The Shubenacadie Canal and Waterway is an outdoor museum running across the very heart of Nova Scotia. Beginning on the Dartmouth waterfront and following a traditional Mi'kmaq route to the Bay of Fundy, you’ll marvel at the feats of engineering and sheer human effort that went into the canal’s construction. Explore all or part of it by driving, walking, cycling, paddling, or boating and let yourself become one with the past.

**Canal History**
The Mi’kmaq used this waterway to move between their summer encampment on the Atlantic coast and their hunting grounds in the interior. By following this route of rivers and lakes, they could easily travel the 115 kilometres from what is now Halifax Harbour to the Bay of Fundy, with only 5 kilometres of overland portage required.

By the early 1800s, merchants in the garrison town of Halifax and ports along the Bay of Fundy were looking for a fast, safe route to move goods from one side to the other, rather than the dangerous sail around Cape Sable. Turning the Mi’kmaq portage routes into a navigable waterway would provide that passage.

In 1826, some 300 workers, including stonemasons specially recruited from Scotland and Ireland, got to work. It was backbreaking labour, mostly done by hand. Locks, dams, terraced embankments, stone hut foundations, and the remnants of two marine railways remain a testament to their effort. By 1861, the waterway was complete.

Small inland steamers and barges transported goods through a series of nine locks, up two incline marine railways, across seven lakes, and one river. But for all the effort and costs that went into building the canal, it was no match for the age of rail. In 1871 the canal company ceased operation, leaving behind a stone and water tribute to a dream made real; one we can still see and touch today.

**Appreciate Nature**
The route of the Shubenacadie Canal and waterway was literally etched in stone; the natural lakes and rivers were carved out of the bedrock by the receding glaciers of the Ice Age. Following the canal today will take you through lake shores, bogs, marshes, and streams. Trees range from old-forest hemlock and fir to younger stands of spruce, birch, and poplar. Mayflowers and lady slippers bloom in the spring, with asters and goldenrods signaling the start of fall. A wide variety of ferns grow summer-long.

During the spring, Atlantic salmon, American smelt, striped bass and shad come up the Shubenacadie River and return to the sea in the fall. Eels also come up and stay until they are ready to return to their spawning grounds.

Eagles are a common sight along the route from the Dartmouth lakes to Maitland.

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Whether you have an hour or several days, there are many ways to experience this historic canal/waterway. By foot, you can trace its path by going to any of the multi-purpose trails, walking paths, or parks that dot the route. Bicycles are also welcome on most of these trails. But perhaps the most authentic way is by kayak or canoe. Boat launches are marked on the map. Some portaging is required.

**Shubenacadie Provincial Wildlife Park**

**Greenwing Legacy Interpretive Centre –** Enjoy walking trails and a living exhibit of many native and non-resident species of animals and birds. At the Greenwing Centre, get a hands-on lesson about the value and function of wetlands through interactive exhibits, as well as close-up views of wildlife in a wetland habitat.

**Laurie Provincial Park and Oakfield Provincial Park**

Shubenacadie Grand Lake, provide great opportunities to picnic, swim, or boat along the historic waterway. Laurie Park also offers camping, picnicking, and other activities.

**Portobello**

The remains of an incline marine railway built during the mid-1850s can still be seen here. Hike or bike to this site (5km from Fairbanks Centre) or drive and park nearby.

**Lock 4 Fall River**

This lock between Lake Thomas and Fletchers Lake is partially collapsed, but most of the stone blocks remain visible.

**Lock 5 Wellington**

Explore a fully restored lock that connected Fletchers Lake to the Shubenacadie Grand Lake.

**Lock 6 Hornes Settlement**

Built in 1857, the rubble stone walls of this lock remain largely intact. Follow the interpretive signs along the nearby walking trails for more about this and Lock 7's role in the Canal's history.

**Lock 7 Enfield**

A walking trail and remnants of this lock remain.

**Shubenacadie River**

By kayak or canoe, you can pass through the remains of river Locks 8 & 9 in Elmsdale and Lantz.

**South Maitland**

Twice a day, the lower 30 km of this river experiences a tidal bore from the incoming Fundy tides. These bores can reach more than a metre in height. View the tidal bore from the look-off at South Maitland.

**Maitland**

End of the canal/waterway and the hometown of shipbuilder W.D. Lawrence whose home is open to visitors. The tides on this shore are the highest in the world.