

Saving Moose Island

Dear Ponhook Lake Neighbours,

We hope you are enjoying our great summer weather. As we've been mingling throughout the area, several neighbours have asked family members about our intentions regarding Moose Island. In the absence of information from the "horse's mouth", several have raised concerns about "outrageous plans" they hear are underway. We thought it would be best to send out a detailed letter to all of those who live near and care the most about Moose Island so you know exactly what is happening.

About Moose Island

Moose Island is an approximately 175-acre island in the heart of Ponhook Lake, which is on the Medway River system. It was granted to George W. Freeman, our great, great, great uncle, who purchased the island from the Crown in 1847 and has been in our family's care ever since. Although used by our family as a renewable timber and meadow hay resource for generations, Moose Island is still undeveloped and uninhabited because our family has always appreciated the unique role and character it plays in its undeveloped state to all of those who live on and enjoy the lake. We have rejected many offers from property developers, keeping the island undeveloped as our grandfather and father always insisted. Most recently logged by a work crew led by our father Harry Freeman, Jr. in the early 1950's, Moose Island has matured into a predominantly hemlock forest.

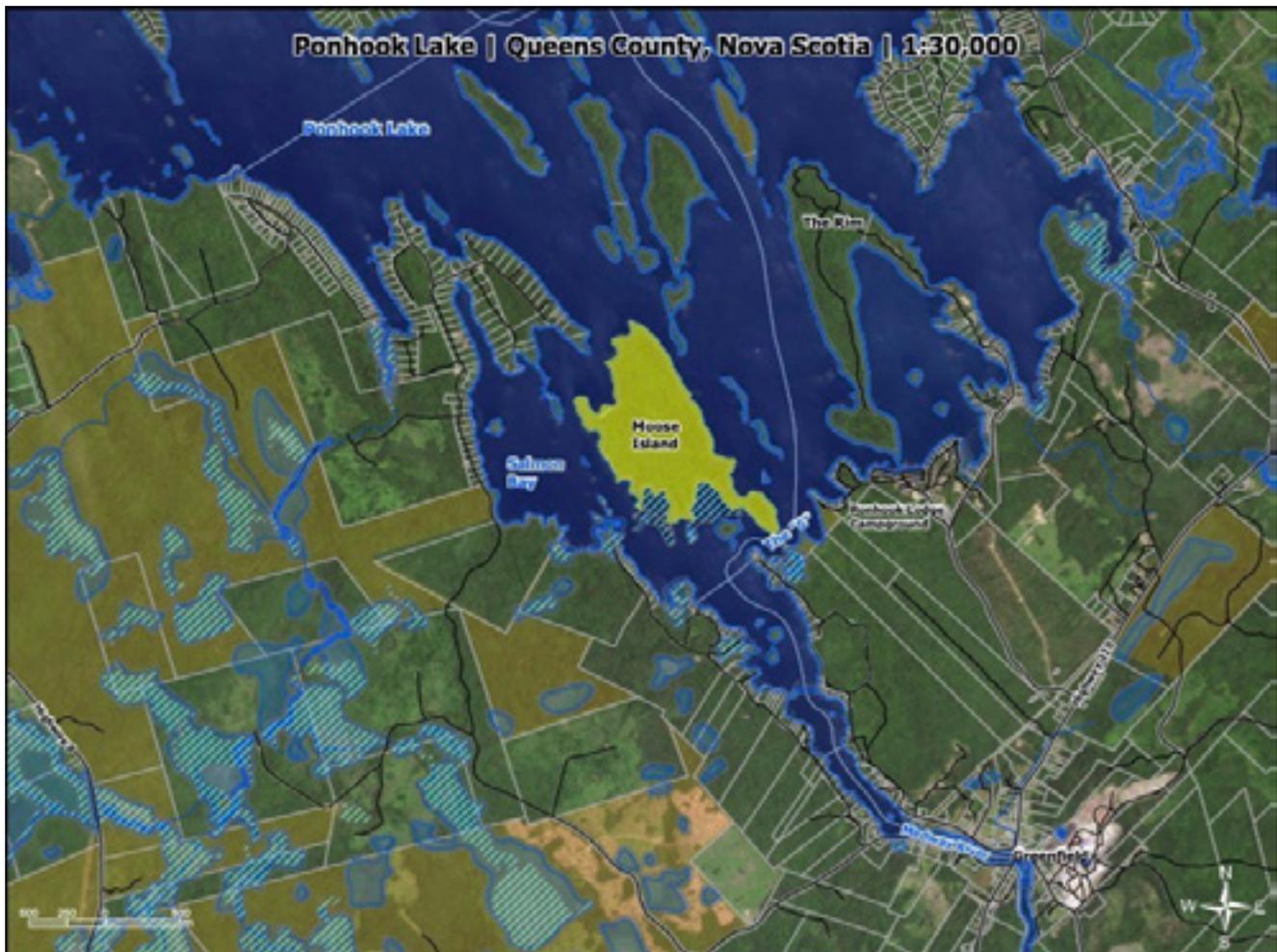




Photo: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestation on a hemlock

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

As you likely know, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), a devastating invasive insect, is currently ravaging much of the hemlock in southern and western Nova Scotia. Sadly, the hemlock forest on Moose Island has been significantly impacted. You may have noticed several trees turning brown and dying which is indicative of the later stages of infestation. We suspect many of you have hemlocks on your own property that are also infected and are considering what to do about them. We have consulted with many experts and doing nothing will very likely result in the loss and devastation of almost all hemlocks on Moose Island. Needless to say, this is unacceptable to us and we're quite certain all of you would prefer Moose Island remain green.

Our Rescue Plan Is Being Developed Now

As the landowners of Moose Island, we are assuming responsibility to properly address the HWA infestation by developing a sound and science-based recovery plan working with the Canadian Forestry Service (CFS), Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute (MTRI), NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables and other experts.

Following the advice of experts our goal is to preserve as much of the hemlock forest as possible while introducing varied Acadian tree species to the island to improve biodiversity and resilience. This will be a very costly, long term, low intensity initiative. This will not be a profitable commercial logging approach. It is our hope that our significant private efforts and investment will save our island from turning brown and dying which will be the outcome without intervention.

We will share our plan with you once it is more developed so you can be aware of what will happen and when. We hope to learn about effective HWA treatments in our work. We will share what we learn to assist your efforts to control this invasive insect on your own properties.

We do want to assure you all that our family has every intention of saving Moose Island so it can remain a magnificent part of Poonhook Lake for generations to come. Any activity we undertake will obey all the laws and follow the best forestry practices to treat or remove diseased trees and introduce healthy ones. That's our commitment to you as a fellow resident and neighbour of this precious place.

If you have any questions, please visit our website savingmooseisland.ca or reach out to either of us directly and we'll be happy to discuss where we are in the planning.

Yours truly,

Richard Freeman

Charlie Freeman