

*The Couchiching
Conservancy*



Annual Report | 2017



Growth. Connectivity. Discovery. Trust.

One day last spring, Courtney Baker voiced something very important about the nature of our work.

Growing up, Courtney had sworn to someday buy a wild property near her house. She dreamed of keeping it safe. The plants and animals she had shared her childhood with had a right to exist, and she wanted to make it happen.

And then: life. University. Travel. Work. Bills. Family responsibilities. At some point she realized the property was out of reach; maybe forever. But The Couchiching Conservancy caught her eye. She realized that what she couldn't achieve alone, she could do with others. She could help protect some of the land she grew up loving by working collectively with like-minded people. She signed up to volunteer and eventually became a Conservancy staff member.

Joan Rosebush, one of over 200 people who made gifts to help protect a 730-acre tract on the Black River this year, had a similar story (see donor profile by turning the page). What she couldn't achieve alone, she did with the Conservancy.

That is the power and the promise of this organization.

It is the energy that allowed us to protect close to 1,000 acres in the last 13 months and approach \$1 million in annual revenue. It's what gives us the confidence to take on projects like the acquisition of Black River Wildlands, where 4.4 kms of the Black River are now protected on both sides. It's at the core of our strategic planning that focuses on connecting natural hotspots to create crucial corridors for wildlife. It's the glue that binds hundreds of volunteers who logged more than 7,500 hours of time working on stewardship and research and community outreach.

It's a vision: what we may not be able to do alone, we can do together.

That's the driving force behind changes to our property team structure and our investment in citizen science. We've contributed to regional scientific knowledge through inventories and wildlife tracking technology. Our Passport to Nature program is being promoted by The Gosling Foundation as a model across Canada.

There is so much to do, and change is coming on us so fast that there is a critical need for inspired, well-trained, well-informed volunteers to play multiple roles in the care and protection of our wild spaces.

Mark Smiley, one of the most highly-regarded environmental organizers in North America, recently started a seminar with an African proverb: If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together. That is what Courtney Baker and Joan Rosebush are expressing.

The past year has been one of the most successful ever for The Couchiching Conservancy. As we move toward our 25th anniversary, the truth of that proverb will guide us in every step.



Doug Christie
Doug Christie
President



Mark Bisset
Mark Bisset
Executive Director

Board of Directors

Jack Booth, *Treasurer*

Kailin Gratrix, *Secretary*

Margaret Pomeroy, *Past President*

Directors: Robert Sullivan, Pamela Fulford, Wendy Lowry, Jamie Ross, David A. Homer

Staff

David Hawke, *Stewardship Program Manager*

Dorthea Hangaard, *Project Manager*

Tanya Clark, *Development Coordinator*

Courtney Baker, *Administrative Assistant*

Contractors: Ron Reid, Ginny Moore, Kathy Connor & Gay Guthrie

Summer Staff & Interns: Meagan Coughlin, Grant Mask & Kelcey MacLean

Pictured on next page, from left to right: fence cairn in Carden, a Passport to Nature event, white blueweed at Windmill Ranch, pileated woodpecker on the grandfather pine at Grant's Woods, painting bird houses with the Orillia Museum of Art & History, cattle on the ranch, a bird's eye view of a marsh/wetland complex near the Black River.

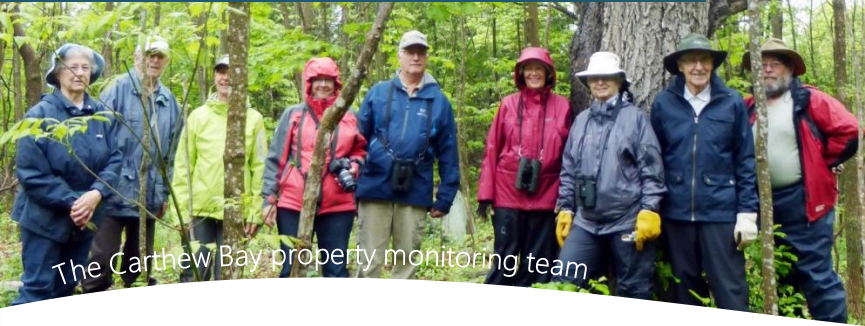


Protecting nature for future generations since 1993

You are at the centre of it all. Your passion, donations, time and energy make all the difference. By powering the work of The Couchiching Conservancy, you help protect the special natural places, care for irreplaceable habitat and work to acquire more land while we still can.



Building Corridors of Connected Wilderness



The Carthew Bay property monitoring team



Bill & Molly Starr



PROPERTY MONITORING VISITS
250+
 Recorded by
 Volunteers or Staff

CONSERVATION WORK IS POWERED BY:
1,300+
 Caring Supporters
 & Volunteers

OF CONSERVANCY ECO-GIFTS RECOGNIZED FOR CANADA 150
3
 of 30 across Ontario for high
 level of biodiversity

VOLUNTEER HOURS
7,500+
 Contributed
 this year



Joan Rosebush on the Black River

For years after they moved to Orillia from Toronto, Joan and John Rosebush roamed the region looking for a wilderness property they could call their own.

"Nothing was ever quite right," Joan recalls.

They negotiated to purchase one property in Carden, but it didn't work out. Time went by. Grandchildren grew up. John's health took a serious turn when he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

"Finally we decided we were too old to even think about looking after another property," Joan says.

Then in late spring, Joan was invited by the Conservancy to go for a paddle on a section of the Black River that runs through a 730-acre property available for purchase inside Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park.

It was one of those days when no amount of Gore-Tex was going to keep the rain out, but it was heaven for Joan.

"The Black River is really my big love," she says.

After pulling her boat up the slippery bank in the teeming rain at the end of a four-hour paddle, she gave Executive Director Mark Bisset the news: she was going to help the Conservancy with the campaign to the tune of \$100,000.

"It's a moment I'll remember the rest of my life," Mark says. "It was pouring buckets and we were all muddy and grinning at each other. I knew then we were going to be able to bring the project home. It was huge."

For Joan, it was the property she and John had always searched for, but better. It would be permanently protected and she didn't have to worry about looking after it.

Like her, other individuals and organizations rallied to protect this stunning landscape. Environment and Climate Change Canada and The Nature Conservancy of Canada came to the table early with a pledge followed closely by The Gosling Foundation. As the campaign proceeded to the public phase, major donors stepped up, including Doug and Barbara Christie, Rosemary and John Dunsmore, Bob and Wendy Sullivan, and Gord and Jane Ball. In the end, more than 200 individual donors contributed and the project drew significant support from both The Echo Foundation and The Schad Foundation.

Completing the campaign weeks ahead of schedule and exceeding the target of \$575,000, the Black River property was purchased by the Conservancy in December, making it the single largest acreage under the Conservancy's ownership.

The board committed more than \$100,000 to the Conservancy's reserves for the long-term stewardship of the property -- well over our original budget. More funds will go into the Property Protection Fund once final project expenses are completed.

An official dedication ceremony being planned for the 2018 field season will officially open this reserve, which will keep nature close for generations to come.

And Joan Rosebush finally has her piece of heaven.

 **730**
Acres protected

 **4.4 km**
Black River

 **200+**
Supporters

\$575,000
Project

Caring for the Land you Love

134 acre Dale Easement Completed

An effort that stretched over several years came to a happy conclusion when Peter Dale and Louise Calvert-Dale donated a conservation easement on 134 acres of their Oro-Medonte home property in early January. This acreage on the edge of the Oro Moraine contains beautiful mixed forests, open meadows and mixed wood swamps. A segment of Coulson Creek runs through it, directly downstream from the West Coulson Swamp. It has habitat for at least eight species of provincial significance.

The Dales have stewarded the property carefully over the years and have now ensured it will be protected forever.

A shift in the way we manage properties

We have a challenge.

There is an urgent need to protect more natural habitat in the Lake Couchiching region which is slated for some of the highest growth pressure in Canada over the next 25 years. At the same time, we cannot ethically acquire land that we can't effectively steward. Our ability to care for the lands under our protection poses a potential bottleneck in our drive to protect more land.

We have carefully managed the financial side of the equation, growing our resources and prudently adding excellent staff as funding allowed, but staff alone can't open up that bottleneck sufficiently.

One of the key solutions is to maximize the potential of our powerful and dedicated volunteer base. To that end, the following goals have been identified:

- Grow our volunteer resources to increase our capacity to steward the land at peak efficiency;
- Generate more data on the properties under protection to guide stewardship decisions, particularly in the face of climate change;
- Create more value for volunteers by providing them with new field skills and giving them meaningful opportunities to contribute to conservation

2017 Sightings:

- bull moose at an easement
- brown creeper nest on the Adams Nature Reserve
- fairly healthy butternut trees on Kris Starr Sanctuary + Carthew Bay Reserve

We spent months experimenting with our systems, asking hard questions and testing different approaches. In 2017, with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation Seed Grant, and funding from The Youssef-Warren Foundation we have created a new property team model with citizen science as a core element.

Using lessons learned from our successful Water Quality Monitoring Program, we set out to expand the citizen science monitoring for species at risk on our properties. We re-structured several teams to make them more flexible and allow them to include more people.



With this new, refined approach still in its infancy, we know from the preliminary results that we're on the right track. In 2017, the number of team visits to properties doubled. We experienced an unprecedented 100% retention rate among water quality volunteers who, among other things did benthic kick tests at 13 sites to develop a clear picture of the quality of our streams. The program led to a special focus on Sundial Creek at Grant Wetland, home to the last population of Brook Trout within the City of Orillia.

Volunteers reported 58 sightings to Ontario Nature's Reptile and Amphibian Atlas project in the fall alone. When we announced the volunteer opportunities for reptile and amphibian monitoring, the program was full in three weeks and that included 19 new volunteers.

Our Lunch-and-Learn program for volunteers has been hugely popular, averaging 40-50 people per session and a robust schedule of 10 training events is planned for 2018.

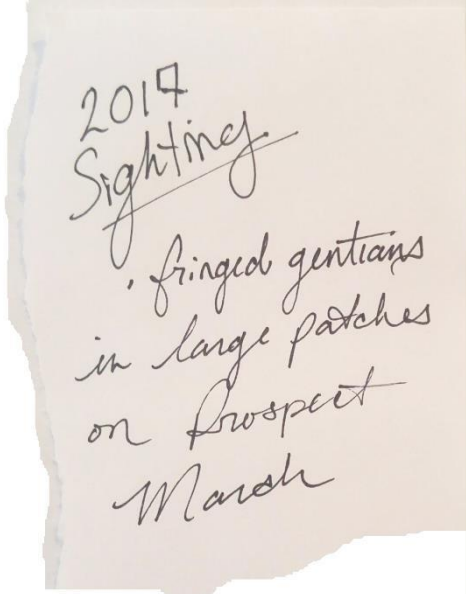
Because the program is built on collaboration intended to support efforts already underway, we added or strengthened partnerships with seven different organizations.

It's not just our volunteers who have experienced change. Staff roles have been restructured to make it possible. In helping us establish the volunteer tracking systems and developing training sessions, volunteer coordinator Gay Guthrie laid critical groundwork during her contract with the

Conservancy. Stewardship Program Manager David Hawke and Project Manager Dorthea Hangaard were tasked with working in a new collaborative relationship to merge property management and citizen science. Together they have orchestrated a remarkable transition in just a few months.

Consolidating this approach will be a high priority for 2018, as we funnel more community energy into conservation to allow us to continue to deliver on our promise to care for the land at the same pace we protect it.

At this critical time, volunteers have never been more important to our success.



What goes into stewarding 37 properties?

Volunteer training

Trail maintenance

Actively controlling invasive plants

Species at Risk projects

Site trespass investigations

Site dumping investigations

Developing new property plans

Review of existing Property Management Plans

Coordinating volunteers

Handling neighbour relations

Site visits by Stewardship Manager

Managing cattle grazing leases

Pictured on these pages: Dave fashions a dog-strangling 'necklace' in Carden, a resting fawn in Carden, the Alexander Hope Smith property monitoring team, praying mantis on Cameron Ranch, Alec and Heather Adams at the opening of the Nature Reserve they donated, Toby counting fungi at Grant's Woods.



Volunteers – a Force of Good for Conservation

Contributing to the long-term health of the land

330+ WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS

Plus many, many event volunteers and leaders

53 new volunteers joined this year

PROPERTY MONITORING



561+ hours

14 properties, 63 visits by 49 volunteers

WATER QUALITY MONITORING



798+ hours

Between 17 sites, 133 visits by 32 volunteers

AMBASSADORS

27 volunteers attended 10 events in the community to talk about the importance of conservation



Fungus at Roehl Wetland Reserve

When people give their time as a volunteer, they have the power to amplify conservation efforts in their region. Together, we can do more. Advisory Council members and the Past Presidents Council are two such examples of volunteer groups who help us punch above our weight as a small non-profit. We are so grateful to work with such incredibly caring people.

Abert, Rudy · Adams, Heather & Alec · Aggarwal, Aiesha · Agnew, Sandy & Melnyk, Lynne · Anderson-Simpson, Tracey · Ariss, Kimberly · Atwood, Harold · Aykler, Petra & Bob · Bailey, Mike · Baker, Courtney · Baker, Jen · Baker, Stevie · Ball, Gord & Jane · Bam, Homi & Linda · Barbour, Anne · Barrett, Craig · Bender, Ian · Benjafield, Sue · Berkhout, Derek · Berndt, Joan & Richard · Binsted, Kevin · Bisset, Sandi & Mark · Bittner, Richard · Blair, Fred · Graham, Bob · Wright, Bob · Bone, Dan & Blayney, Susan · Bonsteel, Jane · Booth, Jack · Bowden, Lydia · Bowler, Colin · Bowles, Bob · Brenner, Konrad & Jutta · Brown, Jerry & Lorraine · Bulguth, Melissa · Bulguth, Reid · Burgan, Leah · Burnie, Joelle · Burns, Jordyn · Burrows, Steve · Calcafuoco, Adam · Callahan, Kathy · Calvert-Dale, Louise · Campbell, David & Barb · Careless, Philip · Carlyle, Gayle & Challis, John · Charters, Anderson & Susan · Chevrier, Sandra · Christie, Douglas & Barbara · Church, Gerald · Churchill, Makayla · Clark, Jennie · Clark, Marilyn & Hayward, Peter · Clark, Tanya · Cleland, Murray & Rosalind · Cole, Jeff & Kristi · Cooke, Stephanie · Coughlin, Meagan · Coughlin, Trudy · Coull, Drew · Crooks, Rosiland · Curran, Cameron · Dagenais, Adam & Brittany · Damsma, Paul · Darker, Bill · Davis, Eric · Deadman, Sue · Deimling, Peter & Carol · Devine, Eran · Dickson, Laura · Douglas, Mark & Christine · Duchesne, Ron · Duncan, Bruce · Duncan, Robert · Dunlop, Garfield · Dymont, Leslie · Ellingwood, Chris · Ewing, Heather · Fecht, Joe & Ford, Eileen · Fell, Garry · Fonseca, David & Joanna · Forbes, Don · Ford, John · Francis, Bella · Francis, Simon · Fulford, Pamela & John · Furman, Henry · Gamroth, Mary Sue & Konda, Ed · Gauldie, Heather · Gibson, Kelly · Gilchrist, Danny · Giles, Danielle · Gill, Raj · Gillette, Lisa & Peters, Gary · Gillette, Michael · Grand, Janet & Reid, Ron · Grandine, Joan · Gratrix, Kailin · Gray, Neil, Cameron & Ann · Greatrix, Ted · Guthrie, Gay · Hadlington, Sid · Halbot, Deb · Hall, Harry & Marian · Hancock, Ron & Sharon · Hangaard, Dorthea · Hatzipetrakos, Hillary · Hawke, David & Juliana · Henderson, Lane · Hess, Sandra & Jullian · Hewitt, Luke · Hodgson, Tony · Holden, Clare · Homer, David & Bonnie · Howes, Kyra · Humphries, Jean · Hunt, Katrina · Ilyniak, Morris · Iron, Jean · Ironside, Nancy · Jamieson, Lynn · Johnston, Krystie · Johnston, Richard · Jones, Michael & Barbara · Juneau, Mary



From a Volunteer: Meagan Coughlin

"I feel very grateful to have had the chance to get in on the ground level of the Conservancy's citizen science projects, and to support an organization that does such valuable work in our community."



Mary Mick receives award



Volunteers at the Adams Nature Reserve



bronze copper

Karson, Alyson · Kennedy, David & Margaret · Kenny, Maureen & McDonald, Jim · Kirby, Mary Lou · Kitchen, Kate · Klimuk, Vanessa · Kluger, Ronald & Ronna · Knockaert, Taeko · Kohl, Adrienne · Langman, Katherine · Larsen, Ellen · Larson, Brendon · Lauer, Rhonda & Tim · Laver, Paul & Frances · Leadbeater, Dale · Lewis, Jane · Ling, Philip & Frenette-Ling, Linda · Lowry, Si & Wendy · Macdonald, John W. · MacDonald, Sara · MacLachlan, Pam · MacNaughtan, John & Joan · MacPhee, Andrew · Macphee, Dorian · Mandryk, Tom · Marshall, Bob · Martin, Reuven · Martin, Scott · Mask, Grant · Massig, Cathy · Massig, Joanne & Jaski, Greg · McClelland, Elizabeth · Mcintosh, Sue · McNeill, Colleen · McSorley, Lois & Wayne · Meadows, Keith · Meleg, Ethan · Merced, Christopher · Michener, Sandra · Mick, Omer & Mary · Middaugh, Paul · Miller, Tyler · Milligan, Claire & Josh · Mills, Peter · Molenaar, Gail & Perry · Moore, Ginny · Moore, Melanie · Moy-Shuster, Stefanie · Mustel, Karin · Neville, Lisa & Jim · Nixon, Catherine & Richard · Oben, Miriam · Parker, Kathy · Parnell, Bobbi · Pearce, Jenny & Hathaway, Jeff · Pitts, John · Poge, Joe · Poisson, Geri · Pomeroy, Grant · Pomeroy, Margaret · Popp, Karen · Poredos, Boris · Powell, Valerie & Jamie · Probst, Lou & Judy · Reid, Mary · Rekret, Philip · Robert, Laura · Robillard, Suzanne · Rockhill, Nathalie & Pengelly, Elizabeth · Rosebush, Joan & John · Ross, Jamie & Anne · Russell, M. Lynn · Ryckman, Barbara & Warren · Scanlon, Meegan · Sherwood, Bill & Victoria · Shortridge, Tim · Shultz, Mary & Karl · Shuster, George · Simons, Peter · Sinclair, Alex & Muriel · Sinclair, Carol · Sinclair, Sue · Sloley, Jane & Langman, Jim · Smale, Alan · Smith, Hope · Splichal, Fern · Starr, Bill & Molly · Stephen, Marcia · Stephens, Phillippa · Stewart, James K. · Stinnissen, Arnold & Dianne · Stinson, David · Storozinski, Eugene · Storry, Noella & Robinson, Peter · Stoutt, Daniel · Sullivan, Bob & Wendy · Sullivan, Jacqueline · Swinimer, Bill · Sykes, Darlene · Symmes, Ric & Sandy · Talbot, Candice · Taylor, Tom · Telfer, Lindsay · Teubner, Dagmar · Thiess, Isabelle & Gary · Thompson, Courtney · Thomson, Adam & Shirley · Thomson, Ken & Corinne · Totten, Beverley · Treash, Martin · Tremblay, Phyllis · Trottier, Maddie · Trumble, Don · Truyens, Ann · Tuck, Alan · Tuck, Melanie · Tuininga, Karlene · Turner, Jan · VanDerJagt, Mike · VanderMarel, Ingrid · VanStralen, Henry · Varey, Theresa · Walker, Lukas · Walker, Madeline · Wallace, Chelsea · Walnick, Jan & John · Ward, Andrea · Watt, Valerie · Whitman, Christie & Bill · Wiancko, Leanore · Wilkins, Dave & Mary · Williams, Paul · Wilson, Bruce · Wilson, Tom & Judy · Wolst, Julia · Woodford, Pat · Wright, John · Wright, Laurie · Wright, Noel · Wright, Robert J.L.

**PAST PRESIDENTS
COUNCIL**

12 members

**Working on the
long-term sustainability
of land protection**

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

9 members

**Played a role in
securing grants and
acquisition funding**

IN OUR REGION, THERE ARE

41 species

**at some level of risk of
disappearing forever**

Of those,

25 species

**have been found on properties
you help us protect**

**6 ENDANGERED,
8 THREATENED,
11 SPECIAL CONCERN**



From a Volunteer: Paul Laver

"Living in a rural area and owning a farm, it is imperative we preserve not only the land we own but as much of the surrounding landscape as possible. I like being outdoors, enjoy nature and the people I have worked with from Couchiching Conservancy have been and are a pleasure to be with as a volunteer"



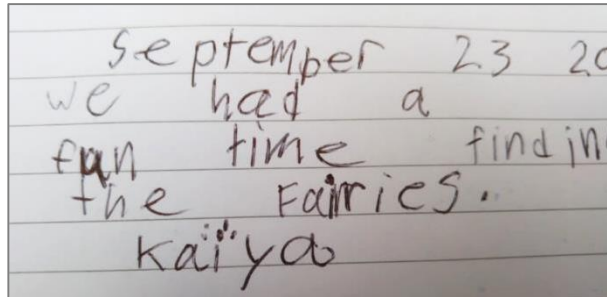
Engaging the Community, Supporting Conservation



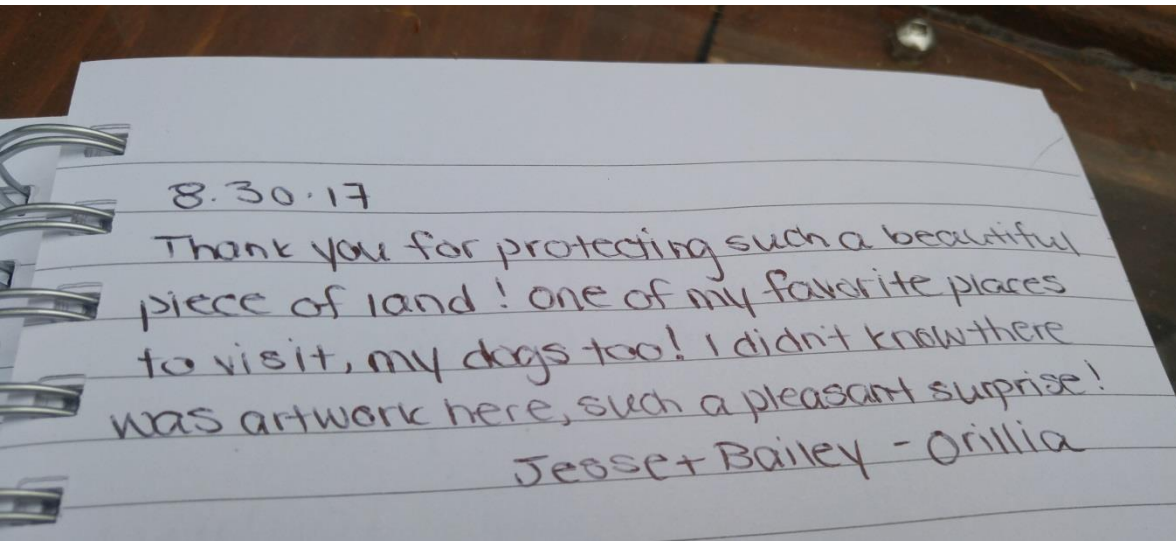
It's 5am. The air is cold and crisp. The sun is just starting to rise, and with it comes the songs of hundreds of birds. This special place is the Carden Alvar. After 13 years, the Carden Challenge continues to attract naturalists of all ages to the alvar to raise funds and have fun as they count as many species as possible in 24 hours. To the people who took part, and the hundreds who donated to support their friends and the Conservancy – *thank you!*

Now we move onto another landscape. Old-growth giants who provide homes to our beloved feathered friends and rich wetlands act as host to some of the Passport to Nature events. Thanks to all of our sponsors, including Sojourn Outdoors, Orillia Harvey's, Dr. Kevin Vennard, Orillia Power Corp., Lynda Hepinstall of Century 21, Home Hardware Orillia, Brewery Bay and Rustica Pizza Vino, we were able to offer 17 events. A special thanks to the Organizing Committee, Volunteer Event Leaders and those who attended!

And lastly, an unexpected surprise while walking through the woods. A phoenix spreads its wings, the history of the Grandfather Pine is shared and tiny fairies hide between leaves and ferns. This was one aspect of a partnership we had with The Orillia Museum of Art & History.



The Nature Reserves that you help to protect played host to Art in Nature events, Plein Air activities and Temporary Art by Professional Artists in Grant's Woods in Orillia.



CARDEN CHALLENGE

\$19,000+

RAISED BY 11 TEAMS

150 species counted

BEST SIGHTINGS:

Five-lined Skink
Bay-Breasted Warbler



SUPPORTED BY

244 CARING PEOPLE

**Funds support efforts
on the Carden Alvar**



WALK WYLIE

\$560

RAISED BY 15
PARTICIPANTS

PASSPORT TO NATURE

\$20,000+

contributed by 50
generous businesses
and participants

SEVENTEEN EVENTS WITH HELP FROM

31+

CARING VOLUNTEERS

Connecting to the Community



The following businesses supported conservation with donations and in-kind services or products, work at the properties and the Passport to Nature program. All of their contributions made a difference to the work we do and to the events we ran. They know that a healthy environment is **vital** to a healthy community. Names with a * indicate those who donated to create the new 730 acre Nature Reserve.

Oak (Up to \$5,000+): Russell, Christie, LLP Barristers & Solicitors, Brewery Bay Food Co., J.R. Booth Professional Corp.

Maple (Up to \$2,500): SMS Design, Sojourn Outdoors, ScottInc Design + Build*, Harvey's Orillia, Accessibility Professionals, Hehn Trickey Professional Corp., Longford Reserve Ltd.*

Elm (Up to \$1,000): The Bird House Nature Co.*, Century 21 - Lynda Hepinstall, Dr. Kevin Vennard, Home Hardware Orillia, Ontario Waterway Cruises Inc.*, Orillia Power Distribution Corporation, Orillia District Chamber of Commerce, RBC Dominion Securities, Beacon Environmental*, Pelee Island Winery, Carden Field Naturalists*, The Water Market, Carbon Free Technology Inc.

Pine (Up to \$500): BDO Wealth Management - John Mayo, Georgian Bay Printers, Investment Planning Counsel – Rhonda Cowen, Meridian Credit Union, Remax - Ian & Franci Ross, Rustica Pizza + Vino, Thor Motors, Walker Industries, Mountain Equipment Co-op, The Villager Magazine, Northern Business Equipment, K. McKechnie Architectural Design, Wild Bird Trading Co.*, Kawartha Field Naturalists Club*

Cedar (Up to \$350): Mawdsley's Mobile Crane Rental Ltd., Dr. Michelle Gordon Medicine Professional Corp, Roy E. Pearn Enterprises Limited, Madison County Food and Beverage, Dufferin Aggregates, Arniworks Photography, Art's Clothing, Bayview Wildwood Resort, Ben Cole, Brechin Timber Mart, Bruce Stanton, Hooper's Coffee House, Jack & Maddy's – A Kids' Store, Jobu Design, Kawartha Dairy, Kind Living with Sue Sinclair, Lake Dalrymple Resort, McLean & Dickey Insurance, Orillia EyeWear & iCare, Orillia Naturalists' Club, Sunshine Carpet and Flooring, Velocity Cycle & Ski, Orillia Volkswagen, Ontario's Lake Country

Willow (\$150): BDO Canada LLP, Crawford McLean Anderson & Duncan LLP, Office Links, Lakehead University, Shine Juice Bar & Cafe, Mariposa Market, St. Johns ACW, Blaine's Automotive and Tire*, Apple Annie's Café*



A special THANK YOU to The Bird House Nature Company for taking the lead on a number of initiatives to raise funds for the Black River Wildlands Campaign. Janet, Heather and staff made such a difference to spreading the word, inspiring their customers to contribute and helping create this new Nature Reserve!

An additional thank you to Brewery Bay for hosting a community dinner in support of our conservation efforts!

Inset: Janet Grand, owner of The Bird House Nature Company, holds a sign to promote the fundraisers they ran in the store for the Black River campaign.

Pictured: garden lupin at Grant's Woods, enjoying dinner at Brewery Bay with friends to raise funds for conservation, Kristi McKechnie, Don Scott and Mark Bisset received awards from the Orillia Chamber of Commerce for the renovation of The Couchiching Conservancy's office.

Building a Brighter, and Greener Future

Aiming for a Carbon Neutral Workspace

We now have more than a year of solar power generation under our belts and the numbers are encouraging. Since September 2016 when the solar array went into full operation, the Conservancy has generated an estimated 8,118 kilowatt hours of energy with a savings of \$1,860. That timeframe included a winter with heavy snowfall and a stormy spring and early summer.

Reduced our Carbon Footprint by: One Metric Tonne of CO2

=

Energy that 2,706,033 AA batteries generate



OR

Energy used in driving 7,100kms in a gas-powered vehicle that gets 8.5 kms per litre



The Heartwood Fund

“We won’t know what we’ve got til it’s gone”

The ecological future of our region is dependent on The Couchiching Conservancy being a viable organization for many generations to come. To be at the forefront of this protection effort we must be prepared to support our grass roots group of citizens, members and staff so that unique spaces can be recognized and preserved for those who follow us.

Our sincere thanks to the following people who have pledged or contributed: Sandy Agnew, Gord & Jane Ball, Philip Careless, Douglas & Barbara Christie, Timothy & Ros Crooks, Ron & Sharon Hancock, David & Bonnie Homer, Robert & Beverley Leask, Wendy & Si Lowry, Cathy Massig, Jim McDonald & Maureen Kenny, Ginny Moore, 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 Thiess, Adam & Shirley Thomson, Ken & Corinne Thomson, Mary Walton-Ball. There are also nine anonymous pledges and contributions.

For information on the Fund, contact Tanya Clark for a confidential discussion at 705-326-1620 or tanya@couchconservancy.ca.

THE GOAL OF THE HEARTWOOD FUND:
leave a green legacy for future generations by supporting the core of The Couchiching Conservancy

WHAT IS NEEDED:
\$10 million dollars, endowed by 2025

PROGRESS:
an estimated \$2.1 million dollars has been pledged to date in bequests, life insurance, cash and other legacy gift options.

“Twenty five years have gone by since the formation of our local land trust, and we have seven grandchildren to whom we are leaving a legacy of environmental concerns. We also want them to see that the efforts of a small group of individuals can have a positive impact, a lasting effect and thousands of hectares of protected land to which to point.”

Adam and Shirley Thomson, Couchiching Conservancy Supporters

17% Pledge to Protect Nature

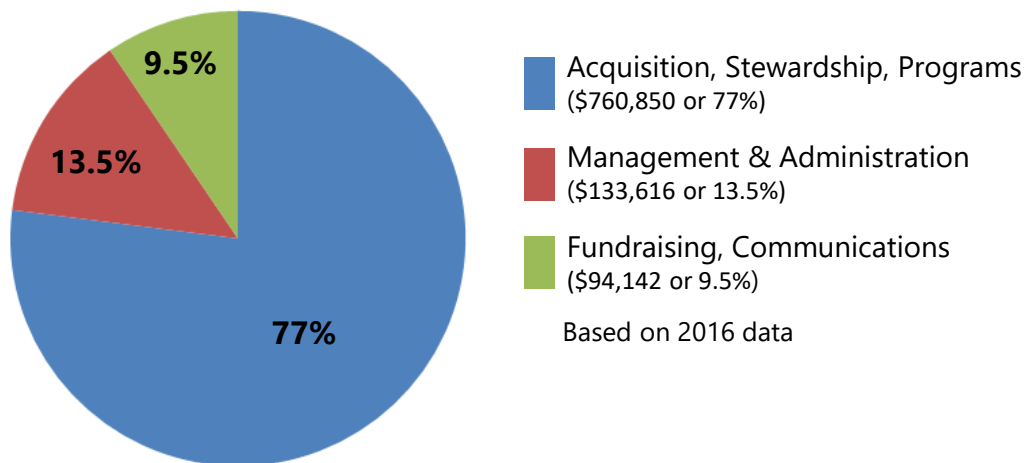
The federal government has a goal to conserve at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020, through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. With two years left, we reached out to the community and asked for their support to show that land trusts, conservation and this goal matter.

Over the past two years, the Conservancy has been able to hire summer staff thanks to the Gosling Foundation, and thanks to those efforts and volunteers, over 2,000 people showed their support for the pledge to protect nature.



Pictured: Kelcey MacLean and Grant Mask take a celebratory selfie at a community event when the 17% pledge garnered 2,000 supporters!

Financial Report



The Couchiching Conservancy logged a strong financial performance during the 2016-17 fiscal year, driven by growth in community support, foundation support and a high-profile public campaign to acquire a 730-acre property on the Black River. The Conservancy completed the year with an operating surplus, putting it in a position to bolster reserves. Our President's Reserve was increased by \$30,000 a portion of which will support a modest benefits package over four years to improve our ability to retain and recruit quality staff. Our acquisition fund -- critical to our ability to reach our land protection goals -- was also increased by \$22,762 while the Heartwood Fund continued to grow by \$38,917, bringing its actual cash value to \$254,226. Additional pledges have pushed Heartwood Fund projections over the \$2-million mark. Overall our net assets increased from \$4,699,574 to \$5,013,700 by October 31, 2017.

A full independent financial audit for our fiscal year, ending October 31, 2017, has been prepared by Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Professional Accountants and is available to the public at www.couchichingconserv.ca.

"It's an investment that pays dividends by enriching the lives of not only present membership families and friends but will provide future generations with a rich heritage of natural environment. It helps Mother Nature to survive and thrive."

Anne-Marie Alexander, Couchiching Conservancy Supporter



Thank you!

The people listed in the following pages, are the people to thank for everything that has been made possible this year. Many are regular supporters, with a long-standing commitment to the earth that we hold dear, and some new supporters who have been inspired by the natural places in our region.

Those listed below donated over \$200 to our organization in 2017. Additional donors have requested anonymity. Names with a * indicate those who donated to create the new 730 acre Nature Reserve. **Thank you to everyone who has supported conservation this year – together, we are making a difference.**

- Ackert, Joy & John*
- Adams, Brian
- Aggarwal, Aiesha
- Aggarwal, Ravi & Kennedy,
Karen & Family*
- Agnew, Sandy & Melnyk, Lynne*
- Armstrong, Brian*
- Atwood, Margaret & Gibson,
Graeme
- Ball, Gord & Jane*
- Ballantyne, Robert*
- Barrett, Craig*
- Beck, Gregor
- Berndt, Joan & Richard
- Binsted, Kevin & Mary*
- Bisset, Sandi & Mark*
- Bonsteel, Jane
- Booth, Jack & Jennifer*
- Bramhall, Mark & Baker, Courtney
- Brenner, Konrad & Jutta*
- Brown, Peter*
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One receipt, one thank you letter with an update of how your support helped and personal invitations to upcoming activities. On average, our 78 monthly givers contribute \$24 each month to power conservation activities. **If you would like to join as a monthly giver, please visit our website or call Tanya at the office.**



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2017 Sightings:
 • Sandhill Cranes flying overhead
 and seeing a Northern Mockingbird.
 A lifer!



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Pictured on front cover: running through Elliott Woods for an art in nature event with Orillia Museum of Art & History, an American Copper near the Black River, Lily.

Pictured on back cover: autumn meadowlark dragonfly at Kris Starr Sanctuary, otters in the Black River, enjoying the waters of Lake Couchiching.



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