



Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area - Explore your local Big Backyard!

The Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area is right here on our doorstep, yet many have not been able to explore it yet. Three local groups - Maskwa Aquatic Club, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society-Nova Scotia Chapter and Halifax North West Trails Association - hope to change that with community support and input. The large Wilderness Area is bounded by many old and new neighbourhoods.

Plan to attend the Open House session when we hope to gather local knowledge from users, young and old, new and former, to help inform future trail development and use, both front and back country, in the Wilderness Area. This includes experiences from the paddling community who describe the 8-lake loop as “a mini-Keji experience”. New trails will be planned, old ones may be closed if deemed unsuitable, and maps and signage will be a part of this long term plan. It will take several years depending on fund raising to phase in the many outdoor adventure opportunities. The NS Departments of Environment and Natural Resources will be very much involved in next steps and the Department of Health and Wellness is partnering with us to help fund our expert consultants from Cobequid Trails Consulting.

Join us as we share the Blue Mountain Hill trail experience with MLA Ben Jessome and others. Meet at the end of Anahid Drive off Kingswood Drive on Monday, October 13 at 2 pm. We may encounter some wet areas so plan to wear waterproof hiking boots. Not suitable for children under 8 years as there are some large boulders to climb.

Currently, one of the few public access points directly into the Wilderness Area is at the end of Saskatoon Drive off Kearney Lake Road at the Maskwa Aquatic Club. To discover this trail, join John Moore, at Maskwa, on November 8 at 2 pm, for a hike to Charlies Lake and beyond. Wear hiking boots or shoes, and bring water and a snack.

Open House: Sunday, November 2 at St Peters Church, corner of Kearney Lake Rd and Bedford Highway. Drop in from 2-6 pm to discuss and share your ideas for the future of Blue Mountain - Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area. Bring your stories, maps or images to share. To read more about the Trail Planning Project, go to www.bmbcltrails.com and complete a survey if you cannot come to the Open House. Click here for [detailed map](#) of the Wilderness Area.

Submitted by Wendy McDonald, Halifax North West Trails Association