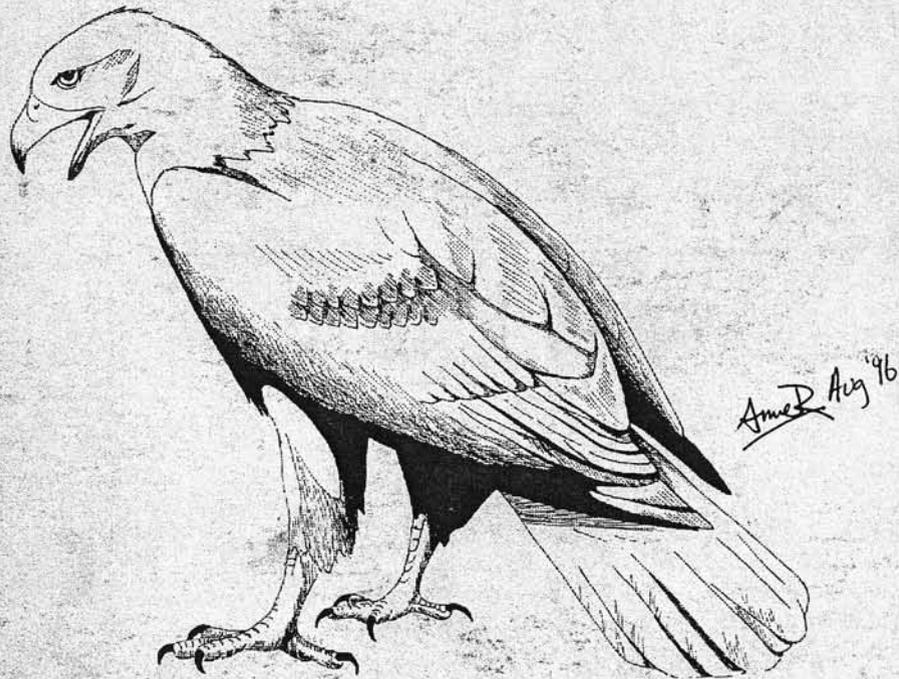


Woodens River Watershed Environmental
Organization

A Guide to the Trails of the Woodens
River Watershed



Prepared by
The Woodens River Environmental Action Team 1996

A Guide to the Trails of the Woodens River Watershed

Prepared by
**The Woodens River Environmental Action
Team**

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August 1996

sponsored by
**The Woodens River Watershed
Environmental Organization**

Woodens River
Halifax County
Nova Scotia

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Disclaimer: The information contained within has
been compiled with as much accuracy as possible.
However, changes may occur in the watershed.
Therefore, the authors cannot be held responsible for
misinformation that occurs in this booklet.

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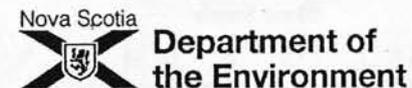
We would like to thank the WRWEO for sponsoring and providing guidance for this project. The members of the WRWEO have committed many hours to this project and towards the development of the watershed.

We would also like to thank the NSYCC for giving us the opportunity to do this project, and our generous funders for their willingness to support our project. This project was funded by: *The Halifax County Regional Development*

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We would also like to thank our families for their support and especially Greg Doucette for his time and help with the booklet.

Only through partnerships between community organizations, local residents, government, and businesses will these types of projects be possible. We hope to see more of these partnerships in the future and the many benefits that come with them.



Forward

Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization

WRWEO

This volunteer organization is comprised of some fifty citizens who are committed to protecting and improving the Woodens River Watershed. The group began meeting in the summer of 1995, and became incorporated in February 1996.

The Woodens River watershed stretches from just north of Exit 4 on Highway #103, in the communities of Hubley/Five Island, to Seabright and Glen Margaret where the Woodens River empties into St. Margaret's Bay. Concerned about a variety of issues in the Watershed, the organization is aiming to prepare and implement a community-based watershed management plan that will meet the needs and aspirations of the residents, landowners, and other users of the watershed. This plan will enable these groups to have a say in government planning for the area.

For more information about the WRWEO or this booklet call:
Richmond Cambell at (902) 876-7847
or write to:

Woodens River Watershed Environmental
Organization
41 Oak Ridge, Hubley
Nova Scotia
B3Z-1A3

The WRWEO is working to raise community awareness of environmental issues in the watershed, and to encourage feedback from the community on a variety of issues. This is being accomplished by holding public meetings and by producing displays and other information materials. The Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization was pleased to sponsor and supervise the Woodens River Environmental Action Team who spent much of their summer collecting the information contained in this brochure. Their hard work has resulted in this excellent publication which will help people to fully appreciate the Woodens River watershed

Introduction

The Woodens River Watershed is an important part of several of the communities in the St. Margaret's Bay area. Few people know the extent of it's boundaries and the role it plays in the area.

The Watershed extends from the communities of Hubley/Five Island Lake at the northern end to the communities of Seabright and Glen Margaret where it empties into St Margaret's Bay.

The Woodens River Watershed was first used by the Mi'kmaq. European settlers were attracted to the lakes and rivers which were well stocked with fish, and engaged in activities such as hunting and angling. It supported the ship building industry in St. Margaret's Bay and provided a source of fuel. It was not long before tourism and trade in the Watershed began.

Today the Watershed is used for recreation and residential development. Forestry continues in the southern area. Fishing and hiking

remain popular activities for residents and visitors.

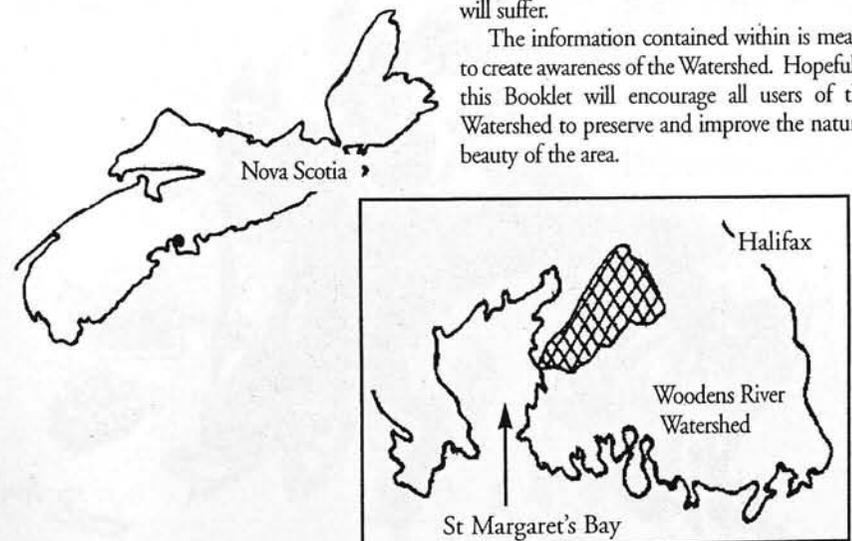
The Watershed is home to a wide variety of Nova Scotian wildlife and indigenous plants. It is also an area of historical interest as two former roads cross it's boundaries. These roads form the foundation for a network of trails in the area.

This booklet is the outcome of a summer project carried out by the Woodens River Environmental Action Team. WREAT was formed by four students who were concerned about the condition of the area.

Working under the sponsorship and supervision of the Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization, their goal was to map and collect information about the Watershed and to promote a sense of responsibility for the preservation of the Watershed area.

The human impact the Watershed has sustained over the years is not irreversible, but if it continues, the watershed and surrounding areas will suffer.

The information contained within is meant to create awareness of the Watershed. Hopefully this Booklet will encourage all users of the Watershed to preserve and improve the natural beauty of the area.



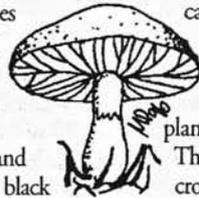
The Watershed's Floral Environment

For centuries humankind has felt a sense of awe and wonder for the natural world. Its beauty has inspired poets and songwriters, and its wilderness has thrilled and challenged adventure seekers everywhere. We have begun to develop a sense of responsibility for nature as we realize that we share this planet with many other living beings.

There are lots of great places to explore in the Woodens River Watershed, each with its own special qualities for visitors to enjoy. The varying terrain in the watershed provides any visitor with a wide range of sights to see. There are sections of old and new forests, bogs, barrens, swamps and wetlands. The forest areas are home to both coniferous and deciduous trees such as red and black spruce, jack and white pine, eastern hemlock, white and yellow birch, trembling and big tooth aspen, maple and oak. The majority of the

main trails are in the open while most of the side trails are canopied.

Some common plants of the area are berries such as raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, tea berries, bunchberries, strawberries, and swamp dewberries, and plants and flowers such as the starflower, blue flag, bluebead lily, indian pipe, orange hawkweed, sheep laurel and prairie rose. It is good idea to bring an identification booklet along on any outdoor trip if identification is an interest. Many of the berries mentioned above



can be found along with several types of lichen in the barren areas of the watershed.

The soil supporting these trees and plants is fairly sandy and granite based. This is a result of the glaciers that once crossed the area.

The watershed's environment is rich in its diversity and worth exploring.



4

The Watershed's Fauna Environment

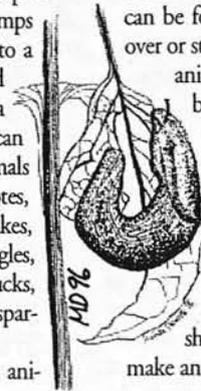
The Woodens River Watershed is rich in its diversity of wildlife. There are many different species of animals that can be seen if one is quiet and takes the time to look. Tracks can be found in muddy areas and other traces of wildlife such as a tree stripped of its bark by a porcupine can be seen by the watchful eye. Stumps or sticks with the ends chewed off to a point is evidence of a beaver and small, black-brown scat piles are a sign of rabbits. Even bear tracks can sometimes be found. Common animals in the area are deer, moose, fox, coyotes, squirrels, raccoons, dragonflies, snakes, spruce and ruffed grouse, bald eagles, hawks, osprey, hummingbirds, ducks, and small birds such as chickadees, sparrows and kingfishers.

Sometimes deer and other large animals can be seen on a main trail because animals will use human trails that connect with their own.

Very small trails that are not used by humans are common and are made and used by animals like rabbits.

Any users of the trails should be aware of the wildlife that could be unintentionally harmed. Small animals such as frogs, toads and snakes can be found on trails and are sometimes run over or stepped on. It is important to respect an animal's territory. Insects can sometimes be a nuisance and hornets nests can be easily disturbed by mistake. When in the woods overnight, campers should tie their food high in a tree to avoid attracting animals to the campsite.

Human food and garbage that has been left behind can seriously harm an animal. The watershed can easily be shared by humans and nature if visitors make an effort to act responsibly.

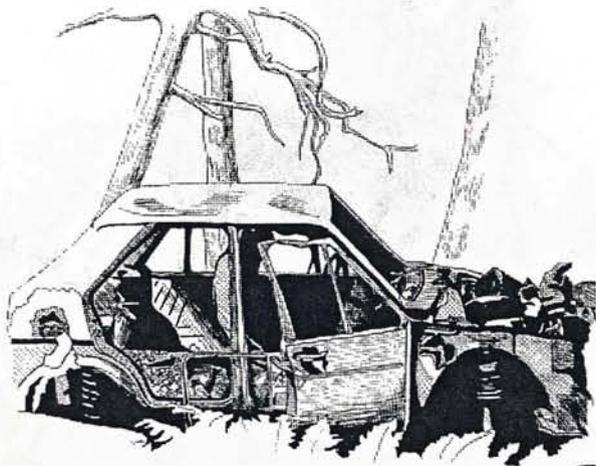


5

Environmental Concerns

The Woodens River Watershed has been used by people for centuries. Over the years some users have mistreated and misused the area. This has caused the environmental quality of the area to be degraded. There are serious environment problems in the watershed such as dumping, erosion and PCB contamination.

When the information for this booklet was collected in 1996, the authors took a survey of the junk piles in the watershed. Over forty piles were found. The majority of these were car wrecks that had been driven into the area and left behind. Also discovered were fridges, furniture and building materials including paint, shingles and concrete. Some of the cars found dated back to 1959 but most are recent. This abuse of the area still takes place and ruins the aesthetic quality of the trails. More importantly, these dump sites are damaging to the local ecosystem. Any leaking fluids can pass into the water and spread through the watershed. The refrigerators are also a concern because they hold CFCs (chloroflourocarbons) that damage the ozone.



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Erosion can be a problem as well. It is a process which occurs naturally throughout the watershed. Misuse of the area can lead to an acceleration of this process. The most obvious evidence can be found in the areas that have been logged or clear cut. Clearcutting removes all of the trees in a given area leaving only dry stumps and branches that can be a fire hazard in dry weather. Heavy machinery destroys the top organic layer of soil that is vital to the regeneration of a forest. Once the second layer of mineral soil is exposed it washes down hills into the streams. Without trees forming a buffer zone along a river, soil can wash directly into the water and suffocate fish spawning habitat. Clearcutting is the most economical way to harvest a forest but the most costly to the environment. There are alternative methods of harvesting that are being promoted by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources.

Any human activity such as hiking, biking, or camping may impact an area, but clearly

irresponsible use of motorized vehicles causes rapid erosional damage to delicate areas. The majority of ATV users are responsible when operating their vehicles but some are not and are possibly causing damage unknowingly. Some reckless users have brought a bad name to the sport. Areas such as bogs, barrens, and stream banks are easily damaged and difficult to restore. The worst damage is caused in spring after the heavy rains. Alternate routes that avoid these delicate areas would help solve this problem and create less damage.

A major environmental concern that has drawn attention to the watershed is PCB contamination. The problem began at a former metal salvage yard in the area. The PCBs coming mostly from the salvaging of copper from power line transformers entered the system of lakes and streams though Five Island Lake and have polluted the sediments in several lakes in the watershed. A liaison committee was formed with local residents, representatives of the NS Department of Transportation and Public Works and the NS Department of the Environment to work with the government towards the successful cleanup of the area. The dumpsite was partially excavated and the contaminated soil was stored in special containers.

Several advisories were issued because of concerns for human health and the environment. At present (1996), the Department of Health is advising people not to swim or boat in the North Bay section of Five Island Lake to avoid stirring up contaminated sediment that could move downstream. Another advisory is against eating the fish caught in particular lakes in the watershed (see recreation). A study was conducted of the possible effects on wildlife in the area. Mink and loons were studied and the conclusion was that both could be at serious risk. However, the conclusions are theoretical and only time will tell the true impact of the contamination.

Some environmental problems in the watershed are not irreversible and can be improved. Community responsibility and cooperation is essential. There are many things that citizens can do to improve the condition of the area. Anyone in the area should be careful not to leave any garbage behind. Everyone is responsible for packing their own belongings out when they leave the watershed. It would not hurt to carry some extra garbage out as well if it is found. Human beings can be the environments worst enemy or best friend.



7

Recreation

With over 28 km of trails and 19 lakes there is a wide range of recreational uses of the watershed. The larger dirt roads known as fire roads are used extensively by mountain bikers, ATV users and 4x4 truckers. These roads are wider and less rocky than other trails in the watershed and are best suited to these types of vehicles. The smaller trails are used more by hikers but suit the avid ATV or bike travelers as well. In the winter months some trails are used for cross-country skiing, skiddooing, and dog sledding. These activities make the watershed a year-round recreational area.

One of the main advantages of hiking the watershed is that it enables the hiker to gain a better appreciation for the area. A wide range of wildlife can be seen on the trails and lakes as visitors enjoy the natural environment. Hikers can access all trails including the smaller side trails.

Anglers who have visited the area in the past have found excellent fishing. Many have special spots that they revisit year after year. Unfortunately some areas of the Woodens River

Watershed have become contaminated by PCBs. The Department of Health has advised that the public not eat fish caught in: **Sheldrake Lake, Birch Hill Lake, Holland Marsh Lake, Lizard Lake, Frederick Lake, Five Island Lake Run, Five Island Lake, East Duck Pond, Hubley Big Lake, and Long Lake.**

Though the fish may be contaminated, the watershed's many lakes are safe for activities such as kayaking or canoeing and are beautiful spots to visit.

There is something in the watershed for everyone to enjoy. It is a great place for outdoor enthusiasts of any age at any time of the year.

Note: By law you must bring a compass, map, knife and matches into the woods with you when participating in an outdoor activity. Always remember safety.



Trails

The trail inventory was the main purpose of the 1996 summer project by WREAT. The following pages contain descriptions of the trails in the watershed which have been compiled with as much accuracy as possible.

Every year there are stories of people getting lost in the woods. Most people get lost because of a lack of preparation and knowledge of the area. We strongly advise that all people who enter the watershed carry a daypack and a topographical map of the area. The maps in this booklet are intended as a guide and are meant to be accompanied by a more detailed map. The map of Halifax 11 D/12 in the National Topographic System is at a scale of 1:50000 and shows the entire watershed. It is a suitable map of the area which can be purchased at most outdoor recreation supply stores.

It is a good idea to make up an itinerary detailing your route and leave it with a responsible person along with the time you expect to return. Once you have decided on a route stick to it! Exploring that little side trail could be the mistake that gets you lost. The times that are listed in the trail descriptions are meant for hikers traveling at a fair pace so always leave ample time to complete your trip.

The trails are not maintained by any specific group but most users will remove deadfalls and clear drainage ditches.

Due to poor drainage in several areas, users should be prepared to get a bit wet. Making trails that skirt the water holes is a practice that is undesirable because they enlarge the existing water holes. These side trails do not last long because the ground becomes compressed and then floods.

Another area of concern that users should be aware of is the terrain. Erosion has carried away much of the gravel on the hills exposing loose rocks that can be hazardous. Some trails also have rocks protruding from the ground. Hikers are advised to wear proper footwear and boots that provide good ankle support.

Most of the bridges are in fair condition and allow users to cross with ease. The bridge that crosses the run between Brines Little Lake and Albert Bridge Lake (known as Albert Bridge) is in need of some repair. The stringers are in good condition and can be crossed with caution, but the decking is unsafe due to rot.

In the trail descriptions under the uses category biking should be interpreted as mountain biking. None of the trails in the watershed are suitable for street bikes.

Trail markers have been placed at even intervals on the trails for the benefit of all users. They are made of corrugated plastic, similar to that used in real estate signs. The markers are 6" square and have been placed between 7' and 9' above the ground. They are visible from both directions. Some of the trails are very obvious and in these cases marking has been limited to widely spaced intervals and where the trail forks. Where the trails are not so obvious the markers have been placed within line of sight. In some areas it was not possible to use these markers so survey tape of the same colour has been used. In the trail descriptions the marker has been listed under: Colour.

These trails have been in existence for some time. With proper use they will continue to provide pleasure for a long time to come.

Trail Heads (#s correspond with maps)

1. Three Brooks Trail: Take Exit #4 off the 103 highway and turn towards Hubley. Follow route #3 for 2.6km and turn left onto Hubleys Road. Turn right at the T and take the next left, Hubley's Lake Rd., into the Three Brooks subdivision. Follow this road to the end. The Three Brooks Trail is straight ahead.

2. Joshua Slocum Trail: Take Exit #4 off the 103 highway and turn towards Hubley. Follow route #3 for 5.4km to Lewis Lake and turn left onto Joshua Slocum Ave. Follow Joshua Slocum

Follow Joshua Slocum Ave. to the end. The Joshua Slocum Trail is straight ahead.

3. Old Halifax Road: Take Exit #5 off the 103 highway and turn towards Tantallon on highway 213. Take the next left onto route 333 towards Tantallon. Follow route 333 through to Glen Haven for 6.5km, and turn left onto Old Halifax Road. Follow it to the end. The Old Hubley Road is straight ahead. Woodens River Road is through a gate on the right.

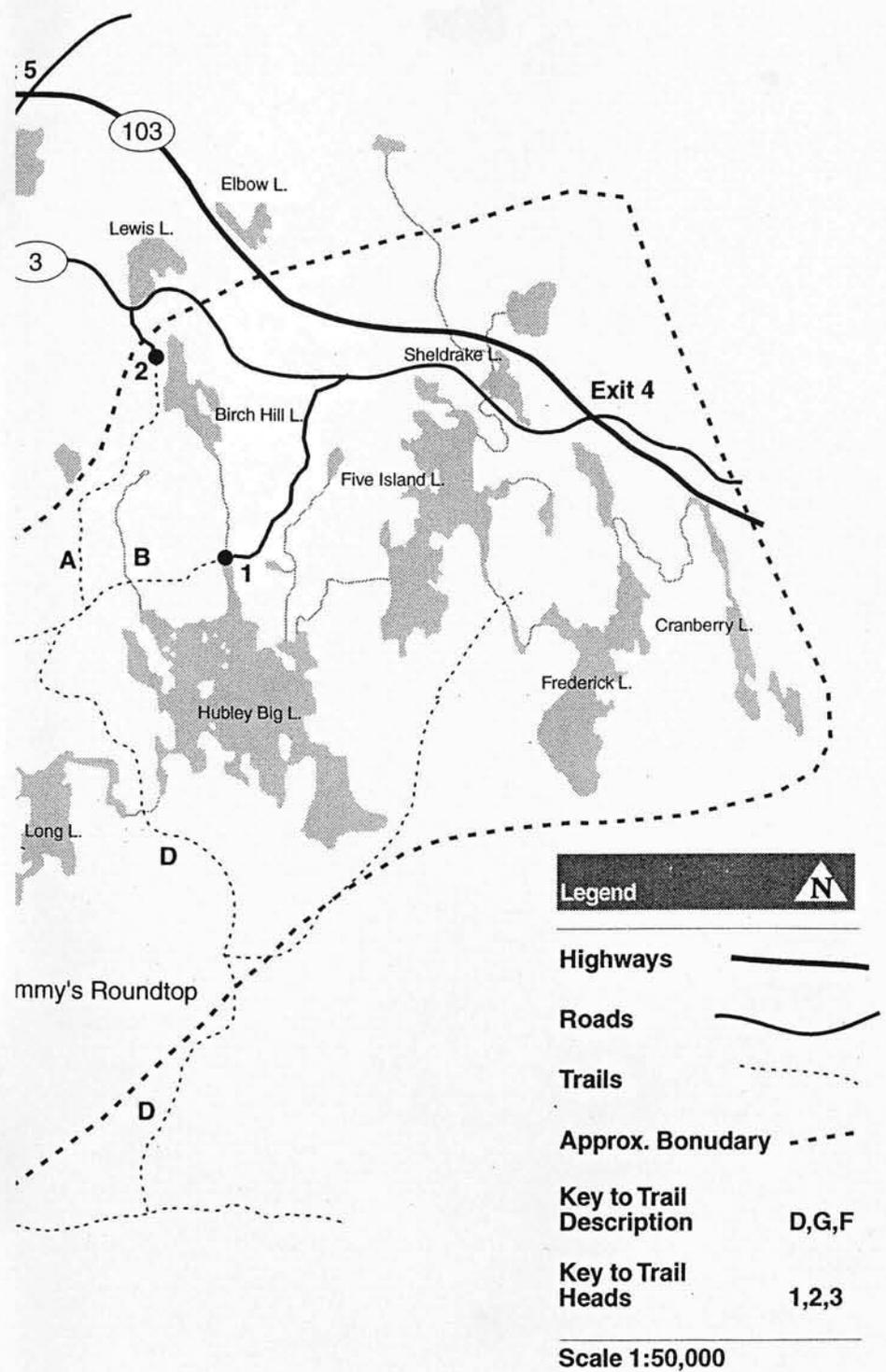
4. Woodens River Road: Take Exit #5 off the 103 highway and turn towards Tantallon on highway 213. Turn right at the end of highway 213 and take the next left onto route 333 towards Tantallon. Follow route 333 through to

213 and take the next left onto route 333 towards Tantallon. Follow route 333 through to Seabright for 12km. Turn left onto Woodens River Road just before the bridge. Follow it 500m to a clearing where you can park.

5. Westhaver Road: Take Exit #5 off the 103 highway and turn towards Tantallon on highway 213. Turn right at the end of highway 213 and take the next left onto route 333 towards Tantallon. Follow route 333 through to Glen Margaret for 12.3km across Woodens River Bridge. Take first left, Westhaver Road, across from yellow "caution-sanding only" sign. Turn left at the T. Old St. Margaret's Bay Road is 50m on the right.



Map of the Woodens River Watershed

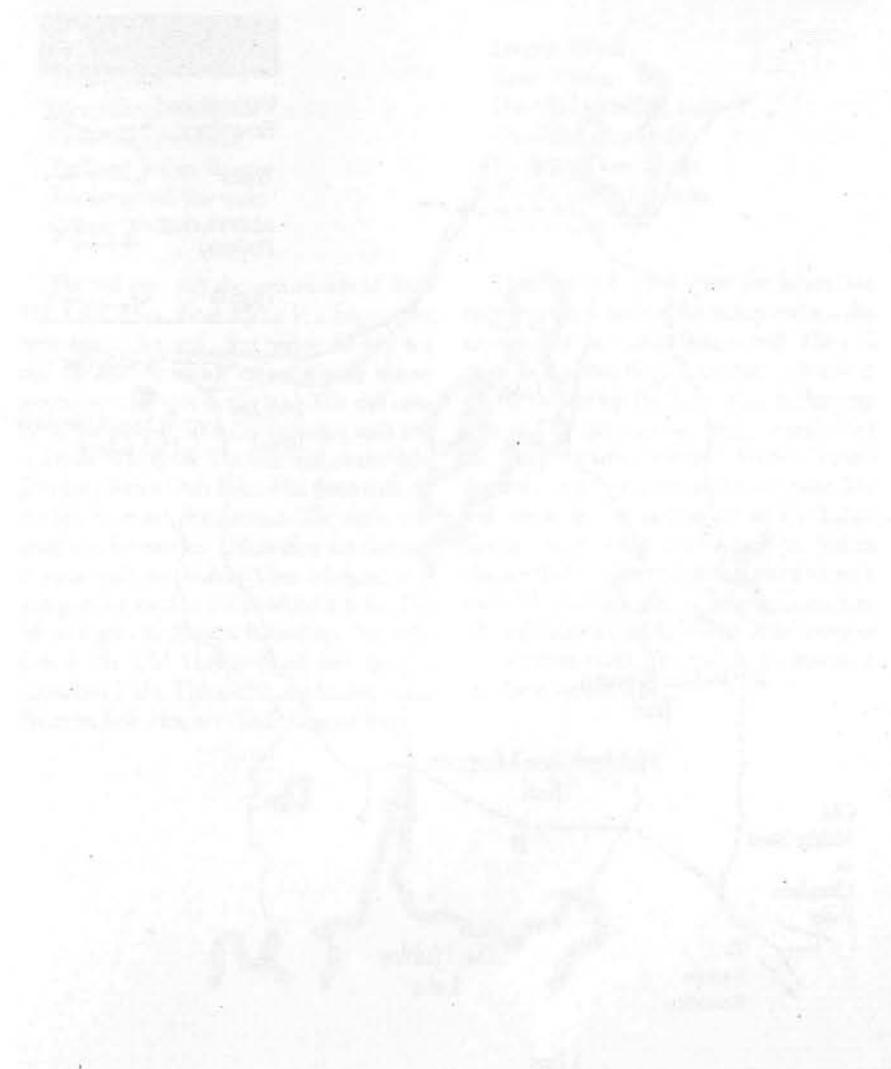


Map of the Woodens R. Watershed

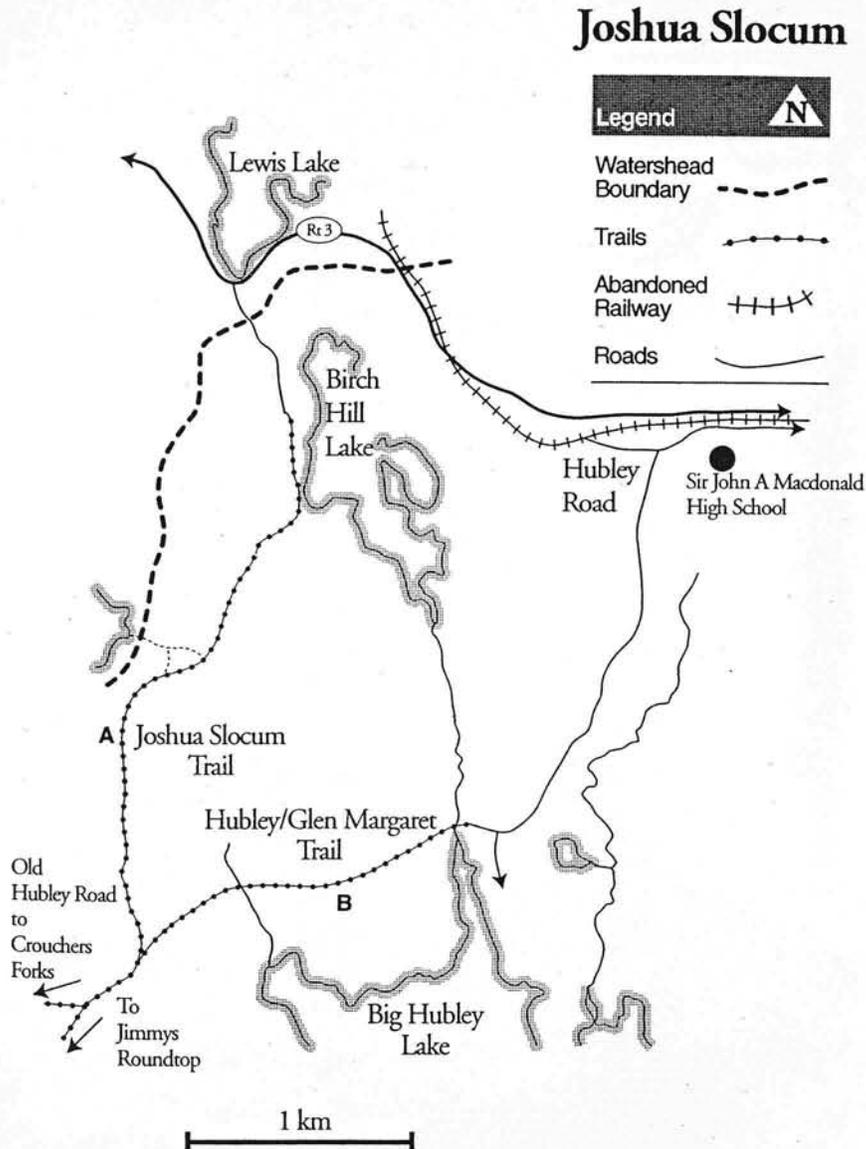


John Stoen and Glen Magner Trail

Map of the



Joshua Slocum and Hubley/Glen Margaret Trail



Joshua Slocum Trail Trail A

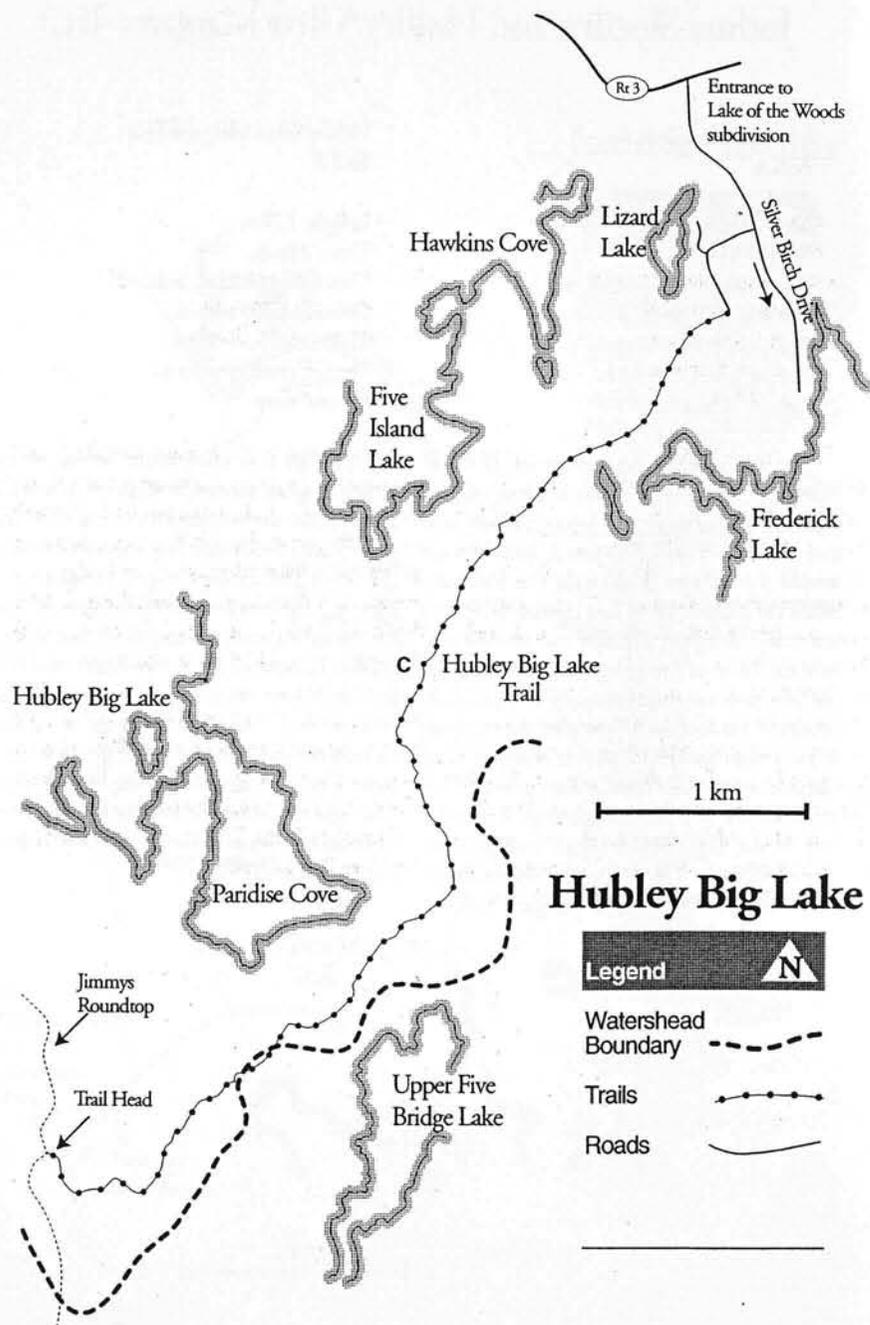
Length: 3km
 Time: 45min.
 Uses: hiking, biking, ATV, x-ski
 Ownership: Provincial
 Trailhead: Joshua Slocum
 Terrain: gravel, few rocks
 Colour: White

Hubley Glen Margaret Trail Trail B

Length: 1.7km
 Time: 25min.
 Uses: hiking, biking, x-ski
 Ownership: Provincial
 Trailhead: Three Brooks
 Terrain: gravel, few rocks
 Colour: Grey

The trail goes past the western side of Birch Hill Lake. After about 650m is a bog on the right side of the trail. Just before the bog is a trail on the left which makes a wide detour around the wet spot in the trail. The trail continues for another 500m to a clearing with several trails forking off. The first trail on the right goes for 350m to Ash Lake. The three trails on the left have no destinations. The main trail continues for another 1.5km after the clearing. It joins with the Hubley/Glen Margaret trail and goes for another 300m where it forks. The left fork goes to Jimmys Roundtop. The right fork is the Old Hubley Road and goes to Crouchers Forks. This trail is also known as the Fourteen Mile House - Glen Margaret Trail.

This trail is a good route for hikers and cyclists to access Jimmys Roundtop and it is also shorter than the Joshua Slocum trail. The trail starts with a footbridge that crosses a brook at the tip of Hubley Big Lake. This bridge may prevent ATV users from accessing the trail. After the bridge is a series of water holes that become flooded to depth of 25cm after heavy rains. The trail continues on to connect to the Joshua Slocum trail. After connecting to Joshua Slocum the trail goes for another 300m where it forks. The left fork goes to Jimmys Roundtop. The right fork is the Old Hubley Road and goes to Crouchers Forks. This trail is also known as the Three Brooks Trail



Hubley Big Lake Trail

Hubley Big Lake Trail Trail C

Length: 6.4km

Time: 4hrs.

Uses: hiking

Ownership: Provincial

Trailhead: Joshua Slocum

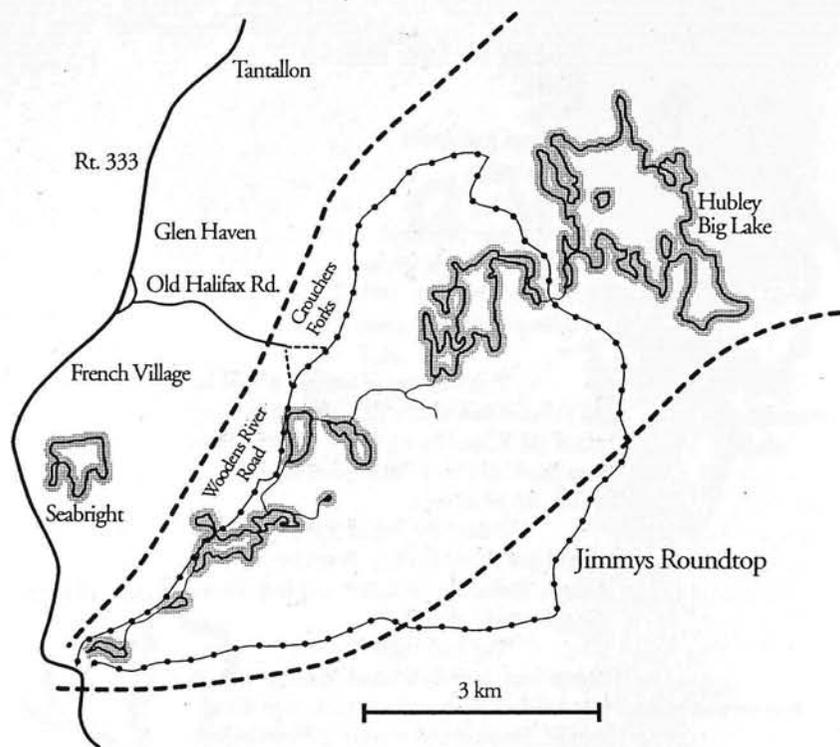
Terrain: varied

Colour: Yellow

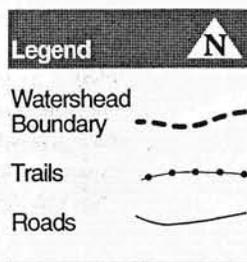
This trail was at one point used by ATVs but is now strictly a hiking trail. In many places the bushes have grown over the trail so long pants are a must. Waterproof hiking boots would also be an asset.

Follow the Joshua Slocum trail and take the fork to Jimmys Roundtop. Follow Jimmys Roundtop for 4.2km and look for an overgrown trail on the left.

The trail begins by crossing a wet, barren area and then passes through a large stand of Jack Pine. After the pine stand the terrain becomes hilly, alternating between barrens covered with low shrubs or lichen, and hardwood stands. Approximately 2.3km from the start of the trail it is crossed by a portage between Paradise Cove on Hubley Big Lake and Upper Five Bridge Lake. Follow the signs to the other side of the trail. After 5.4km the trail crosses a crude bridge over the stream between Five Island Lake and Frederick Lake. The trail crosses a gravel road 200m after the stream and continues to its end on Juniper Way in Lake of the Woods subdivision.



Jimmys Roundtop



Jimmys Roundtop Trail

Jimmys Roundtop Loop Trail D

Length: 22.5km

Time: 11hrs.

Uses: hiking, biking, ATV, x-ski, horseback riding

Ownership: Provincial

Trailhead: Joshua Slocum

Terrain: gravel/dirt, rocky

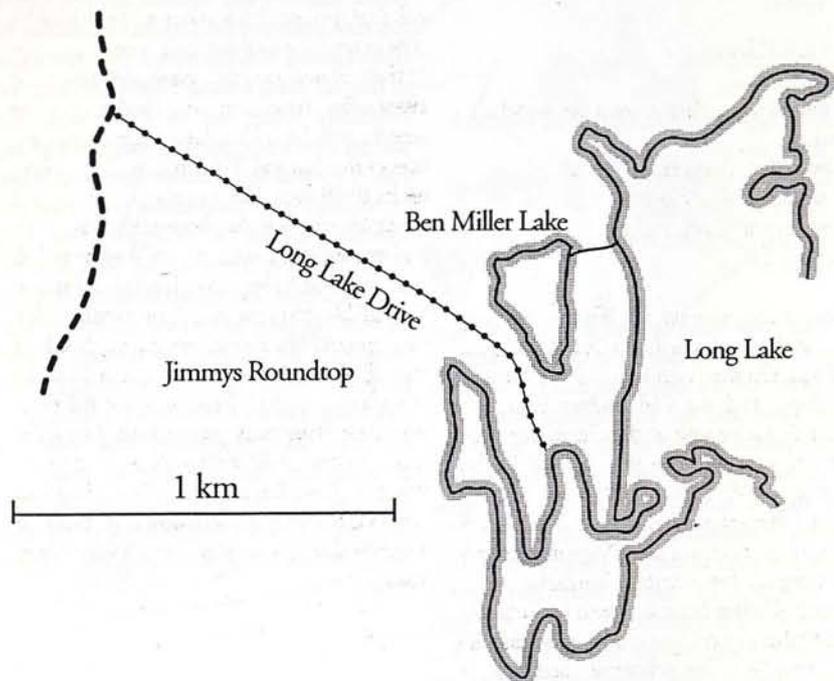
Colour: Red

Four trails make up the Jimmys Roundtop loop. On the south side is the Old St. Margaret's Bay Road. On the north-west side are Woodens River Road and the Old Hubley Road. The fourth trail is a fire road on the eastern side. There are several ways to access the loop but the best spot that is accessible to all users is Joshua Slocum. Hikers should be advised that it is difficult to complete in one day. Only advanced hikers equipped for staying overnight should attempt it. Cyclists can complete it but may wish to follow the loop counter-clockwise because it is more downhill. The following directions are clockwise around the loop.

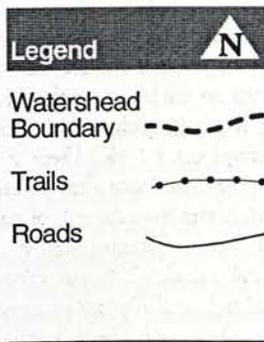
Fire Road

Follow the Joshua Slocum trail to the fork. Take the left fork to Jimmys Roundtop. There is a side trail 600m from the start on the right. Continue on the left down the main trail. After 2.6km is a large bridge which crosses the river near Woodpecker Hole. There is another side trail on the right 250m after the bridge. A lookout spot 3.3km from the start of the trail offers a beautiful view of Hubley Big Lake. Hubley Big Lake Trail is another 900m after the lookout. The fire road ends at a "T" approximately 7.3km from the start of the trail. The trail that it joins is the Old St. Margaret's Bay Rd.

The Old St. Margaret's Bay Rd. is known by several names. These include: the Old Coach Rd, the Goodwood Rd, and the Old Halifax Rd (one of several with this name). The eastern part of the trail heads towards Nine Mile River and eventually comes out in Goodwood. The authors have no current knowledge of that section of the trail and therefore cannot comment on its conditions. The western part of the trail continues towards St. Margaret's Bay. It is 6.2km long and comes out on Westhaver Rd. (see: Trailheads) The terrain is hilly and is dotted with blueberry patches. Approximately 1km from the end is a clearcut on the north side of the trail. There are several connector trails in the area which join onto Woodens River Rd; however these trails cross private land. Users can cross the river over the bridge on route 333. Woodens River Rd. is just on the north side of the bridge. (For the continuation of the loop see: Woodens River Road and Old Hubley Road.)



Long Lake Drive



Woodens River Road and Old Hubley Road

Woodens River Road and Old Hubley Road

Length: 8.5km

Time: 2.25hrs.

Uses: hiking, biking, ATV, x-ski, horseback riding

Ownership: Provincial

Trailhead: Woodens River Rd.

Terrain: dirt, some rocks

These trails make up the north-western side of the Jimmys Roundtop loop. Woodens River Road extends from the mouth of Woodens River to Crouchers Forks. Old Hubley Road continues from Crouchers Forks up to the fork at the end of the Joshua Slocum Trail.

Trail E

Colour: Orange

The Woodens River Rd. is 5km long and takes about 1.25hrs. to hike. It begins at the Woodens River Rd. trailhead and winds around several lakes on its way up the watershed. Approximately 1.2km from the start of the trail is a trail that splits to the right to the bridge below Old Mill Pond. The main trail continues for another 1.1km to Albert's Bridge. After Albert's Bridge the trail passes through a large clearcut. The trail continues for 1.5km after the clearcut up to the southern point of Crouchers Forks. Here the trail splits. Following the main road to the left for 500m will bring you to the end of Old Halifax Rd. (see: Trailheads) Following the trail straight for 600m will bring you out on the Old Hubley Rd.

Trail F

Colour: Blue

The Old Hubley Rd. is 4.1km long and begins at the Old Halifax Rd. trailhead. It takes about 45-60min. to hike. Follow the road west along the north side of Crouchers Forks. After 600m the Woodens River Rd. forks to the south. The trail continues on an uphill grade for 1.2km to Long Lake Drive on the right. The trail goes north for 2.3km and connects to the Joshua Slocum trail. The trail on the right goes to Jimmys Roundtop.

Long Lake Drive

Trail G

Length: 1.5km

Time: 25min.

Uses: hiking, biking, ATV, x-ski, horseback riding

Ownership: Provincial

Trailhead: Old Halifax Rd.

Terrain: dirt/gravel

Colour: Green

At the trailhead follow Old Hubley Road for 1.8km. Long Lake Dr. begins on the right side of the road. The trail goes past a small pit with a large boulder on the left side, about 400m from the beginning of the trail. This is at the top of a hill from which Long Lake can be seen. The trail passes Ben Miller Lake which can be seen on the left. It ends at Long Lake with a large oak stand on the right.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to promote awareness of the Woodens River Watershed and to encourage the responsible use of the area. The watershed is a great area for anyone of any age to enjoy. Right now, the area is in fair condition. This can be maintained or improved depending on the effort of the area's users.

The Woodens River Watershed Environmental Organization is working hard towards the improvement of the area and everyone can get involved. If everyone can respect the environment, wildlife and the private land in the watershed, the area will be better protected. The River is open to everyone to enjoy so everyone can play a part in its preservation.



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Notes

Suggested price \$5,
proceeds to support
Woodens River Watershed
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