

CALEDONIA GORGE NATURE RESERVE, NEW BRUNSWICK

PROTECTING DRINKING WATER FOR THE VILLAGE OF RIVERSIDE-ALBERT

Photo:
Nature Conservancy of Canada

PROTECTED AREA (PA)

Tucked in the rolling hills near the Bay of Fundy, the forest above Riverside-Albert does more than frame a picturesque village, it quietly sustains it. For generations, these woods have provided something essential and what may look like just another stretch of trees is, in fact, a meaningful conservation story in southeastern New Brunswick.

The forest here is Wabanaki (Acadian) forest—an ecosystem that once blanketed the Maritimes but is now exceedingly rare. Less than five per cent of these mature forests remain, making every surviving stand a treasure. The area provides significant habitat for wildlife, adds connectivity to a larger network of protected areas nearby, and offers a space for the community to connect with nature. However, perhaps most importantly, it protects freshwater reservoirs that supply the village's drinking water. For nearly a

century, residents have drawn fresh water from this landscape, water that first passes through the forest.

When the village faced losing secure control of its watershed due to an expiring lease in 2019, community leaders and the Nature Conservancy of Canada stepped in. Local leadership, conservation expertise, and shared commitment to nature came together in support of the land resulting in an agreement for its permanent protection.

This type of cooperative conservation action shows what's possible when we work together and serves as a reminder that conservation can have many faces, approaches, and participants. Today, birds like the eastern wood-pewee, a species of Special Concern, flit through the understory, rare orchids bloom in hidden glades, and the forest in Riverside-Albert continues to do what it has always done: quietly support all the life around it for years to come.



Does the property have a defined geographical space?

Yes! The boundaries of the Caledonia Gorge are well identified and can be accurately placed on a map.



Is there an effective way of ensuring that biodiversity will continue to be conserved into the future?

Yes! The land is owned for the long term by Nature Conservancy of Canada. NCC actively manages their nature reserves based on established guidance and standards for privately protected areas



Is there an expectation that the biodiversity on the site will be conserved for the long term?

Yes! NCC has a charitable purpose to preserve and manage lands and has established policies and agreements in place that support the organization's commitment to preserve the site for biodiversity in perpetuity.



Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?

Yes! This land is a primarily a nature reserve but also serves as a drinking water watershed for the town of Riverside-Albert.

Quick tip

If this answer was "no" for the Caledonia Gorge Nature Reserve it would likely be assessed as an Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure (OECM). Both types of areas are important, and both achieve biodiversity conservation.



Is biodiversity on the site conserved?

Yes! The Caledonia Gorge Nature Reserve is a pristine example of mature Wabanaki (Acadian) forest that includes mature red spruce, sugar maple, red maple and yellow birch. Most of the trees on the nature reserve are more than 80 years old. This forest provides habitat for many species of wildlife, including species at risk. The site is also adjacent to land owned by the province of New Brunswick that is designated as a Protected Natural Area under legislation.