News Release

For immediate release

Date 17th February 2021 – Charlottetown, PE

Iconic coastline saved from development in Fortune Bridge

15 hectares (37 acre) property serves as a natural coastal buffer for species-at-risk such as the Piping Plover.

A coastal headland including ecologically important and fragile beach-dune habitat will now be protected forever. The peninsula, named Penny's Point Natural Area, is located within the Rollo Bay Wildlife Management Area and is on the south point at the mouth of Rollo Bay. It was transferred to Island Nature Trust for perpetual stewardship in December, through a most generous and thoughtful donation. Land donors Tom Welch, Anne Lambert and Nancy Willis were resolved to see this coastline remain in a natural state forever.

Commented [PH1]: Is this an Ecogift?

Commented [BfINT2R1]: No, it's not an ecogift

The property is a highly significant sliver of the PEI coastline, which is under continued threat from erosion and wildlife displacement due to human encroachment. Penny's Point is part of the northeastern shoreline that hosts some of the best examples of sand dune and beach systems in the Atlantic Maritime ecozone. 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 exceed 10m in height and 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.

Commented [PH3]: Are these SARA?

Commented [BfINT4R3]: Just bank swallow

Commented [PH5]: Please add SARA designation. (endangered, threatened, etc)

"PEI's multi-hued coastline is a dynamic and wild natural boundary between land and sea. Our ability to retain pockets of shore in a natural state translates directly to a healthier, more robust ecosystem that will provide for wildlife and people alike long into the future." – *Megan Harris, Executive Director Island Nature Trust*

Penny's Point has been named after land donor Tom Welch's mother Jane Coyne, who was fondly known as 'Penny'. His family's love of PEI wildlife flourished over the decades as they vacationed to the Island every summer starting in the 1950's.

As a youngster Tom and his siblings enjoyed creeping through coastal forest that existed before being cleared for farmland, to watch from high ground the seals sunbathing on the Rollo Bay sand bars at low tide.

"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. She was concerned about the looming threat of development since our family observed first-hand the surrounding area being steadily built on over the decades." – *Tom Welch*

Becoming a staunch supporter of conservation, Tom along with his wife Anne Lambert 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.

This project has been made possible by the land donors, stewardship donations from generous Islanders and funding from the ECHO Foundation and by the Government of Canada through the Natural Heritage Conservation Program, part of Canada's Nature Fund.

Images & Video

Photographs and Video can be downloaded from this link: https://www.islandnaturetrust.ca/?p=3926

Quick Facts

- The core area of the property is the coastal cliff and dune. It is 37 acres (15 hectares) in size with 3,800 feet (1,158 meters) of shore frontage, 1000 feet of which is beach.
- The Atlantic Maritime ecozone is characterized by mixed-wood Acadian (Wapan'ekati) forests, sand dunes, and coastal islands. These systems, combined with ocean waters that, during the summer, are the warmest ocean waters in Canada, make them ideal recreational sites.
- The site is one of only two owned by INT that hosts habitat essential for Piping Plover nesting– a species-at-risk on PEI.
- The Rollo Bay Wildlife Management Area is the 6th largest conservation area in PEI and is 526 hectares/1,300 acres in size.
- The Province of Prince Edward Island has set a target of 7% of the landmass or 86,000 acres of natural areas to be protected by 2020.
- Fortune Bridge was and continues to be an important ancestral burial ground for Acadians.
- For the Mi'kmaq Peoples of Prince Edward Island, Fortune Bridge has cultural importance including the harvesting of fish, birds, medicinal plants, and shellfish (Specifically: the fish harvesting of eels, trout, smelts; bird harvesting of ducks, geese; decorative and medicinal plant harvesting; and shellfish harvesting of oysters along the Fortune River). On the land, Traditional Mi'kmaq use of the area includes feather gathering, campsites, and berry gathering.

About

Island Nature Trust is a membership-based, non-government, Canadian charity dedicated to land conservation in Prince Edward Island since 1979.
We envision a network of protected natural areas across PEI sustained by the love and generosity of Islanders today for the enjoyment of Islanders and wildlife tomorrow.

The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program (NHCP) is a unique public-private partnership to support new protected and conserved areas by securing private lands and private interests in lands. The program is managed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Federal funds invested in the program are matched with contributions raised by NCC and its partners, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the country's land trust community. Private regional and community land trusts, of which Island Nature Trust is one, access a portion of funds from this program to protect ecologically significant land across Canada.

Learn More

Visit our website: www.islandnaturetrust.ca
Facebook: www.facebook.com/islandnaturetrust
Instagram: www.instagram.com/islandnaturetrust/

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