Master's Thesis

Remembering the Forgotten Shore

Sustainable Development Alternatives for Owls Head, Nova Scotia

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Declaration

I hereby confirm that I am the sole author of this thesis and it is a product of my own academic research.

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Angus MacLean

Abstract

Rural coastal communities are increasingly challenged to innovate and adapt to changes brought on by external economic, environmental, and sociocultural pressures. As a means of adapting to these changes, this study explored sustainable tourism and innovative community-based development strategies within the contexts of conservation and community engagement by focusing on the case of Owls Head, Nova Scotia. Supported by background knowledge from an extensive literature review, 13 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Community assets were evaluated with regards to their potential to contribute to sustainable tourism development in the Owl's Head region. Analysis resulted in five core themes: (1) Recognizing the Importance of Owls Head to NS, (2) Owls Head & Ecosystem Regeneration, (3) Building Trust through Community Engagement, (4) Building Community Resilience through Tourism, and (5) Localized Economic Development. Based on the results, many stakeholders believe that the accessibility and quality of tourist sites surrounding Owls Head can be improved and protected by creating and updating infrastructure. Additionally, interviewees believed programming initiatives are needed to add value to tourist experiences and infrastructure. Policy recommendations to stimulate regenerative development could include renewable energy subsidies, incentives for local business development, designation of protected areas, and/or subsidies and grant funding for local organizations and initiatives. The main lessons learned from this study are that development should: restore trust between community members and outsiders, highly value and utilize local ideas and resources, improve access to and quality of the natural environment, showcase the cultural heritage of the region, and inspire further innovation. Further research is needed to understand the full impacts, effectiveness, and complexities of community-based, community-led infrastructure and program development on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore.

Útdráttur

Strandsamfélög í dreifbýli eru í auknum mæli knúin til finna upp nýjar lausnir og aðlagast breytingum sem orsakast af utanaðkomandi hagrænum, umhverfis, og félagsmenningarlegum þrýstingi. Tilgangur þessarar rannsóknar var að kanna sjálfbæra ferðaþjónustu og endurmyndandi, frumlegar, og aðlagaðar þróunaraðferðir í tengslum við náttúruvernd og samfélagsþátttöku með því að beina athyglinni að tilvikinu Owls Head, Nova Scotia. Stutt af bakgrunns þekkingu úr víðtækri fagritarýni, fóru fram 13 hálfhönnuð viðtöl. Samfélags eignastaða var metin með hliðsjón af möguleikum á að leggja til þróunar sjálfbærrar ferðaþjónustu á Owl's Head svæðinu. Greining leiddi til fimm kjarnaviðfangsefna: (1) Að gera sér grein fyrir mikilvægi Owls Head til Nova Scotia (NS), (2) Owls Head & vistkerfisendurgerð, (3) að byggja upp traust gegnum félagslega virkni, (4) að byggja samfélaglega seiglu með ferðaþjónustu, og (5) staðbundna hagþróun. Á grundvelli niðurstaðnanna telja margir hagsmunaðilar að aðgengi og gæði ferðamannastaða umhverfis Owls Head megi bæta og vernda með því að skapa og uppfæra innviði. Að auki töldu viðmælendur að þörf væri á framtaksverkefnum um sameiginlega áætlanagerð til að auka virði upplifunar ferðamanna. Ráðgjöf um stefnumótun til að örva endurmyndandi þróun gæti ná til endurnýjanlegrar orku ívílnana, hvata til fyrirtækjaþróunar á staðnum, tilnefningu verndarsvæða, og/eða ívilnana og styrkja fjármögnunar fyrir stofnanir á staðnum og framtaksverkefni. Helsti lærdómurinn sem við drógum í þessari rannsókn er að byggðaþróun ætti að endurskapa traust milli samfélagsmeðlima og utanaðkomandi aðila, meta hátt og notfæra sér hugmyndir og aðföng á staðnum, bæta aðgengi að og gæði náttúrlegs umhverfis, sýna í góðu ljósi menningararfinn á svæðinu, og hvetja til frekari nýsköpunar. Frekari rannsóknir þarf til að skilja heildaráhrif, markvirkni, og flækjustig samfélags-grundvallaðra, samfélags-leiddra innviða og þróun áætlunar á austurströnd Nova Scotia.

I dedicate this thesis to my loved ones and peers that have supported me over the last year. Special thanks to my academic advisor, Dr. John Colton for motivating me to produce the best work that I could. Additional special thanks to my partner Taryn and my parents for always keeping me inspired.

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Acronyms

- ABCD – Asset Based Community Development
- BIPOC – Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour
- DLF – Department of Lands and Forests
- EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment
- ERGCCA – Enviro-Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act
- ES – Eastern Shore
- ESSPS – Eastern Shore Seaside Parks System
- GDP – Gross Domestic Product
- IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- LGBTQ – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer
- MLA – Member of Legislative Assembly
- NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
- NS – Nova Scotia
- PAPA – Parks and Protected Areas Plan
- QDA – Qualitative Data Analysis
- SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
- SOH – Save Owls Head
- UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNEP – United Nations Environmental Programme
- WCED – World Commission on Environment and Development
- WTO – World Tourism Organization

Land Acknowledgement

This study took place on Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People, specifically in Kjipuktuk and Ku'kukwes within the territory of the Sipekne'katik First Nation. The First Nations people of Mi'kma'ki are the original stewards and managers of the province's ecosystems. Academic studies in Nova Scotia ought to respect and engage the deep historical connection that the First Nations people of Mi'kma'ki have with the land.

1   Introduction

The economic systems of coastal communities are often dependent on the region's coastal resources. Climate change and irresponsible resource usage has put many of these resources in vulnerable states of depletion (Neumann, Ott, & Kenchington, 2017; IPCC, 2014; Grieger, Capon, Hadwen, & Mackey, 2020; Middleton, 2016). This study focused on one of the industries that commonly relies on natural resources: tourism. In order to protect the future performance of their venture, tourism operators need to take steps to minimize environmental impacts (Lane, 1994). Smaller scale forms of tourism, such as experiential tourism, can offer authentic and intimate experiences that are of higher value to tourists while having minimal effects on the natural environment (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). Outside of tourism, many organizations and communities have developed plans in an attempt to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change (United Nations, 2015; WCED, 1987; UNEP & WTO, 2005). An example is the Rio+20 Sustainable Development Goals, which outlines a list of 17 goals, each with actionable steps that countries can work towards when addressing issues of sustainability, resource management, and economic development (United Nations, 2015).

Following the Nova Scotia Provincial Election in September of 2021, the newly elected Progressive Conservative government introduced the Enviro-Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act (EGCCRA), which was created to "guide Nova Scotia towards a cleaner and healthier environment in the coming decade (and beyond) and will further encourage growth of the sustainable and green economy and the sustainability of traditional industries." (Houston, 2021, p. 2). Along with the EGCCRA, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change made commitments to protect at least 20% of Nova Scotia's land and water mass for conservation by 2030, to update environmental impact assessments to consider impacts on wetlands and aquatic environments, and to update environmental decision-making processes to encourage diversity and inclusion (Houston, 2021).

An area of note when it comes to conservation in Nova Scotia is Owls Head, shown in Figure 1. Located on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, the site was deemed ecologically significant and a top priority for conservation in 2009 by a team of researchers working on behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Environment (Colin Stewart Forest Forum

Steering Committee, 2009). In 2019, the Nova Scotia Provincial Government removed Owls Head from a list (the *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan or* PAPA) of proposed sites awaiting official Provincial Park status (Gorman, 2019). The delisting of Owls Head occurred following a purchase proposal from an international development corporation (Lighthouse Links Development Co.) that included lands within and adjacent to Owls Head (Parker, 2019). The delisting of Owls Head did not involve public consultation, and the public was eventually made aware of the removal of Owls Head from the PAPA in late 2019 through a CBC article by investigative journalist Michael Gorman (Gorman, 2019). In the wake of Gorman's article, a Facebook page called "Save Owls Head Provincial Park/Little Harbour From Becoming Golf Courses" was created by a group of concerned community members and local activists. The Facebook page became a hub for the pooling of local resources, ideas, and perspectives with regards to the protection of Owls Head.
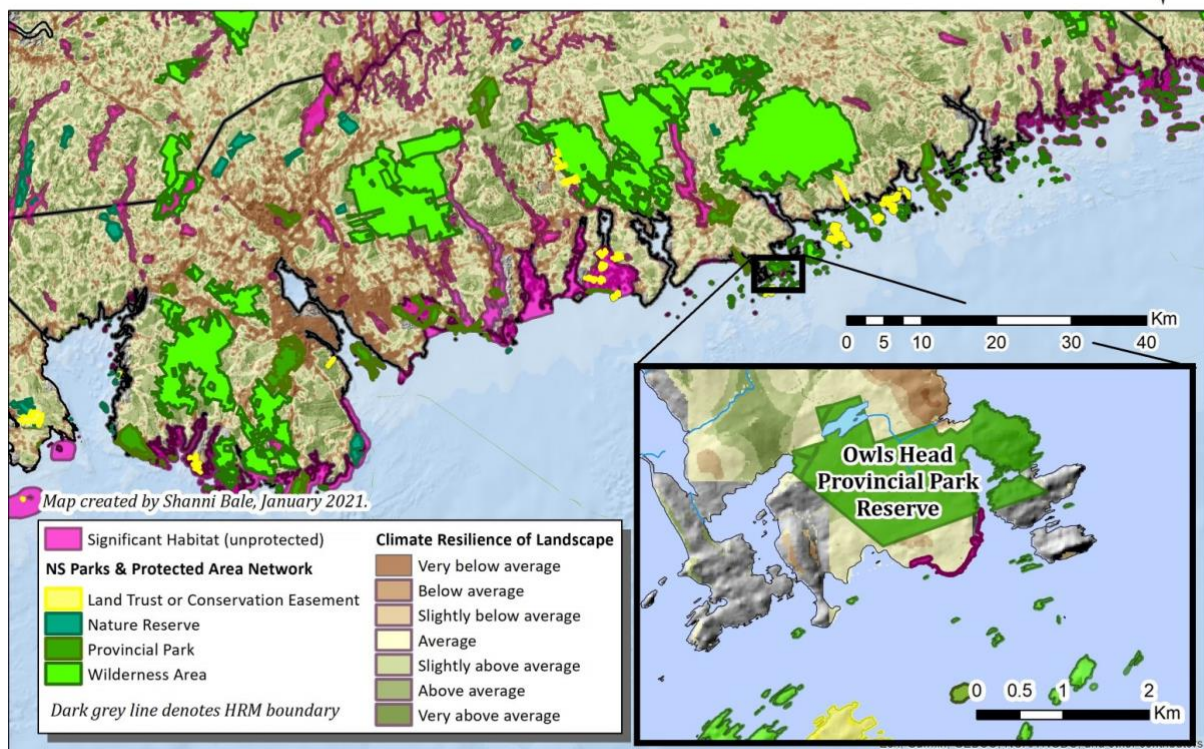
Owls Head Provincial Park is a gem of Nova Scotia, containing a variety of ecosystems, including heathlands, salt marshes, bogs, freshwater lakes, and estuaries. This habitat diversity makes it a haven for a variety of at-risk species, including the Barn Swallow & Piping Plover. Owls Head Provincial Park had been awaiting protection for decades. However, in 2019, the NS Liberal Government removed it from the 'Pending Protected Area' list so that this ecological treasure could be sold & developed. The fate of the park remains uncertain, but thousands of Nova Scotians continue to give their time, money, and energy to save it.

Figure 1. Map of Central Nova Scotia with Owls Head shown. From "Parks & Protected Area Network in in Halifax Regional Municipality", by S. Bale, 2021, https://saveowlshead.org/blog/parks-and-protected-areas-network-in-hrm/

In November of 2021, the purchase proposal for lands at Owls Head was dropped, with the development company citing a lack of government support as their primary reason for withdrawing (Donovan, 2021). The Facebook page remains active but has been changed to "Protect Owls Head Provincial Park" and continues to be a space for community members to share concerns and ideas regarding local environmental justice and conservation issues. Due to its highly diverse ecosystems and cultural richness, Owls Head now represents an opportunity for local government, NGOs, and businesses to not only conserve the environmental and cultural integrity of Nova Scotia's coastline, but to also showcase the natural landscape and cultural heritage of the province to visitors. The Facebook page also shows the amount of knowledge and resources that exist in the communities surrounding Owls Head. By utilizing the assets that already exist within communities to create sustainable development, developers can ensure that local stakeholders are the ones that reap the benefits of new development. A method that could be used to showcase the unique ecological and cultural landscapes of the Owls Head region is sustainable tourism development or similar development alternatives.

Nova Scotia is well positioned to support sustainable tourism, especially tourism focused on maritime landscapes and ecosystems. A study conducted by Tourism Nova Scotia (2019) found that the two most common motives for tourists travelling to Nova Scotia were visiting a beach (31%) and coastal sightseeing (34%). As an area with beautiful stretches of coastline, Owls Head has the ability to suit the needs of a large portion of tourists coming to Nova Scotia. To maximize value in tourism ventures, developers and tourism operators can couple products with experiences (Tourism Nova Scotia, 2019). For example, a kayak tour ending in a lobster boil on a beach is of much higher value than selling lobster as a commodity. This type of tourism, called experiential tourism, aims to bring visitors close to the heritage, culture, art, nature, and people of a region through interpretation, stories, and immersive hands-on experiences (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). By creating an economy based around immersive, high value experiences, communities can maximize the potential of their unique local assets.

1.1 Purpose Statement

This study explored sustainable tourism and other sustainable development alternatives for the Owl's Head region in Nova Scotia, Canada. More specifically, the study:

- Explored the concept of sustainable tourism and its relationship to conservation through review of key literature,
- Investigated stakeholder perspectives and visions for Owl's Head in relation to sustainable tourism and identified gaps in knowledge and conflict areas among stakeholders, and
- Developed a series of policy recommendations for sustainable tourism development in the Owl's Head region.

This study is exploratory as it collected and organized new information in order to create innovative ways to support sustainable development in Owls Head

The organization of this thesis is as follows. First, an in-depth literature review was conducted (Chapter 2) that explores the background knowledge and prior research related to sustainable development, sustainable tourism, policy tools for encouraging environmental conservation in tourism, and a brief history of Owls Head along with a background of the controversy surrounding the region. Next the methodology (Chapter 3) is explored in detail, including the ways in which data were collected and analyzed, as well as how the researcher ensured a high quality of research, met ethical standards, addressed biases, and disseminated the findings. Following the methods, the results (Chapter 4) are reviewed along with five main themes (and their related sub themes) gathered through the analysis of interview data. The discussion (Chapter 5) then interprets the findings of the previous section. The conclusion (Chapter 6) provides key policy recommendations and explores potential next steps for research in the topic area.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to gain insight on the perspectives and prior research that could potentially contribute to sustainable tourism development in the Owl's Head region. This in-depth literature review situates the topic within prior academic research as well as existing initiatives relating to sustainable tourism and coastal community development that could be of use in encouraging sustainable tourism development at Owls Head. Key areas reviewed include:

- Sustainable Development;
- Sustainable Tourism;
- Sustainable Tourism and Conservation;
- Governance Tools; and
- A Background on the Owl's Head Controversy

2.2 Sustainable Community Development & Coastal Regions

'Sustainability' is a term that many academics, authors, and institutions have defined over the last 50 years (Meadows, 1972, 1992, 2004; Mebratu, 1998; Lippert, 2004; UNESCO, 2015; WCED, 1987, United Nations, 2015). The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) states that 'sustainability' functions as a means of thinking about a future in which realms of economy, society, culture, and environment are balanced and nurtured in ways that continuously work towards improving the quality of life for all members of society (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO describes 'sustainability' as a long-term goal that society ought to work towards, while describing 'sustainable development' as referring to the process that aims to achieve sustainability (UNESCO,

2015). One of the earliest and most referred to definitions of 'sustainable development' can be found in the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED): Our Common Future. In the report, item 49 in the first chapter states that:

"Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future." (WCED, 1987).

Development is only sustainable if future populations are able to receive the same or more benefits from the natural environment as compared to current generations. Goal 14 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is specifically focused on the sustainable use of marine resources for the long-term goal of sustainable development. Goal 14 is defined as:

"Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development" (United Nations, 2015, p. 4).

Goal 14 includes 10 targets, each with specific indicators that allow people to understand when the goal has been achieved. In addition, each target includes a timeline for when the goal should be achieved (United Nations, 2015). Though Goal 14 sets ambitious targets that exist within a defined timeline, it suffers the same shortcomings as the majority of other SDGs; it lacks specific actionable steps or guidance (Persson, Weitz, & Nilsson, 2016).

The issues highlighted in Goal 14 are deeply complex and require actions that transcend geographic and disciplinary borders, taking into account the natural environment, economic systems, sociopolitical networks, and cultural landscapes locally, regionally, and internationally. To make the goals actionable, Persson, Weitz, & Nilsson (2016) identified three steps that individual countries can take: (1) understand the specific commitments that the country will make in relation to each goal, (2) understand how they will implement their commitments, and (3) decide how they will follow-up on and review the previous two steps.

Many studies concur that loss of natural resources and biodiversity is not occurring at random, and that much of this loss is a result of unsustainable land and resource management (Díaz, Fargione, Chapin, & Tilman, 2006; Baillie, Hilton-Taylor, & Stuart, 2004; Mace et al., 2005; Kotiaho, Kaitala, Komonen, & Paivinen, 2005; McKinney & Lockwood, 1999). With the loss of natural resources and biodiversity, industries and

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communities may suffer both economic and cultural losses. The long-term environmental and economic sustainability of coastal communities is often dependent on the ways in which businesses and industries, like those associated with tourism for example, interact with the natural environment. According to the model of non-renewable resource extraction created by Goodland and Daly (1996), if an industry irresponsibly handles the marine resources of an area, the region will eventually be depleted of those resources and may suffer economic downturn as a result.

To relate the issue of natural resource loss to tourism, Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik (2012) argue that when environmental resources are destroyed or degraded, a destination becomes less attractive to visitors. For example, a 2017 study found that people visiting Barbados would not return if the visible quality of the environment declined by 5 or more percent (Schulmann, Skeete, & Waite, 2017). The study also found that tourists placed high monetary value on environmental resources such as coral reefs and sea-water quality, and that they would pay more to see and experience natural resources of higher quality (Schulmann, Skeete, & Waite, 2017). Similarly, Rolfe and Windle (2003) found that most travelers surveyed in the South Pacific were willing to accept increases in fees for the protection of cultural heritage sites. It is clear that the ways in which tourism businesses and relevant governing bodies interact with ecosystems and cultural heritage sites impacts the ways in which visitors perceive and place value upon these destinations.

2.3 Defining Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism emerged as an academic term in the early 1990s as a product of the growing popularity of the concept of sustainable development (Torres-Delgado & Palomeque, 2012). Sustainable tourism is a strategy many coastal regions explore in order to develop and support local economies, and in doing so, work towards the aims of Sustainable Development Goal 14. It is important that institutions and individuals reckon with the meaning of 'sustainable tourism' and how it can be used both as a tool to solve local issues and as a driver of global change (McMinn, 1997). Various definitions of sustainable tourism were created by academics and institutions throughout the 1990s (McIntyre, Hetherington, & Inskeep, 1993; Eber, 1992; Countryside Commission, 1995; Payne, 1993; Woodley et al., 2019). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines sustainable tourism similarly to the WCED's definition of sustainability:

"Tourism which meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future." (McIntyre, Hetherington, & Inskeep, 1993, p. 7)

While a good definition to initiate a discussion, this definition lacks specificity in terms of the actions that are required to protect these present and future needs. Perhaps a more useful and specific definition was formed by Butler in the same year:

> … tourism which is developed and maintained in an area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an infinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and well being of other activities and processes. (Butler, 1993, p. 29).

Other terms have emerged to describe relationships between tourism and the environment. These include nature-based tourism, cultural tourism, green tourism, eco-tourism, environmentally friendly tourism, geo-tourism, adventure tourism, and alternative tourism (Aall, 2014; Butler, 1999; Butler, 1990; Zolfani et al., 2015; Kane & Tucker, 2004; Dowling, 2013). Each of these types of tourism carry differing connotations and implications. For example, 'nature-based tourism' does not necessarily imply that the tourism venture is sustainable, but only that it utilizes the natural environment as a primary resource (Aall, 2014). The Québec Declaration on Ecotourism states that ecotourism (1) contributes actively to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage, (2) includes local and Indigenous communities in its planning, development and operation, and contributing to their well-being, (3) interprets the natural and cultural heritage of the destination to visitors, and (4) lends itself better to independent travelers as well as to organized tours for small size groups (UNEP & WTO, 2002). An emerging form of tourism is experiential tourism, which seeks to engage the senses and minds of tourists in impactful ways to create deeply meaningful tourist experiences (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). Experiential tourism is rooted in authenticity, as it aims to bring visitors closer to the people, stories, landscapes, and culture of a region (e.g., not only eating local food, but also hearing from the chef about the history of the dish and where the ingredients come from (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018).

An important critique of sustainable tourism is that it only aims to sustain the current state of ecosystems, whereas many argue that tourism needs to regenerate ecosystems (Owen,

2007; Cave & Dredge, 2020; Glusac, 2020; Wahl, 2018; McEnhill, Jorgensen, & Ulrich, 2020). The term 'regenerative tourism' emerged as a response to this critique (Owen, 2007). This form of tourism strives to leave destinations in better environmental, economic, and social conditions than before tourism occurred, rather than maintaining current conditions (Glusac, 2020). Some authors have argued that regenerative tourism is the natural maturation of the concept of sustainable tourism (Cave & Dredge, 2020; Glusac, 2020; Çakar & Uzut, 2020; Pollock, 2019). In other words, there is a need to regenerate ecosystems and economies to a point where they are whole and healthy, and then paradigms of sustainability can be applied to maintain these thriving systems (McEnhill, Jorgensen, & Ulrich, 2020).

Understanding how to manage, monitor, and implement sustainable tourism is supported by several key concepts including carrying capacity. The term 'carrying capacity', originating in environmental planning, refers to the maximum population that an ecosystem can support over a given period of time (Taiwo & Feyisara, 2017; Baldwin, 1985). In relation to tourism activities, carrying capacity refers to the number of visitors a tourism destination can accommodate before the negative effects of tourism (e.g., environmental degradation, overcrowding) begin to outweigh the positive benefits (Butler, 1999). These negative effects may be felt immediately or may have a more insidious onset (Butler, 1999). Understanding the carrying capacity of a destination is an essential step towards supporting sustainable tourism development in the region. This said, Butler also notes that numbers alone are not a sufficient indicator of the effects of tourism on an area (Butler, 1999).

2.4 Measurement Tools for Sustainable Tourism

Many articles have stressed the importance of using indicators in evaluating a tourism venture's progression towards its goals, as well as measuring its impacts (White, McCrum, Blackstock, & Scott, 2006; Miller, 2001; Castellani & Sala, 2010). Most often, indicators rely on the perceptions of local residents, visitors, and tourism operators regarding the impacts of tourism, and may not show the true impacts of tourism in that area (Buckley, 2012). This is likely because these individuals are not aware of impacts or they do not know what impacts look like (Buckley, 2012). It is useful to form a set of effective indicators that show the true effects of tourism on several different aspects of society

including local and regional economy, local culture and identity, built infrastructure locally and regionally, local and global environmental quality, and systems of governance. Buckley (2012) identifies regulatory instruments, like sustainable tourism indicators, as the foundational tool of creating sustainability in tourism.

Engagement with communities, government and non-government organizations can support the development of relevant indicators (White, McCrum, Blackstock, & Scott, 2006). White, McCrum, Blackstock, and Scott (2006) note that it is important that indicators are:

- Measurable – necessary data available/can be collected;
- Sensitive – to spatial and temporal change;
- Economically viable- cost effective;
- Acceptable and accessible;
- Useable and easily interpreted;
- Reliable and robust;
- Verifiable and replicable;
- Participative process – meets the needs and interest of target audience;
- Specific – clearly relate to outcomes;
- Timely – show trends over time;
- Transparency in methodology and selection;
- Relevant to local, regional, national policy and to local concerns; and
- Scientifically well-founded.

Regulatory instruments, like indicators and government policy, dictate and restrict the movements and actions of visitors travelling to a given destination, and therefore can be used as a means of protecting the ecological and cultural health of vulnerable regions (Matteo, 2021; Wanner, Seier, & Pröbstl-Haider, 2020; Castellani & Sala, 2010). Indicators create accountability in tourism operators by providing limits to activities and actionable steps to work towards achieving environmental goals (Buckley, 2012). Like indicators, government policies create a level of accountability for tourism activities by enforcing environmental standards. Policies can also be useful tools in ensuring that the tangible (e.g., monetary profits, improved public infrastructure) and intangible benefits (e.g., improved cultural connectivity between communities/regions/nations, community

empowerment, celebration and protection of community heritage) of tourism activities are realized within the community where the tourism activities are taking place (Haigh, 2020; WTO, 2015; Kanwal, Pitafi, Rasheed et al., 2019). Buckley (2012) lists technological innovations, community planning strategies, and incorporating environmental education into tourism ventures as other approaches for promoting sustainable forms of tourism. These innovations and strategies can be incentivized and supported through government policy.

2.5 Sustainable Tourism & Conservation

Adherence to principles of sustainability and conservation can be highly beneficial to tourism ventures in limiting negative environmental impacts. Conservation principles can also protect the future economic performance of tourism activities, educate tourists/general public on the importance of sustainability, create alternative employment opportunities, and encourage and support infrastructure development, programming, and community engagement through conservation initiatives (Lane, 1994; Muntifering, 2019; Muntifering et al., 2020; Wojciechowksi, Kaszycka, & Otadoy, 2021, Thompson, 2020).

By engaging in conservation initiatives in tandem with tourism activities, tourism operators are protecting the future economic performance of their business (Lane, 1994). Many tourism destinations rely on the visible vibrancy and biodiversity of the natural environment as their main driver of customer satisfaction (Güzel, Ehtiyar, & Ryan, 2021; Su et al., 2021; Mäntymaa, Tryväinen, Juutinen, & Kurttila, 2021). As resource extraction industries often negatively influence the visible quality of environmental landscapes, it is important to limit environmental impacts caused by these activities so that tourism and similar industries do not suffer losses in revenue (Mäntymaa, Tryväinen, Juutinen, & Kurttila, 2021). In a 2005 report written by the United Nations Environment Programme, overall attractiveness of the tourism destination is listed as one of the main drivers for long-term economic viability of a tourism operation (UNEP & WTO, 2005). Additionally, as illustrated by the findings of Schulmann, Skeete, and Waite (2017) and in Rolfe and Windle (2003), visitors are willing to pay a premium for destinations that showcase healthy and biodiverse ecosystems.

Buckley (2012), mentions that more subtle elements of environmental education and sustainable sourcing of local resources can be added to tourism ventures in order to work towards a larger goal of conservation. For example, a tourism venture in Namibia can increase the value that visitors place upon vulnerable species such as the black rhinoceros by educating visitors on the important role the animal plays in its ecosystem through interpretive experiences (Muntifering, 2019; Muntifering et al., 2020). Tourism operators can also educate visitors on local conservation laws, the exploitation that has led to the species' vulnerability/endangerment, and actions that visitors can take to support the protection of vulnerable species (Muntifering et al., 2020). By adding educational elements to tourism experiences regarding sustainability and natural resource management, visitors may develop connections with the place and may be more likely to support conservation initiatives in the future.

Conservation efforts in tourism can increase local employment and community involvement in environmental protection. Locals may possess knowledge that could prove instrumental to conservation (e.g., geographical knowledge, information on habitats and routines of species, or information on hunting and trading of a species) (Wojciechowksi, Kaszycka, & Otadoy, 2021). This community-based knowledge can be identified through Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). For example, people who work in fisheries have valuable knowledge that can support marine life watching tours (e.g., whale watching, snorkel tours) or culinary experiences involving seafood (Pham, 2020). By using ABCD to create tourism activities that utilize the pre-existing skills possessed by local people, the economic landscape of the community becomes more diverse and tourism exists as a complementary industry to pre-existing industries (Pham, 2020). This said, it is important that policymakers working in developing regions recognize that tourism development often increases income inequality between individuals. Unskilled workers are often paid very low wages by tourism operators (Blake, 2008; Kinyondo & Pelizzo, 2015; Zhang, 2021). Policymakers must ensure that unskilled workers receive living wages and that the wealth from tourism operations is more evenly distributed to its workers and stakeholders (Zhang, 2021).

Tourism can encourage community engagement in conservation by diverting funds to sustainable community development projects, partnering with local organizations, institutions, and businesses to address community conservation needs, or by incorporating

local events and activities into tourism experiences (Wakil, Sun, & Chan, 2021; Hughes & Scheyvens, 2021; Thompson, 2020). By protecting, promoting, and providing funding to various aspects of their community (e.g., environment, culture, economy, infrastructure, social networks), tourism operators make the community more resilient and mobilize resources that may prove useful to tourism activities in the future (Wakil, Sun, & Chan, 2021). In partnering with local businesses or organizations, tourism operators can learn about community needs related to conservation. They can also gain a better understanding of the assets and resources that a community possesses, so that these needs can be met (Hughes & Scheyvens, 2021). Tourism operators can also learn of community needs/concerns and gather essential local knowledge and resources through community forums, focus groups, questionnaires, and/or informal conversations with residents (Cole, 2006). Tourism operators can include local events in tourism experiences to educate consumers on local conservation efforts. For example, visitors can be brought to a local farms where they can learn about local sustainable food systems (Thompson, 2020). Engaging with the residents, organizations, and businesses of a community will provide tourism operators with more resources and support for future tourism experiences and conservation efforts.

2.6 Governance Tools for Conservation & Sustainable Tourism

Government can utilize various policy tools and strategies to initiate changes in the tourism sector in favor of sustainability (Dwyer, Forsyth, Spurr, & Hoque, 2013; Zhang & Zhang, 2020; Zhang, 2021). Useful policy tools and strategies could include land usage restrictions/limits, financial incentives, or investment in sustainable public infrastructure (UNEP & WTO, 2005; Halifax Regional Municipality, 2017; Skea & Nishioka, 2011).

Policymakers can control tourism activities by establishing clear, comprehensive limits to the impacts of tourism activities, and penalize those who do not operate within the limits (UNEP & WTO, 2005). Consultation and engagement are key to creating limits and goals that align with local goals and values. These limits can include spatial and land use plans that identify which areas have the capacity and potential for different types of tourism and development (UNEP & WTO, 2005). In identifying these areas, local stakeholders such as Indigenous groups should be continually consulted. Consultation and engagement can be

done through community forums, focus groups, or questionnaires (Cole, 2006). This process helps protect not only the region's physical qualities, but also its cultural and social significance. Continued and transparent consultation may settle concerns amongst local residents and stakeholders regarding new development by involving these individuals in decision-making processes. In addition, engaging community members may provide policymakers with useful local environmental knowledge. This knowledge will assist in creating zoning plans and land-usage restrictions that are sustainable and specific to the given region's ecosystems (Brondizio & Le Tournea, 2016; Armitage et al., 2010).

Along with establishing clear limits, policymakers can use financial instruments to encourage sustainable forms of tourism and environmental conservation. For example, certain resources or procedures that are utilized within the industry can be taxed (e.g., a carbon tax). Along with the resulting reductions in emissions and impacts, tax revenues can support local conservation-related research and development (UNEP & WTO, 2005; Skea & Nishioka, 2011; Eichhammer, Ragwitz, & Schlomann, 2013). Another economic instrument is financial incentives (e.g., tax breaks, subsidies, reduced rate loans, research and development support), which reward operators for engaging in activities like sustainable waste management, local food sourcing, or use of renewable energy (UNEP & WTO, 2005; Zhao, Chen, & Chang, 2016; Abdmouleh, Alammari, & Gastli, 2015). Use of financial instruments provides clear economic benefits to tourism operators. For example, Elvik and Ramjerdi (2014) found that congestion charges and toll schemes were effective policy instruments for promoting sustainable transportation and collecting funds for reinvestment in transportation infrastructure. Policymakers can utilize similar instruments to reduce costs of operations in the tourism industry (e.g., promotion of low-cost sustainable transportation, sourcing food locally and therefore cutting cost of transport).

Government can also support sustainable tourism by investing in public infrastructure such as sustainable transportation (e.g., walking trails, bike paths, rail systems) and public utilities (e.g., updated sewage systems, efficient solid waste management, renewable energy projects) that can be utilized by tourism ventures, potentially reducing operating costs (UNEP & WTO, 2005; Zeng, Wen, Bi, & Feiock, 2021). For example, the Alps Mobility Project, launched by Austria's Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology and the Ministry of Agriculture, Regions, and Tourism, reduced carbon emissions and congestion in peak tourist seasons in the

Austrian Alps. The Alps Mobility Project accomplished this by providing more sustainable transportation infrastructure such as access to electric cars and motor scooters, increased number of buses and bus routes, and increased number of pedestrian-only zones (UNEP & WTO, 2005). By investing in sustainable community infrastructure, the government is not only encouraging change within the tourism sector, but also in other sectors and individuals that utilize these public resources (Karani & Failler, 2020; Mamirkulova et al., 2020). To maintain the beauty, biodiversity, and cultural significance of destinations and maximize satisfaction in visitors, all tourism operators and related governance bodies need to contribute to environmental conservation efforts through the creation of innovative governance tools that support sustainable tourism planning.

2.7 Background of Owls Head & Controversy

2.7.1 Early Plans for Owls Head & the Eastern Shore Park System

Owls Head is a coastal headland adjacent to the community of Little Harbour, which is situated between Clam Harbour and Ship Harbour, approximately an hour's drive east of Nova Scotia's capital of Halifax. The majority of information provided in this section was largely gathered through links provided on the Save Owls Head Provincial Park website at https://saveowlshead.org/. As of May 2022, Owls Head has never been formally protected. The importance of conservation of Owls Head was first formally identified in the Eastern Shore Park System Master Plan, published on June 20th of 1980. The Eastern Shore Seaside Parks Committee, an organization comprised of local community representatives, unanimously approved the creation of an Eastern Shore Seaside Park System on May 1st of 1975 (N.S. Department of Lands and Forests, 1977). In this plan, which was created through close consultation with the Eastern Shore Seaside Parks Committee, Owls Head was designated as a "natural area", to be included in a corridor of protected coastal headlands (Smith, Kuusisto, & Euloth, 1980). These protected areas were to be conserved as authentic representations of the unique landscape and species of Nova Scotia's coastline (Smith, Kuusisto, & Euloth, 1980). To the west and east of Owls Head, respectively, Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park and Taylor Head Provincial Park were designated as sites of public recreation (Smith, Kuusisto, & Euloth, 1980).

The Eastern Shore Seaside Parks Committee was highly valued by the Nova Scotia Department of Lands & Forests at the time of the Eastern Shore Park System Master Plan's publishing, with Dale Smith (Manager of Parks and Planning at the DLF) stating that "The association has proven positive and productive" (Smith, Kuusisto, & Eutloth, 1980, p. 2). Smith continues by noting the process of public consultation has been an important step in addressing parks related issues and concerns (Smith, Kuusisto, & Euloth, 1980). Public consultation was instrumental in creating a Master Plan that considered local knowledge of native species, coastal geography, and the significance of certain areas to cultural heritage. In the years following, infrastructure (e.g., parking lots, outhouses, interpretive signage and maps, trails) was added to Clam Harbour Beach Provincial Park and Taylor Head Provincial Park, while Owls Head and some of the other regions mentioned never received funding and as a result, were never developed by the province for public access.

2.7.2 Owls Head in Scientific Documents & Government Plans

In the decades following the release of the Eastern Shore Park System Master Plan, Owls Head received little attention from government, media, or academia. Later in 2009, the Colin Stewart Forest Forum Final Report was released and made mention of Owls Head. The document was created to support the NS Government's goal of protecting 12% of its lands by 2015 (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Steering Committee, 2009). The report identifies priority areas for the government's efforts to protect lands, designating the areas by Tier 1, 2, or 3 depending on their ecological noteworthiness (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Steering Committee, 2009). Tier 1 areas are deemed highly significant and rare, with the Steering Committee stating that they "... represent the last opportunities to fill particularly critical gaps in the protected areas network, or to capture highly significant ecological features" (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Steering Committee, 2009, p. 15). Owls Head was identified as a Tier 1 area, included in a total of 215,000 hectares of land that received the highest priority designation (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Steering Committee, 2009). If 181,000 hectares of this land was protected, the 12% target set by the province would be met (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Steering Committee, 2009). The report also stresses the importance of engaging in "meaningful dialogue" with First Nations communities in relation to planning and mitigation throughout the entire conservation process (Colin Stewart Forest Forum Steering Committee, 2009).

Though Owls Head has never been formally protected, it received various informal designations in maps released by the NS provincial government. In 2011, the Protected Areas branch of Nova Scotia's Department of Environment featured Owls Head in its 12 Percent Lands for Review (Figure 2). In this document, Owls Head is highlighted in red, meaning it is crown land under review for protection (Province of Nova Scotia, 2011).
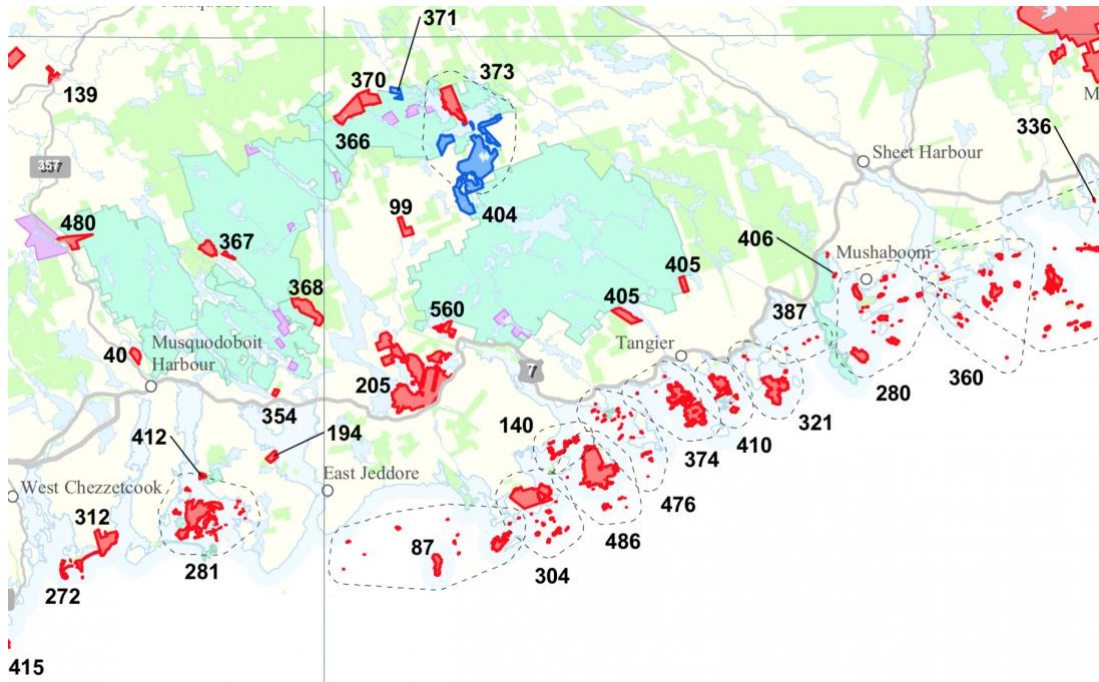
Figure 2. A Section of the 12% Lands for Review Map. Owls Head (304) Highlighted in Red. From "12 Percent Lands for Review" by Province of Nova Scotia, 2011, https://www.novascotia.ca/nse/12percent/docs/12.percent.map.lowres.pdf

In 2012, the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources created a map series that designated Owls Head as a Provincial Park Reserve (Figure 3). Included with the map is information regarding its value as a unique coastal ecosystem with opportunities for coastal environmental education as well as outdoor recreation and tourism (N.S. Department of Natural Resources, 2012). This environmental value is reiterated in the maps of Halifax's Green Network Plan. In the document's Green Network Ecology map, Owls Head is highlighted as an area of high environmental value, with sections of the headland marked as core areas to the Eastern Shore corridor (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2018).
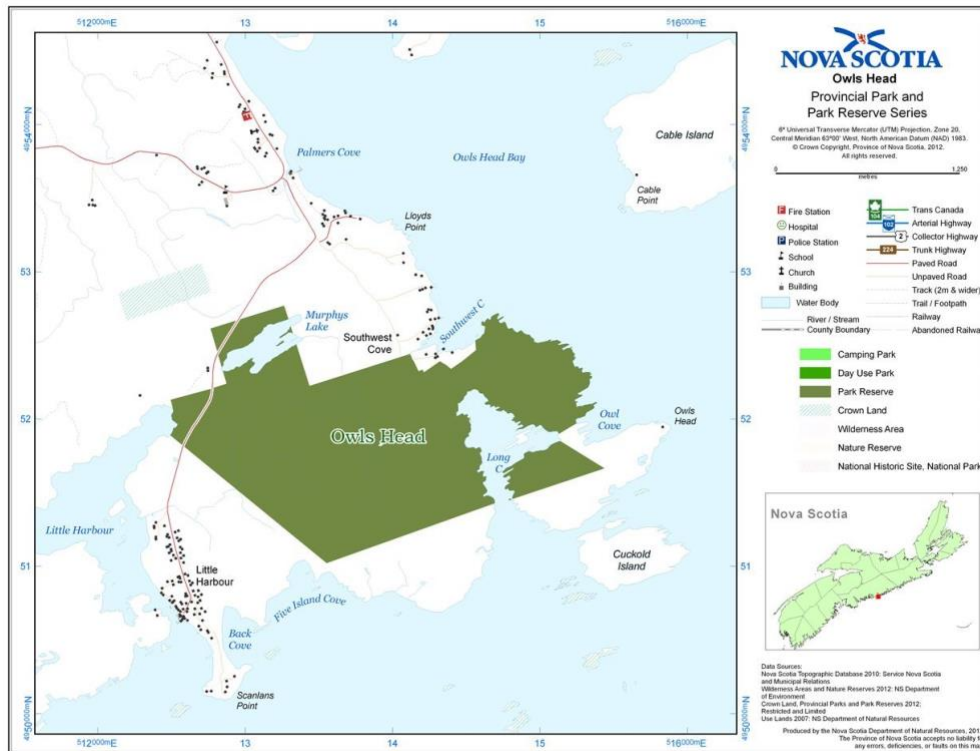
Figure 3. Owls Head shown in Provincial Park and Park Reserve Map Series. From
"Provincial Park and Park Reserve Series" by N.S. Department of Natural
Resources, 2012, https://saveowlshead.org/timeline-of-promised-protections/

Owls Head was later shown as "Owls Head Provincial Park" in two maps, one released in
a 2013 strategic plan (*Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*) by the Nova Scotia
Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, and the other in 2014 within an
Eastern Shore Wilderness Area map series (Figure 4) created by the Nova Scotia
Department of Environment Protected Areas Branch (N.S. Department of Environment &
N.S. Department of Natural Resources, 2013; N.S. Department of Environment, 2014). In
2013, the *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan* included Owls Head on a list of proposed
protected areas along with approximately 100 other Nova Scotia parks (*Bancroft v. Nova
Scotia Minister of Lands and Forestry v. Lighthouse Links Development Company*, 2020).
When Owls Head was delisted from the PAPA, it was soon deleted from the online
interactive map of Nova Scotia's parks and protected areas (Gorman, 2019).
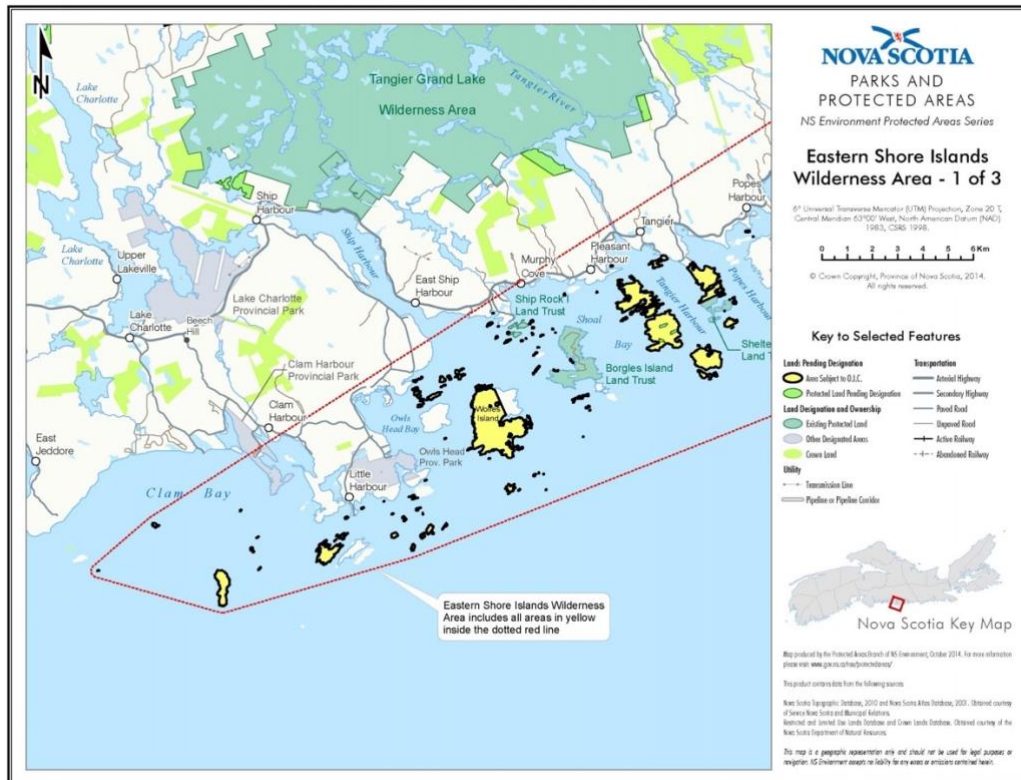
Figure 4. Owls Head shown as "Owls Head Prov. Park." From "Eastern Shore Islands
   Wilderness Area", by N.S. Department of Environment, 2014,
   https://saveowlshead.org/timeline-of-promised-protections/

2.7.3 Purchase Proposals, Delisting, & Community Response

On September 23rd, 2016, an Application for the Use of Crown Land for lands
(specifically, lands surrounding Owls Head in Little Harbour) was submitted by Sean
Glover on behalf of Beckwith Gilbert and Lighthouse Links Development Co. (Glover,
2016). The NS government responded to the application by informing Lighthouse Links
that the lands must be delisted from the PAPA before they can be sold (M. Miller, personal
communication, 2017). Months after receiving this information, Lighthouse Links
Development Co. submitted a purchase proposal for lands surrounding Owls Head in Little
Harbour on July 22nd, 2018. In this proposal, the company requests 740 acres of land,
including 12 km of coastline, in the Little Harbour region on which they would develop 2-
3 golf courses with "almost every hole to be either on the ocean or to have a spectacular
ocean view" (Lighthouse Links Development Co., 2018, p. 3). In response to the purchase
proposal, a Memorandum to Executive Council was submitted by the NS Minister of
Lands and Forestry Iain Rankin and Minister of Environment Margaret Miller called:

"Decision on whether to withdraw Crown lands at Owls Head identified for protection in the Parks and Protected Areas Plan" on February 26, 2019 (Parker, 2019).

Less than a month after the submission of the Memorandum, Owls Head was delisted from the *Parks and Parks and Protected Areas Plan*. The public did not become aware of this delisting until December 18th, 2019 when Michael Gorman, an investigative journalist with CBC News, published an article after receiving details on the delisting in response to an access-to-information request (Gorman, 2019). In the article, Gorman writes of the actions that the province took to delist Owls Head, a brief history of the purchase proposals for Owls Head by Lighthouse Links Development Co. and Beckwith Gilbert's plans for multiple golf course projects in the region (Gorman, 2019). The article also includes interviews with Nova Scotia Nature Trust executive director Bonnie Sutherland and Chris Miller, executive director of the Nova Scotia Branch of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Gorman, 2019).

In an attempt to reverse the delisting exposed by Gorman, the Eastern Shore Forest Watch Association, along with concerned local biologist Bob Bancroft, appeared in the Nova Scotia Supreme Court on April 1st, 2021 after filing a judicial review of the conditional sale of Owls Head (Bancroft v. NS Lands and Forestry v. Lighthouse Links, 2020). In the review's brief, Environmental lawyer Jamie Simpson argued that in delisting Owls Head, the Minister of Lands and Forests (then Ian Rankin) failed to inform and consult the public, failed to provide justification for the decision, and failed to consider relevant factors affecting the decision such as the Crown Lands Act and Endangered Species Act (*Bancroft v. NS Lands and Forestry v. Lighthouse Links*, 2020). On the 26th of July, the NS Supreme Court ruled to dismiss the application for judicial review, as "there is no recognized common law duty of procedural fairness owed by the Crown to the public at large" (Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, 2021, [186]). For further explanation, the Supreme Court stated: "This is not a question that can be resolved by application of law, but rather it engages the accountability of the legislatures. Issues of broad economic policy and priorities are unsuited to judicial review." (Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, 2021, [78]). Despite the decision of the Supreme Court, concerned citizens continued to organize and fight against the sale of Owls Head. Multiple petitions were created with one online petition labelled "Save Owls Head Provincial Park" garnering nearly 36,000 signatures as of October, 2021 (Lee, 2021).

On November 23rd, 2021, Beckwith Gilbert released a statement of withdrawal from the 2019 letter of offer (Donovan, 2021). The company cited a lack of government support as their primary reason for withdrawing from the project (Donovan, 2021). In the wake of this news, the Save Owls Head movement continues to advocate for Owls Head and other sites awaiting formal protection (Donovan, 2021).

2.8 Summary of Key Insights

Natural resource and biodiversity loss does not happen at random, it is often the product of unsustainable natural resource management (Díaz, Fargione, Chapin, & Tilman, 2006; Baillie, Hilton-Taylor, & Stuart, 2004; Mace et al., 2005; Kotiaho, Kaitala, Komonen, & Paivinen, 2005; McKinney & Lockwood, 1999). Management of natural resources can be improved by identifying and operating within a region's carrying capacity (Taiwo & Feyisara, 2017; Baldwin, 1985). Tourism ventures can use metrics such as carrying capacity to ensure that it remains viable over a long period of time and does not negatively impact the region's other activities and industries (Butler, 1999; Butler, 1993). The benefits and impacts of tourism ventures on communities and their ecosystems can be tracked and analyzed using regulatory instruments such as indicators and government policies (White, McCrum, Blackstock, & Scott, 2006; Miller, 2001; Castellani & Sala, 2010). Governance and policy tools including financial incentives, investment in public infrastructure, and land usage restrictions can also be used to encourage and influence tourism development (UNEP & WTO, 2005; Halifax Regional Municipality, 2017; Skea & Nishioka, 2011).

In the wake of the controversy surrounding Owls Head's delisting from Nova Scotia's *Our Parks and Protected Areas Plan*, the community of concerned citizens and resources that the Save Owls Head movement has gathered can be utilized to support sustainable tourism or other sustainable development projects. Owls Head has high value as a tourism destination as it is a coastal region that can offer the most highly sought after experiences among those visiting Nova Scotia (e.g., beaches, coastal sightseeing) (Tourism Nova Scotia, 2019).

3 Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore sustainable tourism and development alternatives for the Owl's Head region in Nova Scotia, Canada, through a review of key literature, interviews with local stakeholders, and the creation of policy recommendations. By engaging a diverse set of people with various backgrounds, each with knowledge, experiences, and or/ideas pertaining to Owls Head and its future, this research aims to form sustainable, inclusive, innovative, economically beneficial, and culturally sensitive development recommendations for Owls Head.

3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research involves in-depth descriptions and explanations of experiences, opinions, and ideas that are situated in local contexts (Miles & Huberman, 2009). Miles and Huberman (2009) note that qualitative research is useful as it allows a researcher to understand the specific events and actions that lead to certain consequences. Qualitative data is nuanced by human experiences and perspectives that deepen the researcher's understanding of interrelated issues and specific contexts (Anderson, 2010). As a result, the findings obtained are often more persuasive and compelling than quantitative findings because they may relate to the reader's experiences and concerns (Anderson, 2010). This study utilizes a qualitative approach in order to gather in-depth information regarding the ideas and perspectives of local stakeholders so that specific recommendations can be created for the local context of Owls Head.

This research takes an exploratory approach in order to gain a deep understanding of the feelings and perspectives of local stakeholders on themes such as sustainable tourism, conservation, education, infrastructure and program development, coastal culture and heritage, community engagement and the role these themes may play the future development of Owls Head and its surrounding communities. Exploratory studies are concerned with attempting to uncover or create new information in a given topic area, rather than studying

known facts at a deeper level (Swedberg, 2020). Therefore, this study is exploratory as it collects and organizes new information in order to create innovative ways to support sustainable tourism and other development in Owls Head.

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through an extensive literature review process that explored definitions and uses of sustainable tourism and its relationship to conservation, and education. Following the review of key literature, data was collected through a series of 13 in-depth interviews with local stakeholders including Members of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly (MLAs), local scientists and educators, local business operators, and members of local organizations. Each interviewee was asked a series of 14 questions in a semi-structured format. Most interviews were approximately 60 minutes in length, with some interviews requiring more time or another interview session. Questions were changed or re-worded at times to better suit the experiences and knowledge of some interviewees.

3.3 Data Analysis

This research is supported by grounded theory, which is an approach that aims to develop new insights on a phenomenon and to offer knowledge in areas where little is known (Charmaz, 2011). Gibson and Hartman (2014) note that grounded theory methods must include five core qualities:

- The study is open to the use of more than one theoretical framework and research questions remain flexible throughout the data collection process;
- The study has explanatory power, meaning that it is relevant and useful to a target audience;
- The study is focused on gaining new insight on a phenomenon, not in justifying pre-existing ideas;
- The study categorizes findings based on theoretical propositions;
- And the study is flexible, with various phases of coding and interpreting findings.

Keeping these core qualities in mind, interviews were transcribed verbatim using an automated transcription software called Otter.ai. Upon completion of the transcribing process, each transcription was reviewed several times to fix grammatical and translational errors. For interviews that were not recorded, the researcher's notes were transcribed.

Member checks (i.e., checking in with interviewees) took place to ensure that transcriptions aligned with the responses of interviewees.

Transcriptions were analysed using QDA Miner Lite, which is a software application commonly used for qualitative research. In QDA Miner Lite, the transcriptions were coded in three stages with the goal of creating a concise list of overarching themes in the interviewees' responses (Saldaña, 2013). The first cycle of codes was used to succinctly summarize responses of note into a few words. In the second wave of coding, the initial codes were grouped into categories and subcategories to show linkages and similarities between interviewee responses. The third wave of coding created 5 overarching themes relating to long-term sustainable community developmental goals. All previous codes were grouped under these overarching themes. The themes represent a long-term goal, and the codes beneath each theme detail ways of working towards that goal. During each interview, the researcher took several pages of notes which were then transcribed into a Word document and categorized under recurring themes.

3.4 Ensuring Quality of Research

Guba (1981) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed five key concepts that researchers ought to address in order to ensure a high standard of qualitative research. These concepts include credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4.1 Credibility

For research to be credible, it must be representative of the values, perspectives, and ideas of the community being studied (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research engaged a diverse set of interviewees in order to develop recommendations that are representative of various perspectives and ideas. To start each interview, interviewees were asked about their experiences and interactions with Owls Head, as well as their general knowledge of the issue. Throughout interviews, participants were encouraged to share their personal opinions and values regarding themes like sustainability, conservation, education, and tourism.

3.4.2 Transferability

A study is transferable if its findings can be easily applied to other scenarios and contexts (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study is applicable to future contexts involving government decisions on crown land sales as well as in sustainable development of tourism in coastal Nova Scotia. According to a study commissioned by the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia (The Ivany Report) many rural communities in Nova Scotia are projected to decline in terms of population and quality of infrastructure (Ivany, 2014). Based on the information gathered by The Ivany Report, immediate action must take place to revitalize the economies of rural Nova Scotia. The current study provides recommendations that can support sustainable forms of alternative development to address socioeconomic challenges in other rural coastal communities.

3.4.3 Dependability

Research is dependable if similar findings can easily be reproduced if another researcher underwent the same process of data collection and analysis (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure that the findings of this study are logical and could be easily reproduced, the methodology of the research and analysis of data is provided in detail. The questions posed to interviewees are shown under Appendices B and C. The first set of questions is framed around Owls Head, while the second set changes the wording of the first set to be framed around the broader context of the Eastern Shore. The first set of questions was used for the majority of interviews, while the second set was used for a couple interviews where interviewees felt that they could not speak specifically to Owls Head. Follow-up questions were also asked when the researcher felt it necessary to further prompt interviewees, some of which are listed as sub-questions in Appendices B and C and others were unscripted. The semi-structured nature of the interview process may make the findings of this research somewhat more difficult to reproduce. To ensure a sound data collection and analysis process, I underwent frequent debriefing/check-in meetings with the advisor of this research, Dr. John Colton.

3.4.4 Confirmability

A study is confirmable if the findings and recommendations of the study are centred on the responses and ideas of participants (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study was

supervised by an academic advisor to ensure that the process of developing recommendations is logical and is based on the perspectives and ideas of interviewees. Common themes of interviews were discussed in regular meetings with the thesis advisor. Interviews were recorded, when possible, as some interviewees preferred to meet in public places such as cafés which were too noisy to obtain a useful recording. During all interviews, I recorded several pages of detailed notes on the interviewee's opinions, ideas, and visions. Later in the research process, member checks took place when necessary to ensure that findings aligned with interviewee responses. When a recording was not taken or was corrupted by noise or technical issues, member checks were especially important to ensure that my notes reflected responses from interviewees.

3.4.5 Authenticity

Authenticity questions whether the findings of the study are varied and applicable to future scenarios (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Before starting the data collection process, I posted a statement on the Save Owls Head Facebook page in an attempt to gather potential interviewees and resources. The responses to this post were overwhelmingly positive, showing that hundreds of the people involved with the Save Owls Head movement felt that the research was both relevant and potentially useful for sustainable development in Owls Head and the future development of coastal areas in Nova Scotia. The majority of individuals interviewed were recommended by members of the Save Owls Head Facebook group and/or by previous interviewees. Each interviewee has a unique perspective on the Owls Head issue, with some coming from academia, others were members of government, and some were involved in rural economic development.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

3.5.1 Informed Consent

Each interviewee was required to read and sign an informed consent form (Appendix A) before the interview could begin. Within the informed consent form, interviewees were provided with details on the purpose of the study, the interview procedures, potential implications of the study, confidentiality, and the dissemination of the findings. Interviewees

were reminded that they could leave the interview at any time, and could also request changes to the wording of their responses. No interviewees chose to modify their transcripts.

3.5.2 Confidentiality

Each interviewee was given a pseudonym to protect their identity when quoted or referenced. Letters were used for pseudonyms (e.g., Interviewee A, Interviewee B, Interviewee C, etc.) This method was used to further protect the identity of interviewees by removing mentions or suggestions of gender. In using these genderless pseudonyms, the researcher hopes to also assist in addressing the unconscious biases that readers may have in relation to the authority attached to certain genders. Specific occupations of interviewees were never disclosed to further protect anonymity. The data collected and information of interviewees was kept on a password-protected computer on a secure server. The researcher was the only individual in possession of notes and recordings of interviews.

3.6 Researcher Point of View and Bias

I was born and raised in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. I spent a significant amount of time visiting the beaches of the Eastern Shore as a child, and have worked as a lifeguard at Lawrencetown, Martinique, and Clam Harbour from 2018 to 2021. Working on the Eastern Shore and spending time hiking, surfing, and exploring its coastal landscape has led me to develop an emotional attachment to the beauty and uniqueness of this region of Nova Scotia. As someone who enjoys nature-based, lower impact activities, I am prone to supporting these types of activities. I also consider myself an environmentalist and an ally to First Nations communities, and therefore tend to oppose development that negatively impacts the environment and/or goes against the wishes of First Nations communities and the wishes of residents in rural coastal communities. To combat this bias, I have attempted to interview a broad spectrum of professionals and officials that come from a diverse set of backgrounds, and hold a variety of perspectives. In addition, I met with my thesis advisor on a bi-weekly basis to address potential bias in my data collection and/or analysis.

3.7 Limitations to Research

Because many of the interviews took place before the withdrawal of the purchase proposal, certain interview participants were unable to respond fully or in detail to certain questions. Once tourism and other forms of development occur adjacent to or in the surrounding communities of Owls Head, or in its surrounding communities, other studies can attempt to identify the development's positive and negative impacts.

An overarching management plan of Eastern Shore parks was created in 1980, but was never fully put into practice (Smith, Kuusisto, & Euloth, 1980). This makes it difficult to predict the complex environmental, cultural, and economic needs of the Eastern Shore without undergoing a rigorous engagement process of Eastern Shore residents, businesses, and organizations, which is beyond this study's scope. If a large-scale management plan had already been in use on the Eastern Shore, then researchers could identify which parts of the plan need to be improved, and how the plan needs to be changed in order to account for new development.

Other limitations are internal to the researcher. As the research was conducted by one person, a limited number of interviews could take place due to time constraints. The qualitative nature of the study is also limiting, as qualitative research aims to gather in-depth information nuanced by human experiences (Miles & Huberman, 2009). Other research methods such as surveys, which could be administered to a much larger population sample, would not be able to gather an ideal level of detail and human experience in their data. Surveys often limit participants to a certain selection of responses, as opposed to interviews which allow participants to respond in any number of ways. Having one researcher is also limiting as recommendations are based off one person's analysis and may be biased towards that person's interests and expertise. If the research was conducted by more than one person, recommendations may have been more diverse.

3.8 Dissemination

This research was conducted as part of a Master's level thesis in the Coastal Communities and Regional Development program at the University Centre of the Westfjords. A copy of the thesis will be kept on record at the University Centre of the Westfjords in Ísafjörður, Iceland.

Other copies can be provided to interview participants or others upon request. The study and its findings also might appear in academic journals or conferences.

4   Results

Five dominant themes emerged from the interview data through an extensive coding process. The interview data was supplemented by several relevant documents and other secondary documents in order to provide a more comprehensive narrative of the key themes. The themes, along with their associated sub-themes are shown in Table 1 below. The first theme (far left of Table 1) relates to the importance of Owls Head to Nova Scotia both ecologically culturally. The subsequent themes speak to ideas and pathways forward with regards to sustainable development at Owls Head.

Table 1. Themes and Sub Themes identified in the Coding Process

Themes	Recognizing the Importance of Owls Head to NS	Owls Head & Ecosystem Regeneration	Building Trust through Community Engagement	Building Community Resilience through Tourism	Localized Economic Development
Sub Themes	Importance of Save Owls Head (SOH)	Land Protection	Community Perspectives on Development	Building Capacity	Economic Transition
	Ecological Significance of Owls Head	Reducing Environmental Impacts	Relevant Stakeholders	Creating Value	Ideas for Infrastructure
	Cultural Significance of Owls Head	Relationship between Tourism & Conservation	Engagement Strategies	Experiential Education & Tourism	Ideas for Programming
	NS Coastal Brand & Owls Head				

4.1   Recognizing the Importance of Owls Head to NS

Before contemplating the types of development that could benefit Owls Head and its surrounding communities, it is important to explore and take stock of the region's unique

assets and resources. It is also key to understand how these assets contribute or could potentially contribute to Nova Scotia's broader provincial brand.

4.1.1 Importance of Save Owls Head

The delisting of Owls Head was a breach of trust not only for the people of the Eastern Shore, but also for the whole of Nova Scotia. Interviewee H, a local activist and community organizer, articulated the reasoning for this in simple terms: "...because if they'll do it to us, they will do it to you." In other words: 'if they delist our local park, they could delist yours as well.' The aftermath of Owls Head's delisting may mark a change in local involvement in public environmental advocacy. Interviewee E, a local scientist, argued that, given the massive amount of support for the movement, "… the Save Owls Head movement shows a change in public mentality."

Many interviewees also mentioned that the exposure of Owls Head's delisting eventually brought awareness to other local environmental issues and allowed people to pool resources and information through channels like the Save Owls Head Facebook Group. Interviewee D, a local journalist, commends the movement's achievement "…in bringing the issue to the forefront of government debate." The success of the Save Owls Head movement to stop the NS government's sale of the lands to Lighthouse Links Development Company shows the power of local grassroots movements to influence government decision-making processes.

The Save Owls Head (SOH) movement is influential in terms of bringing public awareness to the existence of destinations like Owls Head on the Eastern Shore. Interviewee I, an Eastern Shore resident, attributes the lack of public awareness about Owls Head before its delisting to the lack of signage in the area: "… many people contact us asking how do they get in to see Owls Head Provincial Park? There are no trails, there are no signs. It doesn't state that you're here." Interviewee B, a local political representative, argued that: "Owls Head has much potential for tourism, especially in the wake of the media attention from the controversy." The media attention can be utilized to reframe public perspectives on Owls Head, potentially painting it as a destination rather than just a site of controversy.

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4.1.2 Ecological Significance of Owls Head

Owls Head is unique in terms of its geological shape, with Interviewee G noting its "parallel granite or quartzite ridges … Blue Rocks is the only other area in Nova Scotia where you have such an amazing display of this." Owls Head is also unique in terms of the ecosystems, specifically the Coastal Broom Crowberry heathland. Interviewee C mentioned that this type of ecosystem "… is one of the rarest in Atlantic Canada, it's only found in I think about four or five other places, at least from current investigations. Nowhere else in Nova Scotia, nowhere else in Atlantic Canada."

Owls Head is home to a tremendous amount of eelgrass. In a media interview with broadcaster 95.7 News, Dr. Kristina Boerder, a researcher with Dalhousie University, noted that the eelgrass beds are in very healthy condition, and have an incredibly high capacity for storing carbon (Veinotte & Boerder, 2021). During the interview, Dr. Boerder also emphasized the importance of eelgrass beds as nurseries and habitats for large and diverse sets of marine life (Veinotte & Boerder, 2021). Interviewee E stressed that "We need more research to find out how much carbon can be stored in Owls Head." Interviewee F, a local activist and community organizer, was in agreement with Interviewee E's statement, arguing that "We need more research before development can occur. We need to understand the true value of ecosystem services [at Owls Head]."

Many of the ecosystems of Owls Head, including the Broom Crowberry heathland, eelgrass beds, and wetlands, are considered highly fragile. A 2020 report by Lundholm and Porter concluded that development on these ecosystems could completely destroy the ecological value of the site. The Nova Scotia Government has made several commitments to the protection of biodiversity and sensitive ecosystems like those mentioned by Lundholm and Porter (2020). For example, Under Section F of the Nova Scotia Wetland Conservation Policy, the province set a goal to experience 0 loss of Wetlands of Special Significance. Included under Wetlands of Special Significance are salt marshes and wetlands that support significant species (N.S. Department of Environment, 2011). Given that Owls Head includes salt marshes and supports at least one significant species (e.g., Broom Crowberry), it should be formally protected as it is a Wetland of Special Significance.

4.1.3 Cultural Significance of Owls Head

The socio-economic, historical, and cultural landscape of Owls Head and its surrounding communities is centred around natural resource extraction industries such as fishing, logging, and mining. Though fisheries, agriculture, hunting, and forestry only accounted for 2.34% of the province's GDP in 2020, fisheries remain both economically and culturally integral to the Eastern Shore (Statista Research Department, 2021). Interviewee L, an operator of a local tourism organization, provided insight into the economic landscape and heritage of the Eastern Shore by stating: "… they had to survive on many different things. They've had to be fishing in the summer, forestry in the winter, mining, going away to the states and out west." This idea of "surviving" using various skills and trades is a definitive part of the Eastern Shore's cultural heritage.

The Owls Head region provides a great example of historic fishing infrastructure, and also shows a settlement pattern that is unique compared to other parts of Nova Scotia. Interviewee L noted that "… people travelled and socialised across the harbours by boat. So halfway down the harbours, halfway down these peninsulas … that's where the churches are, that's where the density of [infrastructure] was, that was the easiest way to get [around]." Interviewee L continued by mentioning that this can be a weakness for many of the communities of the Eastern Shore economically, as they are not located along the main highway but rather towards the ends of headlands.

Interviewee G spoke to the potential of Owls Head for archaeological research: "… [it is a] landscape that is well preserved and could therefore offer us insight and representation of a very underrepresented period in our history, right?" G then referenced archaeological studies from the 1960s that recovered pre-contact artefacts at locations near Owls Head. Port Joli on Nova Scotia's south shore can be viewed as a similar case. Research on the site began in 2016, and two articles were published in the years following that revealed crucial information regarding First Nations fishing and hunting activity (Betts, 2019; Betts, Burchell, & Schöne, 2017). The success of the studies is largely attributed to a lack of human development that allowed artefacts and significant sites to remain preserved over generations (Betts, 2016). As noted by the interviewee, Owls Head remains relatively untouched by human activity and may have preserved significant archaeological sites not yet discovered.

4.1.4 NS Coastal Brand & Owls Head

Nova Scotia is known as "Canada's Ocean Playground", yet less than 10% of its coast is formally protected (N.S. Department of Environment & N.S. Department of Natural Resources, 2013). As of 2019, nearly 70% of Nova Scotia's lands were privately owned, which makes ecologically significant coastal lands like Owls Head highly valuable to retaining public coastal access (Government of Canada, 2019). Interviewee C, a person involved in the local tourism industry, argued: "We cannot continue to cloister private development, preventing the Mi'kmaq, preventing Nova Scotians, preventing anybody from having access to the coastline…" Interviewee G, who was formerly involved in park planning, said "… the more [public coastal lands] you lose, the more important they become."

Coastal access is not only important for the wellbeing of local residents, but also in satisfying the wants and needs of other Nova Scotians and tourists. When visitors were asked to select their main reason for coming to Nova Scotia, the two most commonly selected responses were visiting a beach (31%) and coastal sightseeing (34%) (Tourism Nova Scotia, 2019). Interviewee K, a person involved with local tourism development, supported these statistics in saying: "… they're coming for coastal experiences, they want to go to the beaches, they want to have accommodations that are on the ocean or near the ocean with ocean views. They want to eat our local food …" Many of the interviewees spoke to the importance of authenticity in the experiences that Nova Scotia offers. Interviewee L provided an example of an authentic experience: "It's an authentic experience for people because they're actually digging clams with a fourth-generation clam digger. And it's a win-win situation, because you're putting value on what he has historically done." In other words, authentic Nova Scotian experiences provide visitors with an intimate, educational experience that is rooted in appreciating and supporting local cultural heritage.

Through taking stock of the assets of Owls Head and how these contribute to the socioeconomic, historical, and environmental landscapes of Nova Scotia, we can better understand how these assets can be assembled and mobilized to build deeper connections between people and place. In doing this, we can also learn important lessons on how to ensure that future generations continue to have access to these resources. With the effects of climate change intensifying, such as increased rates of coastal erosion, increased water salinity, loss of wetlands, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of coastal ecosystems, it is vital

that the assets of Owls Head are assessed within the context of land conservation and environmental sustainability (IPCC, 2014; Grieger, Capon, Hadwen, & Mackey, 2020; Middleton, 2016)

4.2 Owls Head & Ecosystem Regeneration

Before engaging in any sort of development project at Owls Head, it is important to understand Owls Head within the broader context of provincial land protection goals so that its true value as an ecological site is recognized. It is also vital to create a detailed plan for the protection of its vulnerable ecosystems and species. To maximize the plan's effectiveness, it is important that it is applied through multiple channels (e.g., government, businesses, and organizations).

4.2.1 Land Protection

To provide perspective on Nova Scotia's recent land protection initiatives, the province set a goal to protect 12% of lands by 2015 in the Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act (Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act, 2007). In response to this goal, the province released the 12 Percent Lands for Review map series. In the series, Owls Head and its surrounding islands area was shown amongst the lands proposed for protection (Province of Nova Scotia, 2011). The 12% land protection goal was maintained in government documents until 2021, when Nova Scotia Premier Tim Houston set a goal of 20% percent protected lands by 2030 in the Ministerial Mandate for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (Houston, 2021). Many of the interviewees thought that this was still too weak of a target. Interviewee A, an Eastern Shore local and community advocate, said: "… there's too little protected land in Nova Scotia, yeah, there's too little public land and public access to coastal Crown land in Nova Scotia. … We need 30% minimally."

Several of the interview participants spoke to the lack of public access to crown land in Nova Scotia as well as the lack of public coastal access points. For example, F said: "There is a lack of coastal access, which makes it hard for people to experience pristine nature in NS." Interviewee M, a local educator and passionate community member, agreed that coastal access is an issue in NS, stating that: "… our coastlines like those - that needs to remain a public resource. And it's rare in the world today to find the kind of resources that we have …"

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Building on this, Interviewee G said: "… as areas like [Owls Head] are lost, its significance and value increases …" As Nova Scotia is lacking in formally protected coastal lands, Owls Head is highly valuable not only because it is ecologically significant, but also because it is a coastal access point that can be publicly protected. By protecting Owls Head, Nova Scotia works towards the goal of protecting coastal access for future generations of residents and visitors.

Many interviewees spoke to the extensive environmental planning and legislation that needs to occur before any type of development can commence. For example, F said: "We need to look at the Coastal Protection Act. We need to ask ourselves: what is missing?" The Coastal Protection Act, which will be implemented following the approval of proposed regulations, will designate a thin "Coastal Protection Zone" around the entirety of Nova Scotia's coast, restricting the types of development and industrial processes that can occur within it (N.S. Department of Environment, 2021). Along with updating existing legislation, Interviewee A mentioned new legislation that would hold businesses more accountable for environmental impacts: "… business owners would be responsible for the areas around their businesses … And what that should do hopefully, is it should motivate the business owner, who doesn't want to spend the time and the money cleaning up the parking lot all the time, to educate their patrons." Other interviewees shared similar sentiments, in that effective environmental planning should involve government, businesses, organizations, and local residents to help educate visitors and enforce restrictions, regulations, and norms.

4.2.2 Reducing Environmental Impacts

Along with the protection of vulnerable lands, it is vital that tourism/development projects are properly managed to reduce their environmental impacts and create healthy relationships with surrounding ecosystems. Interviewee L said there is a need for a "… really strong management of [tourism sites] so that you don't destroy what it is you're trying to help people come and see." Interviewee K argued that destination management was the key to reducing environmental impacts to tourism sites, stating that: "… one of the critical pieces of information … was identifying what are the best locations on that coastline to bring visitors …" In identifying these less vulnerable locations, G mentioned that "… you have to get into questions of carrying capacity … some areas have a higher carrying capacity for development

of infrastructure than others." Carrying capacity will dictate the type of activities, if any at all, that can take place at a certain site.

Once optimal sites for tourism are identified, restrictions on the amount of people allowed at the site can be developed depending upon its calculated carrying capacity (Kennell, 2014). Interviewee I, a local resident and environmental activist, spoke to this point: "It's like having limits on people going out in the boat … we're going to take eight people at 10 am - 12. And then at 1-3, we're going to take another group …" By assessing the carrying capacity of a tourism site, you can understand the ways in which the site may be harmed by development. Knowing this, you can limit negative environmental impacts by adding restrictions and management strategies to sites.

To support restrictions on visitor activities at sites, destination management strategies must include methods that work to educate visitors and deepen their experience. For example, effective signage at tourist sites was mentioned by several of the interviewees, with many arguing that it can completely change visitor interactions with a site. Interviewee J, an Eastern Shore resident and environmental activist, said "… signed postage that talked about 'don't walk in this area', because you know, [visitors are] going to have paths where [they're] not walking on top of sensitive areas, or areas that could be destroyed. So, some signage that talks about both looking after the area or the history of the area, or the culture of the area …" This quote begins to allude to how land protection can root itself in a visitor's experience of a place. By interpreting the cultural heritage of the site within the context of conservation, visitors might begin to understand why the site's protection is important. Through exposing visitors to various ways in which they can be a more environmentally responsible tourist, like signage for example, you not only deepen their experience of the place, but you also provide them with vital conservation-based knowledge that they will bring with them to their next visitor experience.

4.2.3 Relationship between Tourism and Conservation

It is vital that Nova Scotia properly manages its tourist destinations to reduce negative environmental impacts, but it is also important that contemporary tourism takes steps beyond sustainability. Interviewee C believed that the future of sustainable tourism has to be regenerative tourism: "We have to think about traditional tourism, which has been degenerative, through sustainability, which is do no harm, to regenerative, which is: how can

we make better that which has been harmed?" In order to ensure that tourism activities create lasting, positive impacts in local ecosystems, tourism development projects must factor conservation commitments and goals into their business plans.

Businesses and organizations can engage in conservation initiatives in various ways. Interviewee L spoke to the methods they use in managing their tourism organization to both limit environmental impacts and teach valuable lessons on conservation to visitors: "… we put solar panels on one building, and we're basically net zero in terms of energy use … And we run all of our events [with] completely compostable, or recyclable [equipment/goods]." By re-using materials and utilizing renewable energy sources, Interviewee L can also cut operational expenses. To add an extra layer of regenerative practices to a tourism business plan, Interviewee C provided an example: "… $5 of everyone's admission to come to this program today is going to [an NGO] to restore six square metres of Carolinian forest …" By diverting funds to initiatives like this, businesses not only assist in accomplishing environmental goals, but they also can inspire visitors to continue supporting regenerative tourism related business practices. Interviewee K built on this concept:

> I think we can create champions for a destination. … Through experiences that really deeply connect them with place. … have visitors be part of an experience where they help restore the ecosystem, people love that. People generally want to help; they want to have a positive contribution.

Involving tourists in conservation not only provides a base of volunteers for important tasks, but it also provides visitors with lasting skills, knowledge, and memories related to conservation. By providing visitors with an intimate, educational tourism-based experience that is rooted in environmental sustainability, they are more likely to become environmental stewards for the destination. To illustrate this concept, Interviewee G said: "… you want [to create] ownership and stewardship, right. So [visitors] feel a connection there … you want them to want to protect it."

4.3 Building Trust through Community Engagement

To ensure that development projects are in the best interest of local stakeholders, it is vital to first understand the current perspectives of these stakeholders with regards to new development. This provides essential information regarding the community's needs when it

comes to their involvement in the development and ultimately how they stand to benefit from it. A community that has been historically neglected by development projects may be wary of new development. For example, decisions made by the government without community consultation, such as the secret delisting of Owls Head, are a huge breach of the trust between government and community members. Eastern Shore residents and stakeholders need to be shown that their opinions and ideas are essential in shaping the projects that may be proposed in or adjacent to their communities. To support their opinions, they also need to be exposed to alternate perspectives that are based in scientific evidence. For example, fishers on the Eastern Shore need to be guaranteed that through effective planning, a marine protected area (MPA) will not negatively affect their livelihoods; the MPA will conserve marine life and biodiversity for the enjoyment and livelihoods of future generations (Koropatnick, 2018; Withers, 2019). By educating residents on the benefits of development, you can simultaneously build support for the current project while beginning to remedy the feelings of distrust that Eastern Shore locals have towards change.

4.3.1 Community Perspectives on Development

General distrust exists for new development in Eastern Shore communities after decades of failed engagement processes and unfinished/unsuccessful development projects. Interviewee M spoke to this: "There's a distrust that's come up because people offer/voice ideas, and then that doesn't happen, for whatever reason, so people get cynical about it." Later in the interview, Interviewee M said: "And you talk about expropriation of people's lands and homes and communities and … that story is what happens and people don't forget that easily." In this quote, Interviewee M was likely referring to the community pushback to the proposed National Park in 1975 on the Eastern Shore. Many residents worried that the National Park would reduce their access to natural areas and would disrupt their way of life (Rainville, Beaton, Graham, & Burns, n.d.). In response to the proposed park, the Association for the Preservation of the Eastern Shore (APES) was created, and eventually the park proposal was dropped (Rainville, Beaton, Graham, & Burns, n.d.). Interviewee M could also have been referring to the ongoing controversy between the Eastern Shore fisheries industry and the regional department of the Department of Fisheries (DFO) and Oceans Canada regarding a proposed MPA. The DFO has assured fishers that the MPA would not include a no-take zone which would prohibit fish harvesting (Withers, 2019). Despite releasing draft documents and plans for the MPA that do not include no-take zone, representatives of

Eastern Shore fisheries have refused the addition of the MPA until they receive a legally binding statement from the DFO that prohibits the implementation of no-take zones in the MPA (Withers, 2019). A general fear of losing livelihoods as well as spaces of cultural and ecological significance is pervasive amongst Eastern Shore residents. These feelings of distrust and fear surrounding new development should be taken into account when creating plans for community engagement.

Interviewee L effectively illustrated the tension that exists on the Eastern Shore with regards to development: "… we have this remote, less touched landscape and coastal communities. The reason why we have that is because people haven't taken an interest in us." Further, Interviewee H said: "We're not against development, we're against a particular kind of development." According to Interviewee H, the type of development that many Eastern Shore residents oppose is development that comes from outside of the community and does not actively engage and utilize the perspectives and resources of community members. In a similar vein, Interviewee E said that the "… Eastern Shore needs to get away from the 'we've always done it this way' mentality …" They went on to say: "We need to create behavioral change in residents to show them that change can be positive for the community's culture and economy."

4.3.2 Relevant Stakeholders

When asked what groups and individuals should be consulted before development can occur on Nova Scotia's coast, almost all of the interviewees listed marginalized groups (e.g., First Nations, African Nova Scotians) as primary stakeholders. Interviewee A said: "… First Nations must be consulted … And I believe that First Nations actually [have] the strongest voice when it comes to consultation based on what we've seen happen on environmental issues in the province over the last 5 to 10 years." In the same vein, Interviewee D argued that engagement should "… seek out the people not being heard." By engaging these groups in meaningful, impactful ways, Nova Scotia can begin reconciling its relationship with people that have been historically underrepresented in (and often negatively impacted by) community economic development projects. On top of this, development projects can benefit from the diverse and innovative perspectives, ideas, and skills that these groups possess. Interviewee C said: "We're going through a period of reconciliation. … Could reconciliation

actually be a driving factor of how we think differently about the development of the Eastern Shore?"

The importance of involving local residents in the engagement process was also a common response amongst interviewees, like Interviewee J, who said "… I think the fishers hold a lot of weight and say in the eyes of a lot of people in the community. So, I think it's definitely important to include them." The vast majority of interviewees also highlighted the wealth of knowledge and skills on the Eastern Shore that could be gathered through engagement. Interviewee J said: "Government comes up with these ideas, like I said, the same old, same old ideas, instead of talking to people in the community - and people in this community have lots of ideas." By engaging local perspectives, developers not only ensure that the project aligns with local values, but they also gain an abundance of site-specific knowledge and local resources.

Another recurring response to identifying relevant stakeholders was that all people should be involved in community engagement processes. For example, Interviewee M said: "… seniors, our Indigenous communities, the Black communities, all the BIPOC folks, our LGBTQ folks … Everybody needs to have a voice." Interviewee C spoke to the importance of engaging a variety of perspectives during community consultation processes:

> I've learned that having diverse people, as many diverse people in the room together from an area is actually very helpful, as opposed to talking to singular groups. And the reason is that when you have multiple people, different backgrounds, different individuals, different context, different groups, and you create a respectful and safe place for conversation, then everybody is learning from everybody.

By working with a highly diverse set of stakeholders in engagement processes, you create innovative solutions that suit the needs of a wide variety of individuals. Bringing these stakeholders together can re-frame community tensions so that people from opposing perspectives can learn from one another, creating community networks. With proper facilitation, you can not only come to better solutions, but you can also begin to bridge gaps between divisive groups and build trust.

4.3.3 Engagement Strategies

Several interviewees mentioned that proper consultation begins with a professional facilitator. Interviewee C said: "… we need qualified people to facilitate and host these conversations. These are conversations, they're not meetings." In addition to a professional facilitator, some of the interviewees believed that engagement is most effective when it is conducted by trusted members of the community, someone who is already a trusted member of various regional networks and community groups. These trusted members of the community were referred to as "influencers" by certain participants, like Interviewee A, who said: "What you should probably try to do is identify who the decision makers are … Who are the influencers?" Building on this, Interviewee L said: "… it's very important that it tries to come from within the community outwards, as opposed to the other way around." In other words, Interviewee F said: "Consultation should restore trust; therefore, it cannot be led by the developer." By utilizing two trusted individuals (a local person of influence as well as a professional facilitator) to lead engagement, the engagement process begins at a place of trust.

Interviewees believed that the engagement process needs to include a variety of methods to obtain the most inclusive set of data from stakeholders. Interviewee C articulated why it is important to use a mixture of consultation methods: "… it has to have a number of touch points. And those touch points have to be in the order of, of literally, everything from online opportunities to in person at townhall meetings, facilitated learning sessions and workshops, because they all do different things, and they collect different information." Building on this, Interviewee C also said: "… if you use a variety of different techniques, you will reach different people in different ways." With regards to using social media as a resource, Interviewee G said: "I think social media has to be used more effectively and more efficiently … [it] can provide one of the important vehicles for facilitating and finding engagement …" Extrapolating on this, the engagement process should include a variety of different strategies and touch points (e.g., focus groups, social media, forums), and should be led by a group of trusted community members who have skills relating to the methods of engagement.

Community engagement is a crucial aspect of the development process. By engaging groups and individuals that have been historically underrepresented and neglected in local development projects, you can begin to reconcile important relationships between local residents, government, and the broader Nova Scotia community. If engagement is led by

trusted community leaders and facilitated by trained professionals, consultation can create optimal development solutions that satisfy the needs of a wide variety of stakeholders. Throughout the engagement process, developers and facilitators should also assess the assets that the community possesses, and how these assets can be mobilized to meet community needs and accomplish developmental goals.

4.4 Building Community Resilience through Tourism

By understanding what assets exist within the community as well as how they are linked to the community's culture and heritage, development like sustainable tourism can better represent the values, goals, and perspectives of community members and other key stakeholders. With an in-depth comprehension of local assets, one can begin to organize, connect, and grow these resources to create new and innovative solutions to local needs and goals, eventually making the community more resilient and adaptable to regional economic and environmental changes.

4.4.1 Building Capacity

Interviewee C believed that in order to identify the most important resources a community possesses, we need to ask: "What is the DNA of this area that speaks to the kind of developments that are sustainable? … people already know what that DNA is, and they're full of pride about it. … we have not evoked that sense of pride." In other words, the community members already know what is special about their community, and developers often fail to bring this DNA into their projects. Interviewee C went on to argue that community members need to know: "What [they] do is valued. … not as a commodity, but as a story." Many of the interviewees were aware of the high number and variety of skills and knowledge possessed by Eastern Shore residents. For example, Interviewee H said: "… we can inspire the people in this area to do … all sorts of things like … getting storytellers together, and there are lots of storytellers." The development process should not only take stock of assets, but it should also bring community members together and make them proud of their skills and experiences,

thereby building strong community networks that are more responsive to changes and opportunities.

Along with fostering a sense of local pride, development should also inspire community members and remove barriers to innovation. Interviewee A spoke to this: "… if people could have some wins, they'd get excited. And they'd come up with: we could do this, and we could do that. … when you feel like everything you start is bound to fail, of course you're not going to be inclined to start too much." When community members are shown that success is possible and that they will be supported in pursuing their ideas, they may be more inclined to act on those ideas. It is also important that individuals are able to continue to engage in economic activity that is significant to the area's heritage and cultural landscape. For example, Interviewee C said: "… we pay them a living wage to tell their story - that is untapped. When you look at the Eastern Shore … you've got loggers. You've got fishers …" By paying fishers and loggers a living wage that reflects their professional and personal experiences over many years to tell stories and educate participants in visitor experiences, you can begin to build a higher appreciation for these skills both within the community and amongst visitors. Further, paying a living wage to these people makes them less vulnerable to periods of economic downturn.

Development should improve a community's ability to adapt to changes in regional economic systems and the natural environment. One way of doing this is by raising awareness of the plethora of skills that community members possess, and how these skills can be used and assembled in different ways to create new economic opportunities.

4.4.2 Creating Value

To provide insight into tourism's importance to Nova Scotia's economy, Interviewee K mentioned that "… tourism is the biggest export opportunity for Nova Scotia pre-COVID …" This being said, the Eastern Shore has only accounted for about 1% of Nova Scotia's tourism revenues in recent years (Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, 2016). Given this, it is important to ensure that the rural, coastal communities of the Eastern Shore are able to reap the benefits of this industry, and that the revenues are not just concentrated in Halifax, the province's capital. To address this, Interviewee C asked the question: "How can the coastline of Nova Scotia be better designed and managed as a stage for sharing the story of Nova Scotia?" In other words: how can we add value to the pre-existing infrastructure and

landscape of Nova Scotia's coastline to connect visitors with local cultural heritage and place-based knowledge? Interviewee C also provided several answers to their question, for example "… a thoughtfully designed trail that allows for traditional activities like hiking but also has stages built in for unique natural history experiences." In creating these stages, it is important that the communities adjacent to Owls Head and individuals telling stories that are tied to the coastal landscape and/or history of the region are the ones reaping the economic benefits of the experience.

A concept that arose in certain interviews is that value needs to be added to commodities in order to maximize economic benefits for the community. For example, Interviewee C said: "I think that fishers, they represent a culture, they have a business model that's based around a commodity, but we haven't added value … How do they become respected for more than just for what they go out in a boat and collect? … these guys have a lifetime of experience equal to any university professor." In response to this, Interviewee C also said: "But you then create opportunities for visitors to engage with real people. … the pricing becomes higher, the return to the community becomes greater." By adding experiences to commodities, these products can be sold at a much higher price, and visitors are able to learn about local cultural heritage and form lasting memories in the community.

An important aspect to consider in tourism management is the target market of products and experiences. To illustrate this, Interviewee K provided an example: "So somebody coming from like Moncton might spend $400. Someone coming from Ontario might spend close to $2000, and someone coming from Germany's going to spend over $2000." Further, Interviewee L said: "But if they want what you're offering, and they're willing to pay more, … you can scale back some of these things … and have a slightly higher price point for certain stuff, and they'll still come." By creating high-value, authentic, community-based experiences and marketing them to wealthier visitors, the community is able to profit more from tourism while avoiding impacts caused by mass tourism.

Another item of consideration when creating these experiences is the season in which they are offered. Interviewee C spoke to this: "… we need to start thinking of tourism over 12 months of the year." Interviewee C went on to say that tourism in Nova Scotia needs to acknowledge that the type of tourist that travels to the province during peak tourist season is most likely coming to see iconic Nova Scotian sites and landscapes. Further, a tourist that visits Nova Scotia outside of peak season is most likely looking for a more authentic,

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community-based experience. To strategically optimize tourism in Nova Scotia, experiences must be priced and promoted to the right target audience to maximize community benefits. By making tourist experiences adaptable to changes in seasons and types of tourists, communities can increase the value and profitability of their tourism industry.

4.4.3 Experiential Education & Tourism

Experiential tourism is rooted in showcasing parts of a region that locals are passionate about through immersive and interactive activities. Experiential tourism, like other types of community-based initiatives, can be used as a means of accomplishing community goals. Interviewee C provided insight into this: "Experiential tourism is really a way for people to experience people, place, and local culture in ways that are helpful to the community." Experiential tourism can not only transfer skills and knowledge from educators to visitors, but it can also transmit the deep connection that locals feel towards significant sites and stories to tourists. For example, Interviewee K said: "I think there is an opportunity to create awareness through experiences, to understand what makes the place special in an engaging way for visitors. And to really deepen that connection to the place and become a champion for it." In simpler terms, Interviewee F said: "Education can build support for a movement or idea." Communities can create experiences that not only educate visitors, but also inspire them to enact change.

Visitors are often searching for authenticity and want to experience destinations in ways that are educational. Interviewee L spoke to this: "We're always looking for context and story. And that's what makes something interesting to us." Building on this, Interviewee J said: "… why not look at, study, explore, and teach people about actually what exists here?" By connecting visitors to places through engaging stories, you can begin to build an appreciation amongst these visitors for the community's environmental and cultural assets. Interviewee E agreed with this statement when they said: "We need environmental education to build appreciation of nature in the area and local culture." To illustrate the potential effects of connecting visitors with place, Interviewee I said: "… having someone there at Owls Head … to help educate people on why we actually need to save this … [The visitors] could very well take it back to their own community and do the same thing."

A large component of educating through experience is creating a passion for sustainability, conservation, and local cultural heritage amongst children. To do this, Interviewee J

recommended "… bringing school kids to areas so that they can learn. If there could be little outdoor classrooms …" Educating children on the cultural and environmental landscapes of their home is an important method for creating passionate community advocates and activists. In reference to environmental education experiences for children, Interviewee J said: "… it's sort of a turning point for kids … wanting to stay [on the Eastern Shore] and come up with their own ideas about how they can stay and live here …" Environmental education is important to create a future generation that is more prepared to adapt to changes brought on by climate change and environmental issues. Environmental education and experiential tourism are not only important for creating champions for conservation and local economic development in visitors, but also for making local residents more accepting, prepared, and excited when it comes to change.

4.5 Localized Economic Development

In order to understand Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore within the context of economic transition, it is important to contemplate methods of creating value and building capacity within communities. In addition, one must explore the role that experiential tourism/education can play in the process of capacity building. Economic transition is a key concept for communities that have heavily relied on extractive industries in the past and want to have more diverse, adaptable, and regenerative economic systems in the future while retaining the region's cultural identity (Climate Justice Alliance, n.d.). By diversifying their economy and utilizing strategies that put the community in control of development, communities can work towards common goals such as improving quality of life, attracting new residents, and becoming less susceptible to economic downturns.

4.5.1 Economic Transition

Economic transition is often a large aspect of new development projects in rural areas, and was mentioned by several interviewees. Interviewee J described a need for economic transition on the Eastern Shore: "… The options for economic development have been sort of same old same old, very intensive resource extracting industries … but it's sort of been the only type of development that's been promoted … And I think we need to change." Later in the interview, J argued that "… there needs to be some transitioning also in terms of training and also just vision … people have to see other possibilities." For transition to be successful,

local residents need to be exposed to the different economic opportunities that exist, and training needs to be made available so that local workers can pursue the opportunities that interest them.

Economic transition needs to be rooted in the basic needs of the community. Interviewee M spoke to this: "… when you peel away the layers, it's really just about jobs, you know? … And I think there's a reticence for people that have held traditional jobs, they don't like moving into something else. But in creating that space, that it can be really a positive thing … and it's not like taking away from [tradition], it's trusting and making oneself vulnerable to go into something new." Beyond jobs, transition should aim to secure basic services. Interviewee J said that development should focus on "… supporting the kind of basic things that people require to live in rural Nova Scotia, like hospitals, like good schools … And those kinds of jobs are good jobs that bring something to the community … they're important for people to stay here." Economic development that creates jobs and brings essential services is not only important for improving the quality of life for residents but is also important for attracting new residents.

Though economic transition often aims to move away from extractive industries, it is important to recognize the influence that these industries have had on local culture. Interviewee L said: "… you have this sort of shift from a traditional resource-based economy, to the sort of tourism side of things … And the younger people don't want to work at the fish plant. … And sometimes you get tourists who come in, and they're like, "where can I pick up fish?" … [there isn't] really anywhere to get local fish anymore." In this scenario, the fishing industry is not only important to the cultural heritage of the region, but also occupies a place in the outsider perspectives and ideas regarding the community. This creates a challenge for the community, in that they must create a method of transition that retains and utilizes the cultural heritage of the region while continuing to inspire change, innovation, and diversity amongst residents and community initiatives. Each of the interviewees had several ideas in terms of solutions to this challenge.

4.5.2 Ideas for Infrastructure

Development of physical infrastructure was a key aspect of the ideas presented by many of the interviewees. For example, Interviewee A said: "… footpath is fine - boardwalk is better. Bike path, I think would be worthwhile. …. But if we could put even a half metre bike lane,

from Lake Charlotte out and down the west side of Ship Harbour." Beyond simply building trails, Interviewee C spoke of "… a thoughtfully designed trail that allows for traditional activities like hiking but also has stages built in for unique natural history experiences …" Building on this, Interviewee G mentioned that "… we need to develop those other supporting destinations and opportunities, then people will come and they'll stay for two days, three days, four days. They'll camp at Lake Charlotte … they may spend more time and therefore more money." By creating infrastructure that links different sites and experiences together surrounding Owls Head, and by creating space for programming that is rooted in the environmental and cultural landscapes of the Eastern Shore, communities can work towards creating memorable visitor experiences. Below is Table 2 that shows a list of interviewee ideas for infrastructure development.

Table 2. Interviewee Ideas for Infrastructure Development

Pathways	Navigation	Transit	Amenities	Existing Infrastructure	Basic Infrastructure	Park System
Bike lanes	Website development – Discover Halifax	Revamp water-based transport	Cafés that use local food	Link pre-existing assets together	Improved Wi-Fi speed/access	Implement ESSPS
Link bike lanes to rest stops, pump stations	GIS map that shows sites and describes their history	Create a marina system linking coastline together for boat travel	0-waste, energy efficient inns	Update sites to improve accessibility	Adequate access to local healthcare	Add bathrooms, boardwalks, viewpoints to parks
String sites together with trails	Concise and informative signage	Electric car charging stations	Inns that connect to sites, other activities	Use existing structures (e.g., docks) as stages	Access to local, region-specific education	Renovate, maintain existing parks
Board- walks over sensitive areas		More frequent bus routes from Halifax	Develop amenities to support tourism sites			Link parks from Dartmouth to Canso w/ signage, experiences
Trails with stages for activities		Intuitive road signage linked to local amenities	Farm-to-fork restaurants based in local culture, landscape			Add washrooms, garbage cans to popular islands

The ideas that interviewees had surrounding infrastructure mostly centred around improving the accessibility and quality of sites through use of paths/trails, implementation of the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System (ESSPS), effective signage, mapping, and updating the pre-existing infrastructure of sites. Ideas for infrastructure also included the addition/improvement of essential services such as community-based education, local healthcare, and Wi-Fi access. Several interviewees also mentioned that the Eastern Shore needs more amenities like cafés, inns, and farm-to-fork restaurants. Some interviewees argued that these amenities should not only utilize local resources, but that they should also strive to use renewable energy and eliminate waste.

4.5.3 Ideas for Programming

Many of the interviewees believed that physical infrastructure had to be paired with forms of experiential community-based programming in order to create truly impactful tourism experiences. Interviewee C argued that "… we begin to be seduced by the idea that if we build it, they will come. And that's a very poor way of economic development." In order to create impactful visitor experiences, destinations need to provide more than physical infrastructure. Later in the interview, C made the point that "… 'what do we need to build?' is not the question we should be asking, but rather: … 'how does the development actually make a difference?'" Below, Table 3 shows the interviewees' ideas for program development and activities that could take place at Owls Head or other nearby sites.

Table 3. Interviewee Ideas for Program Development

Educational/ Interpretive Centre	Community-linking Experiences	Skill-sharing and Community-based Knowledge	Promoting Eastern Shore (ES) Experiences
Create experiences for school children of all ages. Bring in university/college students for internships/co-op opportunities	Create package experiences including guided tours, live music, museums, and storytelling (taking place in a string of communities)	Painting, photography, film experiences with locals and/or artist residents	Differentiate ES from other parts of NS with unique, community-based experiences
Create spaces/studios for artist/musician residencies –create experiences led by artists	Guided birding, wetland experiences	Quilting, net/trap-making experiences	Market to the wealthy, educated

Table 3. (Continued)

Connect with other local education-based orgs (e.g., The Deanery, Port Hilford Whale Sanctuary	Canoe/kayak route – stops at docks, beaches, meet with local storytellers/chefs	Ensure that local guides/storytellers/ skill-sharers are earning living wages	Connect Owls Head with the 100 Wild Islands through experiences
An Oceanarium that showcases local marine plant life and small organisms	Snorkel trail along the along the coastline of Owls Head	Diving experiences – educate visitors on local marine life	
Host conferences, concerts, workshops, other events	Bike tours that connect communities and sites	Cooking experiences with local chefs, using locally harvested food	Market all experiences – create packages

The ideas that interviewees had for community programming were predominately focused on utilizing local assets to create intimate, interactive, and educational experiences for visitors that are strategically linked together through tourism packages and guided tours (e.g., bike tours, culinary tours). Several of the interviewees believed that these experiences should be marketed to wealthy, foreign tourists that are willing to pay more for an authentic, personalized experience. Further, some interviewees argued that Nova Scotia must differentiate between two separate tourist seasons: peak season (which would promote iconic Nova Scotian sites and destinations), and the tourism off-season (which would showcase personalized, higher-value, authentic experiences). A potential project that was presented by several interviewees was an education/interpretive centre located at Owls Head. Some of the interviewees suggested that this project could partner with local schools, universities, and other NGOs to host student internships, research projects, artist residencies, community events, live music, retreats, and more. An example of a similar project is the Haida Heritage Centre in Skidegate, British Columbia. The Haida Heritage Centre consists of a museum, a gift shop, the Carving House which provides space for local indigenous artists to carve canoes and poles, the Canoe House which showcases and explores the heritage of the Haida through their use of canoes and other methods of transportation, a space for performances, and the Trading House which serves as a gift shop to the museum (Haida Heritage Centre, n.d.). The Heritage Centre also hosts art auctions, conferences, workshops, and other events that aim to bring locals and visitors together to celebrate the unique living cultural heritage of the Haida (Haida Heritage Centre, n.d.).

The results of stakeholder interviews provide insight into the ideas, values, visions, and perceptions that key stakeholders have in relation to sustainable tourism and other development on the Eastern Shore. These perspectives and visions can be used to influence and support aspects of development such as limiting environmental impacts, community engagement, economic transition strategies, program design, and destination management. Based on the emerging themes from interviews, three primary concepts were created. Each of these concepts, described in detail in the next chapter, provides insight into the ways in which Owls Head and its surrounding communities can be developed sustainably while maximizing benefits and minimizing impacts for local stakeholders.

5 Discussion

The purpose of this research was to evaluate key stakeholder perspectives in relation to sustainable tourism, and to use these insights in the creation of policy recommendations that will encourage sustainable tourism and development. Three primary concepts emerged through the analysis of interview and literature research results: (1) educating through experience is a crucial concept in the future development and conservation of Owls Head and its surrounding communities, (2) development at Owls Head and its surrounding communities needs to focus on uniting people and resources in order to make the region more resilient to change, and (3) development at Owls Head and its surrounding communities needs to be rooted in improving quality of life for current and future Eastern Shore residents. In this chapter, these three themes are explored within the context of existing literature and theories. The themes influenced the creation of policy recommendations for Owls Head and all of coastal Nova Scotia, which are described in Chapter 6.

5.1 Educating through Experience

Experience-based education and experiential tourism allow visitors and local residents to form deeper connections to a region's culture and landscape (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). Rossi and Goetz (2011) describe experiential tourism as a series of events or points of interaction that contributes to the visitor experience. Meacci and Liberatore (2018) added to this definition by stating that each point of interaction between visitors and the destination is an opportunity for tourism operators to engage the senses of visitors, thereby adding value to the visitor experience as a whole. Within the context of Owls Head and Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, local businesses, organizations, and developers can add value to tourism experiences by understanding what their points of interaction with visitors are, and how the senses and minds of visitors can be engaged in meaningful ways at these points. In addition, places like Owls Head can utilize experiential tourism and experience-based education to work towards local conservation or environmental protection goals.

5.1.1 Experiential Tourism at Owls Head

Experiential tourism can be used as a means of revitalizing existing infrastructure and tourist sites by adding points of interaction that will prompt visitors to engage their senses and minds. Interviewee C posed a question that speaks to the addition of deeper, sensory information to sites: "How can the coastline of Nova Scotia be better designed and managed as a stage for sharing the story of Nova Scotia?" By creating opportunities for sensory reactions amongst visitors that seek to reach them on an emotional level, tourism managers can work towards creating experiences that are increasingly memorable.

Meacci and Liberatore (2018) provide a model for evaluating the effectiveness of experiences in engaging the senses of tourists in impactful ways. The model includes identifying the points of interaction in which the senses of visitors can be engaged, identifying the sensory nature of each point, evaluating the depth to which the visitor's senses are engaged at each point, and identifying areas in which the experience can be enriched to engage visitor senses deeper (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). To apply the model to the context of Owls Head, a kayak tour can be used as an example. First, the points of interaction must be identified. These could include: coastal viewpoints that include interpretation from a guide (e.g., the guide describes the different species shown at the viewpoint and their ecological significance, or the guide tells a story of a particular stretch of coastline that is significant to local cultural heritage). Second, the sensory nature of each point must be understood (i.e., which senses are being engaged at each point?). In this example the visitor may see stretches of coastline and see marine life below the surface of the ocean, and may also experience the distinct smells of the ocean and coastline, the feeling of the paddle gliding through water vs. paddling through seaweed, the sounds of waves crashing on the shore, the cawing of sea birds, or the voice of the guide telling an intriguing story. Third, it is vital to recognize which touch points could engage the senses of tourists further by augmenting their interactions. For example, the guide can engage multiple senses at once by educating visitors on the ecological significance of eelgrass while paddling through an eelgrass bed and encouraging visitors to reach out their hand and touch a blade of the grass. By adding more sensory information to each point of interaction in tourist experiences, tourism managers can create an emotional response amongst visitors that produces lasting memories and a high level of visitor satisfaction (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). Tourism should be managed as a set of opportunities to create deeper and more impactful experiences for visitors through sensory engagement.

5.1.2 Conservation through Experience

Experiential tourism can be used as means of creating lasting impacts in tourist perceptions and memories of a place through engaging their senses and evoking their emotions. The information that is conveyed to tourists through these sensory experiences can be linked to local goals such as conservation and environmental protection. By reaching visitors on not only a sensory level, but also an emotional level through carefully constructed and nuanced visitor experiences, visitors may be motivated to promote, protect, and donate to the wellbeing of landscapes and ecosystems locally and or when they return home (Russell, 1994). For example, Hehir, Scarles, Wyles, and Kantenbacher (2022) found that tourists were more likely to donate to local conservation-based charities if they felt a strong connection to the environment of the tourism destination, and if there was a sense that certain aspects of the site may soon cease to exist if they are not protected. Tourists can be prompted to donate to local conservation initiatives, or they can be notified that a portion of the experience's cost was donated to a local conservation initiative of the tourism operator's choosing.

To ensure that experiential tourism conveys information that leads to the development of nuanced, deep connections between visitors and place, it is vital that any anthropocentric or potentially harmful ideals (i.e., ideas that put people and their interests at the top of a hierarchy of all living things) are addressed and minimized in any interpretation or other relevant tourist experiences. To address this, tourism operators must first recognize that education can never be neutral, as refusing to question the status quo reinforces it (Ledwith, 2020). Visitor relationships with nature are determined by the ways in which they experience it, and the types of ideas and rhetoric that guides that experience. If nature is only interpreted on a basis of its usefulness as a resource, this may make it difficult for tourists to connect with environmental issues and build a more harmonious relationship with the environment (Russell, 1994; Evernden, 1992).

Though frameworks for certain types of environmentally-friendly tourism have been created (e.g., The Québec Declaration on Ecotourism), these concepts are often misunderstood or neglected by tourism operators, resulting in negative impacts to biodiversity and/or the local socioeconomic landscape (UNEP & WTO, 2002; Banerjee, 2010; Gulinck, Vyverman, Bouchout, & Gobin, 2001). Because of this, it is important that tourism operators ensure that an intersectional approach is taken to tourism planning: conservation initiatives are embedded within the tourism venture through goals, commitments, and/or partnerships, the needs of the

community are represented in the goals of the venture, and community members are involved in the operations of the venture and share in its benefits.

5.1.3 Local Experiential Education

Studies such as Stefaniak, Bilewicz, and Lewicka (2017) have shown that learning about local history not only increases students' feelings of attachment to a place, but also increases students' readiness to participate in local sustainable community development activities. Some interviewees mentioned that experiential education's potential was not limited to tourist experiences, but that it could also be used to add depth to local educational institutions and services. Certain interviewees also believed that experiential education was key to retaining school children in the community: by building an appreciation for local ecosystems and cultural heritage, you can work towards inspiring children to remain in the community (or return to the community) after their schooling and pursue a career locally or in a neighbouring region. Experiential education can be a driving force behind developing new relationships between locals of all ages and their local environment and cultural heritage. Further, developing an attachment and deeper understanding of these local assets can inspire local residents to innovate and interact with the region's tangible and intangible resources in new and exciting ways.

A common idea amongst interviewees was the construction of an interpretive/educational centre at Owls Head. This interpretive centre would create a space for experiential education opportunities from which to operate. To help visitors as well as locals in learning about the region's ecosystems and heritage, university or college students could be brought into the community to operate research residencies or internships out of the interpretive centre. These researchers could also be partnered with nearby NGOs such as The Deanery. Visitors and local students could be involved in the research either by assisting in data collection or by offering input at various stages of the process. Researchers could also be brought to the region to explore questions of cultural heritage. Interviewee G highlighted this when they said that Owls Head is "… well preserved and could therefore offer us insight and representation of a very underrepresented period in our history …" Along with work spaces for researchers, the site could host presentations, performances, workshops, or other events. The space could become a hub for community events, meetings, and initiatives on the Eastern Shore. When properly managed, the site could facilitate the creation of new community

networks, partnerships, connections, and relationships. Owls Head and its surrounding communities have high potential when it comes to experiential education. Experiential learning can be utilized to spark local innovation and economic development, accomplish local conservation or social justice goals, and/or to add depth to local educational systems and empower community members.

5.2 Building Resilience by Building Community

When properly planned and managed, community-based development projects can be used as a means of mending and maintaining trust between developers, government, and key community stakeholders. Deliberative and appropriate development can also be used to rebuild trust between these key stakeholder groups and individuals, creating stronger community networks, partnerships, and relationships that allow for the sharing of resources, knowledge, and skills. In building these networks, various levels of government and community services professionals can also use the process of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) to recognize the pre-existing assets within the community that could contribute to sustainable and equitable development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003). ABCD explores the inherent gifts of individuals, community assets, and capacities in a region and how these might collectively support sustainable community development. It is an empowering process where the community members act with agency to realize their goals and passions and continue to innovate (Harrison, Blickem, Lamb, Kirk, & Vassilev, 2019). By nurturing relationships between individuals, assets, organizations, and businesses through use of local influencers and expert facilitators, the community will be more prepared to provide support and overcome obstacles by mobilizing local resources in new and innovative ways (Satizábal, Cornes, de Lourdes Melo Zurita, & Cook, 2022).

5.2.1 Rebuilding Trust through Development

Creating safe and welcoming spaces for community members to share ideas, perspectives, skills, and resources is an essential step in rebuilding trusting, healthy, and constructive relationships between opposing groups within and external to the community (Trénel, 2009). In the context of Owls Head, this is crucial given the high degree and ongoing lack of trust after its delisting and other community engagement failures (e.g., the 1975 National Park proposal, the ongoing MPA controversy) that left key stakeholders without a voice. Research

studies such as Engle (2018) and Napoli, Dolce, and Arcidiacono (2019) argue that engagement and providing a voice to locals is an essential step in building trusting, equitable relationships between community members, developers, and governing bodies. An underlying theme from the interviews is the general distrust Eastern Shore community members have in regard to development projects and their advocates. This distrust likely arose from poor community engagement and lack of community control over the aims and outcomes of past development projects (e.g., the 1975 National Park proposal, the delisting of Owls Head, the proposed MPA), a lack of attention from government-led development projects, improper management and/or inadequate maintenance of previous projects by the developer (e.g., Government not following through with the Eastern Shore Seaside Park System), and/or a general fear of change or losing access to significant community sites (Rainville, Beaton, Graham, & Burns, n.d.; Withers, 2019; Smith, Kuusisto, & Euloth, 1980). Many interviewees believe that sustainable community-based development could be used as a means of mending neglected relationships between developers, government, and community members, as well as between groups with differing opinions within the community.

An essential aspect of sustainable community development is empowering community members through trusting, equitable engagement and professional facilitation (Engle, 2018; Napoli, Dolce, & Arcidiacono, 2019; Vidal, 2009). When asked about the essential steps that must take place before development begins, participants noted the importance of a trusted member of the community (e.g., local business owner, local MLA, local NGO director) leading engagement processes. Satizábal, Cornes, de Lourdes Melo Zurita, and Cook (2022) labelled these people as "connectors", given they foster connections between various key stakeholder groups. In addition to a community leader, it was believed that community engagement must be managed by a professional facilitator. For example, Interviewee C believed that differences are key to engagement and development: "… when you have multiple people, different backgrounds, different individuals, different context, different groups, and you create a respectful and safe place for conversation, then everybody is learning from everybody." The facilitator(s) can help bridge gaps between opposing groups and individuals, and work towards ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are able to offer their opinions in a safe space.

When engagement is led by trusted individuals, projects start with a degree of trust, rather than trying to obtain trust through engagement. Interviewee L illustrated this: "… it's very

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important that it tries to come from within the community outwards, as opposed to the other way around." By using a trusted community leader and a professional facilitator as the two guiding entities of engagement, government and developers can not only create safe spaces for the formation of ideas and visions for the future, but these leaders can also impart important skills and knowledge regarding facilitation and sustainable community development that will allow community members to mobilize and innovate more easily in the future (Vidal, 2009).

5.2.2 Mobilizing Assets to Build Resilience

While never explicitly stated by interviewees, Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) was an underlying theme in several interviewee responses and is an approach that could benefit the development of Owls Head and its surrounding communities. For example, when interviewee C said: "… people already know what the DNA [of the community] is, and they're full of pride about it. … we have not evoked that sense of pride." ABCD is related to this sense of pride in the community's "DNA", as it is a process that involves recognizing the existing assets, tangible and non-tangible, and how these assets can be harnessed to pursue community visions for planning and development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Asset Based Community Development is an alternative to the traditional community development approach which focuses on what a community's needs are, or in other words: what is missing in the community (Haines, 2009). ABCD focuses on what already exists within the community, identifying and celebrating the successes or "small triumphs" of a community rather than focusing on its negative aspects or weaknesses (Haines, 2009). Interviewee A believed that focusing on these small triumphs could be a highly beneficial approach to sustainable community development on the Eastern Shore: "… if people could have some wins, they'd get excited. And they'd come up with: we could do this, and we could do that. … when you feel like everything you start is bound to fail, of course you're not going to be inclined to start too much." By building a sense of pride around the strengths and successes of the community, ABCD seeks to make the community more self-sufficient and resilient by providing community members with the tools and support to innovate further (Haines, 2009; Harrison, Blickem, Lamb, Kirk, & Vassilev, 2019).

Within the context of tourism, ABCD can be used to map tourism assets highlighting key community and nature-based experiences local communities wish to share with visitors (Wu

& Pierce, 2014). ABCD could be applied to any of the communities surrounding Owls Head to identify key community assets that can contribute to future sustainable tourism development. With a map of assets, community stakeholders can more readily collaborate and contribute to the development of community-based tourism in the region. Further, experiences and sites can be linked through the asset map in order to add value to local tourist experiences/packages and strengthen support networks throughout the region. Considerations would need to be given to understand how this approach could be initiated in the region surrounding Owls Head.

5.2.3 Creating Networks through Development

Certain assets that ABCD aims to identify and leverage are those that fall into the category of *social capital.* Social capital relates to the groups, networks, relationships, and spaces that may contribute to community members' sense of belonging to the region, their ability to communicate with one another, and/or their ability to work cohesively and cooperatively with fellow community members (Boyd, Hayes, Wilson, & Bearsley-Smith, 2008; DeFilippis, 2001). DeFilippis (2001) calls for an equitable method of constructing social capital, as opposed to previous definitions such as Putnam (1995), that builds on pre-existing relationships and recognizes the many different forms that social capital takes and the spaces it occupies. By utilizing ABCD to develop social capital in Owls Head and its surrounding communities (e.g., Little Harbour) through continuous and meaningful engagement, highly functional networks can be created. These networks will allow individuals, businesses, and organizations on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore to support one another through the sharing of resources and the creation of strong partnerships.

In the context of tourism, local businesses and organizations can benefit from the networks identified/created through ABCD to create packages for visitors that include a diverse set of local experiences through various Eastern Shore operators. For example, a backcountry tour operator could run a snowshoe tour that stops at a point in the forest to speak to a local researcher about the significance of bogs to carbon sequestration. The tour could end with a dinner at a coastal cabin with locally caught fish. At this dinner, local fishers and/or cooks could tell the story of how the fish was caught and prepared, and the significance that the dish has to local culture and local/familial traditions. To create deeply meaningful experiences like this, communities may seek guidance through existing tools such as the Nova Scotia

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Experience Toolkit developed by Tourism Nova Scotia. This Toolkit provides insight into the ways in which tourism operators can add value to their businesses by transitioning from a traditional static tourism product to an authentic experience (Tourism Nova Scotia, 2019). The Toolkit provides examples of successful local businesses that utilize experience-based tourism (Tourism Nova Scotia, 2019). With this information, communities can work towards creating a string of interconnected, community-based experiences that use local assets to their full potential.

Developers and community leaders can also seek to build and strengthen networks between tourist sites. For example, Interviewee L had the idea of creating an intuitive, interactive online community map of the Eastern Shore: "… GIS mapping [or] web-based representation of the eastern shore in which we're going to attach historical pieces of information … who settled this island? … where was there a lobster factory in 1900, or traditional First Nations portage routes and all these different layers of historical information." An online map would not only make potential visitors aware of all of the different tourism sites that exist on the Eastern Shore, but it would also deepen the visitor's experience of these places by showcasing their unique stories. All of these actions support a shift towards deep experiential tourism (Harrison, Blickem, Lamb, Kirk, & Vassilev, 2019; Albuquerque, Costa, & Martins, 2018).

Community networks are a key asset of the future of Owls Head, regardless of the form that its development may take. Pre-existing networks can be seen in the development of the Save Owls Head Provincial Park Facebook group (now titled Protect Owls Head Provincial Park). The removal of the purchase of lands proposal from Lighthouse Links Development Co. shows the power of this network in inspiring social and governmental change (Donovan, 2021). The Facebook group united various local stakeholders of diverse backgrounds around a common goal and continues to utilize the skills of these individuals to educate Nova Scotians on local environmental justice issues. The large following that the movement gathered can be utilized to assemble ideas, skills, volunteers, and other resources for sustainable community development at Owls Head and other small communities in the surrounding area such as Little Harbour. By showing community members that they have the agency and community support networks to influence change, they may be more likely to pursue their ideas toward local development that may include sustainable tourism development (Haines, 2009; Harrison, Blickem, Lamb, Kirk, & Vassilev, 2019).

5.3 Improving Quality of Life through Development

Improving the quality of life of residents is a commonly stated goal amongst governing bodies across the world (Mensah, Andres, Perera, & Roji, 2016). The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines quality of life as: "the degree to which a person or group is healthy, comfortable, and able to enjoy the activities of daily living" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Cummins (2005) states that quality of life is enhanced when an individual feels they (1) have a degree of control over their future and the future of their community, (2) they have access to the resources they need, (3) they feel that their life has purpose, (4) and they feel a sense of belonging to a community, group, and/or idea. By developing a better understanding of the ways in which residents of the Eastern Shore feel empowered and providing them with the tools and support to pursue their passions and ideas, quality of life could be improved for many individuals.

5.3.1 Providing Opportunities for Locals

Researchers have found that regional quality of life can be improved through a variety of community development methods, including the addition of public spaces (e.g., parks and other green spaces), creating opportunities for locals to participate in community events or organizations (e.g., volunteering), and encouraging community members to attend clubs and community events (Mensah, Andres, Perera, & Roji, 2016; Cattan, Hogg, & Hardill, 2011). In relation to the impacts of creating volunteer opportunities, Interviewee L said: "… a lot of our volunteers are people who are new to the community. So that's the one way that they actually meet local people, is volunteering with us. … that's how they become part of a community …" Cicognani et al. (2007) confirms that, among other social activities, volunteering plays a crucial role in creating a sense of community in many individuals. At Owls Head, or in surrounding communities such as Little Harbour, volunteer opportunities can be created in assisting researchers in collecting and/or responding to data, in organizing and executing community events (e.g., workshops, fundraiser dinners, open-mic events), joining civic groups like Save Owls Head, or participating in community planning (i.e., contributing opinions and ideas to community engagement initiatives).

Jeffres and Dobos (1993) found that a high number of perceived opportunities for leisure activities in a community is directly correlated to a higher quality of life (i.e., if community

members have a high level of access to a variety of leisure activities, they are likely to have a higher quality of life than a community with less access to leisure activities). More specifically, Brajša-Žganec, Merkaš, and Šverko (2011) found that attending cultural events (e.g., art exhibits, concerts, theatre shows) was a significant indicator for higher levels of social wellbeing in adults. The access that local people have to experiences can improve with increased tourism development that eventually draws more tourism related services and amenities. Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle still accurately describes how destinations may change over time depending on how well they are managed (Butler, 1980; Butler, 2006). While the Eastern Shore and the Owls Head region will not likely be overrun with tourists or see fast rises in local inflation, it's important to be mindful of proceeding cautiously in developing tourism opportunities and experiences that equally support and benefit the local communities (Biagi, Ladu, Meleddu, & Royuela, 2019).

Experiential and community-based tourism ventures can empower residents to become more involved in their community by creating and showcasing these experiences. These could involve offering input and local knowledge to inform interpretive experiences or assisting in planning/executing community-based events. It is important that tourism operators work to protect and promote residents' access to natural and constructed community assets, opportunities, and amenities so that both locals and visitors are able to enjoy them.

5.3.2 Improving Access to Local Ecosystems

Based on research into the interactions of various age groups with woodland and green spaces, Thompson and Aspinall (2011) concluded that natural open spaces offer a variety of benefits to those that spend time in them. This includes benefits to the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of visitors and local residents (Thompson & Aspinall, 2011). Works such as Wheaton, Waiti, Olive, and Kearns (2021) and Foley, Kearns, Kistemann, and Wheeler (2019) illustrate the significant role that coastal access plays in the wellbeing of residents of coastal areas. Similar to Biagi, Ladu, Meleddu, and Royuela (2019), which argued that resident access to community amenities must be protected, the findings of Thompson and Aspinall (2011) suggest that resident access to green spaces and natural areas must also be protected to protect local quality of life. Less than 10% of Nova Scotia's coast is formally protected, while over 70% NS land and 85% of NS coastline is privately owned (N.S. Department of Environment & N.S. Department of Natural Resources, 2013; Government of

Canada, 2019; Nova Scotia Nature Trust, n.d.). This creates an issue of access to coastal and natural areas for Nova Scotia residents. Interviewee F was aware of this problem: "There is a lack of coastal access, which makes it hard for people to experience 'pristine nature' in NS. … we need to protect these places to preserve the coastal brand of NS."

The World Tourism Organization noted that improperly managed tourism is listed as a potential threat to public coastal access (Yunis, 2001). To combat this, Yunis (2001) suggests a multifaceted approach that includes capacity building amongst residents to encourage them to engage in local coastal resource management and planning, creating incentives to influence the actions of tourism operators, adapting points of coastal access to limit negative tourist impacts (e.g., increasing signage, restricting access to fragile ecosystems), and fully integrating tourism into coastal management plans so that tourism aligns with the carrying capacity of the region. All of these strategies could be useful tools for the coastal communities near Owls Head.

A method that could prove useful to protecting coastal access in Nova Scotia is land stewardship. Stewardship can include informative signage, fencing/physical barriers, or patrolling the area (Burger & Niles, 2013; Burger et al., 2004; Darrah, 2020). The Nova Scotia Nature Trust is one of the province's leaders in coastal land stewardship programs. Landowners can enter stewardship agreements with the Nature Trust in which the organization assists the landowner in protecting the ecosystems of the area (Nova Scotia Nature Trust, n.d.). Land owners can also seek to legally protect their land through the Nature Trust while retaining private ownership (Nova Scotia Nature Trust, n.d.). If tourism operators acquire land surrounding Owls Head, they could enter into agreements with the Nature Trust to create effective plans to improve access to the coastline while protecting coastal ecosystems. In addition, tourism can build support for local environmental stewardship by directly supporting conservation efforts, increasing local access to sustainability focused education, and providing opportunities for community participation in local conservation (Raftopoulos, 2018). It is important to integrate both environmental stewardship and protecting public access to ecosystems into tourism management plans. Interviewee C illustrated the importance of integrating this into management:

> We can cannot continue to cloister private development preventing Nova Scotians
> from having access to the coastline … from a perspective of creating a management
> plan for a large coastal landscape, we need some of those anchor [sites] that are rooted

in biodiversity, rooted in wilderness appreciation, rooted in people enjoying the place through things like kayaking, walking, photography, painting, Mi'kmaq storytelling, all of the things that could be possible if it wasn't a golf course.

5.3.3 Improving Access to Basic Services

In rural areas across the globe, inadequate access to basic services such as education and healthcare is a common issue (Masot & Alonso, 2015; Engle, 2018; Wheaton, Waiti, Olive, & Kearns, 2021). This is also true for many rural areas in Canada (Halseth & Ryser, 2006; Kornelsen, Stoll, & Grzybowski, 2011). As of 2020, 18% of Canadians live in rural areas, while only 8% of the country's practicing physicians serve these communities (Wilson, Rourke, Oandasan, & Bosco, 2020). The provision of basic services through experiential tourism is somewhat beyond the scope of this study but must be addressed as a lack of basic services is a primary issue for many rural communities in Nova Scotia. For example, Interviewee I said: "… to get people to come out here even to build or to move, we need to make sure we've got healthcare and our hospitals are open. But the Eastern Shore hospitals are closed more than they are open." Community development strategies such as ABCD can recognize the existing skills and knowledge within a community that could be mobilized to provide services that are lacking (Australian Government Department of Health and Aging, 2010; Farmer & Nimegeer, 2014). For example, communities can create local volunteer-based first responder services that supplement regional healthcare systems (Farmer & Nimegeer, 2014). Tourism operators could contribute to local healthcare needs by diverting a portion of profits towards equipment for community-based volunteer healthcare services. There are various examples of healthcare being provided to communities through voluntourism, but many of these initiatives are problematic as they fail to address their inherent colonial/imperialist nature, and are unsuccessful in creating lasting changes in a community's capacity to provide itself with adequate healthcare services (Sullivan, 2019). To remedy these issues, Sullivan (2019) recommends that in order to create exchanges that are beneficial for both the tourists and community members, tourism operators need to work closely with community professionals to fully understand the region's capacity to provide healthcare services, and how tourism initiatives can support in building this capacity.

Tourism has the potential to supplement the need for local, accessible education in rural communities. Interviewee J saw this opportunity: "… why aren't the schools taking kids

there? Or why aren't they taking them on a Sober Island boat tour? Why aren't they taking them to see the oyster farm that exists in the area?" Further, Interviewee C said: "I think that fishers - they represent a culture … these guys have a lifetime of experience equal to any university professor." The educational systems of a community can be completely changed by valuing all types of local knowledge and making it easily accessible to local residents. Tourism can be used as a means of engaging these local educators and using their assets to create experiences that are exciting and educational for all ages. Though the provision of basic services may not be the primary goal of tourism development on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore, basic services such as healthcare and education are essential to the quality of life of local residents (Kapuria, 2014; Edgerton, Roberts, & von Below, 2011). If development does not improve the quality of life for community members, it has failed.

In this section, the key findings of interviewee responses were explored. These findings were supported and contextualized by previous knowledge and research. The key concepts that emerged from the stakeholder interviews were that (1) experiential education can be used to drive future sustainable tourism, development, and conservation initiatives at Owls Head and in its surrounding communities, (2) development can be used as a means of building resilience at Owls Head and across the Eastern Shore by taking stock of the region's assets and forming connections between them, and (3) the quality of life among Eastern Shore residents can be improved through sustainable tourism and other development alternatives. By utilizing community-based experiential education and Asset Based Community Development to create local sustainable tourism destinations, communities can work towards generating economic activity that directly benefits community members and builds on the local qualities that residents are proud of.

6 Recommendations & Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the concept of sustainable tourism within the context of future development in Owls Head, first through a review of key literature. Using insights gained from the literature, stakeholder perspectives were investigated with regards to their visions for Owls Head in relation to sustainable community development and sustainable tourism. In this chapter, a series of policy recommendations and sustainable community development strategies are reviewed in order to support and encourage sustainable tourism development in the Owl's Head region.

After the Lighthouse Links Development Co. withdrew their purchase proposal of lands adjacent to Owls Head, the region is now an opportunity for sustainable community-based development. The resource sharing networks that the Save Owls Head movement has created are assets to future sustainable development projects. For example, Interviewee F said: "… the delisting has helped bring awareness to other environmental issues in NS." and Interviewee E who said: "… people are learning from each other and sharing resources/knowledge." With the amount of attention that the SOH movement has brought to Owls Head, the controversy also represents an opportunity for various levels of government to mend neglected relationships with Eastern Shore community members after many incidences of breaches in trust (e.g., the 1975 National Park Proposal, the ongoing MPA controversy, the delisting of Owls Head from the PAPA) (Rainville, Beaton, Graham, & Burns, n.d.; Withers, 2019). In rebuilding this trust through sustainable community development, levels of government can use policy to accomplish local goals such as sparking diversified local economic development, incentivizing sustainable business practices, retaining public coastal access, creating networks between local organizations and businesses, ensuring that marginalized/neglected groups are represented and included in development, and protecting vulnerable ecosystems.

6.1 Policy Recommendations

6.1.1 Incentives for Local Sustainable Business Development

There are various ways in which the government can incentivize development that focuses on using local resources and centres on local cultural heritage and/or ecosystems. One method is to create grants and funding opportunities for business development projects that strive to use the existing assets of the community such as local place-based knowledge and skills, regional cultural traditions and stories, local environmental landscapes, and existing community infrastructure (e.g., docks, museums, community centres). These funding incentives should also encourage businesses and organizations to contribute to other developmental goals such as diverting funds to support the development of the region's basic services (such as education and emergency healthcare). This will help to ensure that tourism development integrates key sustainable community development goals into their business plans and that community members benefit from tourism activity.

In the face of environmental issues both globally (e.g., climate change) and locally (e.g., lack of public access to ecosystems and coastline, lasting damages to ecosystems from industrial activities), it is vital that the government incentivizes sustainable practices in local business development. This could be in the form of grant funding, but could also include tax breaks for engaging in renewable energy use, pursuing 0 waste principles, integrating environmental education into business/organization procedures, and/or creating new low-impact ways for locals and visitors to access ecosystems and coastline. Not only will these incentives work towards protecting local ecosystems from the negative impacts of development, but they will also assist the government in reaching their goals for provincial ecosystem protection and sustainability.

Government can encourage new business development by assisting in the creation of local networks between businesses and organizations throughout the Eastern Shore. For example, regional conferences based around sustainable community development could be hosted. At these conferences, businesses and organizations can interact with one another and form connections, relationships, and potentially partnerships in order to share resources and knowledge. In the context of tourism, these partnerships could result in the creation of tourism packages that link together experiences from different tourism operators, thereby

increasing the monetary value of the experience and deepening the visitor's experience of the Eastern Shore. Government can also assist in constructing networks using digital means. This could be in the form of a GIS map that shows all of the businesses and organizations along the Eastern Shore as well as their unique stories that attach them to the history and development of the region's communities. Not only will this map create an interactive and deeply informative visual for visitors, but it will also create better awareness among local communities of the existing businesses and organizations in the area and how these entities might build connections and support one another in the future.

6.1.2 Creating Community Control through Policy

The delisting of Owls Head represents a failure of various levels of Nova Scotia's government in maintaining trusting, transparent relationships with its rural communities. In the wake of the controversy, the Provincial Government has the opportunity to mend these relationships by creating acts and policies that prevent these sort of back room deals from happening again in the future. Bill No. 19 (a.k.a. the *Owls Head Act*), proposed by then Nova Scotia New Democrat Party leader Gary Burill in October of 2021, would have protected areas like Owls Head from being delisted from the PAPA (*Owls Head Act*, 2021). Unfortunately, the Bill was defeated after all members of the Nova Scotia Progressive Conservative Party (majority party in power) voted against it. In order to restore trust between government and community members, it is vital that a policy similar to Bill No. 19 is passed in order to guarantee the safety of other cherished and ecologically significant greenspaces, beaches, and parks across the province.

The government can also create policies to ensure that effective, proper community engagement occurs before development begins. With expert facilitation, policies like this will work to ensure that all voices, especially those of marginalized groups, are heard and respected before and continuously throughout the development process. Policies can also be created to change certain aspects of community engagement. For example, policies/procedures can be created that aim to place local leaders in control of community engagement. By giving control to these individuals, community members will be more likely to participate in meaningful ways as they already have trusting relationships with those in charge of engagement. Not only should community engagement be used to create trusting

relationships between community members, government, and developers, but it also provides key site-specific knowledge and resources to developers that can support their projects.

6.1.3 Updating Provincial Environmental Impact Assessments

In order to ensure that development projects have minimal negative impacts on the natural environment and maximize positive impacts for the community, it is important that Nova Scotia's environmental impact assessments (EIAs) take into account more aspects of sustainable community development. EIAs need to include the perspectives of community members regarding sites of historical or ecological importance. This could be accomplished through community mapping sessions with various local stakeholders. Nova Scotia's EIAs need to be conducted on all projects that could potentially impact coastal communities and coastal ecosystems, not just for waste disposal projects, energy production facilities, and industrial plants (Environment Act, 1995).

Before EIAs can occur, the full ecosystem services of an area should be mostly understood. In the context of Owls Head, there needs to be much more research on the potential of eelgrass beds and marshlands for carbon sequestration, as well as research on the various species that inhabit the coastal headland and how they contribute to the health of ecosystems across Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Provincial Government can create research grants for students and researchers that seek to examine the unique species and ecosystems of Owls Head. In addition, the government can also provide grant funding to researchers seeking to learn more about the cultural/anthropological significance of ecosystems and landscapes in coastal Nova Scotia. By creating more rigorous EIA processes and funding more environmental research, the Nova Scotia Provincial Government can work towards achieving its environmental sustainability goals while ensuring that the quality of life of residents adjacent to development projects are not negatively impacted by that development.

To summarize the key takeaways from this section, the primary policy recommendations were simplified and are shown under three separate categories below in Table 4.

Table 4. Policy Recommendations Summary

Policy Category	Business Incentives	Community Control	Updating EIAs
	Grant funding for local business development	Community-based environmental policies that account for local values/perspectives	EIAs must account for sites that are significant to local cultural/ecological heritage
	Tax breaks/incentives for sustainable business practices	Policies mandating community-based leadership in engagement	EIAs take place for all development activities that could affect coastline
	Conferences to create networks/relationships between businesses	Policies requiring that local residents and First Nations are consulted before development begins	Funding for ecological research to fully understand ecosystem services of proposed development sites
	Interactive GIS map that shows history, connections between business/organizations		

6.2 Future Research

The scope of this study was primarily centred on community-based sustainable tourism development in Owls Head. This study provides various ideas and strategies for sustainable development specific to coastal areas in rural Nova Scotia. Much more research is required in order to better understand the types of development and sustainable tourism that are most suitable to the province's Eastern Shore. This research could be in the form of performing longitudinal studies of existing businesses in rural coastal towns in Nova Scotia or elsewhere. Alternatively, business conferences could take place in Nova Scotia that showcase success stories of sustainable coastal business development abroad. Local businesses, organizations, and entrepreneurs could attend this conference and collaborate with one another to come up with new, innovative sustainable development plans for rural Nova Scotia.

Though this study provided examples of potential policy interventions that various levels of government could initiate in order to stimulate sustainable tourism development and other forms of sustainable community development on the Eastern Shore, this study did not perform an in-depth investigation of the effects of similar policies on other coastal, rural areas. More research is needed in order to fully understand the effects of the policies, acts, and incentives proposed in the previous section of this chapter. Further, the existing acts and

policies in Nova Scotia regarding sustainability and rural development must be examined on a much deeper level (e.g., the Environment Act, the Enviro-Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act). Any new policy or act should undergo frequent reviews and adjustments based on feedback from community stakeholders. Using this feedback and local knowledge, the Nova Scotia Provincial Government can amend these acts and policies so that they work more effectively within the specific contexts of Nova Scotia's coastal communities. Not only will this help stimulate sustainable development but working closely with community members to update and adjust policies will help in mending neglected relationships between community stakeholders and government.

The table below shows a list of potential future research questions. Each question was categorized into one of four groups: (1) examining policy, (2) examining development, (3) ecological research, or (4) anthropological research.

Table 5. Recommendations for Future Research Questions

Examining Policy	Examining Development	Ecological Research	Anthropological Research
What are the effects of [environmental policy] on sustainable business development in rural coastal communities in Nova Scotia?	What are the effects of [business funding program] on sustainable business development in Nova Scotia?	What is the capacity of eelgrass beds on Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore to sequester carbon?	What is the significance of Owls Head to the heritage of the Mi'kmaq?
How can environmental policy be used to create sustainable tourism development in Nova Scotia's coastal communities?	What are the effects of sustainable tourism development on quality of life amongst Eastern Shore residents?	How does the Broom Crowberry plant contribute to the coastal ecosystems of Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore?	What is the significance of historical fishing infrastructure to the cultural identity of Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore?
How can environmental policies protect public coastal access in Nova Scotia's rural communities?	How can sustainable tourism operators fund the development of basic services in rural communities?	What is the impact of environmental education on the attitudes and behaviours of children in Nova Scotia's coastal communities?	How does storytelling and maritime folklore contribute to the cultural identity of Nova Scotia's Eastern Shore?

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6.3 Concluding Thoughts

Owls Head could represent a turning point in Nova Scotia for land conservation and sustainable development. With proper management and community engagement, Owls Head and its surrounding communities can utilize the region's existing assets to diversify their economic systems into industries like sustainable tourism. Not only will using local assets ensure that development is based on the values and culture of local residents, but it will also help build appreciation for these assets among both visitors and locals. With policy tools the Nova Scotia Provincial Government can help encourage sustainable tourism development in rural communities while accomplishing local and regional goals such as generating diversified local economic development, retaining public coastal access, creating and maintaining networks between local organizations and businesses, ensuring that marginalized/neglected groups are represented and included in development, and protecting vulnerable ecosystems. These policies can also assist the province in reaching its goals for environmental sustainability goals set forth in the Environment Act and the Enviro-Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act. By achieving sustainability goals locally, Nova Scotia can contribute to global sustainability goals like the Sustainable Development Goals that followed the 2012 Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Owls Head has the potential to become an internationally-recognized success story in land protection and sustainable coastal development.

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Appendix A

Research ethics training and clearance

University Centre of the Westfjords
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info@uw.is

This letter certifies that Angus MacLean has completed the following modules of:

(X) Basic ethics in research
(X) Human subjects research
(X) Animal subjects research

Furthermore, the Masters Program Committee has determined that the proposed masters research entitled 100 Wild Islands Sustainable Tourism Feasibility Study meets the ethics and research integrity standards of the University Centre of the Westfjords. Throughout the course of his or her research, the student has the continued responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

University Centre of the Westfjords ethics training certification and research ethics clearance is valid for one year past the date of issue unless otherwise noted.

Effective Date: 18 June 2021
Expiration Date: 18 June 2022

Prior to making substantive changes to the scope of research, research tools, or methods, the student is required to contact the Masters Program Committee to determine whether or not additional review is required.

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Sustainable Development Alternatives for Owl's Head
Master's Thesis in Coastal Communities and Regional Development
University Center of the Westfjords, Iceland
Researcher: Angus MacLean
2477 Windsor Street
Halifax, NS, B3K 5B9
(902) 802-6530; wamaclean8@gmail.com

1. *Purpose of the study:* To explore sustainable development alternatives for Owl's Head.
2. *Interview procedures:* Interviewees will be asked a set of 14 questions. These questions are meant to prompt the perspectives and feelings of the interviewee in relation to the Owl's Head region and about existing and future development projects in that region.
3. *Potential implication of the study:* The outcome of this research may impact the shape and state of tourism and development in Owl's Head, how the local communities benefit from that development, and how the development projects interact with the natural environment.
4. *Duration:* The interview process will require approximately 50 minutes (+/- 10 minutes) of the interviewee's time. The interviewee has the right to conclude the interview at any point in time.
5. *Statement of Confidentiality:* The identity of interviewees will remain confidential in terms of their representation in the research findings unless determined otherwise by choice of a given interviewee. Pseudonyms will be used rather than actual names. Interview data will be kept on a secure computer server.
6. *Dissemination of findings:* The individuals that participate in this study will be the first to receive the results and recommendations of the study. These individuals will remain informed regarding the progress of the research throughout the research process. Further dissemination may include presentations and journal articles.

Signature of Interviewee: _____ Date: _____

Name of Interviewee (print): _____

*Do not hesitate to ask the researcher any questions during the interview, or after the interview at the contact information listed above.

Appendix C

<u>Interview Questions</u>

1) What is your favourite way to experience Nature? (e.g., hiking, swimming, kayaking, or even watching a nature documentary)
2) To what extent are you aware of the Owl's Head issue?
    a) In what capacity (member of advocacy group, nearby resident, government)?
    b) Please describe your experiences with Owl's Head?
3) Why is this issue important to you?
4) Do you think that Owl's Head is unique compared to other coastal headlands in Nova Scotia?
    a) YES - What makes it unique?
5) What importance, if any, do you feel coastal regions like Owl's Head have to Nova Scotia's culture and heritage?
6) What groups, if any, do you feel need to be engaged before development can occur in Nova Scotia's coastal regions?
    a) What are some methods or strategies that can be used to engage these individuals and involve them in the process?
7) How do Owl's Head and other coastal regions in NS could benefit from sustainable forms of tourism (e.g., experiential tourism, adventure tourism, community-based tourism)?
8) How do you think the addition of infrastructure, programming, and experiences (anything from increased signage to a golf course) could help attract more visitors, residents, and businesses to Owl's Head and its surrounding communities?
9) In what ways do you think infrastructure changes and programming can benefit both tourism experiences and resident daily life (e.g., walking paths, culinary experiences bike lanes, signage)?
10) Do you know of any businesses or organizations operating in/around Owls Head that you feel are important to the region's development?
11) What relationship, if any, do you feel that tourism has with conservation?
    a) How might tourism support conservation in Owl's Head?
12) What role, if any, do you feel education plays in promoting and supporting sustainable tourism?
13) How can tourism operate more responsibly in Nova Scotia's coastal headlands? (And what metrics can we use to measure impacts and benefits?)
14) In an ideal future, what would Owl's Head and its surrounding communities look like in 2030?

Appendix D

1. What makes you passionate about the Eastern Shore?
2. Do you think that the Eastern Shore is unique compared to other parts of Nova Scotia's coastline?
3. What importance, if any, do you feel that the Eastern Shore has to Nova Scotia's culture and heritage?
4. What groups, if any, do you feel need to be engaged before development can occur in Nova Scotia's coastal regions?
   a. What are some methods or strategies that can be used to engage these individuals and involve them in the process?
5. How could the Eastern Shore and other coastal regions in NS benefit from sustainable forms of tourism (e.g., experiential tourism, adventure tourism, community-based tourism)?
6. How do you think the addition of infrastructure, programming, and experiences (anything from increased signage to a golf course) could help attract more visitors, residents, and businesses to the communities of the Eastern Shore?
7. In what ways do you think infrastructure changes and programming can benefit both tourism experiences and resident daily life (e.g., walking paths, culinary experiences bike lanes, signage)?
8. Do you know of any businesses or organizations operating in the Eastern Shore you feel are important to the region's future development?
9. What relationship, if any, do you feel that tourism has with conservation?
   a. How might tourism support conservation on the Eastern Shore?
10. What role, if any, do you feel education plays in promoting and supporting sustainable tourism?
11. How can tourism operate more responsibly in Nova Scotia's coastal headlands? (And what metrics can we use to measure impacts and benefits?)
12. In an ideal future, what would Owl's Head and its surrounding communities look like in 2030?