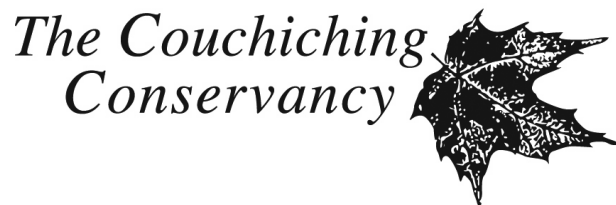


Minutes



Annual General Meeting

March 5, 2022

Video Conference via Zoom

The 2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was called to order by Executive Director Mark Bisset at 3:00 p.m. Those in virtual attendance were 129 households plus 9 panelists.

1. Call to Order & Welcome	Lead: Mark Bisset	
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome given.• Acknowledged the area from which the meeting was broadcasted as the territory of the Anishnaabeg, a land inhabited at different times by the Haudenosaunee, Wendat and Metis Peoples.• Welcome and appreciation given to the members of the Indigenous Community and local politicians that joined this AGM.		
2. Review of Agenda Items	Lead: Mark Bisset	
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brief explanation as to how the meeting would run was provided, including describing the use of the Zoom polling tool to record votes by members on the motions, and the Zoom Q&A function for asking questions.		
3. Review of Previous AGM Minutes	Lead: Lisa Neville	
Discussion/Conclusions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lisa Neville read highlights from the 2021 AGM minutes.• No corrections arose and the minutes for the 2021 AGM were accepted as distributed electronically ahead of the meeting and posted on The Couchiching Conservancy's (CC) website.		
Motion: To approve the Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of The Couchiching Conservancy.		
Moved by: Lisa Neville	Seconded by: Jamie Ross	Vote: Carried

4. President's Remarks		Lead: Neil Gray
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kudos given to the Board of Directors, volunteers, including the community scientists, and the staff and stewardship teams for all their work during the past year. • Goodbye said to Joelle Burnie; welcome given to new Engagement Organizer, Samantha Vessios. • Goodbye said to Kathy Connor; welcome given to new Bookkeeper, Terry-Lynn Hazlett. • Recognition and appreciation given to departing board member, David Homer, departing Development Committee Co-chair, Jason Stewart, and retiring lawyer, Doug Christie. 		
5. Treasurer's Report		Lead: Bob Sullivan
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bob Sullivan reviewed <i>The Couchiching Conservancy Financial Statements For the Year Ended October 31, 2021</i> as distributed electronically ahead of the meeting and posted on the CC's website. Highlights included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revenues and Expenses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revenues and expenditures were slightly more than in 2020; the revenue increase was primarily from investment income, as well as donations. ○ <i>Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets for 2021</i> (p. 5): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expenses were under budget due mainly to the impact of the pandemic delaying the closing of property and easement acquisitions e.g., difficulties obtaining appraisals and survey services. ▪ Strong year with a surplus, which allowed an increase to the Property Protection Reserve Fund and the President's Reserve. ○ <i>Statement of Financial Position at Oct. 31, 2021</i> (Balance Sheet p. 4): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-term investments, those accessible in less than one year, increased as a result of the strong surpluses for the past two years. ▪ Investments in the Heartwood Endowment Fund increased by \$79,000. ▪ Net assets increased by \$451,000. ▪ CC continues to be in a strong financial position. • Thousands of volunteer hours contributed not reflected in these financial statements. • Bob Sullivan thanked all supporters, volunteers, staff and board members for their commitment, as well as Jennifer Mann and Debbie Trickey of Hehn Trickey for their timely audit. • Special mention to the Past President's Committee by Mark Bisset for their ongoing work on the Heartwood Endowment Fund; 68 people have pledged or contributed an estimated \$2.9 million. 		
Motion: To receive the Financial Statements for the year ended October 31, 2021.		
Moved by: Bob Sullivan	Seconded by: Dale Leadbeater	Vote: Carried
Motion: To appoint Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants as auditor for the year ending October 31, 2022.		
Moved by: Jane Bonsteel	Seconded by: Janet Machan	Vote: Carried

6. Election of Board		Lead: Mark Bisset
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographies of the <i>Proposed slate of directors for 2022</i> distributed electronically ahead of the meeting and posted on CC's website. • CC's Nominations Committee has recommended the following slate of candidates: Neil Gray as President, and Directors Jamie Ross, Lisa Neville, Kathy Hunt, Jane Bonsteel, Dale Leadbeater, Janet Machan, Bob Sullivan and Jack Booth. • Mark Bisset asked three times: "Are there any nominations from the floor?" Not receiving any in the Q&A box, the motion was read. 		
<p>Motion: To accept the slate of candidates as recommended by the Nominations Committee for 2022-23: President Neil Gray, and Directors Jamie Ross, Lisa Neville, Kathy Hunt, Jane Bonsteel, Dale Leadbeater, Janet Machan, Bob Sullivan and Jack Booth.</p>		
Moved by: David Homer	Seconded by: Jane Ball	Vote: Carried
7. Executive Director Report		Lead: Mark Bisset
<p>Discussion/Conclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented several maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nature Conservancy (US) map – model of predicted species migration patterns in the face of climate change and remaining natural connectivity; CC used this to help focus on a connectivity approach. ○ Study map and draft <i>Areas Important for Ecological Connectivity Throughout Canada</i> report – method used called "circuit theory" to predict species movement across landscapes similar to the way electricity can be predicted to move in an electrical network. Out of the three best examples of high current density in the country highlighted, one of those was CC's area with opportunities available to maintain connectivity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overlaying CC's five focus areas from the Conservation Priorities analysis with this circuit theory analysis shows confirmation for CC's corridor areas and a good understanding of the dynamics of the landscape. ○ Map of Nature Reserves protected by Land Trusts in CC's region from 1998 to 2021. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carden corridor – string of almost continuous protected land; Black River Corridor – taking shape and the campaign is continuing. • Newly protected areas presented: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cedarhurst – with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, 1,300-acre property in the Carden Alvar; ○ Marley Nature Reserve – 71-acres fronting the Black River; ○ Nicholson Nature Reserve – within the Black River Wildlands Corridor; ○ Add-on to the Thomas C. Agnew Nature Reserve – provides additional access options. ○ Two conservation easements almost completed in Oro West Corridor. • Indigenous-led BioBlitz – held in the Black River Wildlands Corridor with 37 participants and led by Gary Pritchard of Curve Lake First Nation; focusing on Indigenous approaches to conservation with three days of field observations. 		

- CC does three things: protect the land, care for it once it's under protection, and build and nurture the community of people necessary to do the first two things.
 - Actions like, species monitoring, Zoom calls, habitat work, maintenance work, fundraising events, etc.
- Thank you to all, and to CC's partners and sponsors.
- Summary of responses to questions answered during the meeting:
 1. Yes, Simcoe County has been privy to the Conservation Priorities mapping and they were part of its review early on, but it is a good reminder to put it in front of them again as it relates to their current review of the natural heritage corridors.
 2. A conservation easement protects a property by establishing a set of restrictions and developing an agreement with the landowner, which is then registered on title of the property. This allows the landowner to protect their property without donating it. These restrictions in the easement agreement go with the title of the property if it is sold. Staff contacts provided for more information.
 3. Yes, this presentation will be available on our website.
 4. Proposed expansion by the City of Orillia likely to occur into Severn Township and possibly in the area of Grant's Woods. CC is engaged with the City through its forum process, and is participating in the "Stop the Sprawl" campaign. CC is helping to develop planning alternatives through a coalition of area groups for the City to consider.
 5. Logging in the Simcoe County Forest next to the Agnew Nature Reserve may look horrible, but remember the historical context of these planted forests in the County. They do actively harvest and thin these forests but also protect 30,000 acres. CC does communicate with the County.
 6. Ontario's growth plan and its implications are being considered as CC's stance is shaped regarding Orillia's proposed expansion and with respect to urban sprawl.

8. Guest Speaker: Julia Zarankin

Discussion/Conclusions:

- Author of the book *Field Notes from an Unintentional Birder*, recounting her journey to becoming a bird nerd.
- Presentation titled *Birding as an Antidote to Despair*:
 - During the pandemic, the eBird App has seen a 34% increase in use.
 - Birding is the practice of looking and learning to see the details; seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary.
 - Seeing a greater diversity of birds increases our happiness; Audubon article *More Birds Bring More Happiness, According to Science* (<https://www.audubon.org/news/more-birds-bring-more-happiness-according-science>).
 - Volunteers at a bird banding station and has had to rethink the place she lives, Toronto, with respect to bird migration and the network of interconnected wilderness areas; take time to look and marvel.
 - Need to appreciate the common bird species as well, not just the rare bird species, and protect them before they become rare too.
 - There are many different ways to be a birder; most important thing is to look closely and marvel.

- Birding teaches how to be present in the moment; cultivates the habit of looking and appreciation. Birding, in a sense, is a radical act of hope.
- Summary of responses to questions answered during the presentation:
 1. Plans have not yet been made for World Migratory Bird Day on May 14, but Julia will be likely volunteering and/or birding. Hopes to see a cerulean warbler.
 2. Next book will be fiction and currently writing about a Russian Jewish family.
 3. Contact your local nature store about the latest on feeding birds in the winter.
 4. Vortex has good binoculars. Also see article A Birder's Guide to Binoculars written for Cottage Life (<https://cottagelife.com/outdoors/a-birders-guide-to-binoculars/>).
 5. Julia uses a Swarovski scope and an iphone with an attachment piece from Phone Skope.

Meeting declared closed at 4:46 p.m. by Mark Bisset

Minutes Recorded by: Lisa Neville, Board Secretary

FOR APPROVAL