



2021  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



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## Mission:

Protecting nature for future generations.

## Vision:

A prosperous healthy community, laced with clean lakes and beautiful natural spaces – a place we all feel blessed to call home.

## Goals:

- Preserve, Protect
- Restore and Improve
- Encourage and Foster Environmental Awareness
- Acquire, Maintain and Preserve Lands
- Promote and Undertake Research



**Pictured:** Taking in the fall colours at Alexander Hope Smith Nature Reserve.



# Message from the President & Executive Director

Centuries ago, a traveler visiting mountain monasteries in China found the same attitude among monks everywhere he went – “working for the benefit of others benefits oneself; to understand that through making every effort for the prosperity of the community one revitalizes one’s own character; and to know that endeavouring to succeed and to surpass the ancestors of past generations means to learn from their lives and to value their examples.”

To our knowledge there are no monks among us, but this old wisdom rings true for the community that is The Couchiching Conservancy.

It has been another hard year.

But like the first year of the pandemic, the Conservancy has flourished. Thanks to your efforts for the prosperity of the community, we have continued to set aside significant Nature Reserves, fine-tuned our ability to care for them long into the future and logged perhaps the strongest financial year on record.

Our volunteers poured thousands of hours into their work. Members and supporters stepped up again. The benefits to local nature were obvious. But what about the benefits to those who don’t know us now and won’t know us years in the future? During the pandemic, how many people, how much life, took refuge in the beautiful landscapes we protect? How many people, how much life, will wander those refuges down through the years?

And by most accounts, blackflies, ticks and mosquitoes aside, you felt good doing the work.

The founders, who started this community when climate change felt like a future threat, are growing old now. Some are gone. Our collective work makes their early vision a continued success. In working to surpass what they imagined, under conditions they couldn’t have guessed at, we value even more their vision and examples.

We are still facing trying times, but with our collective strengths, we will persevere!



A blue ink signature of Neil Gray.

Neil Gray  
*President*



A blue ink signature of Mark Bisset.

Mark Bisset  
*Executive Director*

## Board of Directors

Jamie Ross  
Lisa Neville  
Kathy Hunt  
Jane Bonsteel  
David A. Homer  
Janet Machan  
Dale Leadbeater  
Bob Sullivan

## Staff

Dorthea Hangaard  
Tanya Clark  
Courtney Baker  
Joelle Burnie  
Toby Rowland  
Aiesha Aggarwal  
Ryan Lamoureux  
Samantha Vessios  
Brittany Haines

## Contractors & Interns

Kathy Connor  
Terry-Lynn Hazlett  
Ron Reid  
Ginny Moore  
Claire Buchanan

## Councils

Past Presidents Council  
Advisory Council

## Consultant

Jack Booth

# Highlights



**NEW PROTECTED LANDS:**

**1,541 acres**

protected thanks to Supporters



**PARTNERING WITH:**

**125+** Non-profits, Businesses & Foundations



**OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT:**

**59,000+**

People reached



**WORK POWERED BY:**

**1,390+**

Caring Supporters & Volunteers



**VOLUNTEER HOURS**

**5,200+**

Contributed this year



**SPECIES-AT-RISK**

**34** Species ranked federally or provincially rely on the wilderness we protect together

**Pictured:** Young Broad-winged Hawk, unveiling the Taylor Nature Reserve with Ron, Charlene and the Taylor family and friends, Jennifer Niven and Kate Crawford do Monarch Monitoring at Ron Reid Nature Reserve, creating nature journals at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve as a part of the Passport to Nature program. The Nature Reserves with trails have been noticeably busier throughout the pandemic.

**Opposite:** Marley grandchildren playing in the Black River. Reet and Jaanus Marley.



## Preserve & Protect



*"Preserving this piece of land will preserve my grandparents' dreams from their time as new immigrants, and their love of the country that became their home."*

Karin Marley



### **Marley Nature Reserve**

This 77-acre property alongside the Black River is now protected thanks to the Marley family.

The Black River Wildlands is a priority area for protection due to the presence of Species-at-Risk, opportunities for protection, and connection to other conserved lands. This work is within the Conservancy's Corridors Campaign which includes the Carden Alvar to the south-east.

This project was made possible by a donation from the Marley family to the Conservancy under the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program. This program provides enhanced tax incentives for individuals or corporations who donate ecologically significant land.

When Leida Randsalu and Roman Marley were forced to leave behind their homes in Estonia due to the advancing Soviet Army in the fall of 1944, they found refuge in Sweden. They were welcomed as immigrants to Canada and had two boys, Jaanus and Toomas. In 1962, Roman found an ad for a 100-acre property with a river running through it. He obtained a map and the family got into their 1961 Pontiac to drive there. It was to everyone's liking – trees, water, cliffs to climb and animal trails to walk along. They purchased it for \$900, built a small cabin and it has been in the family since then. They thought it was very important to have a place to run around, be in nature and be free.

Our thanks to the Marley family for making this possible!

### **Cedarhurst Alvar Nature Reserve**

THIS is the news we were waiting for! At 1,362-acres, this property was at one point slated for development. By working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and many supporters, this Reserve is now protected and contains some of the most significant natural habitat in the province.

*"Every block of land in Carden Alvar is special in its own way, but it's the numbers that tell the story at Cedarhurst Alvar. It's a staggering 551 hectares (1,362 acres). It's providing \$10 million a year in services like cleaning drinking water, purifying air, and storing carbon. Doing conservation at this size and scale is incredibly important in today's changing world."*

Kristyn Ferguson, program director, large landscapes  
Ontario Region, Nature Conservancy of Canada

This new privately protected area provides Ontarians with \$10 million in ecosystem goods and services annually, including carbon storage, the removal of air pollution and flood water storage. The property's diverse habitats, including forests, wetlands and grasslands, act as sponges during spring run-off and major storms. By storing carbon and buffering local communities from the impacts of increasingly severe weather events, the property is an excellent example of the nature-based solutions needed to help combat climate change.

Home to many grassland birds listed under Canada's Species-at-Risk Act, including Grasshopper Sparrow (special concern), Bobolink (threatened) and Eastern Meadowlark (threatened), the Cedarhurst Alvar property adds to an existing network of conservation lands.



*"We as a family feel the time has come for all of us to do as much as we can to help save the environment and save some of the past for the enjoyment of future generations."*

Gary Nicholson



### **Nicholson Nature Reserve**

This property was donated by Gary Nicholson in honour of his family, who have owned the property since the late 1800's. Located in Ramara Township, with a corner touching the south shore of the Head River, this remote property is the fifth Nature Reserve created in the area since it was identified as a high priority by the Conservancy.

This Reserve will continue to provide important flood mitigation and carbon sequestration for generations to come, providing part of the solution to the climate crisis.

The landscape is a mixture of hardwood and mixed swamp, with some open granite outcrops. The landscape is a prime area for Blanding's Turtles (threatened), Eastern Wood Pewee (special concern), Yellow-billed Cuckoo and many others. Connecting these protected landscapes is beneficial to large-range species as well, such as Moose, Black Bear and White-tailed Deer.

This project was undertaken with Ganewinim Meshkiki Eastern Georgian Bay Initiative, The McLean Foundation and donors to the Corridors Campaign.

### **Introducing our cutest addition**

Thank you to Joan Berndt and Susan Campbell who donated an addition to the Thomas C. Agnew Nature Reserve! The new parcel is small (1.7 acres), but mighty as it strengthens protection of T.C. Agnew, and ensures continuity to the neighbouring County Forest!



**Pictured:** Executive Director, Mark Bisset, at the Nicholson Nature Reserve.

**Inset:** The Nicholson family – Blaine, Allisa, Kelly, Loran, Gary, Douglas, Janice, Grace and Brian.



## Putting the Pieces Together

The natural fabric of our landscapes are weaving together, as more wilderness is added to the places we protect.

With the help of our Development Committee, we have been reaching out to supporters to discuss the Corridors Campaign, a strategic push to protect the wild places of the Black River Wildlands and Carden Alvar.

This campaign is a shift from individual property protection campaigns, as we look at the bigger picture of the region East of Lake Couchiching. Together we are working to protect thousands of acres of land and have a goal of raising \$1.4 million to make this possible.

These areas were selected as a priority for many reasons: Species-at-Risk occurrences, connection to existing protected places, areas of natural and scientific interest, and more. We know that these corridors of connected wilderness matter for many reasons such as helping with species migration, saving ecological services, and stopping fragmentation.

Our thanks to those who have made pledges and donations to this Campaign!

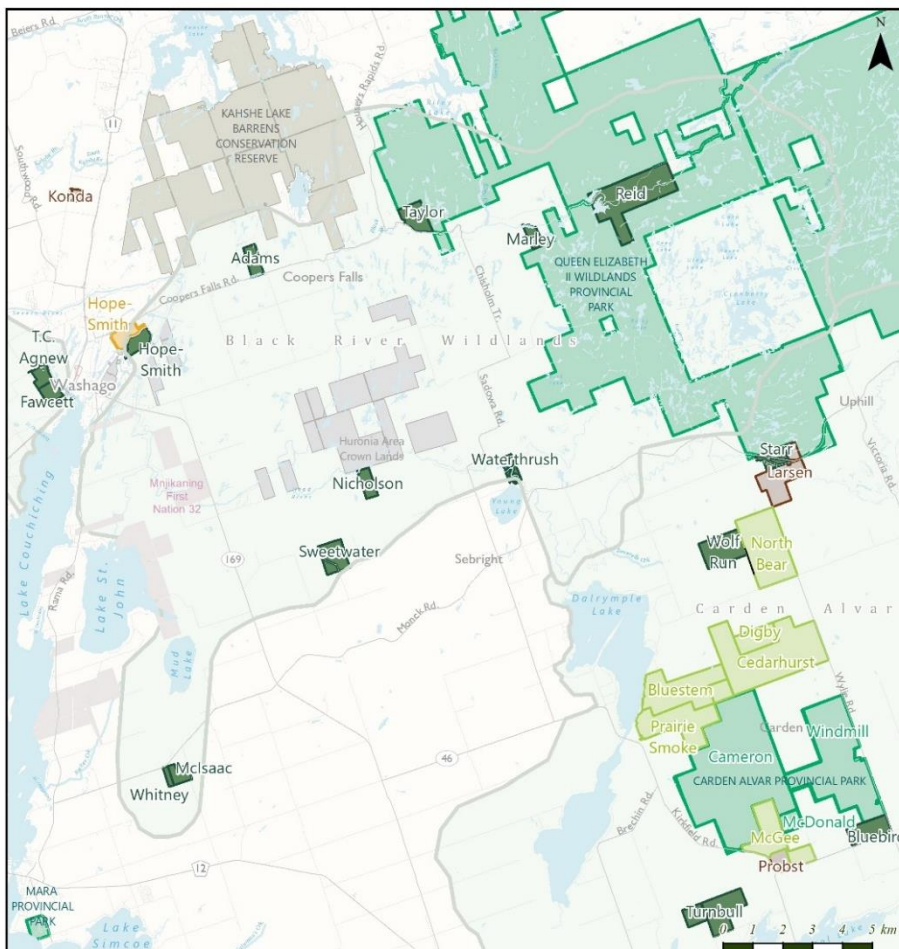
## Times of Transition

The year continued to be one of change and adaptation internally.

Two staff members departed – Joelle Burnie and David Hawke, and we are preparing for another long-time contractor, Kathy Connor, to retire. With that comes a great deal of change as we hire new people, train them, and get them up to speed on all we do together. We welcomed a new Engagement Organizer, Samantha Vessios, and Conservation Analyst Aiesha Aggarwal to our staff, and Terry-Lynn Hazlett as our new bookkeeper. Short-term contractors Ryan Lamoureux and Brittany Haines have provided excellent support as we continue to build our team for the long-term.

## Advisory Council Update

The Advisory Council (AC) was active in building upon its extensive fundraising and naturalist assistance since its creation in 2016. AC members engaged in a broad range of outreach activities with individuals and foundations, and led the Development Committee challenge fund effort that generated over \$200,000 for the Corridors Campaign. AC naturalists participated in Cedarhurst donor tours and the Carden Bird Blitz, and established the Scientific Working Group to support the Conservancy's research capabilities.



- Couchiching Conservancy
- Couchiching Conservancy (Easement)
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Ontario Heritage Trust
- Ontario Parks/Provincial Park
- Conservation Reserve
- Crown Land
- First Nations Reserve
- Conservation Corridor




Author: The Couchiching Conservancy. Date: 1/25/2022.  
 Coordinate System: NAD 1983 17 N. Projection: Transverse Mercator.  
 Data: The Couchiching Conservancy, Land Information Ontario/ 2021.  
 Contact for Details. This is not a plan of survey. Not for navigation or legal use.  
 The Couchiching Conservancy operates within the territory of the Indigenous Peoples of Treaty 18, Lake Simcoe – Nottawasaga and The Williams Treaties.



# Nature Reserves & Easements

## Protected by:



### The Couchiching Conservancy

-  Open to public with trails
-  Open to public without trails
-  Not open to public

\* Indicates nature reserves with Couchiching Conservancy Community Science teams in 2021

### Conservation Easement


Private land owners protecting land with help from the Couchiching Conservancy

-  Open to Public with trails
-  Not open to public

### Ontario Parks

-  Open to public with trails
-  Not open to public

### Nature Conservancy of Canada

-  Open to public with trails
-  Open to public without trails
-  Not open to public

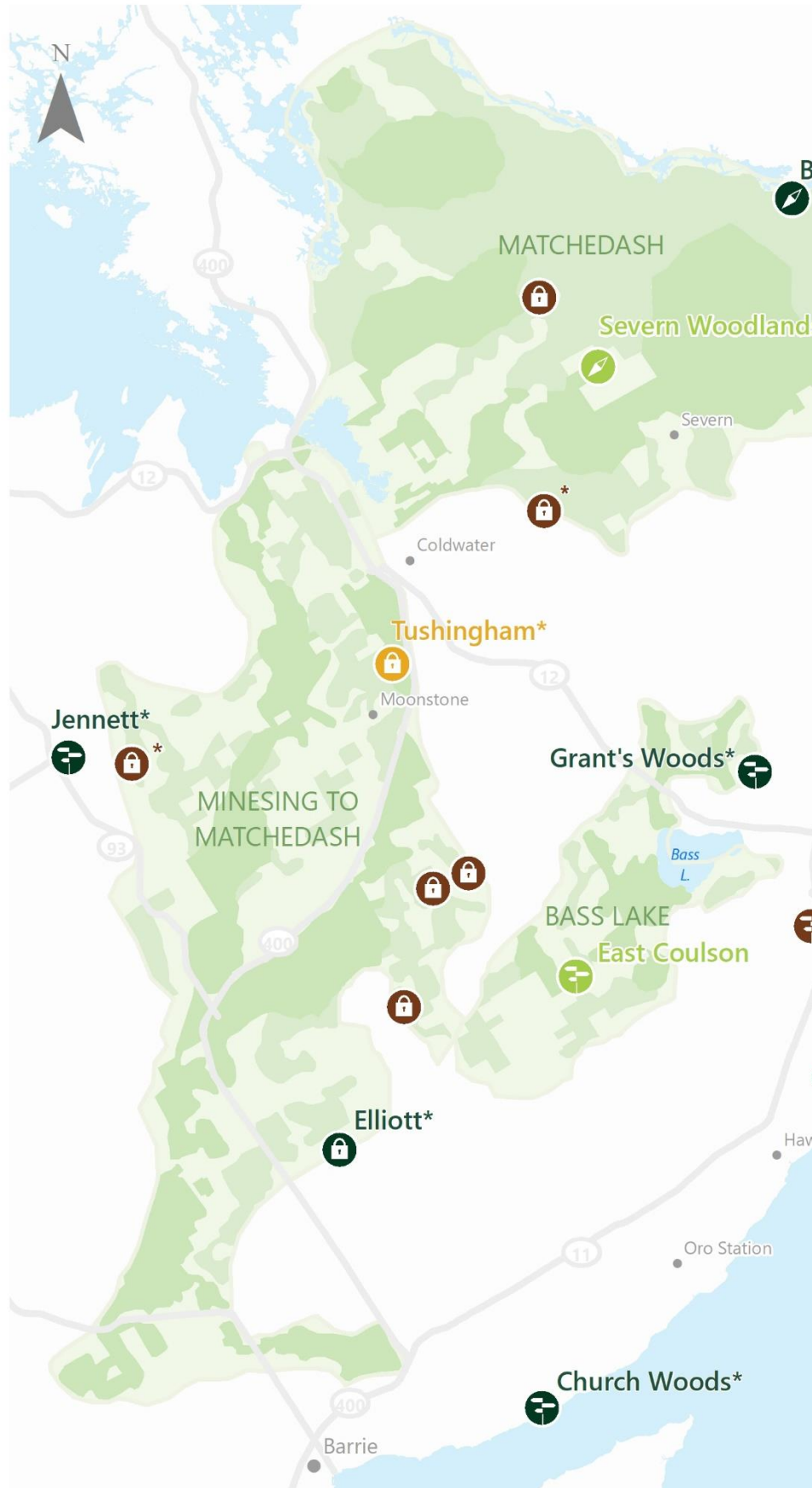
### Ontario Heritage Trust

-  Not open to public

## Acquisition Strategy:

-  Conservation Corridor
-  Priority 1 Zone
-  Priority 2 Zone

Strategy based on mapping of Species-at-Risk occurrences, connection to existing protected areas (land trusts, Conservation Authorities, parks, etc), waterways, forest cover and more. Highest threats, fragmentation, protections in place and more is also considered. Creating corridors of protected wilderness is the goal.



Created by the Couchiching Conservancy, January 2022. Projected coordinate system NAD83. Areas and conservation corridors conceptualized by Ron Reid and the Couchiching Conservancy. This is an artistic rendering and is not meant for navigation or legal purposes. Contact for details.





© 1983, Projection: Transverse Mercator. Data sources: Road and lake data modified from Land Information Ontario (2021); Priority reserve symbols and digitized by Kawartha Conservation (2020). Nature Reserve symbols designed by Finn Canadensis, HonkHonk Graphic Arts, and others.





Community Science is a collaborative effort, and we are so thankful for the time and dedication of all our volunteers. The snapshots of data and anecdotes provided by each team fit together to create an image of the landscape. The data helps us stay connected to what is happening on the ground and supports many aspects of our organization from informing protection and management planning, to supporting funding applications. The impact of these observations spread beyond our organization. Observations of Species-at-Risk are sent to the Natural Heritage Information Centre, monarch survey data is shared with Mission Monarch, and all species observations are sent to Canada Key Biodiversity Areas to support the designation of Couchiching Conservancy Nature Reserves as Key Biodiversity Areas. We look forward to continuing to grow the program, and strengthening our connection to the community and to our Nature Reserves.



**180** volunteers  
**2,380** hours



**334** Reserve & Easement visits

**34** Monitoring sites

**60** Species-at-Risk we tracked

**339** Species-at-Risk observations submitted to the Natural Heritage Information Centre

## Nature Reserve Feature

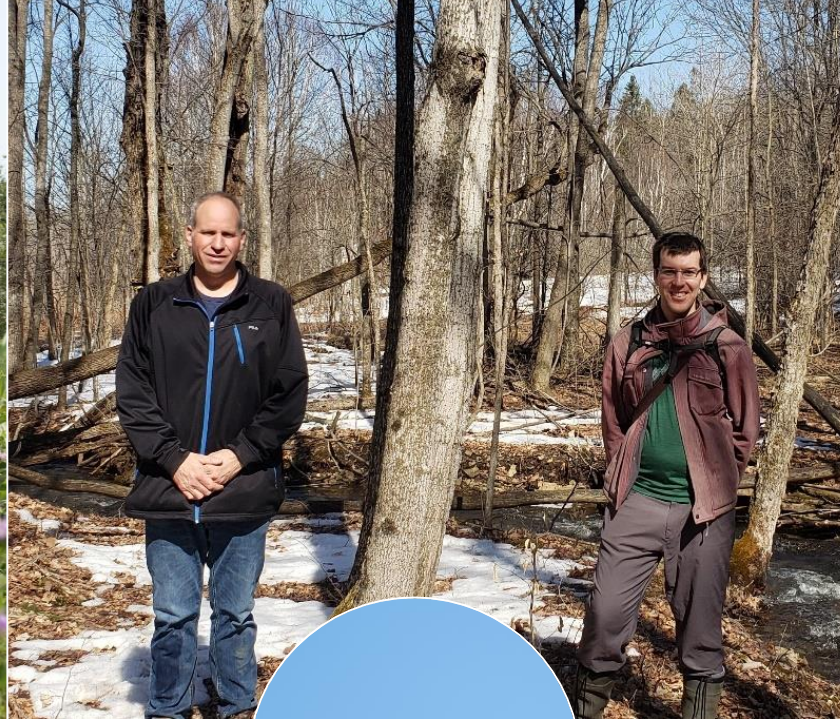
The Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve came under the Conservancy's protection in 2019 and is a prime example of the key role that Community Science plays in our work. Located in Ramara Township, it features streams that emerge from crevasses in the limestone bedrock, then flow through the forest and meadow, over a rock bluff and into a swamp to the north. This Reserve was protected thanks to a bequest donation from John Pitts and his family in addition to support from Environment and Climate Change Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Echo Foundation, Gosling Foundation, Consecon Foundation, plus over 200 supporters. John and his partner Kathleen Milligan cared deeply for the property.

Community Science helped identify the importance of protecting this landscape. Whip-poor-will and Nighthawk Monitoring teams had reported Whip-poor-wills in this region. In the fall of 2019, this knowledge spurred a project funded by the federal Habitat Stewardship Program to remove shrubs from a field, improving habitat for grassland birds such as Whip-poor-wills, Meadowlark and Bobolink (all Species-At-Risk).

Once a Reserve is protected, the next order of business is installing signage, writing a Property Management Plan, formalizing existing trails, and setting up Community Science teams to learn more about the Reserve and its species. Maintenance teams helped with sign installation and maintenance of trails. Canadian Conservation Corps summer interns Ryan Lamoureux and Claire Buchanan spent many hot and buggy days in the summer of 2021 trimming and marking the existing trail system, while scouting locations of Milkweed patches and invasive species for future monitoring.

**Pictured:** Stickleback Stream runs through the Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve. **Opposite:** Susan Crowe, Claire Buchanan, Aiesha Aggarwal, Mary Ellen Mulligan, plus Ryan Lamoureux behind the camera, do some Monarch Monitoring. Shawn McClinchey and Brandon Guoth tackle invasive species.






Brandon Guoth and Shawn McClinchey form the Stewardship team and make seasonal visits while keeping an eye out for invasive species, identifying maintenance issues, and gathering observations on species seen along the way. Thanks to their generous donation of an Extractigator, invasive Buckthorn plants are kept under control. They observed signs of Moose, White-tailed Deer, Black Bear, and Coyote. Footage captured by trail cameras allowed glimpses into the lives of some of these animals.

Teams provide us with data they have been trained to collect and often come across other valuable observations. Between strong winds on the open landscape, and the sounds of the nearby quarry, Frog Call Monitoring yielded no observations for 2021. For the past two years, the Water teams had to make due with measuring only water levels, as water chemistry test supplies have been low. Nonetheless, volunteers provide us with valuable knowledge. Does the sound of the quarry disturb the frogs? Is this habitat not suitable? While in the field, Melanie and Allan Tuck, Water Monitors, came across Green frogs, Wood frogs, and a Eastern Milksnake (Species-at-Risk), all new observations for the Reserve. Mary and Omer Mick monitor for frogs as well.

A new Monarch Monitoring program launched this summer. Susan Crowe and Mary Ellen Mulligan checked Milkweed plants for eggs, and also monitored a patch of invasive Dog-Strangling Vine which Monarch butterflies can confuse with Milkweed plants (to the detriment of their young). Both the Land Stewardship team and the Monarch Monitoring team have sent in observations of pollinator plant species, such as Joe Pye Weed, Asters, Golden Rods, and Wild Bergamot.

This is just one example of a Nature Reserve and the critical role that volunteers and the Community Science programs play in our work to protect nature.

 You can read about volunteer and staff activities on the Reserves on our website's News & Blog.

## **Going All Out for Bat Monitoring**

This was the first year the Bat teams were able to conduct a full season of monitoring, handing off the equipment to each other every other day for over two months. We received the results of the species detected in 2020 and 2021, and now know we have detections of 7 out of the 8 species that are expected for our region: Big Brown, Hoary, Silver-haired, Eastern Red, Little Brown (Endangered - EN), Northern Long-eared (EN), and Tricolored (EN). The Church Woods Nature Reserve, which is surrounded by houses, had more detections of Little Brown Myotis (EN) than any other site, and is a great example of how even small patches of protected wilderness can make a difference!



## Connecting with nature



Another year of adapting our events, but that didn't slow us down. With a number of fundraisers organized by others, our annual Passport to Nature & Carden Challenge, we connected with thousands of people. Our ever-growing Annual General Meeting included over 270 people in attendance, even in a virtual format.

We will continue to plan activities the best we can – to connect with as many people as possible, while keeping our community safe in these challenging times!

*"We used your trails extensively last year during the pandemic, and it looks like we will be back on them again this year. They were a real mental health lifesaver. Thank you!!!"*

- Ruth & Jim



### PASSPORT TO NATURE

**\$15,000+** by 35 businesses & participants

**20+** Volunteers made eight events possible



### CARDEN CHALLENGE

**\$33,000+** Raised in support of Alvar conservation

**88** Participants from across Ontario, almost double the usual number



### THIRD-PARTY EVENTS

**\$19,000+**

Raised by the BluMoose Alvar Ride, Kerslake Pottery, lemonade sales & others



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**270+**


People attended our virtual meeting





### Trail Cameras Give Us Additional Insights

Five trail cameras have been donated or are on loan to the Conservancy which have been taking videos and photos of wildlife almost every day of the year. They are set up in remote corners of the Nature Reserves to capture rarely seen wildlife. These remote cameras give us a better picture of who is living out there on the landscape. Some highlight species include: Coyotes, Black Bears, Fisher, Red Foxes, Flying Squirrels, Weasels, Moose, White-tailed Deer, Porcupines, Racoons, Sandhill Cranes and many more!

 You can visit our YouTube channel to watch some of the footage.



### The Power of Nature in a Pandemic

Nature has the enduring power to refresh our spirits, particularly during the pandemic. We continue to see more people visiting the trails as a safe place to connect with others, get refreshed from the heaviness of the world and recharge.

With increased visitors, comes the need for better communication of uses, more eyes and ears needed to check on issues and more. Our thanks to the volunteers who make this possible!

We are continually grateful to members and supporters who make it possible to protect over 13km of trails, for the entire community, including Aspen, pictured above.

*"His favourite part of the hike at Adams Nature Reserve by far were the bridges. He loves crossing bridges! He enjoys the creek and ponds as well and was pretty proud of himself climbing up that section of rock."*

- Aspen's mom, Jenny

**Opposite:** Kelly, Mandy and Alexander take part in the Carden Challenge.

**Pictured:** Trail camera photo of a young Sandhill Crane. Aspen, an intrepid three-year old explorer taking a break from a hike.



# Volunteers



We are so grateful to the hundreds of people who give their time, knowledge and expertise to help power conservation efforts, monitor for Species-at-Risk and assist in a myriad of other activities.

Aggarwal, Aiesha  
 Agnew, Sandy & Lynne Melnyck  
 Anderson, Charmaine  
 Anne, Victoria  
 Ariss, Kimberly  
 Atkinson, Eileen  
 Atkinson, Jamie  
 Baker, Courtney  
 Baker, Stevie, Stella & Gilda Minges  
 Ball, Gordon & Jane  
 Bam, Homi  
 Banfield, Shannon  
 Barclay, Aileen  
 Barnes, Britney & Sophie, & Rhett & Ellie Mawdsley  
 Barrett, Craig  
 Bedford, Doug  
 Bender, Ian  
 Bird, Gerry  
 Blackwell, Stewart  
 Bloor, Jesse  
 Bonsteel, Jane  
 Booth, Jack  
 Brasher, Jane  
 Bridges, Kate  
 Brown, Holly  
 Buchanan, Claire  
 Burnie, Joelle  
 Callahan, Kathy  
 Careless, Philip  
 Carlyle, Gayle & John Challis  
 Cass, Lindsay  
 Chong, Nancy

Christie, Douglas & Barbara  
 Clark, Marilyn & Peter Hayward  
 Clark, Mackenzie  
 Clark, Tanya  
 Cole, Jeff & Kristi  
 Cook, Ian  
 Coombs, Barry  
 Cote-Sadowa, Carole  
 Cote-Sadowa, Alain  
 Cornish, Lorelei  
 Coughlin, Meagan  
 Coughlin, Trudy  
 Cowl, David  
 Craft, Courtney-Anne  
 Cramer, Kaila  
 Crawford, Kate  
 Crowe, Susan  
 Curran, Cameron & Gamble, Ali  
 Currie, Tricia  
 Deadman, Sue  
 Don, Andrew  
 Drescher, Michael  
 Drozda, Sheree  
 Duckett, Courtney  
 Dymont, Leslie  
 Edgley, Emily  
 Evans, Chris & Ruth Noland-Flores  
 Eves, Sam  
 Ewald, Erika  
 Ewing, Heather  
 Fallis, Murray  
 Fells, Matthew  
 Ferguson, Kristyn  
 Ferris, Cynthia  
 Field, Mark

Francis, Mike  
 Francis, Simon, Melissa  
 Bulgutch, Reid & Bella  
 Frantzke, Evelyn & Robert Williamson  
 Freeman, Lynne  
 Fulford, Pamela  
 Giannunzio, David  
 Gibson, Kelly  
 Gibson, Mandy  
 Gilchrist, Judy  
 Gillette, Derek  
 Gillette, Lois  
 Giroux, Ali  
 Graham, Sarah  
 Grand, Janet & Ron Reid  
 Gray, Neil & Ann  
 Greidanus, Steve  
 Grout, Alexander  
 Gunson, Kari  
 Guoth, Brandon  
 Guzik, Nicole  
 Hall, Charleyne  
 Hamilton, Philip  
 Hancock, Ron & Sharon  
 Hangaard, Dorthea  
 Henderson, Ruth  
 Henry, Alysha  
 Hiles, Darby  
 Hill, June  
 Hodgkiss, Sarah  
 Holt, Val & Paul  
 Homer, David A. & Bonnie  
 Howes, Kyra  
 Hrivnak, Larry  
 Humphries, Jean & Matthew Clark  
 Hunt, Kathy

Hunt, Katrina  
 Hutchison, Peter  
 Ilyniak, Morris  
 Iron, Jean  
 Jabra, Mourad  
 Jackson, Patrick  
 John, Samantha  
 Johnston, Richard  
 Juneau, Mary  
 Keaveney, Andrew  
 Kelly, Patrick  
 Kennedy, Karen  
 Kennedy, Patrick & Beth Jefferson  
 Kluger, Ron  
 Kohl, Adrienne  
 Kungl, Ann-Marie & Joe Baker  
 Lacsamana, Jade  
 Laidlaw, Jamie  
 Lake, Richard  
 Lamoureux, Ryan  
 Larsen, Ellen  
 Leadbeater, Dale  
 Lowry, Wendy & Si  
 Machan, Janet  
 Maclachlan, Pam  
 MacLean, Regan  
 Marshall, Jane & Jeff  
 Massig, Cathy  
 Mathewson, Sophie & Stan  
 Mayo, John  
 McClinchey, Shawn  
 McGee, Melissa  
 McIntyre, William & Lynn Neilsen  
 McKenzie, Kyra  
 Mead, Micheal





Mick, Omer & Mary E.  
 Mitchell-Wilson, Judy & Tom  
 Wilson  
 Molenaar, Gail & Perry  
 Moore, Ginny  
 Moorman, Shirley  
 Moser, Chase  
 Mulligan, Greg & Mary Ellen  
 Murkar, Barbra  
 Nadler, Sarah  
 Neville, Lisa & Jim  
 Niven, Jennifer  
 Norton, Mike  
 Oldfield, Lyndell, Loch &  
 Kinsley  
 Palin, Rob  
 Paveley, Katherine & Robert  
 Vella  
 Peiman, Kathryn  
 Pomeroy, Margaret  
 Popp, Karen  
 Powell, Jamie & Valerie

Ranville, Nicole  
 Ray, Geordie  
 Rivero, Tasia  
 Reekie, Pam  
 Richardson, Jade  
 Richardson, Glynn  
 Robins, Tricia  
 Robinson, Peter  
 Robinson, Jim  
 Rockhill, Nathalie & Betty  
 Bengelly  
 Rosebrugh, Barbara  
 Ross, Jamie & Anne  
 Rowland, Toby & Becky Plant  
 Rusak, Aaron  
 Rusak, Cynthia  
 Rulff, Nicole  
 Rulff, Alex  
 Ryckman, Barbara & Warren  
 Schulz, Karl  
 Scott, Julie  
 Seymour, Kevin  
 Shackleton, Kevin

Sherwood, Bill & Vicki  
 Sinclair, Carol  
 Sloley, Jane  
 Smale, Alan  
 Smith, Jane  
 Spero, Jane  
 Stanford, Laurie  
 Stavinga, Rob  
 Stewart, James  
 Storry, Noella  
 Stott, Tim  
 Stronks, Glenn & Joanne  
 Stuart, Greg  
 Sullivan, Bob  
 Swinimer, Bill  
 Taylor, Cheryl  
 TeBrugge, Vicki & Grant  
 Teubner, Dagmar  
 Thiess, Gary & Isabelle  
 Thompson, Allan  
 Thompson, Courtney  
 Thomson, Adam & Shirley  
 Thomson, Ken

Tozek, Gloria  
 Trudeau, Graham  
 Trudeau, Kim & Mark, Graham  
 Adaline & Woodsley  
 Trumble, Don  
 Tuck, Allan & Melanie  
 Varsava, Leslie  
 Varty, Doug & Charon  
 Vincent, Joan & Roland Rehorn  
 Vojno, Natalija  
 Walinck, John  
 Ward, Andrea & Jeff  
 Warren, David  
 Watson, John  
 Weber, Jacqueline  
 Wheeler, Hazel  
 Wiancko, Leanore  
 Wigham, Peter  
 Williamson, Ivor  
 Wilson, Bruce  
 Wilson, Jean  
 Wolinsky, Eric & Lisa  
 Zoller, Kaye



Doug Christie

"In a community of people who are very giving, Doug Christie stands out. As a past president, a board member, and a leader on numerous committees, his work has been easy to see. But less visible are the countless hours he has put into the Conservancy on the legal front, quietly guiding us through project after project, motivated only by a desire to help achieve our goals. Doug is a very special man."

- Mark Bisset, *Executive Director*

**Pictured:** Lisa & Jim Neville paddling at Roehl Wetland Nature Reserve as Land (& water) Stewards. Roland Rehorn, Tim Stott, Doug Bedford and Jamie Atkinson upgrade a bridge at Adams Nature Reserve. Canadian Conservation Corps Interns Claire Buchanan and Ryan Lamoureux maintain the trail at Sedge Wren Marsh. The Trudeau family monitors for Salamanders at the Church Woods Nature Reserve. Jean Iron helped run the Carden Bird Blitz. Ellen Larsen and Brittany Haines install a trail camera on Ellen's easement.



## Supporters

We are enormously grateful to the people listed on the following pages who made everything possible this year. Many are regular supporters, with a long-standing commitment to the earth we hold dear, and some are new supporters who have been inspired by the natural places in our region. **Thank you to everyone who has supported conservation this year – together, we are making a difference.** Additional donors have requested anonymity.

*The following supporters donated over \$1,000:*

Adams, Brian  
Agnew, Sandy & Lynne Melnyk  
Ball, Gordon & Jane  
Barrett, Craig  
Berndt, Joan  
Bisset, Mark & Sandi  
Bonsteel, Jane  
Campbell, Peter & Therese  
Campbell, Sue  
Charlebois, J. Paul  
Charters, Anderson  
Christie, Douglas & Barbara  
Davis, Sheila & Will  
Drewes, Paul & Janet Drewes Dewaele  
Evans, Chris  
Fischer, Richard  
Furniss, P. Herb  
Gingrich, John  
Gray, Carol  
Gray, Neil & Ann  
Hancock, Ron & Sharon  
Ironside, Nancy  
Jenkins, John & Sharon  
Jones, Richard  
Kennedy, Patrick & Beth Jefferson  
Kenny, Maureen  
Kluger, Ronald & Ronna  
Laver, Paul & Frances  
Leask, Robert & Beverley  
Ling, Philip & Linda Frenette-Ling

Lowry, Wendy & Si  
Mayo, John & Marg  
Mugford, Don  
Murphy, Marilyn  
Neville, Lisa & Jim  
Paul, Peter & Donna  
Probst, Lou & Judy  
Rehorn, Ryan  
Reid, Ian  
Rockhill, Nathalie  
Rohmann, Werner & Christine  
Rolland, Mark & Cecile  
Rosebush, Joan  
Ross, Jamie & Anne  
Samann, Ben  
Smale, Alan  
Stewart, James & Barbara  
Sullivan, Bob & Wendy  
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 Pritchard, Gary  
 Purkiss, Kevin



**The Ling & Frenette-Ling family**  
 (Philip, Linda, Tristan, Coral, Desmond, and Sidney)

*"We all need to play an active role to protect natural places, because it is a part of who we are. I've felt deeply connected to nature my whole life, wanting all the creatures and their habitat to be able to live their lives without the unrelenting pressure from humans as we expand around the world, wiping out so many species and their habitat without caring (occasionally without knowing)."*

As long-time supporters of the Conservancy, as monthly donors, members and sponsors of the Passport to Nature program, the family made a special gift in support of the Corridors Campaign, after seeing the Challenge set out by the Conservancy Board, Development Committee and Advisory Council. They also have a Conservation Easement on their property with the Conservancy.





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### **Every gift matters.**

We appreciate everyone who has made the commitment to protect nature – the following supporters donated over \$100. An additional 495 people contributed under this level.

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Donations were made in memory of:

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**Pictured:** Northern Harrier at Ron Reid Nature Reserve. Northern Duskywing at Cameron Ranch Nature Reserve. Fungi at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve – thanks Ashley for tagging us on Instagram!





The following businesses supported conservation by donating, providing in-kind services or products, helping at Nature Reserves and/or by supporting the Passport to Nature program. All of their contributions made a difference to the work we do and to the events we run. They know that a healthy environment is **vital** to a healthy community.

**Oak** (Up to \$5,000+): J.R. Booth Professional Corp., Accessibility Professionals, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Orillia Area Community Development Corp.

**Maple** (Up to \$2,500): Russell, Christie, LLP Barristers & Solicitors, Conair Corp., Hehn Trickey Professional Corp., Pelee Island Winery, University of Toronto Faculty

**Elm** (Up to \$1,000): Northern & Ethical Investment L.P with John Madden of Edward Jones, Georgian Bay Printers, K. McKechnie Architectural Design, Sojourn Outdoors, Remax Orillia Realty, Ontario Waterway Cruises

**Pine** (Up to \$500): Century 21 - Lynda Hepinstall, Dr. Anthony Reid, Hillson Medicine Professional Corporation, Marci Csumrik & Associates, Northern Business Equipment, Orillia Lion's Club, Refillery District, Rustica Pizza + Vino, Brewery Bay Food Co., Subaru of Orillia, Sophies Landing Development Corp., The Crank & Sprocket, The Water Market, Ursel Phillips Fellows Hopkinson LLP

**Cedar** (Up to \$350): Dr. Michelle Gordon Medicine Professional Corp., Cavalluzzo LLP, Crawford McLean Anderson & Duncan LLP, Allin Veterinary Hospital, Bayview Wildwood Resort, Bruce Stanton MPP, Dr. Louise Hill & Associates, Ego's Nurseries Ltd., Horseshoe Valley Dental - Dr. Suzy Lee, Jack & Maddy's, Kawartha Dairy, Lake Country Physiotherapy, Lake Dalrymple Resort, Maximum Mobility, McLean & Dickey Insurance, Michael Scott Landscaping, Morton Metals, Orillia Floor Fashion, The Bird House Nature Co., Uptique Boutique, Foreign Rider Co., Metro Reno Home Improvements Limited, Motum Inc./Ghost Gravel, Simon Kelley Medicine, Tourism Simcoe County, Chivers Carpenter Lawyers

**Willow** (\$150): Office Links, Wasaga Beach Horticultural Society, The Wild Bird Trading Co., N42 Design Workshop, Orillia Naturalists' Club, Ryerson Faculty Association, Skelton Brumwell & Associates, Superior Shredding, Yorke Motivational Consulting



# The Heartwood Fund

These days, most of us are thinking about keeping ourselves and our families virus-free, and about coping with the many restrictions on the lives that we are accustomed to living. The COVID-19 crisis offers both a reason and an opportunity to think also about the future – the future of our country and the planet, as well as our personal future and the eventual disposition of our personal assets.

Many friends of the Couchiching Conservancy are now deciding or have decided to include the Conservancy in their estate plans. As they revisit the terms of their wills, they're adding the Conservancy's Heartwood Fund as one of their beneficiaries. By their decision, they're saying that now more than ever before, the long-term protection of our precious, local, natural heritage is a high priority for them.

The Heartwood Fund was originally formed to ensure that the promises we make today – to protect thousands of acres of wilderness – would be fulfilled in the future. No matter the ups and downs in the economy, changes in government, or even a pandemic, we are committed to continue and pursue this mandate.

If you are revisiting or writing your will and want to include the Conservancy as a beneficiary, please let us know. Our Heartwood Fund exists to protect the organization and its Nature Reserves for both current and future generations, through good times and bad. Gifts in your will ensure the work you care about today will be sustained in the future.

These gifts don't have to take away from what you are leaving to your family. There are tax benefits to these gifts that can be tailored to your situation. Talk to your financial advisor or contact a member of the Heartwood Committee.



*"Climate emergency. Biodiversity crisis. Those four words are the reasons I have contributed to the Heartwood Fund. The critically important work that the Couchiching Conservancy has done and continues to do – protecting and stewarding natural areas – is a defense against both climate change and biodiversity loss. Forests, wetlands, alvars, these are the 'nature-based solutions' being talked about. The Heartwood Fund ensures that the Conservancy's work will continue long after I am gone. As the mother of two young adults, I want to do what I can to leave them a better world."*

Jane Bonsteel

## **Our sincere thanks to the following people who have pledged or contributed to the Heartwood Fund:**

Sandy Agnew & Lynne Melnyk, Gordon & Jane Ball, Jane Bonsteel, Cameron & Linda Bigelow, Mark & Sandi Bisset, Philip Careless, Douglas & Barbara Christie, Timothy & Rosaleen Crooks, Heather Gaudie, John & Marg Hallman, Ron & Sharon Hancock, David A. & Bonnie Homer, Shirley Johnson, Maureen Kenny & Jim McDonald, Paul & Frances Laver, Robert & Beverley Leask, Wendy & Si Lowry, Cathy Massig, Ginny Moore, Lisa Neville, Bob & Allison Ormerod, Jamie & Valerie Powell, Ron Reid & Janet Grand, Nathalie Rockhill & Elizabeth Pengelly, Joan & John Rosebush, Jamie & Anne Ross, Lynn Russell, Marcia Stephen, Bob & Wendy Sullivan, Michael & Norma Tangney, Isabelle & Gary Thies, Adam & Shirley Thomson, Ken & Corinne Thomson, Mary Walton-Ball & seven anonymous pledges and contributions.

## **UPDATE:**

An estimated \$2.9 million has been pledged through bequests, cash, life insurance and other legacy options. These gifts are already helping today with our work to protect nature.





# Financial Report

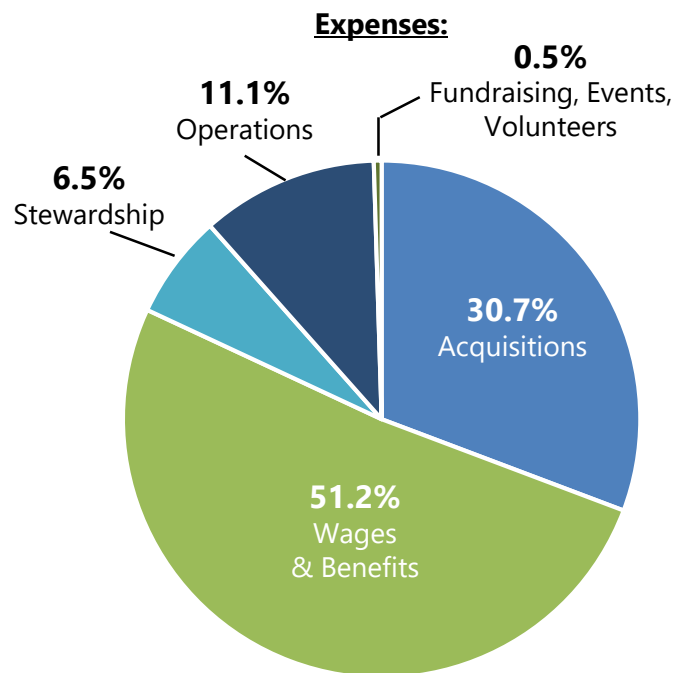
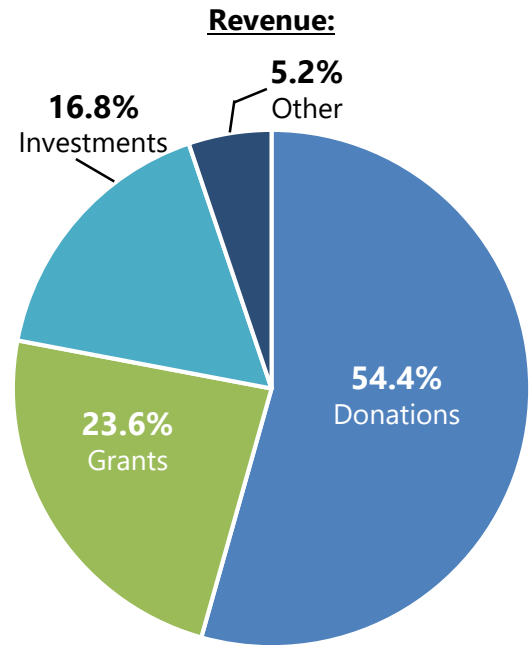


Thanks to the continuing strong support of our donors, funders and business supporters, the Couchiching Conservancy recorded another outstanding financial year in the face of a second year of pandemic disruption. Healthy returns on funds invested through the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area contributed significantly to our financial position. Those investments include the growing Heartwood Fund. The Corridors Campaign has allowed us to build a substantial Acquisition Reserve Fund, ready for use as opportunities arise. A surplus for 2021 has helped strengthen our resilience with additional reserves.

Accountability and transparency are important. We work hard to ensure your gifts are used wisely and are making an impact.

| <b>Revenue:</b>      | <b>2021</b>        | <b>2020</b>        |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Donations            | \$672,435          | \$642,091          |
| Grants               | 291,862            | 425,839            |
| Investment Income    | 208,148            | 84,997             |
| Other                | 64,141             | 69,871             |
| <b>Total Revenue</b> | <b>\$1,236,586</b> | <b>\$1,222,798</b> |

| <b>Expenses:</b>                 | <b>2021</b>      | <b>2020</b>      |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Property Acquisitions            | \$282,203        | \$294,011        |
| Wages and Benefits               | 469,968          | 430,540          |
| Property Stewardship             | 59,733           | 56,573           |
| Operations                       | 101,555          | 94,813           |
| Fundraising, Events & Volunteers | 4,482            | 4,338            |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>            | <b>\$917,941</b> | <b>\$880,275</b> |



A full independent financial audit for our fiscal year, ending October 31, 2021, has been prepared by Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Professional Accountants and is available to the public at [www.couchichingconserv.ca](http://www.couchichingconserv.ca)

*\*Wages and benefits, broken out separately in this graph for transparency, make up a large percentage of the annual expenses of all programming.*



## Partners & What's Ahead



### Our sincere thanks to the following organizations:

Birds Canada  
Bruce Trail Conservancy  
Canadian Conservation Corps  
Carden Field Naturalists  
City of Orillia  
City of Kawartha Lakes  
Community Foundation of Orillia and Area  
Consecon Foundation  
Copeland Forest Friends  
County of Simcoe  
Ecology Ottawa  
Eco-Kare International  
Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Forests Ontario  
Freshwater Future  
Ganaraska Trail Association  
Ganawenim Meshkiki (Eastern Georgian Bay Initiative)  
Georgian Bay Land Trust  
Huronian Land Conservancy  
McLean Foundation  
Muskoka Conservancy  
Nature Barrie  
Nature Canada

Nature Conservancy of Canada  
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Lakehead University  
Kawartha Conservation  
Kawartha Field Naturalists  
Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust  
Ontario Field Ornithologists  
Ontario Heritage Trust  
Ontario Land Trust Alliance  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry  
Ontario Nature  
Ontario Parks  
Ontario Streams  
Ontario Trillium Foundation. *an agency of the government of Ontario*  
Orillia Area Community Development Corporation  
Orillia Fish & Game Conservation Club  
Orillia Naturalists' Club  
Parks Canada  
Rama First Nation  
Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

Scales Nature Park  
Severn Sound Environmental Association  
Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition  
The Canadian Freshwater Alliance  
The Echo Foundation  
The Gosling Foundation  
The Government of Canada's Natural Heritage Conservation Program  
The Land Between  
The Schad Foundation  
The Somos El Barco Fund of Makeway  
The Sustainability Network  
The Youssef-Warren Foundation  
Toronto Ornithological Club  
Township of Severn  
United Way of Greater Toronto  
Water Rangers  
Wildlands League  
Wildlife Preservation Canada

### What's Ahead?

We are primed for action.

The Corridors Campaign, focusing on the Black River Wildlands Corridor and the Carden Corridor, has been a game-changer. Your support allowed us to act decisively with the Nature Conservancy of Canada when the Cedarhurst property became available, and it has supported the costs associated with taking on several donated parcels. There are several other potential properties in our sights. The campaign and the resulting Acquisition Reserve Fund makes us nimble and responsive as those opportunities mature.

Led by the Development Committee chaired by Doug Varty, we will continue to drive the campaign forward in 2022, and push toward our strategic goal of creating more Reserves and more connectivity at an accelerated pace.

Important to our plans to take on those new Reserves is our ability to care for them. The Community Science Program (formerly Citizen Science), the Land Stewards and our Ambassadors are the keys to that management. These programs continue to mature with the support of donors, funders, and most importantly the volunteers who power it. Highly trained, highly motivated, these volunteers are giving us the confidence to take on more protection.

In 2022 we will see more highly trained people engaged in the monitoring and care of our properties.

What does success look like for 2022 and beyond?

The answer can be found in a set of priority area maps contained in our invaluable analysis, *Couchiching Conservancy Conservation Priorities*. Traced out by those maps, success looks like broad swaths of connected wildlands stretching from west to east and south to north, ready to absorb and mitigate the waves of change bearing down, and kept safe from development.

Success looks like abundant wildlife moving freely through linked landscapes.

Success will be measured by the time and treasure of each person who embraces The Couchiching Conservancy vision of Nature rising in this region.

Pictured opposite: Blanding's Turtle.  
Pictured: Running wild at the Taylor Nature Reserve.





## **How You Can Help:**

- Donate
- Consider a Legacy Gift
- Volunteer your time

**Mailing address:** Box 704, Orillia, ON L3V 6K7

**Office address:** 1485 Division Rd West, Orillia, ON L3V 0X6

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**[www.couchichingconserv.ca](http://www.couchichingconserv.ca)**

Charitable Reg. No: 13972 5030 RR 0001



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Photography provided by the staff, contractors, supporters and volunteers of The Couchiching Conservancy.

**Pictured on the covers:** Tiger Swallowtail, Gilda searches for birds during the Carden Challenge, Gossamer-winged Butterfly, Maggie adds to her nature journal, Dorthea Hangaard, Bob Sullivan and Jane Bonsteel lead a tour of Sundial Creek, Barred Owl. Valerie Holt and Laurie Stanford at the Church Woods Nature Reserve, Toby Rowland working in the field...literally – at Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve, fall colours at Adams Nature Reserve, Northern Leopard Frog at the Wilson Point Wetland Nature Reserve.