



# Annual Report | 2019

A thousand acts of hope

## **Contents**

- 2 Message from President & Executive Director
- 3 6 Corridors of Connected Wilderness
- 7 8 Danya & the BluMoose, Nature in our Neighbourhoods
- 9 11 Angela & the Ripple Effect, Citizen Science, Outreach Programs
- 12 13 Volunteers
  - 14 Heartwood Fund
  - 15 Financial Report
- 16 22 Supporters
  - 22 Looking Ahead

## **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

## **Declaration of Shared Principles:**

- 1. Credible science demonstrates that society's behaviour and actions need to change to avoid ecological, economic and social ruin on a scale unprecedented over the span of human history.
- 2. We believe in the power and value of local action to solve global problems.
- 3. We hold that every individual has a responsibility to shift away from behaviour that treats nature as a resource to be consumed toward behaviour that treats as sacred the healthy natural systems upon which we depend for our existence.
- 4. We foster a respect for all living things and acknowledge the right they have to exist without utility for humankind.
- 5. We seek a reciprocal, respectful and protective relationship with the land that provides us health and wellbeing. We recognize that we are of nature, not external to it.
- 6. We recognize that The Couchiching Conservancy operates within the territory of the Indigenous Peoples of Treaty 18, Lake Simcoe Nottawasaga and The Williams Treaties. Understanding our connection to community, the land and the meaning of our historical agreements through treaty is an ongoing process to which we are committed.
- 7. We recognize that we are all accountable to future generations for our choices and actions. This moment demands we invest in nature to support all life on earth.



## **Message from the President and Executive Director**

Protect. Restore. Fund.

Climate activist Greta Thunberg's 2019 call to action resonates perfectly with The Couchiching Conservancy's mission. We protect vanishing wild places. We respond to the needs of species in crisis with special management, but time is often the only requirement for restoration. Funding is our constant quest.

Time can run out, and as Thunberg thundered for her generation on that urgent theme, time ran out for Angela Rehhorn, a promising young environmentalist who died in a plane crash shortly after attending our Annual General Meeting. Her grieving family turned unspeakable loss into a remarkable legacy. A similar act of hope led the family of Danya Leemhuis to create a cycling fundraiser to support the Conservancy.

This is how we fight on.

And The Couchiching Conservancy is in fighting shape.

Thanks to thousands of individual acts of hope, we are a strong, stable organization that knows where it is going and how to get there. Our work was recognized repeatedly in 2019. In each case – the Freshwater Future Hero Award; the Ontario Land Trust Alliance Emerging Leader award for

Tanya Clark; the Canadian Museum of Nature Environmental Inspiration nomination – we were singled out for our impact.

Backed by months of consultation with you, a new strategic plan calls for acceleration.

In August we launched a multi-year campaign for the protection of the Black River Wildlands Corridor. By December we had two new properties under protection and more in the works. We are sharpening our focus with a new acquisition strategy, strengthening our stewardship with Citizen Science, and reaching ever-deeper into the community with Passport to Nature.

With every action, we build resilience in this small, beautiful place. We breathe life into the words of Greta Thunberg. We add to the momentum of thousands of small organizations and millions of people who focus on their own small, beautiful places.

We share one vision for a better future: Nature rising.



Jamie Ross President



Mark Bisset
Executive Director

#### **Board of Directors**

Doug Christie, *Past President*Jack Booth, *Treasurer*Lisa Neville, *Secretary Directors*: Robert Sullivan,
Pamela Fulford, Wendy Lowry,
Kathy Hunt, Neil Gray

## **Councils**

Past Presidents Council Advisory Council

#### Staff

David Hawke, Stewardship Program Manager
Dorthea Hangaard, Citizen Science Project Manager
Tanya Clark, Development Coordinator
Courtney Baker, Administrative Assistant
Joelle Burnie, Engagement Organizer
Toby Rowland, Citizen Science Field Technician
Summer Staff: Alycia White, Adrienne Huston
Contractors: Kathy Connor, Ron Reid, Ginny Moore

## 2019 Highlights



GROWING OUR IMPACT BY PARTNERING WITH

**150**+

Non-profits, Businesses and Foundations

CONSERVATION WORK POWERED BY:

1,140+

Caring Supporters & Volunteers



VOLUNTEER HOURS

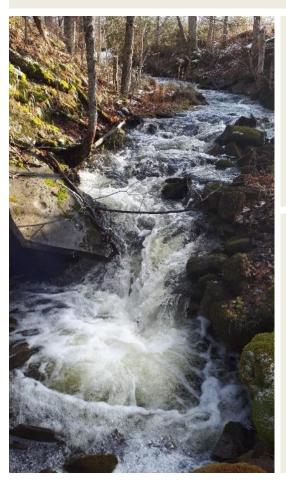
4,000+

Contributed this year

ONLINE OUTREACH & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**75,000**+

People reached through various activities & outlets



NEW NATURE RESERVES:

215 acres

protected thanks to supporters

SOLAR POWER GENERATED AT THE OFFICE SINCE 2016

\$5,000 In revenue

21,820 kilowatt hours



### **AWARDS & HONOURS:**

Finalist for the Canadian Museum of Nature, Nature Inspiration Award (pictured)

Freshwater Hero Award from Freshwater Future

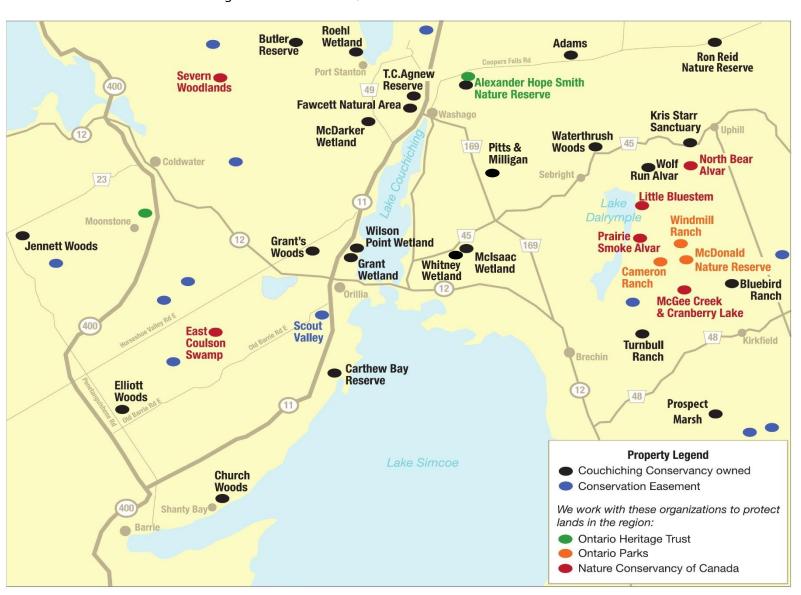
**Emerging Land Trust Leader Awarded to Tanya Clark from Ontario Land Trust Alliance** 



The Couchiching Conservancy acknowledges that the land on which it operates is the territory of Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, Wendat and Metis Peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

Our land base encompasses several habitats collectively called "eco-regions". There are three main divisions and many subdivisions of large categories. The greater the mix and number of these different vegetative communities, the

greater the richness of biodiversity, and ecological value. Woodlands are forests of hardwoods, conifers or a mix of both; rocklands are the granite Canadian Shield and limestone alvars; wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs and fens. Each of these may be further divided to quite specific habitat niches, eventually becoming a rare and essential home for species at risk, and for all species that interact within that eco-region.







We first began talking publicly about the Black River Wildlands when together we successfully protected a 730-acre tract with more than 4 kilometres of river running through it – The Ron Reid Nature Reserve. But the Black River Wildlands are so much more than a single property. Over the last three years we have been working on a new natural heritage analysis of the region using GIS mapping and a specially-designed scoring system that assigned points for Species at Risk presence and numerous other features. Creating natural connectivity is high on our agenda. Five specific areas emerged as high priorities within the Lake Couchiching region: the Carden Alvar, Black River Wildlands, Matchedash Wildlands, Bass Lake West and Minesing to Matchedash Corridor. Of those five hot spots, the Black River Wildlands stood out for immediate action.

Teeming with wildlife and containing the right mix of crown land, park land and potential conservation land to facilitate a natural corridor, we are focusing acquisition efforts on it through the Black River Wildlands Corridor Campaign, launched in August, 2019.

Preserving this corridor will create one of the southernmost links to a broad swath of wild space that connects Algonquin Park in the north, the Kawartha Lakes and Carden to the south-east and Georgian Bay to the west with Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Provincial Park as a central node.

In 2020 we will continue to protect land opportunistically in the other four focus areas, but building the Black River Wildlands Corridor will be a top priority.

**Pictured:** Board members and staff visited the Pitts & Milligan property and braved a downpour along the way. A 'perched birch' on the Pitts & Milligan property happens when a birch seed lands on a tree stump. The birch is able to change its cell structure to grow over the stump, and grow 'legs' so it looks like it is perching above the ground.

The first parcel to come under protection was the Pitts & Milligan parcel, a beautiful 185-acre tract of forest, grassland and wetland, nicknamed Sweetwater Farm. John Pitts lived self-sufficiently on the farm, growing his own food, caring for the land, and giving his time and energy to help friends and contribute to local causes. During this time on the farm, John met and married Kathleen Milligan with whom he shared almost 32 years. To his great sorrow, he lost her in 2012.

John's intention was to protect this place. The Couchiching Conservancy had conversations with him about protecting the farm, but it seemed like there was time to work things out. In February 2018 he died unexpectedly.

When John passed away, he bequested \$30,000 to the Conservancy which helped with the acquisition and permanent protection of the property that he and Kathleen cared for. The property has been purchased and protected with the help of generous support from the families of John and Kathleen, numerous community members, The Echo Foundation and The Gosling Foundation. This project was undertaken with the financial support of the Environment and Climate Change Canada. We are honoured to be entrusted with a place close to their hearts.

## IN OUR REGION, THERE ARE

49 species at some level of risk of disappearing forever



Of those,

29 species have been found on Nature Reserves you help protect



9 ENDANGERED 10 THREATENED 10 SPECIAL CONCERN



Learn from your mistakes.

It's an old saying that almost everyone uses but few want to talk about when it applies to them.

We think sharing a mistake and the subsequent learning we went through in 2019 is instructive in understanding how The Couchiching Conservancy operates internally.

The Conservancy's Citizen Science Program has become a magnet for people who are interested in nature and concerned about the multiple environmental crises unfolding both locally and globally. Being able to take concrete action in support of local nature while contributing to the collective struggle to stop environmental decline is a compelling combination.

And you responded.

Through the winter and spring, we were inundated with people interested in participating. The pressure of that enthusiasm merged with pressure to achieve ever more for funders understandably eager to see their investments produce results. Our ambitious plans threatened to outstrip our capacity to see them through, and we started dropping balls.

But none of our mistakes were fatal, thanks to you.

Some key volunteers made it clear that early cracks were appearing in the system and they were in danger of falling through. Sometimes a schedule did not get out on time; sometimes we didn't get a key piece of information out. As a result, precious volunteer time was occasionally wasted.

We listened.

Then we responded.

We began a process of reorganizing our work. In September we added Citizen Science Field Coordinator Toby Rowland to our roster to eliminate the gaps that occurred at critical times in the yearly cycle when we relied on short-term contracts. We shifted our training emphasis in several key ways to better support our volunteers.

By year's end, the Citizen Science Program had done everything we hoped and more. It saw more people out on our properties gathering more data to inform stewardship decisions. It is stronger, more refined, and more central to our stewardship work every day. It gives us more confidence to take on the responsibility of protecting more land.

Our funders and numerous private donors liked what they saw and invested further in the Conservancy.

There will no doubt be more missteps along the way as the program evolves. But with the dynamics of 2019 in play going forward, the Citizen Science Program and other initiatives will continue to grow stronger.

That is how we build success.

#### Cedarhurst

In 2018, we received some shocking news. An 1,350 acre parcel in the heart of the Carden Alvar had been sold and at the time was slated for development as a shooting range. Since then, we jumped into action connecting with the community, devoting time to attempt to sway the proponents and other activities. There have been some changes since that original shock, but at the moment, not much has changed.

We have an e-mailing list when there is news to share. Contact a staff member at the office to be added. If and when the time comes to raise our voices to protect the Alvar, we need as many people as possible on nature's side.

# Danya Leemhuis and the origins of BluMoose

Danya Leemhuis loved the Carden Alvar.

His love of nature, kindness, empathy and wonderful sense of humour was apparent to all who knew him.

From Toronto, Danya travelled with his family to Cranberry Lake many times and, on the way, would insist on taking a detour, stopping on the Carden Alvar.

When visiting the Alvar, Danya would excitedly search out tad poles, frogs, turtles and butterflies. He was amazed by the diversity of birds. Danya loved using his binoculars to watch Osprey, his favourite bird, as they fed their young in the nest.

"We have many wonderful memories of the happy times Danya and our family shared together there," said Adrian Leemhuis and Lorraine Morris, Danya's parents. "Danya would lie in the woods for hours encouraging chipmunks to eat from his hand."

"When walking in Queen Elizabeth II Wildlands Park, Danya and Adrian encountered a large black bear. The bear immediately climbed up the closest tree, observed the two humans and then confidently began climbing back down. Danya smiled and said, "It's OK dad, I can run faster than you!"

To honour Danya, his memory and his love of the Alvar, his parents launched The BluMoose Cycling Rides. With the goal to raise funds for charities doing work that Danya cared about, the first ride through the Alvar took place on September 7th, 2019 with over 40 people participating. With two routes to choose from, these 80km and 145km distances took cyclists from across Ontario to this globally rare landscape. The BluMoose gained its name from Danya's favourite colour and an experience he and his family had on a lake near the Alvar. Adrian and Lorraine shared, "Whilst canoeing, a huge male moose majestically swam by us. Danya and his brother Nikolay were mesmerized and never forgot this unique encounter."

"To help protect and conserve these precious ecosystems for today's children and future generations is the perfect way to celebrate Danya's life," said Adrian.

The 2020 BluMoose Ride in our region will take place on September 12, 2020. Registration and details can be found online at www.theblumoose.com.

Our hearts are with all those who knew and loved Danya.



Danya Leemhuis November 28, 2003 - March 9, 2018



Adrian Leemhuis (in the white jersey) and 40+ others explored the Alvar during the 2019 BluMoose Alvar Ride.

Photo by Chris Monette.



Engaging the community and connecting with our supporters is vital to the success of our conservation efforts. There are seemingly small actions, like calling supporters to invite them to the Annual General Meeting, and also large tasks like raising funds to power volunteer and staff efforts to protect thousands of acres of wilderness. All of these actions - small and large - they all matter.

Every day our community of supporters grows. This year we had over 225 people attend our Annual General Meeting – a new record. At our annual winter gathering in Toronto, we saw some new faces. It is clear that we all need nature and it desperately needs us to act.

Our Ambassador team kicked off 2019 with a successful Earth Day Clean Up on April 22nd. Ambassadors were joined

by over 30 volunteers, members, supporters, and staff, who put all hands together to clean up Wilson Point Wetland in Orillia.

From there, the Ambassador program continued to grow to a team of over 25 passionate individuals. Throughout the year, they shared the importance of local land conservation with over 1,000 people in the Couchiching Region through phone call invitations, delivering Passport to Nature booklets to local businesses, and booths at 12 different public events.

Thank you to our team Ambassadors for their hard work and for sharing their love for protecting nature with their local community.

### **Supporter Spotlight: Katherine Paveley and Robert Vella**

"One snowy January afternoon, we drove out for a hike in Alexander Hope Smith during what turned out to be a blizzard. The forest was completely covered in beautiful fresh snow and it looked like a wintery wonderland. We hiked in and stopped by the frozen water outlook where Robert proposed! He couldn't have picked a more special and magical place. We're looking forward to saying our vows in front of our immediate family under the cathedral of pines, maples, and oaks in Grant's Woods.

We both appreciate that the Conservancy works so hard to protect the land for people like us, those who will come after, and the non-human living beings with whom we share this world."



# Angela Rehhorn & The Ripple Effect of an Environmental Champion

Angela Rehhorn, 24, was committed to growth, learning and helping where ever she could.

By volunteering for The Couchiching Conservancy as part of a Canadian Conservation Corps initiative, she was helping develop a bat-monitoring project. She was among an elite group of youth selected to attend a United Nations conference on the environment when the flight she was on went down, killing all 157 passengers and crew. Rehhorn and her colleagues Danielle Moore, Micah Messent and Stephanie Lacroix were among 18 Canadians who died in the disaster. In the wake of the crash, Boeing 737 Max 8s were grounded around the globe.

A graduate of Patrick Fogarty Secondary School, Angela was a competitive soccer player and an avid member of the Orillia Channel Cats swimming club, but it was her love of nature that guided her career choices.

"As awesome as her journey was, it was only just beginning," said Joan Vincent, Angela's mother.

As part of her Conservation Corps work, Rehhorn was helping the Conservancy develop and launch a program that will track the progress of central Ontario's bats, which are currently being decimated by a disease called White Nose Syndrome. The project is part of our citizen science initiative to do important wildlife monitoring on conservancy properties.

"When Angela and another local environmentalist, Grant Mask, approached us as part of their Conservation Corps duties to help with citizen science, we felt like we had won the lottery," said Couchiching Conservancy executive director Mark Bisset.

With the encouragement of the Rehhorn family, the local community has ensured that the work Rehhorn started will be completed. To date, the conservancy has received \$15,000 in the outpouring of support in honour of the young environmental leader, benefiting its entire citizen science program.

As a result, the conservancy has created the Angela Rehhorn Citizen Science Fund in her memory. Donations can be made by going to http://www.couchichingconserv.ca/angela/.

To finish their adventure
The pack howled at the moon
Knowing they'll always remember
Steep cliffs and snowfalls,
Samsquanches and bears,
There is much more to this story,
But for now please take care.

~ A poem by Angela



Angela Rehhorn A Life Well Lived April 22, 1994 - March 10, 2019



Angela's team mates from the Canadian Conservation Corps (CCC) presented a special bat box to the Couchiching Conservancy in her memory. The bat box is installed at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve.





The Citizen Science Monitoring Program has become so integral to the stewardship of our Nature Reserves, it's hard to believe the program is only two years old.

Here's just one reason why this biological research matters: The chytrid fungus has become a major threat to frogs worldwide and is responsible for the extinction of 90 frog species. The disease has made some appearances in western Canada, and it is therefore important that we track our frog populations for any signs of decline.

In 2019 there were 18 citizen science teams closely monitoring frogs on our Nature Reserves for a variety of species and population size. Equally important work was done by our land stewards, reptile, salamander & vernal pool, whip-poor-will, water quality and bat monitoring teams.

A key feature of the program is on-going training. Each volunteer is trained for a specific job, but can also take advantage of the other courses we offer to enrich their naturalist skills and improve their monitoring results.

Volunteers have identified these courses as a key reason for their interest in the program, and the approach is working. While the amount of volunteers participating stayed about the same, we saw an increase in the number of hours our teams spent in the field, and in the observations submitted.

## **CITIZEN SCIENCE STATS**

Volunteers contributed

1,585 hours

property visits

opportunities

properties monitored

project teams

### **Team Numbers:**

5 Bat

11 Whip poor will

18 Land Stewardship

17 Frog

11 Reptile 9 Salamander

17 Water

**Training** courses

**Hours of** training

# of Species at Risk observations submitted to Natural Heritage **Information Centre:** 

**258** 

## **Courses Offered:**

- Species on the Brink
- Reptile & Amphibian **Identification**
- Species at Risk
- Water Quality Monitoring
   GPS
- Invasive Species
- **Vernal Pools**
- Frog Calls
- Avenza



Pictured: Olivia and Robert Sparrow monitor for reptiles at the Ron Reid Nature Reserve on the Black River. Some members of the Grant's Woods Land Stewardship Team have been caring for the property since it was donated in 2002. The newest member of the team is 4, and the oldest 92.





## PASSPORT TO NATURE

\$19,000+

contributed by 47 generous businesses and participants TWENTY EVENTS
WITH HELP FROM

**34+** 

**CARING VOLUNTEERS** 

## **CARDEN CHALLENGE**

\$23,800+

**RAISED BY 9 TEAMS** 

180 species counted

**BEST SIGHTINGS:** 

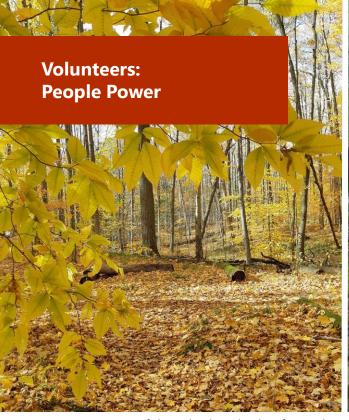
Yellow Rail
Redbellied Snake
Fox Sparrow
White-footed Mouse
Great Horned Owls

Now in its fifth year, the Passport to Nature program continues to be a key way to invite people to visit the Nature Reserves and learn about conservation. Our volunteer Committee works hard to plan the best events throughout the year with volunteer leaders guiding activities. Well over 500 people participated in these events and we estimate the program reaches over 50,000 people. A special thanks to all of our sponsors, including Sojourn Outdoors, Cuisinart, Brewery Bay and Rustica Pizza Vino.

The Passport program has been so successful, that other environmental non-profits from across Canada have used it as a model to develop their own programs. Now called, Passports to Nature Canada, ten participating non-profits follow our guide and we meet regularly to learn from each other. Supporting a broader conservation movement helps us all – from coast to coast!

There were many notable records this year during the 24 hour birding and biodiversity event, the Carden Challenge. New species were added to the list and many species were missing because of the rain. But the most noticeable record was the participants. Every year this event attracts more and more young people! Our youngest participant this year, Stella (pictured above in the center) was five years old at the time of the event. A young and curious birder, Stella's favourite birds of the day were the Great Horned Owls – a favourite of many!

We are so grateful to the people who take part, and everyone who donates and sponsors the participants. Thank you to Justin Peter for being our celebrity birder. He was also our top fundraiser, raising almost \$3,500 to help protect the alvar! A special thanks to the Bird House Nature Company, The Roost Farm and Quaker Oats Farm for contributing items for prizes.





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, help in the office, and assist in a myriad of other activities.

Adams, Heather Aggarwal, Aiesha Agnew, Sandy & Lynne Melnyk Ariss, Kimberly Atkinson, Eileen Atwood, Harold & Lenore

Aykler, Petra Babcock, Lea Baker, Courtney Baker, Jon Baker, Stevie & Stella Minges

Ball, Gordon & Jane

Ball, Jon

Bam, Homi & Linda Barnes, Sophie Barrett, Craig Bender, Ian Beresford, Lori Ann

Bernatavicius, Cathy Berndt, Joan Bingham, Lorraine

Binsted, Kevin Blanchet, Emily

Blayney, Susan & Dan Bone

Bonsteel, Jane Booth, Jack Bowden, Lydia Bowles, Bob Brasher, Jane Briere, Janet Brinks, Jodi Brown, Holly

Brown, Jerry & Lorraine

Buchanan, Claire

Bulgutch, Melissa & Reid Bulgutch-Rosenblum

Burnie, Joelle Burns, Jordyn Cabugao, Glorilyn Callahan, Kathy

Campbell, Barb & David

Careless, Philip

Carlyle, Gayle & John Challis

Cass, Lindsay

Christie, Doug & Barbara

Church, Gerry Cirino, Anthony Clark, Jennie

Clark, Marilyn & Peter Hayward

Clark, Tanya Cole, Jeff & Kristi Connor, Kathy & John Cornish, Lorelei Coughlin, Meagan Coughlin, Trudy Cowl. David

Cramer, Kaila Curran, Cameron Curry, Shannon Dale, Peter & Louise

Deadman, Sue Drescher, Michael Duckett, Courtney Ewing, Heather Ferguson, Kristyn Ferris, Cynthia Fligg, Nathan Fox, Karen & Mike Francis, Simon & Bella French, Jonathan Fulford, Pamela & John Gamroth, Mary Sue Gauldie, Heather Giannunzio, David Gilchrist, Judy

Gill, Raj

Gillette, Lisa & Gary Peters Grand, Janet & Ron Reid

Gray, Neil & Ann Halbot, Deb

Hancock, Ron & Sharon Hangaard, Dorthea Hawke, David J. & Julie

Hiles, Darby Hodgkiss, Sarah Hodgson, Tony

Homer, David A. & Bonnie

Hope, Brittany Howes, Kyra

Hrivnak, Larry and Tricia Currie

Humphries, Jean Hunt, Kathy Hunt, Katrina Ilyniak, Morris Iron, Jean

Ironside, Nancy Jenkins, Jeramie Johnston, Richard Juneau, Mary Kallin, Fred Kaposki, David Kennedy, David





"When I retired I wanted to find a volunteer activity that focused on environmental protection. I was looking for a hands-on opportunity and for an opportunity to learn and grow. The Conservancy trains its volunteers and offers a wide variety of projects to get involved in. It was a natural fit."

- David Cowl, volunteer and supporter (pictured right)

Ketchum, Anna Kohl, Adrienne Konda, Ed Larsen, Ellen Laver, Paul Leadbeater, Dale Lowles, Marilyn & Doug Lowry, Wendy & Si Machan, Janet & Gary MacLachlan, Pam Mask, Grant

Massig, Cathy

Massig Joanne & Greg Jaski Mathewson, Sophie & Stan

Meadows, Matthew Mick, Mary E. & Omer Middaugh, Paul Miller, John Mills, Heather Mitchell-Wilson, Judy & Tom

Wilson

Molenaar, Gail & Perry

Moore, Ginny Mulligan, Mary Ellen Naphtali-Stott, Melinda Neville, Lisa & Jim

Noble, Susan Oberfrank, Jacob Pellerin, Ethan Peter, Justin Peyton, Barry

Pomeroy, Margaret & Ted Duncan

Powell, Jamie & Valerie

Probst, Lou & Judy Read, Mike Reed, Eleanor Reekie, Pam Rehhorn, Angela

Rehhorn, Rolland & Joan Vincent

Robins, Tricia

Rockhill, Nathalie & Elizabeth Pengelly

Ross, Jamie & Anne Rowland, Toby Rusak, Aaron Russell, M. Lynn Ryckman, Barbara Sadowski, Gregory Schulz, Mary & Karl Scott, Julie

Sherwood, Bill & Vicki

Sinclair, Carol

Sinclair, Muriel & Alex

Sloley, Jane & Jim Langman

Smale, Alan R. Smith, Jane

Sparrow, Olivia & Robert

Sternberg, Barbara Stevenson, Mark Stewart, James K.

Storry, Noella & Peter Robinson

Stott, Tim and Melinda Strickland, Carol

Sullivan, Bob & Wendy

Swinimer, Bill Symmes, Ric Talbot, Candice Taylor, Cheryl

Tebrugge, Grant & Vicki

Teubner, Dagmar

Thiess, Isabelle

Thompson, Courtney

Thomson, Adam

Thomson, Ken

Tozaks, Alan

Trudeau, Kim, Adeline & Woodsley

Trumble, Don

Tuck, Alan & Melanie

Varty, Doug & Charon

Walinck, Jan & John

Walker, Dave

Walsh, Cathy

Wand, Kimberly & Cameron

Warboys, Meredith

Ward, Andrea

Westerby, Lynne

Wiancko, Leanore

Wigham, Peter

Wilkins, David & Mary

Wilson, Bruce

Woodford, Pat

Wright, John F. Yankech, Gary

Zoller, Kaye



### THE GOAL:

Leave a green legacy for future generations by supporting the core work of the Conservancy

## WHAT IS NEEDED: \$10 million dollars.

endowed by 2025

## PROGRESS:

An estimated \$2.5 million dollars has been pledged to date in bequests, life insurance, cash and other legacy gift options.

The viable 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 citizen volunteers, members and staff so that unique spaces can be recognized and preserved for those who follow us.

For information on the Fund, contact Bob Sullivan, chair of Past Presidents Council at 705-325-8775 sullyb@rogers.com, or Tanya Clark at 705-326-1620 or tanya@couchconservancy.ca for a confidential discussion.

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

Sandy Agnew & Lynne Melnyk, Gord & Jane Ball, Cameron & Linda Bigelow, Philip Careless, Douglas & Barbara Christie, Timothy & Rosaleen Crooks, Heather Gauldie, John & Marq Hallman, Ron & Sharon Hancock, David A. & Bonnie Homer, Maureen Kenny & Jim McDonald, Paul & Frances Laver, Robert & Beverley Leask, Lisa Neville, Wendy & Si Lowry, Cathy Massig, Ginny Moore, 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 Thiess, Adam & Shirley Thomson, Ken & Corinne Thomson, Mary Walton-Ball. There are also seven anonymous pledges and contributions.

Pictured above: beaver at the Ron Reid Nature Reserve.

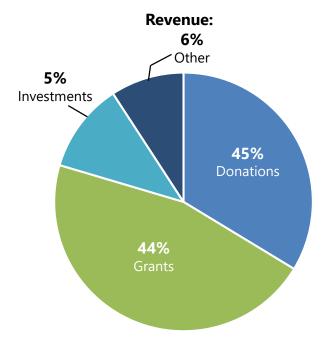
"The goal and promise of the Conservancy is to preserve and protect lands with special natural features in the Couchiching region forever. This is a challenge given creeping development, changes in government policy, land abuse and climate change. Through having participated in a number of Passport to Nature events I have become more sensitized to the fact that there is an amazing and important interaction between the environment and all living things. Humans are a part of this interaction but the land is not there simply to suit our needs."

Doug Christie, Couchiching Conservancy Supporter for well over 15 years

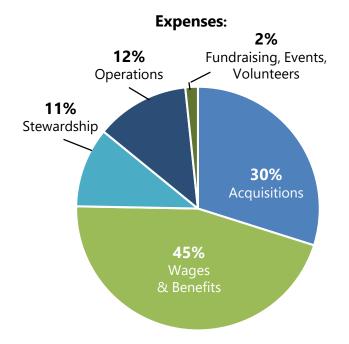
## **Financial Report**

Together, we are a beacon of hope. In a time of overwhelmingly grave environment news, our supporters step up for nature. They step up by making generous and kind donations of cash, stock and bequests and by becoming members. Businesses and foundations have a critical role as well to help further the land trust movement.

Accountability and transparency are important. We work hard with volunteers, the Board of Directors and staff to ensure your donations are used wisely and are making an impact.



	2019	2018
Donations	\$393,047	\$645,186*
Grants	385,374	679,843
Investment Income	47,552	37,948
Other	51,021	52,771
Total Revenue	\$876,994	\$1,415,748



Total Expenses	\$900,136	\$1,143,523
& Volunteers		
Fundraising, Events	14,994	11,387
Operations	111,975	88,336
Property Stewardship	95,392	80,671
Wages and Benefits	408,818	354,431
Property Acquisitions	\$268,957	\$608,698*
	2019	2018

A full independent financial audit for our fiscal year, ending October 31, 2019, has been prepared by Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Professional Accountants and is available to the public at www.couchichingconserv.ca.



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+): Russell, Christie, LLP Barristers & Solicitors, J.R. Booth Professional Corp., Sojourn Outdoors

Maple (Up to \$2,500): ConAir, Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation

**Elm** (*Up to \$1,000*): Orillia Chamber of Commerce, Promotomax Automation, RBC Dominion Securities, Scottlnc Design + Build, The Bird House Nature Co.

**Pine** (*Up to \$500*): James Dick Construction, Georgian Bay Printers, BMO Wealth Management - John Mayo, Brewery Bay Food Company, Century 21 - Lynda Hepinstall, K McKechnie Architectural Design, Morton Metals, Northern Business Equipment, Ontario Waterway Cruises Inc., Orillia Lion's Club, Orillia Power Distribution Corporation, Orillia Subaru, Refillery District, Remax - Ian and Franci Ross, Rustica Pizza + Vino, The Villager Magazine, The Water Market

**Cedar** (*Up to \$350*): Michael Scott Landscaping, Kawartha Dairy, Bruce Stanton, Hill's Restaurant, Dr. Michelle Gordon Medicine Professional Corp., Back to Function, Bayview Wildwood Resort, Brechin TimberMart, Carden Field Naturalists, CRH Canada Group, Dr. Anthony Reid, Dr. Kathleen Michalski, Dr. Louise Hill, Dufferin Aggregates, Ego's Nurseries Ltd., Fashion Therapy, Horseshoe Valley Dental - Dr. Suzy Lee, Huronia Unitarian Fellowship, Jack & Maddy's, Jobu Design, Lake Country Physiotherapy, Lake Dalrymple Resort, Lakehead University, Mariposa Market, Maximum Mobility, McLean & Dickey, Miller Paving, Orillia EyeWear & iCare, Orillia Channel Cats Swim Club, Orillia Horticultural Society, Pelee Island Winery, Pioneer Handcraft, Sebright Capital Advisors Ltd., SLR Consulting Ltd., Staples Orillia, Sunshine Carpet and Flooring, The Crank and Sprocket, Wagg's

**Willow** (\$150): Benson Kearley IFG, Blaine's Automotive and Tire, Carbon Free Technology Inc., Cockburn Refridgeration, Covexco Inc., Crawford McLean Anderson & Duncan LLP, HGR Graham Partners LLP, Hillson Medicine Professional Corporation, Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalists Club, Office Links, Ontario's Lake Country, Orillia District Chamber of Commerce, Orillia Naturalists' Club, Room to Breathe, Roy E. Pearn Enterprises Limited, Mike Stahls Realtor

## What goes into stewarding 37 properties?

The on-going care of local Nature Reserves is a big effort. Support from donors and volunteers like you helps make these activities possible:

- Volunteer training
- Trail maintenance
- Actively control invasive plants such as Garlic Mustard, Phragmites Reed, Dogstrangling Vine, Japanese Knotweed, Purple Loosestrife, European Frog-bit and more
- Species at Risk projects
- Trespass & dumping investigations
- Developing new property plans
- Review of existing Property Management Plans
- Coordinating volunteers
- Handling neighbour relations

- · Site visits and monitoring
- Managing cattle grazing leases
- Manage existing structures



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 are new supporters who have been inspired by the natural places in our region.

Those listed below donated over \$200 to our organization in 2019. Additional donors have requested anonymity.

## Thank you to everyone who has supported conservation this year – together, we are making a difference.

Aggarwal, Ravi & Karen Agnew, Sandy & Lynne Melnyk Anastasiades, Matt Anderson, William J. Atwood, Harold & Lenore Aykler, Petra & Bob Ball, Gord & Jane Ballantyne, Robert Barrett, Craig Beatty, Stephen Beck, Gregor Belchamber, Patricia Berndt, Joan & Richard Binsted, Kevin & Mary Bisset, Mark & Sandi

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Marshall, Taylor McCall, Beth McCreath, Paul McEvoy, Hal & Arlene McGee, Susan

McSorley, Lois & Wayne

Melcher, Nancy Meldrum, Janet Menagh, Roy & Nancy



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**James K. Stewart** Co-Chair of Advisory Council, Supporter

"Oro-Medonte and the Lake Couchiching area have been special places for our family for many decades, and I want to help sustain these amazing habitats and wildlife for future generations. The Couchiching Conservancy's success in protecting crucial habitat and species is inspiring and compelling.

For me, the Conservancy embodies local commitment and effectiveness in preserving natural spaces and wildlife. Its work with other conservation organizations has paid huge dividends in preserving the beauty and magic of this region. Its leadership through initiatives such as citizen science and Passport to Nature make Couchiching a role model for local environmental work across Ontario. It is enjoyable to seek support from foundations to help fund the Conservancy's work, and a pleasure to be part of the Advisory Council with its dedicated group of scientists, naturalists and fundraisers."

Every dollar matters. We appreciate everyone who has made the commitment to protect nature - on the following pages are the people who have supported us under the \$200 level. An additional 156 people contributed under \$30 this year.

Abernethy, Michael Abray, Jane Ackert, Joy, John & Brenan Adams, Brian R. Adams, Christine Adams, Frederika & William Adams, Heather & Alec Addison, Joan H Anderson, Doug Ansell, Mark F. Archer, Judy Arens, Harry & June Ariss, Kimberly Armstrong, Brian J. Attfield, Peter Audet, Chantal Backway, Kathy Baker, Allan Baker, Candy & Steve Baker, Courtney Ball, Barbara Ball, Jennifer S. M. Ball, Jon

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## Donations were made in memory of:

Bellerby, Gordon Campbell, Silvia Chapman, Barry Graham, James Holmes, Harold Hughes, June Kelly, Frances Alberta Mackay, Patricia Parkes, Don Pitts, John Rehhorn, Angela Starr, Kris Steel, Nancy Trinier, Carol Valk, Jane Wilson, Dr. Henry

Our sincere thanks to the following organizations:

**Bird Studies** 

Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Brereton Field Naturalists' Club **Bruce Trail Conservancy** Canada Helps Carden Field Naturalists City of Orillia Community Foundation of Orillia and Area **Copeland Forest Friends** County of Simcoe **Ecology Ottawa Environment and Climate** Change Canada **Escarpment Biosphere** Conservancy Freshwater Future Ganaraska Trail Association Georgian Bay Land Trust Huronia Land Conservancy Island Nature Trust Long Point Basin Land Trust McLean Foundation Muskoka Conservancy Nature Barrie Nature Canada Nature Conservancy of Canada Nature Trust of New Brunswick Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority Kawartha Land Trust Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Lakehead University Land Conservancy for Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Kawartha Conservation Kawartha Field Naturalists Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust

Turner, George

Uren, Karen





Pictured: Morgan and Jeff from Ontario Land Trust Alliance tested out bat monitoring equipment with Meagan and Toby. We met with non-profits from across Canada to skill share and work to improve our engagement practices as a part of the Better Organizations for Nature Community of Practice funded by the Gosling Foundation...it all matters to our work here and beyond.

**Ontario Federation of Anglers** and Hunters 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 Community Development Corporation Orillia Fish & Game Conservation

Club

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Sustainability Network
Talbot Land Trust
The Canadian Freshwater
Alliance
The Echo Foundation
The Gosling Foundation
The Land Conservancy of British
Columbia
The Schad Foundation
The Somos El Barco Fund of
Tides Canada

The Sustainability Network

The Youssef-Warren Foundation

Toronto Ornithological Club Trent University United Way of Greater Toronto Water Rangers Wellington Water watchers Wildlands League Wildlife Preservation Canada

## Looking Ahead - a new Strategic Plan

The Couchiching Conservancy takes strategy seriously. Having a sound plan and sticking to it has been a pillar of our success. But flexibility is an important asset for a small organization. So plans must be reviewed, dogma challenged, fresh ideas injected.

Our 2014-2019 Strategic Plan served as an excellent guide, and we were able to check off almost all of the goals set. When it came time to create a map for the next five years, we turned to the experts: our leaders, our supporters, our volunteers. We wanted to create a document that people recognized as their own.

In the spring of 2018 Conservancy Director Pam Fulford agreed to chair a steering committee made up of Dale Leadbeater, Gord Ball, Margaret Pomeroy, Dorthea Hangaard and Mark Bisset. In addition to lengthy consultations with board and staff, the group hosted five focus groups representing various sectors of our community. Several individuals were also interviewed.

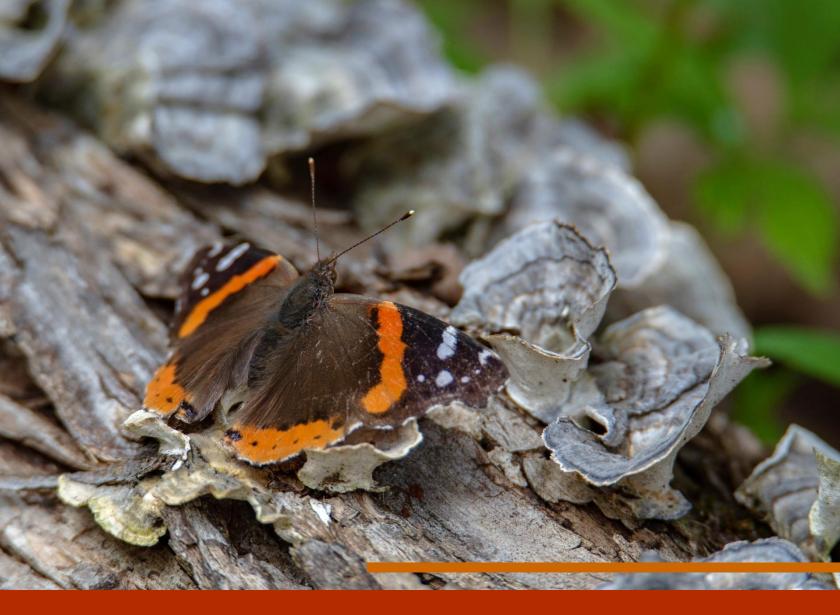
Finally, an online survey was distributed across our mailing list, inviting anyone who was interested to contribute their ideas and opinions.

The committee sorted through the information gathered, identified common themes and directions and hammered out a first draft, which was circulated for comments. After numerous revisions and lively discussions, the final version was approved by the board in late November.

Not every idea or direction made the final version, but every voice received a respectful hearing and careful consideration. Two strong themes emerged: given the climate emergency, there was strong support for accelerating the protection of land to the full extent of our capacity. There was also a strong emphasis on the importance of fostering well-trained, empowered volunteers to carry out stewardship on our properties, backed by well-supported staff.

Many comments dealt with organizational culture rather than goals and objectives, leading the steering committee to create a new element called Declaration of Shared Principles. It provides context for the entire document and will act as a guide for decision-making going forward.

You can view the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan visiting the website or by calling the office to request a copy.





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