

## To Reach the Park

Five Islands Provincial Park is located on Nova Scotia's Bay of Fundy coast, 23 kilometres (14 miles) east of Parrsboro and 57 kilometres (35 miles) west of Truro, on Route 2. Access Route 2 from Highway 104 at Exit 4 in Amherst, Exit 5 near Springhill or at Exit 11 in Glenholme.



## RESERVATIONS

1-888-544-3434

9:00 am to 11:00 pm AT (7 days a week)

[www.novascotiaparks.ca](http://www.novascotiaparks.ca) (24 hours)

## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Parks and Recreation Division**  
**Department of Natural Resources**  
RR # 1, Belmont,  
Colchester County,  
Nova Scotia, B0M 1C0  
(902) 662-3030  
[www.novascotiaparks.ca](http://www.novascotiaparks.ca)

**Department of Natural Resources**  
PO Box 428  
Parrsboro, Nova Scotia  
B0M 1S0  
(902) 254-3241

**Five Islands Provincial Park**  
(902) 254-2980  
(mid-May to September)



Photos courtesy Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

# Five Islands

## Provincial Park



*Five Islands Provincial Park rises majestically above the Bay of Fundy, where twice-daily some of the world's highest tides cover, and uncover, the immense tidal flats skirting the park. The park's 637 hectares (1,573 acres) include 90 metre (300 foot) sea cliffs, 225 million-year-old geological formations, a variety of forested and aquatic habitats, and abundant wildlife. Campers, hikers, birdwatchers, rock-hounds and photographers will find it hard to leave the park.*

**Folklore and History** The Bay of Fundy region abounds with exciting legends of the Mi'kmaq man-god Glooscap. At Five Islands it is said that Glooscap hurled five huge rocks at pesky Beaver. These rocks are visible today as islands near the park's headland.



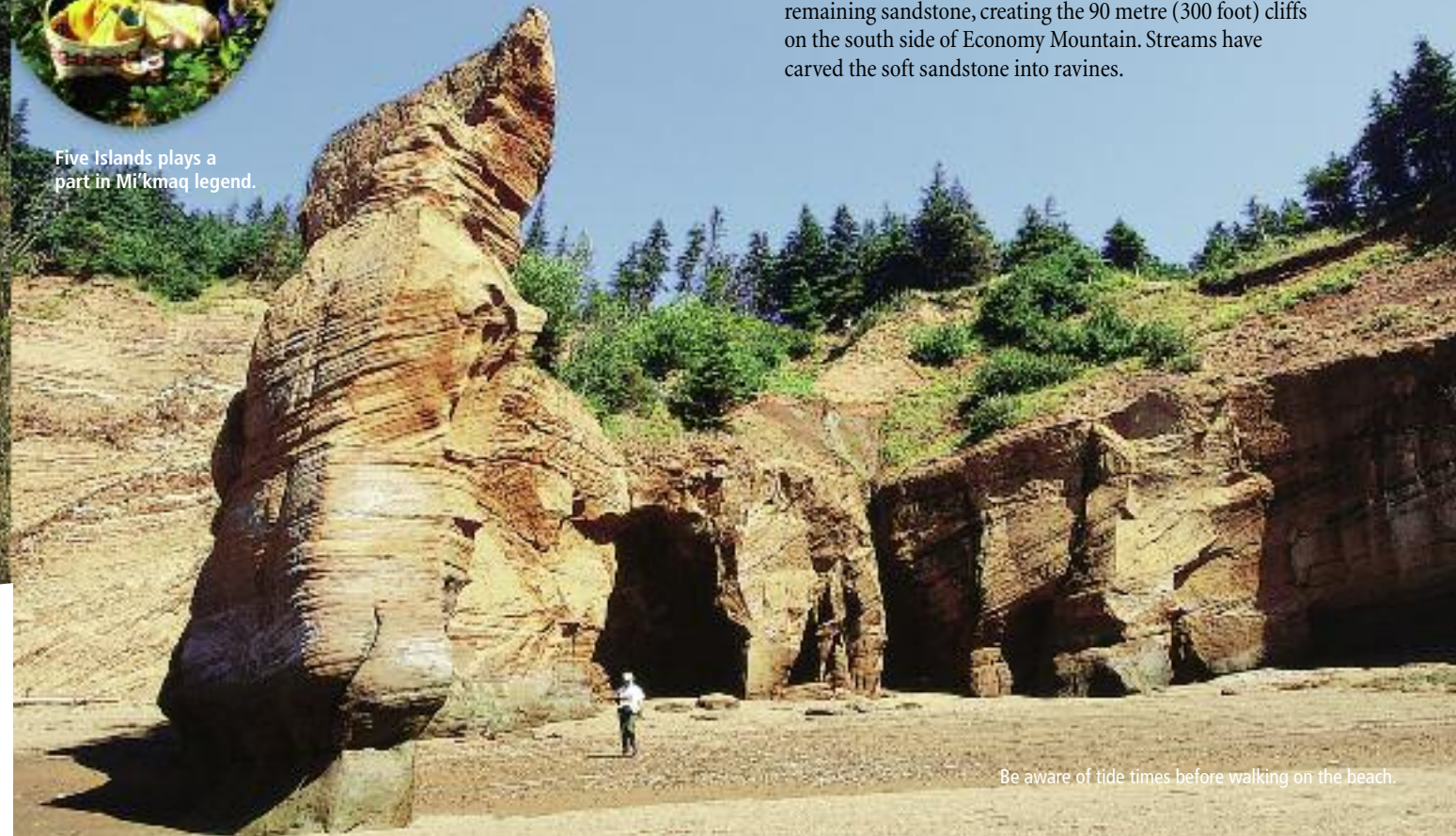
Five Islands plays a part in Mi'kmaq legend.

Evidence of old foundations, and the occasional apple tree still found throughout the park, are testimony to European settlement here in the 1800s. An oak tree, planted in 1865, still stands near the administration building.

**Natural History** Volcanic action, massive erosion, flooding and glacial scouring, created the spectacular scenery and interesting geological formations found here.

The park lies on red sandstone deposited over 225 million years ago when the Bay of Fundy was a dry, sandy plain in the middle of the mega-continent, Pangea. At that time, Pangea was splitting apart and basaltic lava flooded into newly-formed rift valleys. Remnants of those lava flows can be seen covering the red siltstone when looking toward Red Head. Approximately 3 metres (10 feet) below the base of the dark basalts, red siltstone layers alternate with thin layers of gypsum, a remnant of Pangea's arid climate.

Extensive erosion over the next 180 million years removed much of the basalt and sandstone. At the end of the Ice Age, some 12,000 years ago, flooding in the Bay of Fundy caused rapid erosion of the remaining sandstone, creating the 90 metre (300 foot) cliffs on the south side of Economy Mountain. Streams have carved the soft sandstone into ravines.



Be aware of tide times before walking on the beach.



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Hike the trails



The Old Wife and the protective caps of the five islands are examples of the more erosion-resistant basalt.

Agate, the provincial gemstone, along with amethyst, jasper and stilbite, are found along the beaches and cliffs. Fish fossils, as well as ornithopod dinosaur tracks, have been discovered in the loose blocks on the beach. If you find a fossil, please report it to park staff. Your discovery may be important.

And if you were wondering, the greatest recorded difference between high and low tide is 16.27 metres (53.4 feet) at Burntcoat Head, across the bay, on the south side of the Minas Basin.

**Plants and Animals** The climax hardwood forest of Nova Scotia – sugar maple, yellow birch and beech – covers many of the slopes and hilltops within the park. White spruce is the predominant softwood here having colonized the settlers' abandoned pastures. A mid-successional spruce-fir forest can be found on the upland flats, lower slopes and valley bottoms. Mixed-wood stands of white spruce, balsam fir, red maple and white birch oversee the park's coast.

Mud flats extending over 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) from shore are home to clams, crustaceans, worms, slipper limpets, mussels and barnacles, and also provide an important feeding and resting area for migratory shorebirds.

A salt marsh has developed in the upper tidal reaches of the estuary at Five Islands. Here winter flounder and mummichogs thrive, while rainbow smelts, gaspereau, striped bass, and Atlantic salmon migrate between ocean and stream.

While deer may be seen browsing in open woodland areas, the park is a haven for birds. Hawks and owls hunt for small mammals. Kinglets, warblers, siskins and crossbills can be seen, or heard, throughout the park, and Moose Island is a nesting site for bald eagles.

**Trails** For a geological perspective with excellent views of The Old Wife and Red Head, take Red Head Trail, 5 kilometres (3 miles) in length, skirting the sea cliffs that overlook the Minas Basin.

Follow an old logging road along the Economy Mountain Trail to an elevation of 213 metres (700 feet). This 5 kilometre (3 mile) trail passes through impressive stands of maple, birch, beech, and white spruce. For a more leisurely pace, the Estuary Trail's 4 kilometre (2.5 mile) route follows a tidal estuary through a variety of forest types, and features several viewing stations and interpretive panels.

Although no facilities or services are offered during the winter, the park is open for winter recreational activities. The park road is normally plowed to the parking lot near the start of the Economy Mountain Trail.



Fundy Geological Museum

## Area Attractions

Plan to attend these local festivals along the Glooscap Trail.

**July** Old Home Week, Parrsboro

**Aug** Nova Scotia Gem & Mineral Show, Parrsboro

- The Cobequid Interpretation Centre and Second World War observation tower can be found at Economy, as well as the Thomas Cove Coastal Reserve.
- The Fundy Geological Museum in Parrsboro showcases the area's unique geology and ancient life, and houses a rock and mineral shop.
- Visit the Economy River or Portapique River Wilderness Areas.
- Enjoy live theatre performed by The Ship's Company Theatre aboard the M. V. Kipawo in Parrsboro, or discover the area's rich timber and shipbuilding heritage at the Age of Sail Museum in Port Greville.
- At Advocate, the Cape d'Or lighthouse stands watch over the Bay of Fundy while the former lightkeepers' homes now serve as an interpretive centre, restaurant and guest house.
- For information on these and other attractions please consult the Nova Scotia Doers and Dreamers Guide, visit a Visitor Information Centre or the website at [www.novascotia.com](http://www.novascotia.com)

## Five Islands Provincial Park

- Parking
- Park Office
- Washrooms and Showers
- Vault Toilets
- Playground
- Picnic Area
- Walking Trail
- Lookoff
- Interpretive Panels
- Swimming
- Campground (73 sites)
- Recreational Vehicle Site
- Firewood
- Dumping Station
- Park Boundary

## A Special Message to Park Visitors

### PARK SAFETY

- Help preserve and protect this beautiful park for the enjoyment of future generations. Plants, animals and rocks are an important part of its natural heritage. Please do not damage or remove them.
- Please keep pets on a leash at all times.
- Firearms are prohibited within the park.

### PERSONAL SAFETY

- The cliff line is constantly eroding and may be unstable. Approach cliffs at designated viewing stations only and remain behind the security fence at all times.

- Use caution when venturing near the mud flats. The incoming tide rises very quickly, and at high tide the waters may be 15 metres (50 feet) higher than at low tide. Treacherous currents make travel to Moose Island too dangerous to attempt.
- Swimming may be hazardous due to high tides and strong currents. Beaches are unsupervised and children should be watched closely in or near the water.
- Contact park staff for further information about the park. They will be pleased to make your visit as enjoyable as possible.

