



# Foley's Pond Natural Area

The *Foley's Pond Natural Area* is 20 acres located in Central Kildare, Prince County, Prince Edward Island. The edges of the natural area feature coastal access to the Gulf of St. Lawrence and a section of pond edge on a barrachois pond. The interior of the property is largely forested in old field white spruce in need of diversification. With some hard work and time, Island Nature Trust hopes to restore the forest at Foley's Pond to a diverse Acadian forest woodland.

## Acquisition and Legal Status

The *Foley's Pond Natural Area* was donated by Edward and Agnes Laughlin from Brantford, Ontario on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011 through Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. Land designated as an EcoGift is considered important to the preservation of Canada's environmental heritage and receives special protection through the program. The natural area is also protected under the *PEI Natural Areas Protection Act* (designated March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013).

Land donors, Edward and Agnes, both grew up in large families in western PEI and after moving away to Ontario, have returned to the island every year for the last 50 + years. Their wish was for this parcel of land to remain undeveloped and in its natural state. Edward and Agnes are profiled in [Issue 138 \(September 2017\) of the \*Island Nature Trust Quarterly\*](#).

## Landscape Context

*Foley's Pond Natural Area* is bordered to the north by an active agricultural field and to the south by forested land of similar composition to the natural area. To the east, is a white sand and sandstone rock beach on the Gulf of St. Lawrence and to the west is Foley's Pond, a barrachois pond. Barrachois ponds are coastal beach-barrier ponds separated from the ocean by a land barrier. Foley's Pond is almost entirely freshwater with little tidal influence. Barrachois ponds are productive areas that provide habitat for many types of rare plants, stopover locations for migrating waterfowl, and spawning areas for fish and insect species.

The *Foley's Pond Natural Area* lies within the Cascumpec Bay/ Alberton Harbour Important Bird Area (IBA). The IBA includes all of Cascumpec Bay and Black Banks Cove, including sections of the Cascumpec Sand Hills which regularly support breeding pairs of endangered piping plovers. The bay is also significant in that it supports large numbers of migrating waterfowl in the spring and fall. Jacques Cartier Provincial Park lies directly east along the beach.

## Human Occupation

This area was used by the Mi'kmaq and the Kildare area was given the name Kepisaktek, which means "It is blocked or obstructed" (Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI, Traditional Use Map). The property was farmed until the 1940's, shortly before it was acquired by the Laughlin's. Bridges formerly provided access to farms across Foley's Pond. The bridges are long gone, but remnants are still visible and can be seen in satellite imagery (Figure 1).

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## **Plant Community**

Most of *Foley's Pond Natural Area* is composed of evenly-aged white spruce, growing up from a regenerating old field. The plant community in the western portion of the property near Foley's Pond is more robust, featuring species such as smooth gooseberry, bristly black currant, Indian pipe, sweet gale, pearly everlasting, interrupted fern, tufted yellow loosestrife, and American mountain ash. There are also many apple trees that have seeded into the property along the northern border.

## **Wildlife Community**

The areas of greatest biodiversity on this property are the more open and wet areas, although the uniform stand of white spruce does provide valuable cover for wildlife during harsh winter weather. Some species you might encounter in this natural area are common yellowthroat, song sparrow, black-capped chickadee, white-throated sparrow, golden-crowned kinglet, and red squirrel.

## **Access**

The *Foley's Pond Natural Area* has no trails; those visiting can do so only on foot and should have a good comfort level with navigating using a map and compass or GPS. There is an old woods road that bisects the white spruce stand from north to south and east to the shoreline.

The natural area is located between the communities of Tignish and Alberton. The property is just off of Route 12, which is accessed from Route 2, approximately 2 km past the community of Portage. There is no road access to the natural area. The best way to access the property is by driving down O'Rourke Road to the end walking south along the shore, and entering along the eastern edge directly from the beach.

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0,3km

DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, CNES/Airbus DS

The *Foley's Pond Natural Area* is represented in green in the map above.