

Action is Our Middle Name

COASTAL & WATER

The Coastal Protection Act (CPA) was a top environmental issue of the 2024 provincial election — a reflection that the desire for pan-provincial coastal protection legislation remains top of mind for Nova Scotians. The Coastal & Water Team continues to field regular inquiries from the community concerned about the changes facing their coastline. We also field multiple media inquiries on the CPA and coastal issues each month. The EAC continues to be a proud member of the Coastal Coalition; together we continue to advocate for the CPA to be proclaimed for the benefits of all Nova Scotians.

We also continue to stay involved and follow other on-going local coastal issues. Earlier this year, the Halifax Regional Municipality invited the public to submit comments regarding their proposed amendments to prevent infilling at Dartmouth Cove. The EAC supports these amendments and encourages city council to explore bylaws that would prevent similar coastal infilling issues elsewhere in the municipality.

There was also an open public comment period concerning the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) proposal to engage in shoreline stabilization at Hartlen Point. The EAC is advocating that DNR engage in implementing nature-based shoreline designs, as they have economic, social and environmental benefits, rather than using hard-armouring approaches (like sea walls) which can destroy important habitat, alter wave patterns, impact coastal access and cost more financially.

PHOTO: Nicolas Winkler Photography



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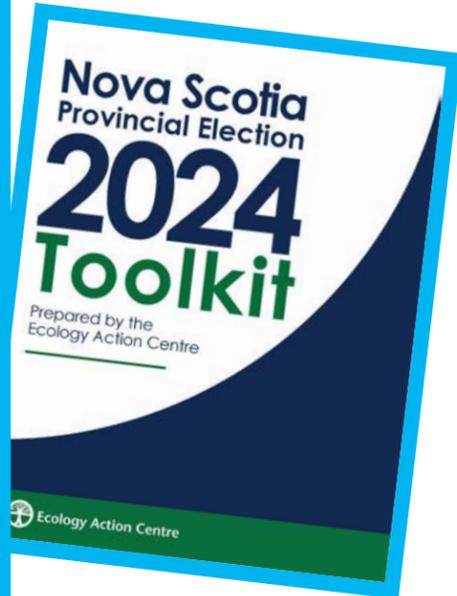


PHOTO: Jillian Ramsay

PHOTO: Claire Parsons



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PHOTO: Jillian Ramsay



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Built Environment Team led the EAC's engagement with Halifax Regional Municipality's newly elected regional council, focusing on policy and planning priorities for Halifax. To support this work, we enlisted a Dalhousie planning student to research non-market housing solutions, such as community land trusts and affordable housing initiatives.

As the weather cooled, we wrapped up our Hike the Greenbelt series with our final four events, including a Hike and Fungi Foray and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid species surveys at Sandy Lake and Cox Lake. Feedback from participants in the Hike the Greenbelt campaign revealed that 96 per cent of attendees gained a deeper understanding of native ecology and development pressures, 94 per cent felt confident in knowing how to find more information and take action to protect the area and 42 per cent were discovering these green spaces for the first time.

The Built Environment Team then shifted indoors to host a workshop on the implementation of the Halifax Green Network Plan for members of Our HRM Alliance, a coalition advocating for sustainable growth across the region. Finally, we organized a special craftivism event, Love Letters to Sandy Lake, where we used art to rally the public in the fight to protect Sandy Lake, sending dozens of handmade valentines to key decision-makers.

ENERGY & CLIMATE

In January 2025, the Clean Electricity Regulations Act was released — a federal policy that mandates the phase-out of coal and that followed a multiyear effort campaigning for a greener energy grid for all Canadians. The Energy & Climate Team is continuing this momentum by pursuing research into innovative community energy models such as micro-grids and energy co-ops.

Our electric school bus project has been building partnerships with health advocates following the launch of Driving Towards a Healthier Future in October. This report outlines the negative impacts of diesel on children's health and debunks gasoline alternatives for school buses.

Our efficiency work finished 2024 with 71 free energy audits secured for faith buildings across Nova Scotia! We hit the road this March to kick-off our Faithful Footprints Roadshow to showcase retrofits already completed by United Churches across the Atlantic provinces.

Our energy poverty campaign worked to centre affordable energy as a key election issue, promoting a universal service program in the provincial legislature and advocating for increased funding for EfficiencyOne's low-income programs.

In October, the EAC and HalifaxFACT launched the Climate Commitment Badges — a program for HRM residents to earn artist-designed lapel pins (badges) by learning about and committing to climate action. Current badges include Climate 101, Home Energy and Getting Around, with more in the works.

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PHOTO: Irwin Barrett



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FOOD

Between October and December 2024, the Food Team continued to implement priority recommendations identified in Part B of the JustFOOD Action Plan. Progress and outcomes are captured in the JustFOOD Status Update report, published in early March. The report can be found at justfoodhalifax.ca.

In December, the Halifax Food Council concluded two pilots in collaboration with Feed Nova Scotia's Innovation and Learning Lab. The Rural Food Access Pilot delivered affordable, shelf-stable food items to 51 households in the Musquodoboit Valley, while the Social Supermarket pilot explored partnerships and potential sites to launch Halifax's first multi-vendor social supermarket. In January, the Food Team worked with Feed Nova Scotia to distribute over \$131,500 in funding to grassroots groups and community organizations across HRM, targeting projects that increase access, availability and/or choice of food; increase community-led food production; and promote food justice and sovereignty. In February, the Food Team supported the launch of a Community Garden Grants Program for community gardens and urban farms located on municipal land, with \$40,000 in funding to support participation, community-led food production and procurement of tools and infrastructure.

The Food Team continues to support the Coalition for Healthy School Food – Nova Scotia Chapter in its advocacy around the province's school lunch program, focusing on localizing the program to allow for more choice and flexibility in menu development, creating pathways for schools to develop and maintain relationships with local food suppliers and reducing food waste.

WILDERNESS

Distinguishing truth from fiction has become more difficult as some politicians spout divisive rhetoric, big polluters spread disinformation and corporate interests seem to heavily influence policy.

In the past months, the Wilderness Team has continued to advocate for a healthy environment and healthy communities. These efforts have gained urgency as valid concerns are twisted into "fear mongering" and public interest groups are painted as "special interests." In this landscape, the Wilderness Team is determined to continue bringing you credible information.

We released fact sheets this spring about industries such as uranium mining and royalties for resource extraction, providing important, factual information amid a confusing sea of projects, policies and industries that claim to be sustainable but are actually distracting from — and delaying — vital environmental action. We took our role as an environmental watchdog to heart, calling out disinformation and mobilizing with our allies in the face of emerging issues that put our communities at risk.

We continued to address the problems around burning forest biomass for electricity, unsustainable mining and industrializing the rural landscape for so-called "green hydrogen" for export — all things lobbyists falsely claim are necessary for the green transition.

We helped to sound the alarm when rural advocates, community groups and citizen scientists noticed a disturbing trend: while the government dragged its feet, industrial forestry companies appeared to be targeting areas communities have proposed for protection.

MARINE

The Marine Team attended the seventh International Marine Conservation Congress, sharing our work on community-led marine planning and protection in Gros Morne and our work at international fisheries management bodies to advance compliance with shark conservation measures.

We played a critical role in negotiations at the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. This year, led by Canadian scientists, a new management procedure for North Atlantic Swordfish was adopted and gives Canada a fair portion of swordfish catches. With our coalition partners, we built an unprecedented number of supporting countries (43!) who proposed a measure requiring that all sharks caught are brought from boat to market with their fins naturally attached. This is an important rule for ensuring sustainable harvest and compliance.

It was an exciting fall for our Kelp Kurious team as we worked on growing new kelp seedlings, planting out lines of seedlings for businesses to create new seaweed products and for our partners researching nutrients and growing techniques. In addition to sugar kelp, we also planted horsetail kelp and worked with National Research Council to improve techniques. We hope to be the first in Atlantic Canada to have a successful harvest!

We held a series of workshops on how to build a nursery and reproduce kelp with eager sea farmers. We broadened our reach by partnering with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq to host kelp workshops in Pictou Landing, Glooscap and Bear River, hopefully turning a few more people from Kelp Kurious to Kelp Serious.



PHOTO: Sara Farias



TRANSPORTATION

Each season brings a different kind of busy for the Transportation Team. These last months have been spent wrapping up funding reports and building new proposals to keep pace with the demand for accessible and safe transportation options. The team's annual two-day retreat was spent reflecting on the wins and challenges and building out plans and strategies for 2025.

We held successful active transportation events for Nova Scotia schools, with over 8,000 students participating in our fall IWALK event and over 14,255 students across 66 schools participating in Winter Walk Day this February.

We led successful youth mobility audit sessions with Amherst Rural High School and engaged youth in Baddeck to provide input on their Core AT Network Design.

We launched our road safety campaign with the goal of getting the Traffic Safety Act proclaimed and photo radar actualized in Nova Scotia to help reduce avoidable collisions and deaths.

For the second consecutive year, we offered a series of bike maintenance and repair workshops for individuals identifying as women, trans or non-binary through Bike Again's Shifting Gears sessions. Sixteen participants enrolled for the full program. We were excited to add a new workshop series aimed at empowering African Nova Scotian youth that took place during March break, engaging 12 participants in a three-day bike maintenance workshop experience.

We continued to engage the communities of Spryfield, Eskasoni First Nation and New Glasgow to develop and implement interventions that support active and sustainable transportation as part of our new Local Activations program.