

Endangered lichen on the South Shore

lichen used to live
a south shore but
en seen here since
s. Crystal Doggett
has been search-
e endangered bo-
lichen this winter
Neily, a provincial

ct works for the
Tobeatic Research
e in Kempt as a
at Risk Recovery
and is responsible
g the National Re-
strategy for boreal
n.

boreal felt lichen
e found in Norway,
and Canada but it
bally endangered
y lives in a few
n Newfoundland
a Scotia. Twenty
boreal felt lichen
d in Lunenburg,
and Shelburne
The main threats
pecies are air pollu-

tion, acid rain, and defor-
estation of the sites where
the lichen still hangs on.

According to Doggett, "the
boreal felt lichen has an im-
portant message to society.
This endangered species is
a sensitive indicator of local
air quality that tells us that
air quality is at a danger-
ously high level.

Pollution reduction and
sustainable forestry prac-
tices will go a long way to
protect this rare and dis-
tinctive species but the first
step is to locate all of the bo-
real felt lichen in Nova Sco-
tia so it can be protected."

Tom Neily, an experi-
enced botanist with the
Nova Scotia Department of
Environment and Labour,
said lichens grabbed his at-
tention about four years ago
when he realized that al-
though winter is a poor sea-
son for studying plants, it is
a perfect opportunity to



Boreal felt lichen on balsam fir - Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. By Robert Cameron

study lichens that are more
visible in winter without the
summer foliage.

For Doggett, the invita-
tion to accompany Neily in
the field was welcomed after
weeks of reading and writ-
ing about the lichen. The

two hiked all day searching
balsam fir stands in places
pinpointed on maps that
showed the lichen's
favourite habitats. Al-
though their search for bo-
real felt lichen came up
empty-handed, they found

some other rare lichens that
usually live near the en-
dangered one, and Doggett
described the day as a suc-
cess. "Never again will
lichens blend into the forest
for me. People who love
the outdoors really should

go to the library or local
bookstore and learn about
them. We often consider
winter a barren time of
year, but it's really an op-
portunity to see something
extraordinary".

The Mersey Tobeatic Re-
search Institute (MTRI) is
a non-profit cooperative as-
sociation of researchers and
land managers interested
in sustainable resource use
in southwestern Nova Sco-
tia.

The MTRI conducts re-
search and monitoring, and
maintains a field station fa-
cility at Kempt, which pro-
vides office workspace, basic
accommodation, space for
public presentations, and a
site for training.

For more information
about the boreal felt lichen
or the Mersey Tobeatic Re-
search Institute call 682-
2371 or visit
www.merseytobeatic.ca.