detail the management needs of the acres protected. NCC is also in the final stages of formalizing a custodianship agreement with the Port Joli Basin Conservation Society (PJBCS). The PJBCS will assist NCC in stewarding lands conserved by NCC at Port Joli.

Deep Cove Focal Area

Land Acquisition Activities:

Situated on the Aspotogan Peninsula, NCC's Deep Cove Focal Area is a unique coastal landscape of freshwater wetlands that provide migratory habitat for waterfowl including the Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) and Canada Geese. The Focal Area's undisturbed mature forest support terrestrial mammals such as American Black Bear and Bobcat, and is also habitat for the globally endangered Boreal Felt Lichen (*Erioderma pedicellatum*) and other rare species of lichen.

The Menger property features a rolling topography of mixed conifer dominated forest, wetlands and freshwater lakes, as well as large areas of exposed rock. The wetlands support migratory waterfowl like the American Black Duck and Green Winged Teal. An impressive stand of Jack Pine (*Pinus banksiana*) - one of the largest stands of natural Jack Pine in the province —extends into the Menger property from the southeast corner of the adjacent Blandford Nature Reserve. Of particular interest on the Menger property are the lichen and moss communities that have colonized the rock barrens and the damp mature fir forests. The COSEWIC listed endangered Boreal Felt Lichen, has historically been discovered on the property. There are two Canadian populations of the Boreal Felt Lichen: the Atlantic population (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) and the boreal population (Newfoundland & Labrador). It is thought that the Atlantic population is extirpated from New Brunswick and that the only population is now left in Nova Scotia.

In addition to acquiring the Menger property, NCC also purchased an adjacent 112-acre property in 2007. Added to the adjacent 791-acre Blandford Nature Reserve, the lands secured at Deep Cove have created a protected area of over 1,700 acres within 50 km of Halifax.

Land stewardship activities:

The baseline inventory for the 837 acres (including the 725-acre Menger property) secured by NCC at Deep Cove was started in August 2008 but not completed because of limited access and rugged terrain. The baseline was completed in June 2009 and will be merged into a property management plan to be finalized this fall. Preliminary work has also started to establish a network of volunteer stewards to monitor NCC lands at Deep Cove. The objective is to have volunteer stewards engaged in monitoring by summer 2010.

3.2 Project Costs

The \$25,000 Habitat Conservation Fund contribution was allocated to securement staff time required to facilitate the land transactions, stewardship staff to time facilitate the baseline inventory work, legal fees associated with the two land transactions and the cost of land. The remained funds were sourced from NCC's Natural Area Conservation Fund (Federal Government grant), the Nova Scotia Crown Share Land Legacy Trust, The Nature Conservancy and the Government of USA - US Fish and Wildlife District.

4. Variances

Title searches completed for the Port Joli and Deep Cove transactions adjusted the acreages being acquired.

5. Appendices

1. Map of the Port Joli Focal Area
2. Map of the Deep Cove Focal Area

6. Images of Deep Cove and Port Joli

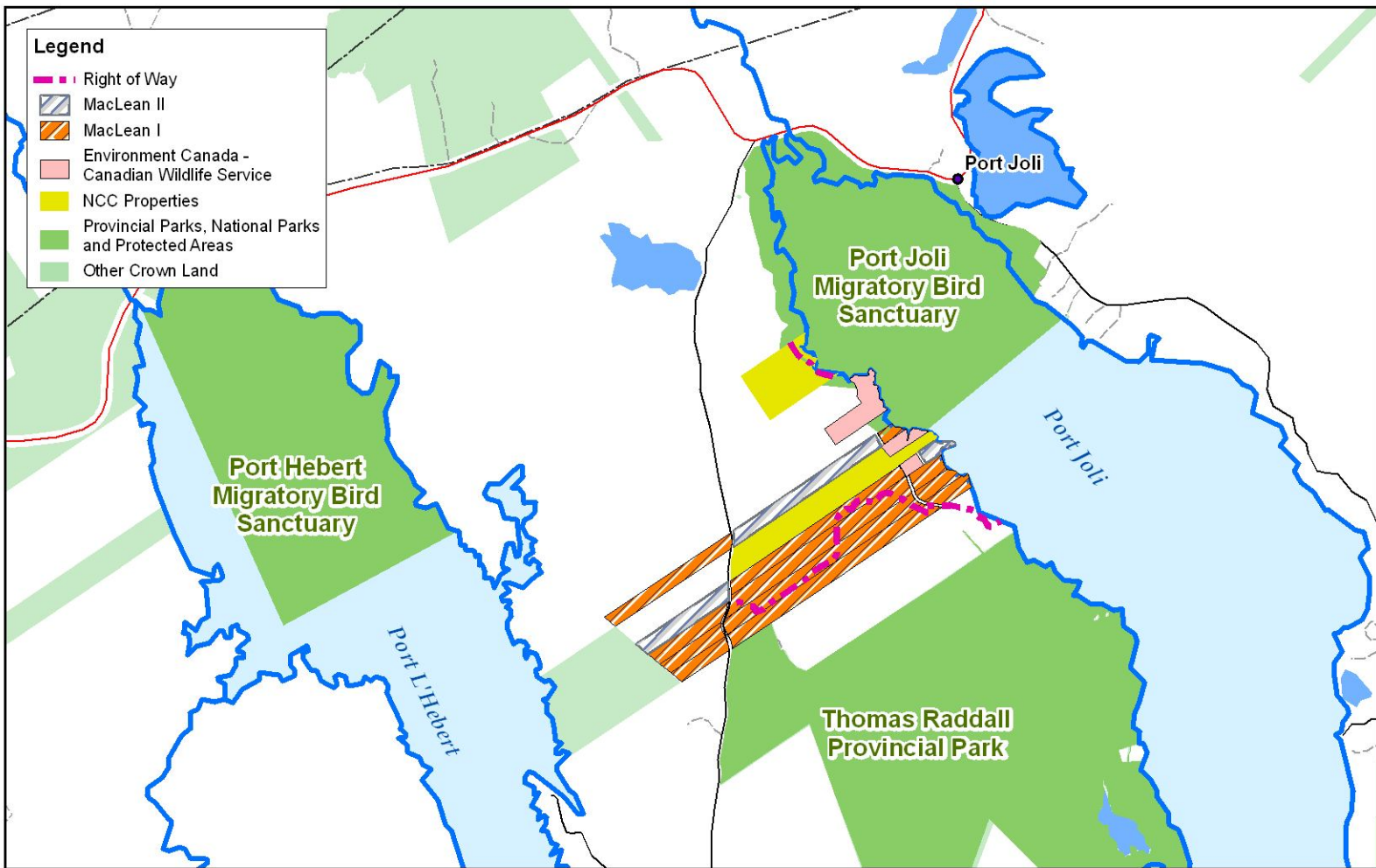
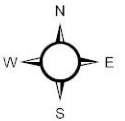


Deep Cove Jackpine stand along shoreline

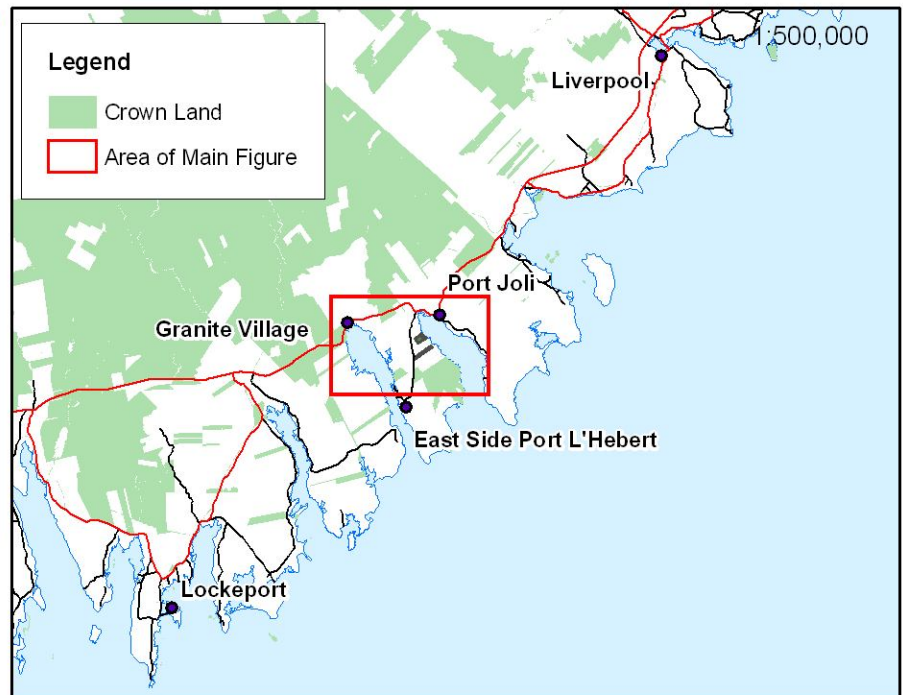
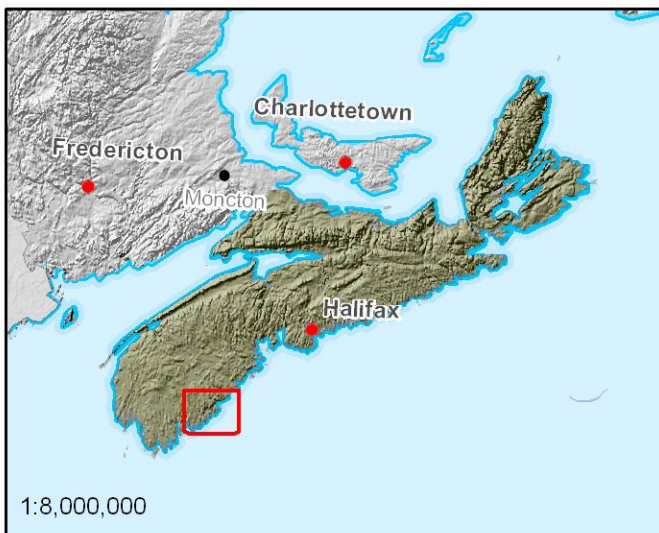
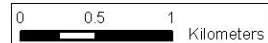


Shoreline of Port Joli Harbour

Port Joli Focal Area

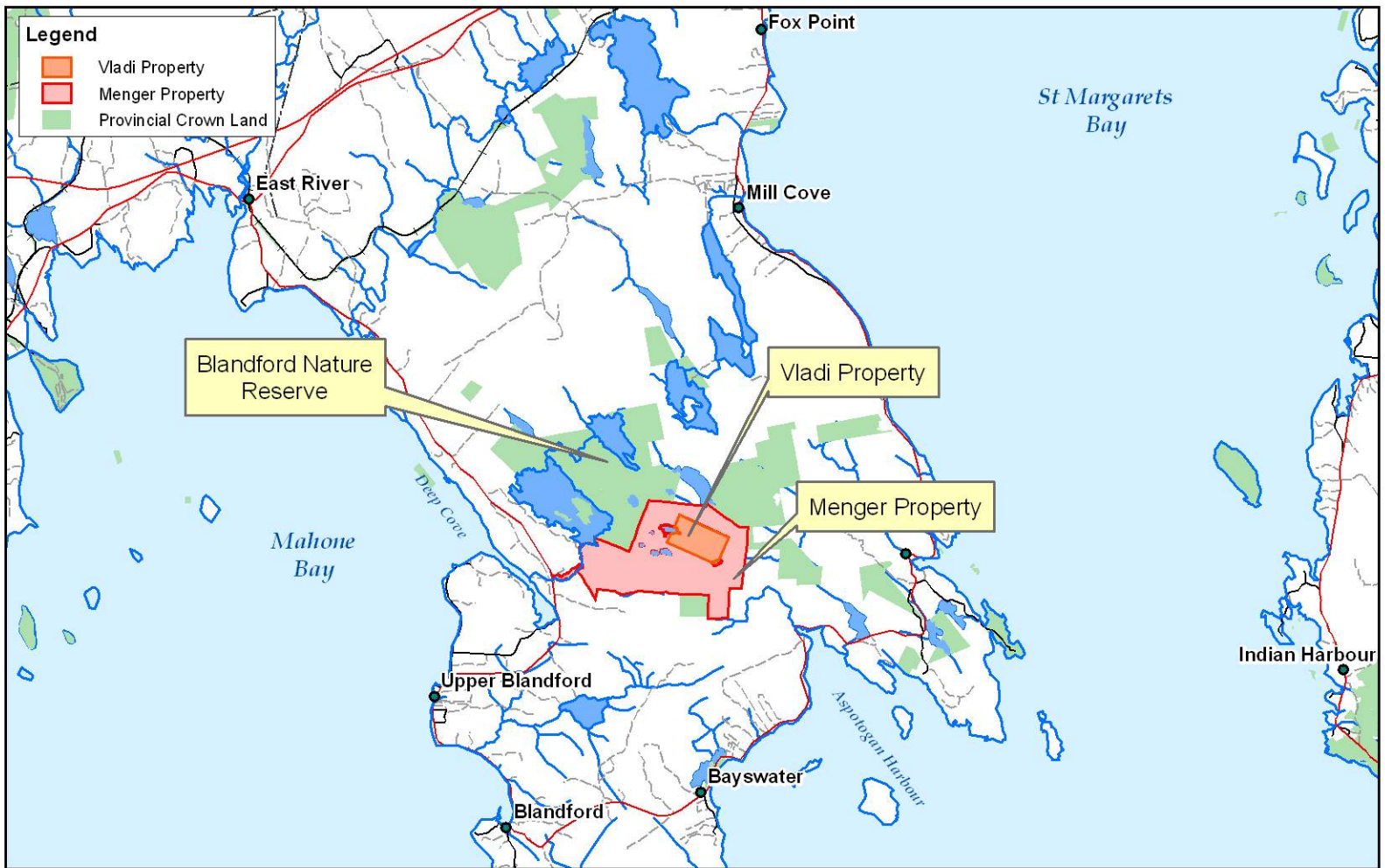
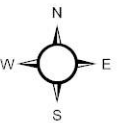


Port Joli - MacLean I and II properties

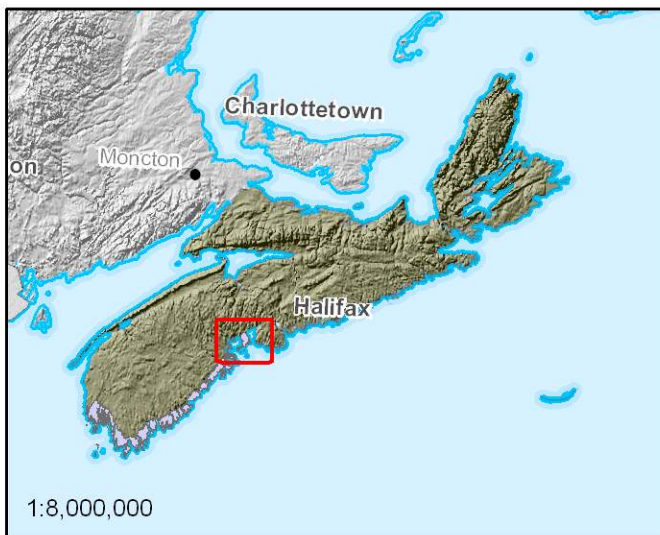


Shelburne County area showing location of the Port Joli Focal Area

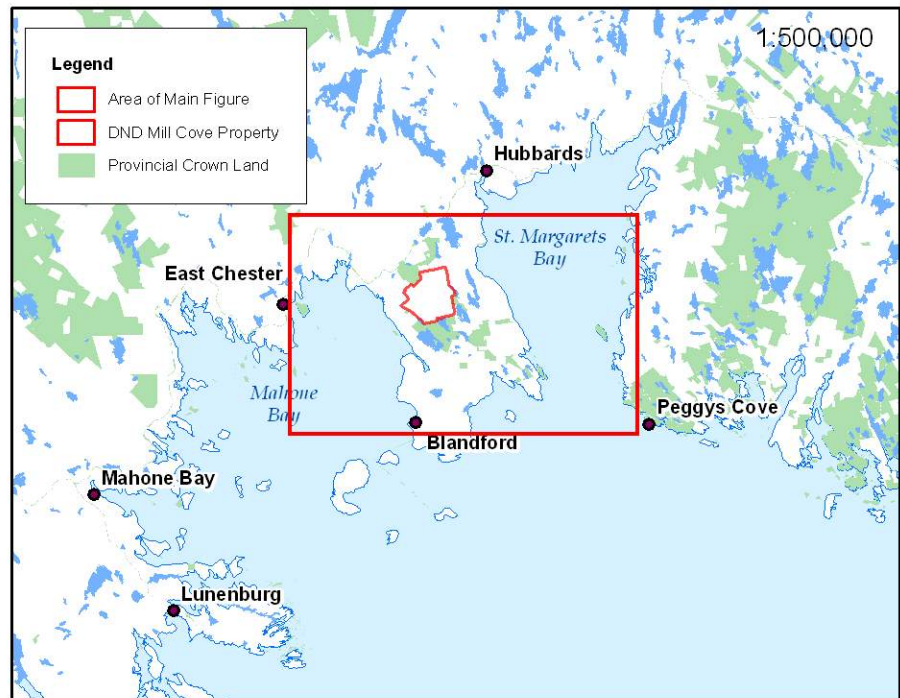
Deep Cove Focal Area



Deep Cove Focal Area



Nova Scotia



Lunenburg County area showing location of the Deep Cove Focal Area