



RCFNS
RURAL COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION OF NOVA SCOTIA



Annual Report

2023

Collaborating with Communities to Create a Brighter Future

Who We Are

The Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia

- is a community foundation that supports community organizations in rural Nova Scotia, through convening fund development and granting.
- has a proven track record, with more than 20 years of developing and delivering small and large grant programs.
- has dedicated board members from all regions of the province who have a wealth of experience about community development in rural Nova Scotia
- is a registered charity and is accountable to community members including donors and grantees.
- adheres to the highest standards of transparency and accountability in its financial management.
- is a member of the Community Foundations of Canada, Volunteer Canada, Environmental Funders of Canada and the Nova Scotia Music Association and the Nova Scotia Not For Profit Coalition.
- has signed and adheres to the seven pillars of the Canadian Philanthropic Commitment on Climate Change.
- Has signed the Philanthropic Community's Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.
- has been widely recognized for its excellence and leadership in the field of rural grant-making.
- adheres to the values of gender equality, equity, and climate action.



Jessica Fancy-Landry



Marta Anderson



Penny Day



Sherry McLeod



Chris Googoo



Ben Haightway



Mark Embrett



Ella Lentz



Justin Cottreau



Dana Decent



Belinda Tupper



Jeremy Martel



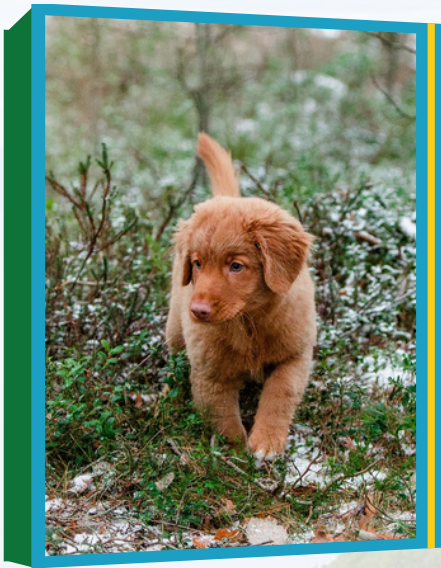
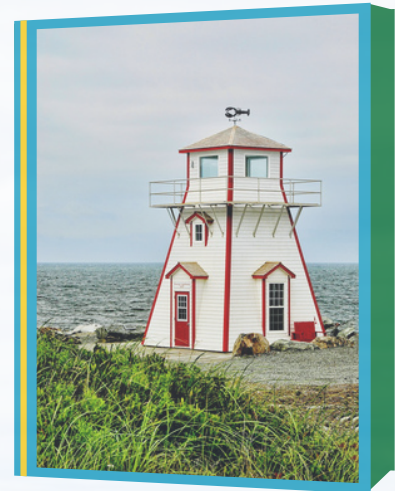
Kjeld Mizpah (KJ)
Conyers-Steede



Cathy Leslie

Our Mission

To empower residents and communities of rural Nova Scotia through sustainable granting and convening.

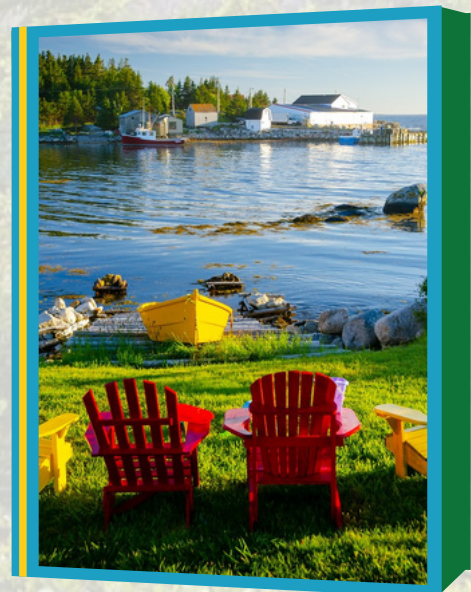


Our Vision

All Rural Nova Scotian residents live within healthy, prosperous, and sustainable communities.

Our Values

- RCFNS values the important contributions of rural Nova Scotian residents and communities.
- RCFNS values amplifying the [important] voices of marginalized peoples and communities, as well as the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- RCFNS values sustainable and responsible environmental stewardship.
- RCFNS values positive leadership and responsible innovation.
- RCFNS values acknowledging Nova Scotia's history and role in colonialism, as well as committing to learning and understanding more about truth and reconciliation.
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Message From RCFNS' Board Chair



Jessica Fancy Landry
Board Chair, Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia

I am honoured to present the Annual Report for the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia 2023-2024. As the new Chair, it gives me great pleasure to reflect on the accomplishments, challenges, and impact we've made in advancing the well-being of rural communities throughout our province.

This year has been one of resilience, adaptation, and growth for the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia. Despite the unprecedented challenges posed by Climate Change and subsequent financial hardships coming out of the pandemic, our commitment to supporting the vitality and sustainability of rural communities has remained steadfast. We've witnessed remarkable efforts from our grantees, partners, and volunteers, whose dedication and ingenuity continue to inspire us.

Throughout the fiscal year, we distributed over 2.3 million dollars to grassroots organizations, community projects, and initiatives aimed at addressing various challenges faced by rural communities. These grants have supported a wide range of initiatives, including food security programs, youth empowerment projects, and environmental conservation efforts to name a few.

We participated in our first #GivingTuesday Initiative, where we hosted many workshops online which highlighted the many ways that Nova Scotians can give back to their communities; whether it be with their time, monetarily, or by giving their knowledge to others.

This year, as a foundation, we aligned our strategic plan to our chosen UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to further drive our mission and vision and keep our purpose at the forefront of everything we do. We committed to investing 100% of our foundation's funds in social impact funds, as a way to have real and positive impacts on the achievement of our chosen SDGs. We have also committed to the 50-30 Challenge in creating a foundation that encourages the adoption of practices to improve equity.

In terms of our fund development and granting, we worked hard this year on Climate Action Initiatives and also held a Climate Impact Convening Session in Cape Breton last spring that was well attended and largely received by not only Nova Scotians but throughout the Atlantic Provinces. We began seeding of Dave Gunning Zero Hunger Campaign Fund and have closely reached our first goal of \$100,000. We were able to reopen our Ukrainian Resettlement and Joan Feynman Climate Change Funds, as well as expand our Livia Properties: Women in Trades Scholarship Program. We also developed the Dallas Lewis Legacy Fund and adjudicated the next round of the Communities Foundation of Canada's Gender Equity Grants.

Recognizing the importance of building organizational capacity within rural community groups, we presented a series of capacity-building and partnering workshops to Municipalities, and Chambers of Commerce throughout Nova Scotia. These workshops have empowered local leaders with the tools and knowledge needed to effectively address community needs and drive positive change in their communities. Collaboration has been at the heart of our work this year. We've forged strategic partnerships with government agencies, private sector organizations, and other philanthropic entities to leverage resources, share expertise, and maximize impact. These partnerships have enabled us to amplify the reach and effectiveness of our initiatives and achieve meaningful outcomes for rural communities. Wow, we have been very busy!

As we look ahead to the coming year, we remain committed to our mission of empowering rural communities to thrive and prosper. We recognize that the challenges facing rural areas are complex and multifaceted, but we are confident in the resilience and resourcefulness of rural communities. In the year ahead, we will continue to prioritize collaboration, innovation, and inclusivity in our efforts to create positive change.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our donors, supporters, volunteers, and partners for their unwavering commitment and support. Your generosity and dedication are instrumental in driving the success of the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia, and we are deeply grateful for your contributions. To our outgoing board members, Chris Googoo, Ben Haighway, Mark Embrett, Ella Lentz, Sherry MacLeod, and Belinda Tupper we wish you luck with your future endeavours and thank you for your service and dedication to RCFNS!

In closing, I am inspired every day by the collective efforts and achievements of our organization and the communities we serve. Together, we will continue to build a brighter future for rural Nova Scotia.

Our Numbers

**Number of
Community
Groups
Impacted: Over
300**

**Number of
People
Impacted:
Thousands**

**Number of
Communities
Reached: Over
80**

**Number of
Grants given:
Over 220**

**Number of
dollars granted:
Over
\$4,300,000**

**UN Sustainable
Goals activated
17/17**

**Canadian
Philanthropic
Commitment to
Climate Change
Pillars
Activated 7/7**

**NS Social
Determinants
of Health
identified and
activated
10/10**



Impact Stories

Joan Feynman Climate Action Grant

Nova Scotia's rural communities are directly affected by climate change through such factors as sea level rise, storms, weather, disease and species shift, all of which can cause major economic impact. As such, our communities are on the front-lines of Nova Scotia's efforts to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change and they have a vital role in finding solutions to this enormously difficult and complex issue. This fund was created in 2019 in partnership with the Joan Feynman Family in order to ignite creativity, innovation and change through community projects on climate change.

Fish Point Project

The Fish Point Committee was awarded a generous grant from the Joan Feynman Climate Action Grant in 2023. This grant was a pivotal turning point for the committee, enabling the documentation and execution of crucial initiatives to safeguard our beloved Fish Point Historic Site. Over the past months, they have tirelessly worked on the rock wall expansion, heightening the ground level, lengthening the walking perimeter on site, expanding our parking area, and initiating the ground formation for a future kiosk, paving the way for more community events.

In the face of challenges such as high course tides, hurricanes, and storm surges, they are delighted to report that there has been no further erosion, and our historic site ground area remains protected. This accomplishment is a testament to the efficacy of the measures they've put in place and the positive impact of the Joan Feynman Climate Action Grant.

Their journey began with the realization of the increasing threats posed by climate change, including higher course tides, coastal erosion, storm surge damages, and hurricanes affecting Nova Scotia's coastal communities. With over 70 percent of people in Nova Scotia living, working, and playing along the coasts, the need for proactive measures became urgent.



The Fish Point Committee was proud to have found a grant application that aligned with our commitment level, supporting our financial planning for the Fish Point Historic Site Program. Rising sea levels, a consequence of glacier melting, and thermal expansion of water and land temperature rises, have wreaked havoc along coastal regions. Nova Scotia has experienced a rise of approximately 0.32 meters in sea levels during the twentieth century.

Notably, Yarmouth faced a significant storm surge of 1.49 meters during Groundhog Day in 1976. Since 1990, sea levels have surpassed the projected upper limits of 1.4 meters. To address these challenges, they turned to Lidar (Light Detection and Ranging Technology), enabling accurate topographic mapping of coastal areas and projections. By 2100, the projected mean sea level for Yarmouth is estimated to be between 1.4 and 1.79 meters.

Impact Stories

Ukrainian Nova Scotia Resettlement Fund



In the spirit of giving and compassion, RCFNS was thrilled to build on the recent success of our 2022 Ukrainian Nova Scotia Resettlement Fund in collaboration with municipalities across Nova Scotia. In 2023, RCFNS was once again able to extend a helping hand to 32 new Ukrainian families who have chosen Nova Scotia as their new home.

This initiative would not have been possible without the incredible support and generosity of our donors, who selflessly contributed to make a meaningful difference in the lives of these immigrants. As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine persists, these families are navigating the challenges of adapting to a new world, and your support has played a crucial role in easing their transition.

Through the collective efforts of our community and the municipalities, RCFNS distributed gift cards to 32 more Ukrainian families, providing them with a bit of extra support during the year. These gift cards serve as a tangible expression of our collective goodwill and solidarity with those seeking refuge and a new beginning.



In the face of adversity, it is heartening to witness the resilience and strength of the human spirit. The Ukrainian families in Nova Scotia are actively working to establish themselves in their new community, and your contributions have undoubtedly made this journey a bit brighter and more hopeful.

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has been a part of this incredible program. Your kindness and generosity have not only provided practical assistance but have also sent a powerful message of unity and compassion. Together, we are making a positive impact on the lives of those who need it most.

As we reflect on the past year and look forward to the opportunities that the new year brings, let us continue to stand united in support of our neighbors and friends, both near and far.

Impact Stories

Communities for Gender Equality Grant



RCFNS is excited to share the inspiring outcomes of Potlotek First Nations' recent initiative, supported by the Gender Equality Grant. The project, titled "Apoqn'multiek Epi'jik," brought together 75 indigenous women, including members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, for two transformative gatherings.

The primary goal of the project was to foster unity and understanding among indigenous women, acknowledging the commonalities, differences, and shared experiences that shape their identities. Recognizing the historical challenges of lateral violence stemming from decades of oppression, Potlotek First Nations aimed to create a space for healing, connection, and empowerment.

During the sessions, participants engaged in discussions spanning cultural, political, social, and gender equality experiences. The gatherings provided a respite from the stresses of daily life, offering attendees a valuable opportunity to connect, share, and learn from one another. Observing tangible changes, the organizers noted that, initially, not all groups interacted with each other. However, by the end of the retreat, laughter and collaboration had replaced initial reservations, demonstrated the power of collective healing and understanding. The project successfully served a diverse group of 75 indigenous women.

As a continuation of their commitment to wellness, Potlotek sent 31 women, including LGBTQ2S+ individuals, to a wellness retreat at Oak Island Resort in Western Shore. This experience included group meditation, rune stone readings, divining rods, tarot card readings, chakra readings, shared stories, and group healing. The participants also enjoyed activities such as hiking, beachcombing, and live music, fostering a sense of community and self-discovery.

This initiative went beyond the immediate goals, sparking conversations about financial literacy, employment opportunities, and the potential for a men's wellness event. Participants discussed the trauma, PTSD, and fear of vulnerability experienced by their male counterparts, highlighting the need for inclusive healing spaces.

The retreat facilitated intergenerational healing, with women ranging from 17 to 70 years old coming together to share their journeys and perspectives. The impact was evident in observed relationship changes, fostering a deeper appreciation for one another and a heightened understanding of the ongoing struggles faced by Mi'kmaw women.

In the spirit of collaboration, women volunteered for various tasks, discussed their personal journeys openly, and shared meals at a large outdoor picnic. The experience was nothing short of fantastic, emphasizing the strength that emerges when communities come together to support and uplift each other.

Potlotek First Nations continues to be a beacon of empowerment and unity, showcasing the profound impact that community-driven initiatives can have on fostering resilience, understanding, and healing.

Our Commitments



In 2023, RCFNS granted over \$2,391,250 worth of grants to rural charities: over \$37,000 for the Joan Feynman Climate Change Fund, \$2,000 to the Livia Properties Women in Trades Grant, and over \$8,000 for the Ukrainian Nova Scotia Resettlement Fund.

Our Financials

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Assets		
Current		
Cash	\$ 170,852	\$ 1,107,251
Investments	312,702	347,748
Accounts Receivable	4,960	2,344
	<hr/> 488,514	<hr/> 1,457,343
Appropriated cash, Endowment Fund		22,484
	<hr/> \$ 488,514	<hr/> \$ 1,479,827
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Current	\$	\$
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	1,842	1,964
Employee Deductions Payable	24,092	1,126,630
Deferred Contributions	<hr/> 25,934	<hr/> 1,128,594
Net Assets		
General Fund	(17,471)	(55,047)
Internally Restricted Fund	50,000	50,000
Endowment Fund (externally restricted)	811	811
Endowment Fund (internally restricted)	394,298	355,469
	<hr/> 462,580	<hr/> 351,233
	<hr/> \$ 488,514	<hr/> \$ 1,479,827

This summary is based on excerpts from audited financial statements by MacDonald Murphy & Timmons Inc. Chartered Professional Accountants.

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia was registered in July 11, 2000 under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act.
Registration number: 3786251.

Our Future

Expanding our Impact Investing

Highlighting UN Sustainable Goals

Convene Impact Sessions

RCFNS Board Training

2024 Joan Feynman Climate Action Grants

Continuing the 2023 Community Sector Recovery Fund

Expand Housing For Health Program

Expanding Community Granting

2024 Dave Gunning Zero Hunger Fund

2024 Soaring Eagle Fund

Align With More Partners

Ukrainian Nova Scotia Resettlement Fund

Policy Review

2024 Strategic Planning

Expand Our Community Impact



RCFNS
RURAL COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia



Financial Contributions for Equity, Diversity and Climate Leadership Innovation makes Healthy Communities!

Please consider Donating today...

