

## Addition to Silver River Wilderness Area

[Silver River Wilderness Area](#) protects a 30 km corridor of river, woodlands, lakes and wetlands in the interior of Digby and Yarmouth counties, and is approximately 5,300 hectares (ha) in size.

An addition to this wilderness area will add close to 2,200 ha of the upper Silver River watershed, in Digby County, including another 8 km of river corridor.

The addition includes the following provincial (Crown) lands:

1. About 1,010 ha of land acquired from the [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#) (NCC) in 2014. The NCC is a private, not-for profit land trust. These provincial lands are subject to a conservation easement and are already considered as a protected area;
2. The northern portion of the historic New France (Electric City) parcel (about 47 ha), avoiding archaeological sites and areas accessed by vehicle; and
3. Langford Lake, Little Tusket Lake, part of Silver River, an island in Langford Lake and two islands in Long Tusket Lake (about 127 ha);

The addition also includes the following lands owned by the Nature Conservancy of Canada:

4. About 810 ha to the east of the provincial lands, in the headwaters of Caribou River; and
5. About 220 ha north of the provincial lands at Little Tusket and Long Tusket Lake.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada will continue to own its lands, which are already recognized as a type of protected area. Designation as wilderness area adds protection and management options. Provisions of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* will now apply, except for any uses or restrictions the Nature Conservancy of Canada may choose as landowner.

The net increase in protected area with this addition is approximately 174 ha, much of which consists of lakes and river.

The ecological values of the addition include:

- Snapping turtles, which nest on beaches and live in the watercourses. These turtles are considered a species of concern both provincially and nationally, as populations are declining.
- Pockets of older forest, consisting of eastern hemlock, red spruce, white pine, and shade tolerant hardwood forest. These host uncommon and at-risk birds, including Canada warbler, chimney swift and nighthawk. Other forest is younger due to harvesting in recent decades.
- Though rarely encountered, this is also habitat for endangered mainland moose.

The area has a long tradition of sportfishing, canoeing, camping, hunting and other outdoor adventures.

An east-west off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail crosses the addition near the southern end of Little Tusket Lake and passes by a campsite on the southeast side of Little Tusket Lake. If there is interest, the Minister of Environment will consider designating this for OHV use, under terms of a trail management agreement with the All-terrain Vehicle Association of Nova Scotia (ATVANS) or other organization.

Langford Road (west of Silver River) and Cranberry Lake Road (east of Silver River) are not part of the addition, nor is the drive-in campsite at the south end of Little Tusk Lake and access road. Vehicle access on these roads and to this campsite will not be affected.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada intends to permit on-going public vehicle access to the campsite and boat launch at the southwest corner of Long Tusk Lake.

At historic New France (Electric City), the area with archaeological ruins, the picnic and beach area at the north end of Langford Lake ("Casino Beach") and the drive-in campsite at the south end of Little Tusk Lake are not part of the addition to Silver River Wilderness Area.

The entire New France (Electric City) parcel was proposed as a provincial park in the Parks and Protected Areas Plan in 2013. However, after further planning and consultation, the Department of Lands and Forestry now intends to manage a portion of this parcel as a special category of Crown land to provide flexibility in managing the historic features and recreational use of this area. There are no plans to change existing vehicle access, including to Casino Beach and the drive-in campsite at the south end of Little Tusk Lake. The Department of Lands and Forestry intends to work with the Electric City / La Nouvelle France Society and other interested community groups to maintain basic infrastructure at New France and support visitor experience. The remainder of the New France parcel is now part of the addition to Silver River Wilderness Area.

The main purpose of this consultation is to seek comment on the extent of provincial lands to be added to Silver River Wilderness Area. This has changed since release of the Parks and Protected Areas in 2013 and since additional public consultation in 2014. Most of the change is due to the transfer of over 1,000 ha from the Nature Conservancy of Canada to the Province in 2014.

#### **Aerial view of Little Tusk Lake, looking north**



