

The Couchiching Conservancy



Proposed slate of directors for 2023

Kathy Hunt (President)

Kathy is a freelance marketing communications specialist, has enjoyed working with a wide variety of organizations throughout her career, and continues to do so on a part-time basis. She has specialized in the fields of recreation and sport, healthy lifestyles, tourism and education. Most recently she worked with Lakehead University during the opening and development of its new Orillia campus. She has been involved with the Couchiching Conservancy over the years, originally as a corporate member with her business, KH Communications. She worked with the Conservancy to help develop and produce the organization's first newsletter, as well as promotional materials for special events and public awareness. Kathy moved to Orillia with her family, husband Lance and three children, 30 years ago and loves the area, especially the opportunities for outdoor recreation. Her favourite pastime is exploring local trails, parks and waterways, preferably by canoe, kayak, rowboat, on skis or by bicycle. Always interested in promoting the benefits of the Orillia lifestyle, Kathy has volunteered with local festivals, the Orillia Community Development Corporation, the Terry Fox Run, and as a member of the Games Organizing Committee for the 2018 Ontario Winter Games.

Jane Bonsteel

Jane moved to Orillia in 2016 and is retired after a career in drinking water treatment with the Region of Peel. She is on the Development Committee of the Board and also volunteers as a Water Quality Monitor for Sundial Creek, one of Orillia's last cold-water streams. She is a former member of the City's Environmental Advisory Committee and Sustainable Orillia. Her favourite pursuits are out-of-doors, paddling canoes and kayaks, rowing, cross-country skiing and cycling.

Jack Booth

Jack Booth is the owner of J.R. Booth CA Professional Corporation. Originally playing the role of auditor and then later acting as an accounting advisor, Jack has worked with the Conservancy for many years, most recently serving as treasurer. He brings a wealth of knowledge to the organization and has the advantage of being well-versed in many of the nuances of running the Conservancy. He currently serves on the Investment Committee. An Orillia resident, he has served a number of community organizations, most recently acting as treasurer of the Lighthouse soup kitchen.

Neil Gray

Neil has a B.Sc. (University of Guelph), M.Sc.(Warwick University, England), and Ph.D. (University of Western Ontario) in Biochemistry. He then went into Environmental Engineering; was an Associate Prof. at University of Western Ontario. After 5 years he shifted gears and went into industry, working on environmental projects (surveys, protocol development, remediation [air, land, groundwater and surface water]) for a Fortune 100 company in Canada, US and England. Throughout his industrial career (20 years) he maintained his academic connections, as an Adjunct Prof at Waterloo, Guelph, and University of Toronto. For several years he has been leading a group of scientists for the Federal Government (CRA; Scientific Research and Experimental Development program for the Ontario Region); retired in November 2018. He has published/presented over 120 scientific papers and holds a number of patents, covering everything from bioremediation to wind turbine blade design. He belongs to the Carden Field Naturalists, Couchiching Conservancy, Hamilton Naturalists, Ontario Field Ornithologists, Scottish Ornithology Club and the Archaeological Society of Ontario.

Morris Ilyniak

Morris has been coming to Lake Simcoe for more than 30 years. He enjoys kayaking, backcountry skiing, cycling, camping, birding, and citizen science. He grew up in the Burlington-Hamilton area where he first became active in nature studies. While living in Toronto, Morris worked for the Ontario Ministry of Finance as a senior economist and manager of an economic policy unit. Since retiring in 2016, Morris and wife Dana live at the cottage on the north shore of Lake Simcoe in Atherley, while still retaining a home in Toronto. Morris has served on several boards, including a long-term care facility and community health centre. Morris has degrees in urban planning, journalism, and intellectual property law. He can't remember when he first joined the Couchiching Conservancy, so it must have been a really long time ago!

Dale Leadbeater

Dale A. Leadbeater, B. Sc., B. Ed., R.P. Bio., P. Biol., graduated from the University of Toronto, then worked in the Botany Department where she administered the Green Plant Herbarium. A field associate of the Royal Ontario Museum and life member of the Field Botanists of Ontario, she has presented talks on many natural heritage topics, organized conferences and led outings as well as teaching Ecological Land Classification. An enthusiastic supporter of Land Trusts, Dale has worked with The Couchiching Conservancy as an event leader, Advisory Council member and volunteer. Dale lives on a 200-acre Conservation Easement near Kirkfield.

Janet Machan

Janet Machan was an elementary teacher for 30 years throughout Simcoe County. Since her retirement in 2017, she has enjoyed work as an occasional librarian at Orillia Public Library's Family Department. She has always been a voracious reader and a patron of the arts. She and her husband Gary enjoy rural life in Oro-Medonte, where they raised their two children, garden and walk the trails. Janet and her family have been CC members for a number of years attending pie auctions, music nights and Annual General Meetings. Janet has loved the opportunity to participate in the Citizen Science program learning about species at risk and searching for whip-poor-wills on warm summer nights. She is also a volunteer member of the Passport to Nature team which gives her the opportunity to invite others to share in her love of nature.

Lisa Neville

Lisa worked with the federal government for 15 years, mainly as an aquatic biologist in various locations across the country, including British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. She studied marine biology at the University of Guelph and holds a post-graduate diploma in environmental science from Capilano University. Passionate about environmental stewardship, Lisa immediately contacted the Conservancy to volunteer when she moved to the Severn area in 2012. She serves as board secretary, Policy Committee chair, and is an active participant in various aspects of the Community Science Program. Lisa has also been known to stuff an envelope or two.

Robert Sullivan

Bob is a dentist who practiced in Orillia for 30 years. As a long-standing member of the Conservancy, a past president of the board, and a member of numerous teams and committees, his planning and management skills have been invaluable on the Board. Bob currently chairs the Heartwood Committee, works on the Conservancy's Investment Committee, and served as board Treasurer in 2021. He loves snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, canoeing, cycling, hiking and kayaking, and is a keen supporter of conserving land for future generations. He and his partner Wendy have three daughters and live in Severn Township.