

## Nova Scotia's geoheritage sites: the best possible educational resource

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Nature cannot be trumped as a teacher, or as a resource for teachers. Rock and mineral kits have their place, allowing comparisons to be made of a wide variety of rock types, but nothing compares to the experience of a field trip to an exceptionally interesting outcrop of the Earth's crust. Nova Scotia has an embarrassment of richness when it comes to exceptional examples of geology. This endowment is in part due to the variety of geological formations that together form Nova Scotia, and is in part due to the exposure of these sites by unrelenting coastal erosion. Every county within the Province of Nova Scotia has at least one designated geoheritage site, and one lies within a short distance of nearly every school. A sampling of Nova Scotian geoheritage sites from farther afield is featured on an ESRI StoryMap developed at NSDNR that can be previewed online at [https://fletcher.novascotia.ca/geoheritage\\_ns\\_tour/index.html](https://fletcher.novascotia.ca/geoheritage_ns_tour/index.html). The StoryMap captures the diversity of Nova Scotia's geoheritage, but it also can help students realize that not all places have the same geology, the same landscape, and the same significance as their home town does: their backyard, if not unique, is really quite special. An important component of Nova Scotia's Geoheritage List is the recognition of cultural geoheritage: sites where we humans have a history with the rocks. Such sites include historic mining areas and miners museums, and yes, miners' memorials. It includes sites that commemorate some of the greatest geologists to have lived, and their works: Abraham Gesner, Sir William Dawson and Sir William Logan, and geoscientists of the modern era like Dr. Paul Schenk. Perhaps most significantly, the list includes sites that have been understood by the Mi'kmaw, and have been sacred to them, long before the word 'geology' was even coined.