



c/o Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History
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October 14, 2022

To:

Premier Tim Houston

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Minister Timothy Halman

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Department of Environment and Climate Change

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Minister Pat Dunn

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Minister Tory Rushton

[Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables](#)

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Nature Nova Scotia strongly opposes the opening of the gates to western Lake Rossignol, Tobetic

Nature Nova Scotia (Nature NS) is raising its combined voice of private members and 24

Member organizations (representing more than 10,000 Nova Scotians):

Annapolis Royal & Area Environment and Ecology Group • Annapolis Waterkeepers • Arlington Forest Protection Society • Blomidon Naturalists Society • Cape Breton Naturalists Society • Eastern Shore Forest Watch • Friends of Antigonish Harbour • Friends of Blue Mountain–Birch Cove Lakes Society • Friends of McNabs Island Society • Friends of Nature • Friends of the Pugwash Estuary • Halifax Field Naturalists • Hope for Wildlife • International Crane Foundation • Margaree Environmental Association • Nova Scotia Bird Society • Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society • Protect Wentworth Valley • Save Caribou • Stop Clearcutting Unama'ki • Stop Spraying & Clear-Cutting Nova Scotia • Tusket River Environmental Protection Society • Young Naturalists Club of Nova Scotia

organizations to express strong opposition to the current government's intention to open the gates to motorized access into the heartland of a western wilderness. This area holds great cultural importance to the Mi'kmaq and its current restricted access offers some sanctuary for wildlife.

Minister Rushton has expressed a determination to remove the gates from the Mersey River to allow motorized access to ATVs. He made his intentions clear, without input from First Nations or the environmental community. Nature NS represents a large part of that environmental community.

We request wise, well-informed, and careful management of these lands, through inclusive dialogue with the Mi'kmaq and Nature Nova Scotia. Consideration for all that exists there, both natural and cultural, should supersede recreational activities that threaten wild species. ATV recreational objectives would allow recreational motorized access that fragments wilderness and enables human activities that are detrimental to wildlife.

Governments encounter this wish to open the gates to the Rossignol area every few years. The promised Western Crown Lands Planning process has never been completed. Such a process would have better reflected multiple perspectives, including those of nature-based groups like ours, as well as Mi'kmaq traditional interests and activities.

You are collaborating on an Indigenous Protected Conservation Area (IPCA) in this area, where ATV access would be extremely detrimental.

Nature Nova Scotia concerns about ATV presence include rutting and erosion of soil where artefacts may exist, damage to aquatic systems from driving through water and also over-fishing that results from increased access. Vandalism and forest fire ignitions increase with ATV access. Motorized recreational access also exposes endangered mainland moose to poachers, and renders rare forest resources such as old growth hemlocks more vulnerable to fires. Recreational ATVs may re-open old access roads on Kejimikujik Park's southern boundary. These groups are relentless about ATV access, and the results show little or no regard for what their access does to wildlife populations.

Traditional travel in this area is by canoe.

It should remain that way.

On behalf of the board,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Bancroft".

Bob Bancroft
President, Nature Nova Scotia

cc. Nature Nova Scotia Board