



ISLAND
NATURE
TRUST

MARCH 2021
#151



Daryl Guignion
1942-2021

*Dedicated to the protection of
Natural Areas in Prince Edward
Island since 1979*

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Quarterly



INNT

REMEMBERING A GREAT MAN



This winter, Prince Edward Island said goodbye to Daryl Guignon – a man whose words and actions have profoundly shaped the Island’s environmental sector. Through his career as a professor of biology at the University of Prince Edward Island, his many volunteer and “retirement” projects, Daryl pointed the Island towards a more sustainable future. His sharing and application of knowledge was always offered freely and enthusiastically with a gentle, easy manner.

In environmental circles across the Island today, many individuals can say that they were taught by Daryl. His story-telling style of teaching resonated with many. Even those whose student days ended several decades ago can usually recount to this day a lesson learned from Daryl. His teachings live on in the thousands of Islanders who remember his words, spoken so passionately.

Daryl was one of those rare souls who not only talked about what needed to change on our Island, but also actively worked to effect change. On any given day, he was more often than not in the woods or a stream somewhere. Regardless of the season, he would be working to understand what the land needed or addressing the need directly. In his late 60’s, operating a chainsaw in a stream clogged with sediment and tangled with white spruce deadfall, Daryl took great delight in being able to outpace workers in their teens or twenties. In his 70’s, he was still carrying a backpack electrofisher through streams collecting data on Atlantic salmon and brook trout populations.

When there was work to be done, you stopped when it was complete and not before. For Daryl there was always more work to be done and he didn’t stop until a few short months before his passing.

It is now up to us to keep acting on the ethic that Daryl embodied. Today in late March, Daryl would probably have been prepping the red oak acorns he’d kept in his fridge all winter, planting them out in milk cartons filled with soil. The acorns would have been collected last fall from Jeremiah, the old red oak in Canavoy Oaks Natural Area on the land he and his family worked to protect in perpetuity. Also in late March, he might have walked a stream or two to see what changes the winter had wrought. Always he would be observing the natural world around him, listening to what it had to say.

At Island Nature Trust, the organization Daryl helped to found 42 years ago, we are listening and planning too. Red oaks will be planted along with other native trees and shrubs in natural areas healing from past land use. Forests and streams will be walked and we’ll pay attention to what the land is telling us. We will invite others to the woods and tell stories about what the land is teaching us about living sustainably. We will keep working, Daryl. Thank you for showing us the way.

"In wildness is the preservation of the world".
Henry David Thoreau

BY MEGAN HARRIS

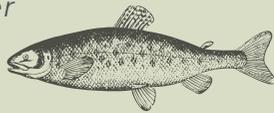
OUR NEW LANDS:

Vernon River

Riparian Zone Natural Area



Surrounded by an extensively farmed watershed, the ecologically diverse riparian forest provides a stable buffer for two headwater tributaries delivering spring water to Vernon River and Orwell Bay.



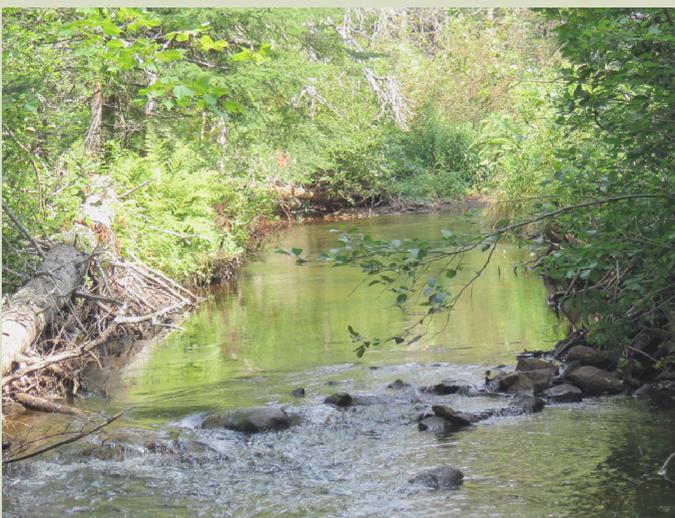
Nestled in the rural farming community of Vernon River approximately 25 km east of Charlottetown, lies a newly protected forest sheltering a section of headwater stream that is key to the breeding success of wild stocks of Atlantic salmon. The 12.1-hectare (30.0 acres) Vernon River Riparian Zone Natural Area was donated to Island Nature Trust late in 2020 by the Schellen family as an Ecological Gift. It contains riparian forest of mixed age structure in steep terrain with groundwater springs that exit the banks to feed the river. The forested floodplain with many vernal pools supports a diverse community of insects, amphibians, breeding migratory songbirds and small mammals. An abundance of spring-fed cold water and the natural cobble river bottom provide excellent conditions for breeding Atlantic salmon and juvenile brook trout before emptying into Orwell Bay, an internationally recognized Important Bird Area.

In a province with less than 50% forest cover, riparian forest like that in the Vernon River Riparian Zone Natural Area plays a pivotal role in free movement of wildlife by maintaining ribbon connections between highly fragmented forest stands. With the land's proximity to another protected natural area on the same watercourse there is an even greater benefit for wildlife in the area.



“In 2008 the PEI Wild Atlantic Salmon Survey found no juvenile parr or spawning redds in this section of Vernon River. With the help of our work crews and the cooperation of landowners since that time, the in-stream habitat for Atlantic salmon has improved and the salmon have returned. The timing of the gift from the Schellen family is perfect; we have begun to seek the support of adjacent landowners in establishing a fifty-meter buffer zone beyond the legislated 15-meters required and this protected area serves as a place to build on.” – *Clarence Ryan, Founder & Chair of Pisquid Watershed Enhancement Project*

Island Nature Trust will manage the property to conserve the forest, river and associated native wildlife communities. A small field will be replanted to expand the forest habitat, while existing forest will be diversified with planting of native species that would have historically been present but are now missing from the community.



OUR NEW LANDS: FORTUNE BRIDGE



Penny's Point Natural Area: Iconic coastline saved from development in Fortune Bridge

The acquisition, from a long-time summer resident of Fortune Bridge Tom Welch, is as quintessentially beautiful as it is ecologically diverse.

Penny's Point is a significant sliver of the PEI coastline under continued threat from erosion and wildlife displacement due to increasing development. Penny's Point is part of the northeastern shoreline that hosts some of the best examples of sand dune and beach systems in the Maritimes.



Tom, who donated Penny's Point in memory of his Mom Jane 'Penny' (Coyne) Welch, remembers fondly the first trip his family made to Fortune Bridge from Toronto in the summer of 1958 and steadily watched his family's love of PEI coastal wildlife flourish over the years. As an 11-year-old boy coming from the city, being dropped into this stunning rural setting surrounded by nature opened his eyes to a whole new world.

He and his siblings enjoyed many encounters with the Island's coastal wildlife, spending countless hours fishing, rafting on the Fortune River and exploring the beach and tidal pools at the bottom of the cliff.

"We would often creep through coastal forest that existed before it was cleared for farmland, to watch from high ground the seals sunbathing on the Rollo Bay sand bars."



Mr. Welch said saving the area from development was one of the main drivers behind the donation. His family had observed first-hand the surrounding area being steadily built on over the decades. When he was given the opportunity to purchase the property from a local farmer, he jumped on it.

"Penny would have been thrilled to know that the headland is now protected forever. We spent 60 years travelling to Fortune and she loved the area so much."



Three generations of the Welch family: Pictured in 1991: Jane 'Penny' (middle), daughter Sarah (right) and granddaughter Brennen.

Conservation is also a way of life for Mr. Welch and his wife Anne Lambert. The couple founded the International Conservation Fund of Canada (ICFC) in 2007 after recognizing that Canada lacked a charitable organization through which Canadians could conserve tropical nature and the winter habitats of Canada's migratory birds. The organization has grown into an award-winning enterprise with projects in 30 countries around the world.

Prince Edward Island has experienced high historic rates of habitat loss to agriculture and other development. Although natural forest cover is about 50%, remaining habitat patches are generally small, fragmented and degraded. The acquisition of this property will allow Island Nature Trust to conserve vulnerable beach-dune and coastal bluff ecosystems while restoring the land back to native coastal krummholz forest, dominated by the Island's red oak and other native hardwoods. The sandstone bluffs may provide suitable habitat for burrow occupants such as threatened bank swallow, in addition to belted kingfisher. The beach-dune area within and immediately adjacent the property's southeast corner is identified as critical habitat for endangered piping plover.



The Trust's ability to retain pockets of shore such as Penny's Point - in a natural state - translates directly to a healthier, more robust ecosystem that will provide for wildlife and people alike long into the future.

CONSERVATION GUARDIAN: MIKE LECLAIR



Mike LeClair is our Conservation Guardian for the newly acquired Penny's Point Natural Area. In May last year, he moved to Fortune Bridge where he finds himself on the beach in every season. Becoming an INT Guardian is a win-win situation for Mike. "I not only get to enjoy the beach, but as a Guardian I can do my part to keep an eye on the Island's natural beauty."

Mike is a proponent of balance in life. "It is so easy to get caught up in work and forget about what else is important. When that would happen to me in the past, I would hit the beach. Listening to the waves lap at the shore or crash the coastline, watching the gulls and the shorebirds forage for food has the capabilities of grounding a person and making them put life in perspective. Walking a trail, listening to songbirds and seeing foxes, squirrels, rabbits and other furry friends scurrying about has the same effect."

Mike's family enjoyed many picnics and outings on the beaches and in the parks and protected areas on the Island over the years. Now his grandchildren are getting their turn to experience the natural beauty of Prince Edward Island. "It is my hope that that their children and the generations after that have the same opportunity."

"It is comforting to know that steps are being taken to preserve the natural beauty of the Island for foreseeable generations. Whether big or small, we all need to do our part to ensure that the natural resources we have are left undisturbed and remain that way for years to come."

A couple of Island species are particularly close to Mike's heart:

"Although eagles and birds of prey have always been an interest of mine, birds in general have always been my go-to source for peace and tranquility. Watching a diminutive hummingbird hovering over a flowering bush is as serene as watching a majestic eagle soar at great heights looking for its next meal."

Conservation Guardians like Mike are the eyes and ears to the ground in our Natural Areas. Without their extraordinary dedication our stewardship mission to protect these areas in perpetuity would not be possible.

"As a Guardian I would hope to carry on the vision of Island Nature Trust and to do my part to protect and preserve our great PEI natural resources."

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A GUARDIAN?

INT protects and stewards over sixty natural areas across PEI. Visit our interactive online natural area map to explore the ecosystems that define these vibrant spaces, find volunteer opportunities and learn more about our mission to create corridors of wildlife connectivity across the Island.

islandnaturetrust.ca/conserving-land

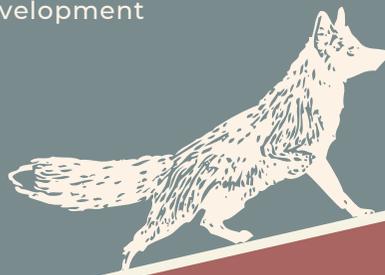
NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: BIANCA MCGREGOR



In November, Island Nature Trust began the search for an Executive Director who would be asked to focus more intently on organizational growth and development. Our incumbent Executive Director, Megan Harris has now moved into a strategic role focused on acquisition and stewardship as the Trust's new Director of Conservation. After conducting a thorough candidate search, Island Nature Trust is happy to announce that Bianca McGregor will be its new Executive Director.

Bianca McGregor has a wealth of experience in the not-for-profit sector, most recently as Manager of fund development, marketing, and promotions at the Canadian Mental Health Association. She has served in senior management roles for not-for-profits in every capacity, from programming to marketing and promotions, to fund development and strategic planning.

"I am very excited to have the opportunity to lead such a well-established and successful land trust through the next stage of its growth. Our challenge will be to show islanders, including many new islanders, that they can make a difference and protect our beautiful island's natural history and wildlife by securing and stewarding the many environmentally sensitive areas, wildlife habitats and vistas. I look forward to working with Megan Harris, whose years of environmental experience and knowledge of the island, are essential to our success."



DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION: MEGAN HARRIS



Two years ago, the Trust noted a substantial increase in economic and population growth on PEI and identified the urgent need to ramp-up its land conservation efforts. While the Trust's primary mission remains the preservation of the island's natural legacy for the benefit of people and wildlife, it is equally committed to enhancing PEI's resiliency to climate change, as well as protecting and expanding PEI's natural carbon sinks.

The newly formed position of Director of Conservation recognizes and responds to the intricate link between conservation of ecologically sensitive lands and preservation of human societies. It allows INT to accelerate efforts to protect land and steward it in a way that maximizes resilience to the extreme climate patterns Islanders are just beginning to experience. This dedicated position will focus entirely on land and species conservation, strategically channeling Megan's skill set and ecological training to benefit the health of natural areas across the province.

"I can't wait to connect with Islanders and explore the lands they want help to steward. I believe strongly that serving the land also best serves the people of that land. To my mind, the Trust is the optimal mechanism to ensure that land in PEI is well tended forever."



CLIMATE SENSE INTERNSHIP

with Amy Frost-Wicks



Although the time feels like it flew by, I'm excited to say that I've been with INT for almost a full year now, and I look forward to spending a second field season as the Land Stewardship Program Coordinator! In addition to this role, I've taken on a new responsibility for the next 12 months. I am happy to announce that I've been selected as one of the University of Prince Edward Island's ClimateSense Professional Interns. As part of this innovative program, each of the 12 interns is paired with a host organization across a variety of public and private sectors in PEI. We'll each be working with our organizations on a sector-specific climate change adaptation project, while also participating in professional development training and education.



Erosion: A line of White spruce trees toppling into the ocean in our Neuffer Natural Area in Point Prim



Restoration: Yellow birch sapplings are planted in our Newton Cross Hardwoods Farrell Forested Natural Area

Over the course of the next year, I'll be working for INT on a dedicated project related to our forested natural areas. These areas face a number of threats related to climate change. Our coastal forests will likely experience increased erosion due to lack of winter ice cover and stronger, more frequent storm events. All of our forests will likely see a changing species composition, as temperature and precipitation patterns change, placing stress on the species which are at far extents of their range in PEI. As forest ecosystems become stressed and species begin to die out, in combination with warmer temperatures, invasive and destructive species are more likely to spread and will be more able to take over in the already weakened ecosystem.

For this project, I will be focusing on creating an inventory of all of INT's forested natural areas. I'll be analyzing satellite imagery, along with existing provincial forestry resources, in GIS software to delineate the different forest types that are present within our 5000+ acres of protected land. In particular, I'll be looking at forest stands that were former tree plantations (before being acquired and preserved by INT). Because of their low species diversity and often poor health, these stands are much more susceptible to negative impacts from climate change. Once identified, I'll be going out into the field to verify the dominant tree species present, along with sampling the age of these stands and assessing other characteristics. After this, I will be able to create a science-based plan for stand thinning and diversification plantings, in order to make these weak sections of forest healthier and more resilient to future changes. Funding for silviculture and forest restoration work related to this project has been generously provided by the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund.

Climate change is a vast and often overwhelming issue, with dire and still many unknown consequences. But I like to think that initiatives like this one, which help people and communities across our island to understand, tackle, and adapt to climate change one small step at a time, will not only benefit PEI in the long run, but will also set a precedent for other programs such as this. I look forward to seeing how we can help our natural areas survive and even thrive in the face of these changes. Stay tuned for updates and outcomes from this project throughout the next year! Needless to say, it will be a busy field season, but I'm looking forward to the challenge, and I'm excited to explore even more of our beautiful protected island ecosystems while working with a great team and an exceptional network of volunteers. See you outside!

HONORARY PATRON

An interview with
Lieutenant Governor
of Prince Edward Island:
Antoinette Perry

By Ben Russell



The Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island Antoinette Perry is a respected educator from Tignish and a proud Acadian. Before her retirement from teaching in 2009, she enjoyed a distinguished 32-year career at Tignish Consolidated Elementary School where she taught Music and French. She serves as an organist and church choir director at St. Simon and St. Jude Parish and as a co-coordinator of the Parish's Summer Organ Recital Series.

Becoming an honorary patron to Island Nature Trust made perfect sense to her Honour. She recalls that from a young age 'environmental consciousness' was instilled in her while growing up in a small Tignish community. There she was exposed to a sentiment that resonates with her to this day – to respect each other and the environment we live in.

Antoinette's respect of nature was nourished by mentors such as her father and amplified by the wider community. Like many of her peers during the 60's, significant time was spent outdoors. The community had an intimate and functional relationship with nature. The family-owned general store was a thriving hub for community connections. Local people would stream in and out of the store discussing everything from 'the wildlife activity in the streams and ponds' to the 'messiness of beavers' It was a melting pot for discussion and storytelling. Crucially, Antoinette was being raised in an environment where nature was at the heart of community engagement.

The idea of respecting nature and leaving a soft footprint on the land was reiterated through the teaching of her father 'I would often accompany him to go trout fishing, picking blueberries and we never left a mess behind us'.

She and her friends would spend most of their time on the beaches in the summer and members of her community took pride in cleaning up the coast of recreational and commercial garbage. They felt connected to these spaces and wanted to leave them the way they found them.



President of Island Nature Trust June Jenkins Sanderson talking to Antoinette Perry during an invitation to Government House. Antoinette became an honorary patron to the Trust in January 2021.

In the 1950s and 1960s Antoinette was a youngster and PEI was experiencing slow population growth as Islanders continued to leave the province in search of economic opportunities elsewhere. During this period Antoinette learned from adults in her locale about responsible citizenship and the importance of caring for the community amidst a period of economic decline. Her exposure to a conservation and outdoors club for youth, was her first formal introduction to the rich world of Island ecosystems. She witnessed a marriage of social conscientiousness and mindfulness towards nature - providing a healthy community for both people and wildlife.

Since hands-on learning was often framed by experiences and sharing knowledge within wildlife spaces, Antoinette was perceiving outdoor experiences through a conservation lens: "The sisters would take us outside and inform us. We would venture into the woods for our annual picnic in the Spring and would learn about the forests.... Of course, we would play cops and robbers there, but we also learned to appreciate and respect nature'. Antoinette was learning to interact with nature responsibly with plenty of room for enjoying it too. 'It's the old way of doing things. Help yourself to what you need but don't make a mess.'

Recently INT's membership informed us of the importance of educating people about Island conservation. A sentiment strongly shared by Antoinette:

'If you want the message to get out there, I firmly believe that education is the key. For example, if we look at the pandemic, Dr Morrison has kept us informed every step of the way. People respecting others by wearing masks is the same as people respecting our nature home and not destroying the nest.'

"If someone is ignorant to the fact that if you destroy a birds nest, there's no more birds....well then lets inform and educate them.'



Regularly Island Nature Trust properties require restoration and the management of invasive species so that the natural area continues to be diverse. Once INT acquires land, the stewardship component necessitates reaching out to the community for volunteers in helping to protect these natural areas in perpetuity. Antoinette knows only too well the importance of preservation and restoration. She has seen firsthand the enriching experience and sense of ownership that individuals experience connecting to a community to realize a common cause. In 2011, she spearheaded her parish's organ restoration project which, thanks to her community's generosity, saw the majestic instrument restored to its original state.

'I knew nothing about the construction of the organ and I didn't understand the mechanics of it either. All I know is that I can play and get people to sing.'

The organ restoration project succeeded in raising \$150K in four years thanks to the incredible generosity of the community.

The pandemic has helped us realize the healing qualities of nature to both mind and in spirit. Antoinette also experiences periods of her own personal restoration of spirit by connecting with her favorite place in the Island – the beach:

'My favorite pastime is walking the beach, that's my meditation spot and that's where I am closest to my creator. This is my spiritual realm and if I can walk on the beach no matter how out of sorts I may be, I can always find my center, my peace.'



We often overlook the positive impact of community during times of turmoil. Its power lies in sharing messages of awareness, resulting in a shared behavior that improves or protects our wellbeing and benefits us all. The pandemic is evidence that the Island's relatively small population compared to the rest of the country is a boon for collaborating to manage daunting challenges effectively within the community. As Antoinette reiterates, we have a responsibility to educate both new Island residents and youth about the fragility of our Islands natural spaces and the ecosystems that reside in them. People like Antoinette are a portal to this wisdom. The Trust is incredibly grateful to hear and share Antoinette's personal relationship with nature and we invite you to listen to the full interview with our president June Jenkins Sanderson on our brand-new podcast page: www.islandnaturetrust.ca/podcasts/

Antoinette's motto is: 'Learn, connect, pass it on!'

Let's spread that message, together.

YOUNG NATURALISTS



Welcome to the brand new Young Naturalists page. Learn about an Island species every newsletter, solve puzzles and express your creative side!

Feel free to share your achievements on social media but don't forget to tag us @Island Nature Trust and use the hashtag;

#givingbacktonature

CANADA WARBLER

Cardellina canadensis

DID YOU KNOW?

Canada warblers are brightly colored birds. Males have dark backs and vivid yellow from under their beak and all along the front of their bodies. They're nickname is "the necklaced warbler." They have a pale yellow ring around their eye that makes them look like they are wearing glasses.

This bright and spirited bird lives in sunny open forests and prefer ones with leafy shrubs that can cover their nest. They make their nests on the ground. They hop along low branches and are excellent flyers. They like the forests that are close to wetlands because they eat insects, and there are lots of insects near wetlands.

Canada warblers are listed as "threatened" in Canada since 1998. This means they may disappear if they continue to lose habitat. To help the Canada warbler, you can stop using pesticides, save wetlands, and plant native shrubs!

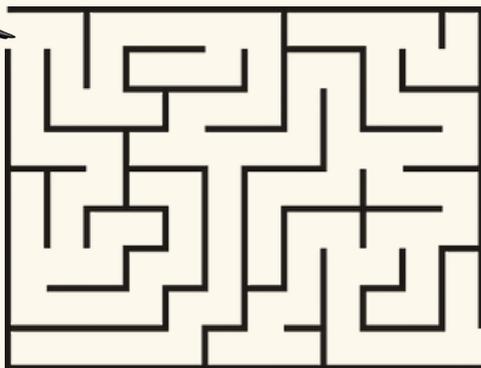
WORD SEARCH

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N	I	N	S	E	C	T	E	A	T	E	R	R	R

- Bird
- Forest Warbler
- Threatened
- Insect Eater
- Ground Nester
- Hopper
- Yellow
- Wetland
- Necklace



COLOR ME IN!



HELP THE CANADA WARBLER GET TO ITS GROUND NEST



NEWS

Congratulations to Lynne Bradley who is this year's winner of the Great Blue Heron raffle draw.

Lynne owns a farm in Suffolk and every summer enjoys a venture around her home to observe and photograph these majestic birds.



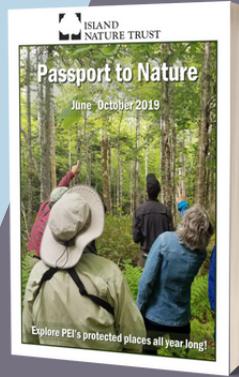
Thank you again to all who purchased tickets. Dave Broderick of Alberton carved and painted this beautiful Great Blue Heron! Every year, Dave donates one for us to raffle and raise funds for natural area protection and stewardship.

Lynne has decided to name her prize 'Bill'.



PASSPORT TO NATURE

After a one year hiatus our wildly successful Passport to Nature event series will be making a welcome return this Spring and Summer.



The passport is a booklet containing information on a series of forthcoming events organized throughout the year. Since 2019 the event series has helped Islanders and visitors alike experience and learn more about PEI's protected places.

In the last few years, Island Nature Trust's outreach focus has moved to immersive nature education and experiential activities for the public. Our strategy is that, young and old, we all retain knowledge more effectively when we are immersed and using all of our senses in the learning experience. We hope that the messages children, youth and adults receive through the Passport to Nature events will carry with them for the rest of their lives. If you don't love it, you won't protect it. It is through a deep connection to nature that conservation begins.

On the 20th April, INT is featured on CBC's compass program ahead of Earth Day to talk about the Passport to Nature events schedule. The first of which will be a memorial walk in tribute of conservationist Daryl Guignon.



CBC news

Compass

Stay connected to our Facebook page and our website for further news & info as it happens.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please take a moment to fill out the form below and return it to the address above with your membership fee. You can also renew and pay easily online at: www.islandnaturetrust.ca Thank you for your support!

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Category:

Student (\$10) Single (\$20) Family (\$25) Life (\$500) Donation \$: _____

(Tax receipts will be issued for all donations)

Payment Method: Cheque Money Order Visa Master Card

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Signature: _____

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WHO ARE WE...?

Island Nature Trust is a non-profit, membership-driven, private registered charity dedicated to permanent protection of natural areas in Prince Edward Island. We acquire lands through purchase and donation for protection and help private landowners protect their own properties through legislation and promotion of good land management practices. We also protect species-at-risk, restore lands and undertake public nature education.

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INT