

A popular guide to the geology of publically accessible scenic sites in Nova Scotia, Canada

MARTHA HICKMAN HILD¹ AND SANDRA M. BARR²

1. Flatrock, Newfoundland and Labrador A1K 1C8, Canada <mhild@bellaliant.net> ¶ 2. Department of Earth and Environmental Science, Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B4P 2R6, Canada

Nova Scotia is well known for its scenic vistas and diverse geology; the link between those two facts is well known to geologists but much less so to the general public. Our goal in this project was to create a practical and engaging field guide for the bedrock geology of Nova Scotia, modeled closely on an existing field guide, the *Geology of Newfoundland: Touring Through Time at 48 Scenic Sites* authored by Hild and published by Boulder Publications. Its design — based on available research into reader needs and behaviours — was developed specifically to demystify the process of finding and understanding interesting rocks, while also providing substantive content for the welleducated, curious traveller. We visited numerous outcrops to evaluate their geotourism potential, wove the selected sites into a compelling narrative, and gathered all the details readers would need to feel confident, motivated, and knowledgeable on their geological outings.

Adult learners absorb information best when presented in a meaningful context, and for that reason units are sequenced to tell the story of Nova Scotia's geologic past. A series of 4- or 6-page units describe how to find, explore, and understand 48 sites of geologic interest in Nova Scotia. The sites were selected for their scenic beauty, access, safety, geological significance, and to a lesser extent, geographic distribution. The sites are grouped into 3 sections: Foundations, Meguma, and Pangaea. The Foundations section features 16 main sites that tell the story of the ancestry and assembly of Laurentian and Gondwanan terranes. The Meguma section focuses on 15 sites illustrating turbidite sedimentation, deformation, and metamorphism. The remaining 17 sites in the Pangaea section cover the Carboniferous–Permian assembly of Pangaea and subsequent break-up and opening of the Atlantic Ocean.

The book uses language that is accessible and lively but not “dumbed down.” Front and back matter provide basic information, context, and vocabulary: succinct but accessible explanations of geologic time, rock types, plate tectonics, and the history of the Appalachian mountains/ Pangaea, as well as a glossary. Other features that facilitate easy use include detailed, foolproof travel directions, a separate Trip Planner cross-referencing the province's tourism regions, a place-name index, and a colour-coded, visual “thumb index” along the book edge. Physical properties are appropriate to the book's function as a field guide, and include a sturdy waterproof cover, robust, flexible binding, and generous use of colour.