

Bring back the boreal!

Hike a trail. Plant a tree. **Save a forest!**



Cape Breton
Highlands
National Park

Spring 2015



Restoring the Forest in Cape Breton Highlands National Park

Parks Canada is working with Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources and other partners to restore the forest health of Cape Breton Highlands National Park. Over the next four years, we will work to reverse the trend of forest loss and begin to bring back the boreal forest.

This conservation and restoration project will focus on three areas: Skyline Trail, North Mountain and Warren Lake. In each of these areas, Parks Canada will try different restoration techniques to test the most effective approach. Approaches include building a moose enclosure, tree planting and an experimental removal of moose from a 20 km² area on North Mountain.

This project is part of Canada's National Conservation Plan, which takes practical action to restore Canada's ecosystems.

The Results are In: **Lots of Moose!**

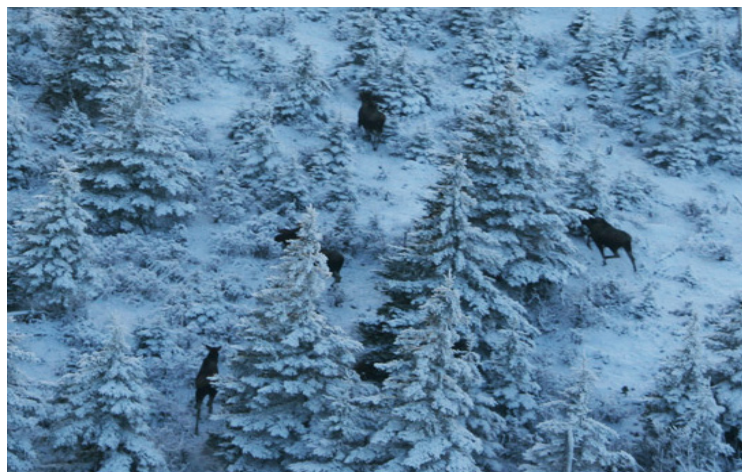
The results of the fall moose survey over North Mountain are in. The aerial moose survey started at the headwaters of the MacKenzie and North Aspy Rivers, and finished north of the park near Big Intervale, covering an area of 76 km². The survey team was lucky that a light covering of snow had fallen the night before, making moose easy to spot. The observers counted between 140 and 153 moose in the area - about two moose per square kilometer. Inside the proposed harvest area, they spotted 39 moose or 1.84/km². This is well above the number of moose that a healthy ecosystem can sustain.

The greater Cape Breton Highlands winter moose survey took place from March 6-14 and was in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources. The survey covered the entire Highlands area in northern Cape Breton, 3880 km². We will share results later this spring.

Construction: **Keeping Moose Out!**

Three sides of the five hectare moose enclosure have been put up along the Skyline Trail. The final side, the wire and the gate will be put up this spring. This will keep moose from entering the area and will protect young trees. The enclosure will be built on the trail, so all visitors will walk through the new enclosure.

We will be installing a viewing platform inside the enclosure. The design for the viewing platform is now complete. It will provide visitors with opportunities to view progress from a higher elevation and get a different perspective of the landscape. It is expected to be constructed in the fall.



Here's a preview from the winter moose survey.



The moose enclosure is nearing completion.

Bring Back the **Boreal!**



From left: an unbrowsed tree, a moderately browsed tree and a severely browsed tree.

Measuring the Impact of Moose on Forest Regeneration

In the spring of 2014, we conducted a survey of saplings and seedlings on a section of North Mountain. We counted the number of each type of tree and shrub, and we also measured whether the plants had been affected by moose browsing. This gives us information on both the short-term and long-term damage caused by moose. We found that more than half of all balsam fir and white birch saplings have been severely browsed by moose! If these

saplings continue to be browsed, they will likely die and the area will be completely taken over by grass.

Monitoring these saplings will help us determine the effectiveness of the proposed moose harvest on North Mountain. We hope to see the trees start to grow again and their health improve once there are fewer moose in the area.



Camryn, planting a tree as part of the week long Nikani Awtiken youth camp



Tree Planting

Parks Canada staff and volunteers planted 500 trees last year. Eleven thousand are planned for this year, and 46,000 in 2016. We will host tree-planting events throughout the spring and fall to give visitors, schools, community groups and organizations the opportunity to plant trees and participate in the forest restoration project.

If you are interested in planting a tree to help save a forest in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, please contact us at 902-224-2306 or cbhnp.info@pc.gc.ca to learn more.



Land and Sea Video: A Tale of Two Moose

Have you had a chance to watch the recent Land and Sea video, A Tale of Two Moose? If not, visit www.cbc.ca/landandsea and watch the informative piece on two Nova Scotia moose populations with very different situations.

For more information about the Forest Restoration Project visit www.pc.gc.ca/capebreton.

