

Interpretation Planning for Purcell's Cove Quarries

Purcell's Cove, Nova Scotia

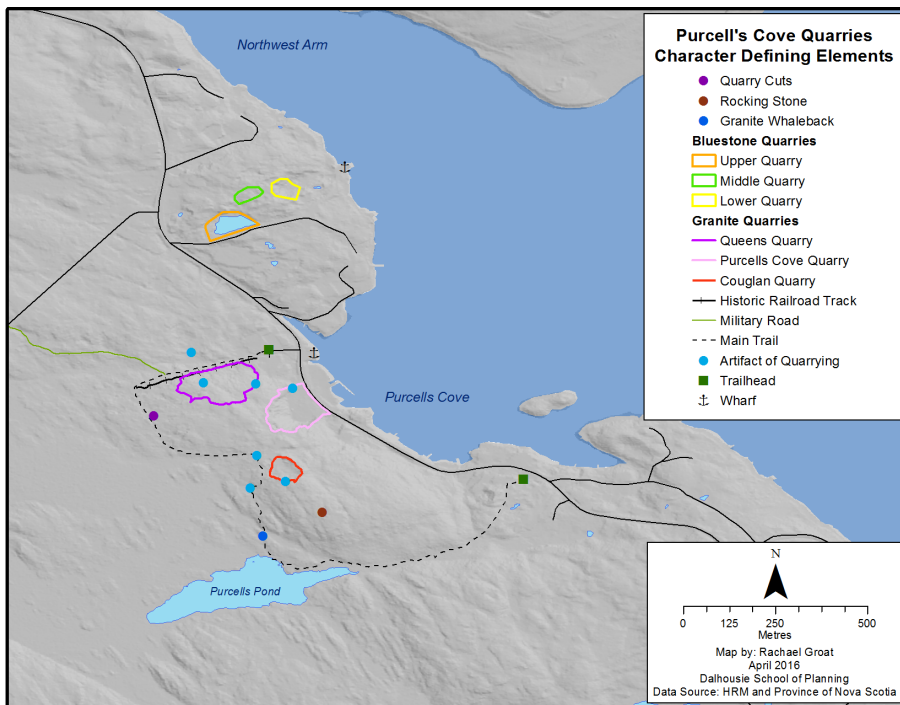
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Purcell's Cove is located on the western shore of the Northwest Arm of Halifax Harbour. Historically there were six quarries located at Purcell's Cove: three granite quarries and three bluestone quarries. The rock quarried here was used to build many historic fortresses and buildings around Halifax. The remains of these quarries and their operations can still be seen today.



Historic granite quarry at Purcell's Cove (PANS)

This project explores the geologic history of the Purcell's Cove quarries through the lens of interpretation planning, with the intent of establishing the cultural and heritage significance of the site. Interpretation is “an educational activity which aims to reveal



meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media”¹. Interpretation planning can contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage resources.

¹ Tilden, F. (1977). *Interpreting our heritage* (3rd ed.). Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 8.

This project also explores and proposes mechanisms the community could use to have the heritage of the site formally recognized and protected.

A site inventory of the quarries, performed using the BackCountry Navigator TOPO GPS app established the approximate extents of the granite and bluestone quarries and located trails in the area, the rail bed of the historic railroad track, as well as significant quarry remains and environmental features. An investigation of the geologic history, using published materials and discussions with experts, provides an explanation of the siting of the quarries at Purcell's Cove. The geologic history reveals that the formation of the South Mountain Batholith 380 million years ago created the granite in the area and also baked the slates of the surrounding Bluestone Formation, making both the granite and slate ideal for quarrying.



Coughlan Granite Quarry today

This work led to the identification of the heritage character defining elements, which are the quarry pits, quarry cuts, granite whalebacks, glacial features, the slate strata and metamorphoses and the landscape of contact between the granite and the slate. This also led to the identification of four possible stories for interpretation and establishing that this site does have cultural and heritage value.

This project also investigates mechanisms and policy that could be used by the Purcell's Cove community to recognize and protect the quarries. A number of recommendations are made and the Maritime Archaeological Resource Inventory application has been filled out, which the community can choose to submit. The Purcell's Cove Quarries are a significant cultural landscape and recognition and protection of this valuable heritage resource should be pursued.



Upper Bluestone Quarry today