

John A. Hogg ~ Kensington Public Forest

14.9 hectares (36.8 acres)

Featuring mature Acadian forest, immature forest, field, and hedgerow

94+ species of plants

2.4 km woodland with natural surface trails or fields with mowed surface trails

0.7 km ski trail

Background:

On April 16th, 2002 the Public Forest Council held a public meeting in Kensington to hear concerns about P.E.I.'s forests. Many citizens from Kensington and nearby communities attended and spoke on the need to conserve the remaining forest and establish a public forest in their area. Thus, the Public Forest Council, the Town of Kensington, and Government of Prince Edward Island combined their efforts to establish a public forest in or near Kensington.

To accomplish this, forested lands were assessed and two sections of primarily hardwood forest were identified as priorities. The woodlands of Robert and Jacquelynn (nee Irwin) Paynter in Kelvin Grove had the core attributes, namely, mature hardwood including sugar maple, yellow birch, red maple, and red oak, a number of older white pine and eastern hemlock, and rare plants such as Christmas fern. The Paynters have had a strong emotional connection to trees and their conservation, used these Acadian forest woodlands personally for hiking, skiing, and horseback riding and allowed others to walk and ski them. They expressed the desire for this forest to remain forest into the future. Thus, in 2003, Robert, Jacquelynn, Amy, and Emily Paynter agreed to transfer this 5.7 hectares (14 acres) of Acadian forest to the province provided that it be conserved as public forest with access to the public. As this section of forest was maintained through the decisions of five generations, they requested that the property be named after the first family member that owned this land, namely, John Andrew Hogg. This land has been in the family since prior to 1880.

To facilitate public access from the Town of Kensington and the Confederation Trail, the Province purchased an 9.2 hectare (22.8 acre) portion of the adjacent Buried Treasure Farms property. This land included a portion of the Acadian forest ridge, a recent softwood cutover area and an agriculture field. A right-of-way from the Kelvin Grove Road (Rink Road) for forest management was also acquired. The acquisition of the Kensington public forest was announced in August 2004. In 2005, the Kensington Public Forest Management Committee was established with representation from the Town of Kensington, Public Forest Council, Kensington Intermediate

Senior High School, and the P.E.I. Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry's Provincial Forest Section. Work started on the development of the ecological principles for the property, and the first trail was mowed in the field adjacent to the Confederation Trail in August, 2006. The John A. Hogg ~ Kensington Public Forest trails were officially opened on August 21st, 2007.

Habitats:

Most of the Acadian forest on this property consists of closed canopy forest, larger diameter, shade tolerant deciduous (hardwood) trees. The primary deciduous species are sugar maple, red maple, and yellow birch. A hardwood ridge runs from the southeast corner to the northwest corner of the property and there are scattered red oak with diameters over 25 cm (12 inches), scattered large American beech, a few large white pine, and scattered hemlock. In some areas of the forest there are dense clumps of ground hemlock, a medicinal plant that yields a cancer treating compound called taxol.

Around 2001, on the eastern side of this woodland, the former owner harvested a patch of the softwood forest. This area now has well established seedlings of sugar maple, red maple, yellow birch, striped maple, white birch, scattered red oak, red-berried elder, mountain ash, beaked hazelnut, and other shrubs.

The field portion of the property was actively farmed until 2002. The fields are thus in the early succession stages of change from farmland to forest. The first trees are appearing and a wide variety of grasses and other ground plants are now completely blanketing the field.

There is a hedgerow between the Confederation Trail and the field. There has been some tree planting along the trail but the majority of the trees and shrubs are naturally regenerated.

The upper reaches of the Barbara Weit River start from springs in this area. With the exception of summer rain storms, this section of the river usually runs dry in summer. There are good spring seepage areas during wetter periods of the year.



Christmas fern (photo by K. MacQuarrie)

To date, 94 species of plants have been identified on the John A. Hogg ~ Kensington Public Forest. One of these species is considered rare, namely, the Christmas fern. No rare animal species have been discovered yet but inventory work for various species is incomplete. The birds, mammals, amphibians, snakes, and invertebrates present are those of upland tolerant hardwoods, young regenerating forest, early old fields and hedgerow. These include Northern Harrier, owls, grouse, woodpeckers, flycatchers, vireos, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, chickadees, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Common Raven, Tree Swallows, Red-breasted Nuthatch, kinglets, thrushes, waxwings, warblers, blackbirds, sparrows, red fox, red squirrel, flying squirrel, eastern chipmunk, meadow vole, red-backed vole, shrews, short-tailed weasel, frogs, toads, salamanders, and garter snake.

Accessibility:

The primary access to the John A. Hogg ~ Kensington Public Forest is via the Confederation Trail. The trail entrance is located 1 km south of the Route 2 intersection on the Confederation Trail on the east side of Kensington near the Industrial Park or 1.3 m north of the Blue Shank Road (Route 107).

Note: Vehicle access is limited. Thanks to the landowners and Aliant, vehicle access has been allowed to the base of the Aliant telecommunications tower located off Route 2. Vehicles are not allowed beyond the parking area and must not block access to the adjacent farm lands. Please remember that some farm vehicles are wide. Only vehicles authorized by the P.E.I. Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry are permitted to enter upon the lands of the

John A. Hogg ~ Kensington Public Forest. Motorized vehicles are only allowed on the Confederation Trail if they have a permit to do so.

Stewardship Principles:

To ensure Public Land will continue to be open for your enjoyment, as well as for those who come after you, please follow the Public Land Code of Ethics:

1. Use vehicles only in areas designated for this purpose and do not block parking sites, laneways, trails or other accesses.
2. Stay on Public Land and do not trespass on private property (see the yellow line marking the boundaries on the entranceway sign).
3. Respect posted signs, and keep to trails where they exist.
4. Keep pets under close control.
5. Pack out what you pack in. Please pick up and properly dispose of litter.
6. Leave signs, fences, gates and other structures as you found them.
7. If berry-picking, use only what is abundant, and leave enough for wildlife.
8. Respect all laws pertinent to this property
9. Guard against fire, and do not drop matches, cigarette butts or other sources of ignition.
10. Avoid making excessive or unnecessary noise.
11. Respect the land, wildlife, and other visitors to the area.
12. Report illegal uses of public land to 1-902-368-5000, or to the appropriate Forestry District Office (902-854-7260).



This view of Kensington allows you to see how farms and natural habitat have changed since this aerial picture was taken in 1935.

If you have questions or comments, please contact the Provincial Forest Section of the P.E.I. Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry at 902-854-7260 or the Town of Kensington at 902-836-3781.

