



February 28 2015

The Honourable Brian Gallant, M.L.A.
Premier of New Brunswick
Centennial Building
P. O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Premier Gallant:

Re: NB Museum expansion

The NB Museum is responsible for documenting our constantly developing human history, making sure that the inventions, customs, and social standards of today will be recorded for the future. It is also charged with documenting our natural history: the species that grow and live in New Brunswick. These tasks are dynamic and ever-changing, but they are essential to keep alive information about our human history as well as our natural history, and to preserve them for future generations and future research.

In the past 20 years, field exploration has found numerous species of wildflowers and ferns that were previously not known to occur in New Brunswick, including one new-to-the-world species of fern ally. With the effects of climate change now fully acknowledged, it is becoming increasingly apparent that we need to carefully track these changes. We know only a small portion of the species living in the province, and research into smaller and less showy organisms such as beetles, ticks, lichens, bryophytes, algae, and fungi, have shown that there is much left for science to discover and learn—and document.

The natural history collections housed at the New Brunswick Museum offer a scientific baseline to help us evaluate changes. As the collections continue to grow, space to house them needs to increase while existing space needs to be maintained. However the current state of the collection facility on Douglas Avenue is inadequate. It is too small and in bad shape. The current proposal to expand the building south into the Riverview Memorial Park has been determined to be the most economical option. Regrettably, 10% of the park will be lost, and losing urban green spaces is not something to be endorsed lightly. However, if the expansion doesn't go ahead, then the NBM will have to look elsewhere for another facility. The Douglas Avenue building will be without a tenant, in desperate need of repair and looking at an uncertain future.

Nature NB fully supports the New Brunswick Museum's request to evaluate the research facility's expansion into the Riverview Memorial Park. There is no better organization able to carefully use part of the space, and reinvigorate the remainder to reflect its historical and cultural significance. We believe the NB Museum has carefully considered its options, and that the most cost-effective approach is being considered.

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Sincerely

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cc: Jane Fullerton, Minister Bill Fraser, Mayor Mel Norton