

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Protecting nature for future generations



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Mission: Protecting nature for future generations.

Vision: We envision a mosaic of inter-connected wild spaces protected sufficiently to ensure the Couchiching-Severn region retains, nourishes and enhances its remaining natural riches through a changed relationship with the land in keeping with our shared principles. Our relationship with the land is built on respect, responsibility and reciprocity toward the earth.

Goals:

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





Executive Director & President's Message

What a privilege it is to be entrusted with leadership of The Couchiching Conservancy in our 30th year as a land trust.

Ten visionary and hard-working volunteers founded this organization in 1993. They continue to be a driving force in our success, and have inspired a large community of donors, members, volunteers and staff to follow in their footsteps over the past 30 years. Many become lifelong supporters.

In our new roles as President and Executive Director, we have experienced an extraordinary year of discovery. Our new perspectives have allowed us to better understand and support the exceptional accomplishments of our community. At times we have been overwhelmed, but there is always someone who steps forward to assist, leaving us energized and inspired by the passion, generosity, and commitment people have for this organization.

It has been a banner year for acquisitions, with a total of 608 acres added over six nature reserves and easements. These latest acquisitions include the pristine Alvar of the Deverell-Morton Nature Reserve, and the

generous donation of the Mitchell Bruce Nature Reserve in Washago.

From our latest acquisitions, to the outstanding work of our Community Science team, and the creativity of our Passport to Nature program, this Annual Report covers the highlights of our year along with some "firsts": A new Youth Stewardship Program, a greatly improved Accessible Trail for Grant's Woods, and being among the first recipients of the Orillia Matters Community Builders Environment Award.

There is much to be proud of, and more work to be done. We look forward to continuing to build on the strong foundation we've inherited, and on our relationship with you, as we strive to accomplish our mission to protect nature.

Founder Ron Reid noted that, "In creating the Couchiching Conservancy, our long-term objective was to become the community-based organization people think of when they think of protecting nature, just like we automatically think of a hospital when we have a medical emergency." Mission Accomplished, Ron!

Dorthea Hangaard
Executive Director

Kathy Hunt
President

Board of Directors

Jane Bonsteel
Jack Booth
Neil Gray
Kathy Hunt
Morris Ilyniak
Dale Leadbeater
Janet Machan
Lisa Neville
Bob Sullivan

Staff

Aiesha Aggarwal
Courtney Baker
Tanya Clark
Meghan Duell
Madeleine Fournier
Dorthea Hangaard
Brandon Guoth
Alysha Henry
Toby Rowland

Contractors & Interns

Mark Bisset
Keiran Dougan
Terry-Lynn Hazlett
Quinlan MacDonald
Lucas McLennan
Ginny Moore
Ron Reid
Carsten Wisch

Councils

Advisory
Development
Past Presidents

Pictured: Birds eye view of Ron Reid Nature Reserve, a participant of the Passport to Nature Painting in the Wildlands event led by Doug Cooper. Yellow Warbler. Turtle friendship - a Midland Painted and Blanding's Turtle.

By The Numbers

14,935

total acres of wilderness
protected & cared for
thanks to supporters

608

new acres added
over six reserves &
easements

60

unique Species-at-
Risk protected

75

people have now made
legacy pledges & gifts to
the Heartwood Fund

5,786

volunteer hours
contributed by
314 people

5,800

acres covered
controlling
invasive species

230

metres of trail
upgraded to
accessible standards

70

trees removed
due to Emerald
Ash Borer

400+

People took part
in Passport to
Nature events

Pictured: The unveiling of the upgraded accessible trail at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve. Upland Sandpiper and Savannah Sparrow at Cameron Ranch Nature Reserve. Unveiling of the Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve. Shawn McClinchey and Mamie de Groot with Turtle Nest Covers made by the class at Eastview Secondary School.





Strategic Plan 2020-2025

As we enter the fourth year of our current strategic plan, we are excited to share our progress on some key goals. The full plan is available on our website in the About Us section.



By 2025, the Conservancy will play a role in protecting an additional 4,000-acres.

- At the end of 2023, we have protected 2,353-acres. In the previous 5-year plan, we protected 1,256-acres.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Maintain a 15% endowed stewardship fund sufficient to provide funding for maintenance of Conservancy properties. ✓ In support of Canada's biodiversity target to conserve and protect 17% of terrestrial areas and inland water, all Conservancy lands that meet the Canadian Protected and Conserved Area Database criteria will be included. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Conservancy will increase the number of volunteers by 25% over 2019 levels. ✓ All policies will be current by the end of 2020 and reviewed on a 5-year cycle thereafter. ✓ New ways developed to support the engagement of youth volunteers, aged 18 to 35. |
|---|---|

Pictured: Wood Lily at Deverell-Morton Nature Reserve. Youth-led clean up at Scout Valley Conservation Easement, Red-headed Woodpecker. Porcupine at Mitchell Bruce Nature Reserve. Thanks to Blundstone Canada for holding a fundraiser at the Mariposa Folk Festival!

Corridors of Connected Wilderness



Small & Mighty Additions

 Cedar Grove Nature Reserve  7-acres / 2.8-hectares  Dec 11, 2023




A seed that was planted in 1995 has come into bloom. The current executive of the Orillia Horticultural Society donated and transferred the Sid Pomeroy Aboretum to the Conservancy. The property is almost adjacent to Grant's Woods Nature Reserve, building a stronger network of protected places.

 Turnbull Road Allowance  7-acres / 2.8-hectares  June 23, 2023




Working with the City of Kawartha Lakes, we were able to secure the road allowance within Turnbull Ranch Nature Reserve, originally protected in 1999. By taking possession of an allowance we can erase arbitrary lines drawn on the landscape for future development while ensuring the ranch's wild residents are not disturbed.

Pictured: Staff, Evelyn Frantzke and Robert Williamson, Ron and Sharon Hancock at the celebration event of the Frantzke-Williamson easement.

Easements

 Frantzke-Williamson  44.5-acres / 18-hectares  Jan 30, 2023

Evelyn Frantzke and Robert Williamson became fast friends with the Conservancy after talking with our ambassadors at the fall fair. They became members, took part in Community Science monitoring, the Landowner Stewardship Program, and then worked with us to protect their land they love forever. It is located on the Oro-Moraine, known for the glacial till that filters some of the world's cleanest water.

 Hancock  47-acres / 19-hectares  Jan 30, 2023

Ron and Sharon Hancock have stewarded their property in Oro-Medonte with care. Plantations of white spruce and white pine were conducted with guidance for the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry, an acid rain monitoring station was installed by Environment Canada and eventually they chose to take the next step by donating an easement on this property lovingly referred to as 'The Hermitage'.



Coyote



Hoary Bat

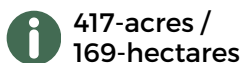


Indigo Bunting



Monarch Butterfly

Carden Alvar



Protected through a purchase and 20% donation by the Deverell-Morton family.

This new nature reserve falls with the Carden Alvar Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, and fills in a significant piece of the Carden Conservation Corridor. It is directly adjacent to Wolf Run Alvar Nature Reserve and North Bear Nature Reserve, and connects to the Black River Wildlands Corridor to the North.

The land is 60% globally-unique alvar in pristine condition, 40% wetland and forest, and home to numerous Species-at-Risk. It will be open to the public.

The property was owned by the Deverell family since the mid-1800's, and is adjacent to their family homestead.



Golden-winged
Warbler



Moose

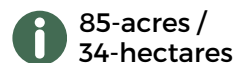


Eastern Newt



Eastern Garter
Snake

Black River Wildlands



Protected through a full donation by Leslie and Irene Bruce. This new Nature Reserve falls within the Black River Wildlands corridor and is directly adjacent to Alexander Hope Smith Nature Reserve. The property fills in the missing 'gap' along Riverdale Drive in Washago. It contains a large area of sedge and cattail wetland, a mixed forest of coniferous and deciduous trees, and has a direct connection to the Green River.

The nature reserve is named in memory of Leslie and Irene's son, Mitchell. Mitchell loved and respected the land and the Indigenous people who inhabited it. He enjoyed hiking, camping, boating on the Yukon River and exploring Kluane National Park. The family's dearly missed son and brother passed away on a hike in Klune on August 2, 2021.

This reserve will not be open to the public, to protect its sensitive habitat.



On The Land



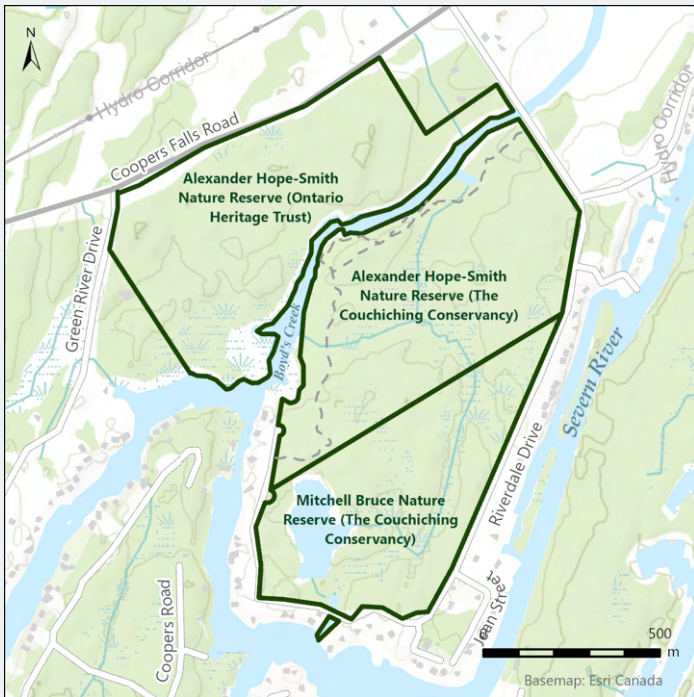
Nature Reserve Feature



Alexander Hope
Smith Nature Reserve



219-acres /
88.6-hectares



Quick Facts:

- 7 community science projects;
- 17 volunteers;
- 156+ volunteer hours dedicated to this reserve;
- Upland forest, rock outcrops, and marshland;
- Two parcels, protected in 2007 and 2008.

Caring for Alexander Hope Smith Nature Reserve

Our landscapes breathe life into each new day. Caring for those landscapes is a cumulative effort by staff and volunteers. Below you will find an example of the effort that goes into one nature reserve.

This reserve is stewarded as a unit by staff and volunteers. This helps us learn more about what species are using which habitats, monitor for threats, and observe changes over time.

The muddy and wet sections of forest offer suitable habitat for salamanders. Wooden boards are placed for surveys and volunteers (Mary, Pam, Larry and Tricia) checked the boards in the spring and fall when these species are more likely to be active above ground. Salamanders are a good indicator of a healthy environment.

The forest and wetland habitat is ideal for frogs and bats. Frog and bat monitors (Karen, Roland, Joan, Jeff and Jane) braved the bugs, and their efforts were rewarded by frog call symphonies, and firefly shows.

Boyd's Creek flows through this reserve and connects to the Severn River and eventually Lake Couchiching. Water monitor, Glenn, diligently checked the water levels monthly from April-Oct. Through the summer months, reptile monitors (Debbie, Morah, Brenda, and Dave) counted turtles and searched for snakes. The creek and wetlands offer plenty of water, plant cover, and basking logs for turtles. From one lookout, 24 Midland Painted turtles were observed, just shy of the record from 2020. Snakes enjoy the rocky outcrops of this area but have also been found along Riverdale Drive as roadkill. Which leads us into the other side of stewardship - managing anthropogenic (human-related) issues.

Volunteer Land Stewards (Mel and Al) investigated issues with dumping and encroachment, while summer staff (Lucas, Carsten, and Quin) and invasive species removal volunteers catalogued invasive species. Staff and roving teams of maintenance volunteers kept the trails safe by removing downed trees.

This year, this corridor of protected natural area grew by 85-acres with the addition of the Mitchell Bruce Nature Reserve, adjoining to the south side of Alexander Hope Smith Nature Reserve.

Caring for the land

Maintaining trails at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve

There were increased trail maintenance activities at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve. A number of trees fell across the trail and in one case, crushed a bridge. This reserve has an intricate and long trail system with 18 footbridges. We estimate that over 7,000 people visit this reserve annually, and keeping the trails cleared and safe is an immense task that would not be possible without the generosity of our volunteers and supporters.

The Impact of Emerald Ash Borer at Church Woods Nature Reserve

The Church Woods Nature Reserve was critically impacted by the invasive emerald ash borer as infested trees posed a hazard to neighbouring properties. Arborists were hired and used techniques that minimized disturbance to the forest floor to decrease the chance of invasive plants spreading into newly opened areas. The trees were left on site to decompose and form habitat for wildlife. Introduced and destructive forest insects and pathogens are unfortunately the new normal and protecting biodiverse and relatively undisturbed areas is a proven strategy for safeguarding native flora and fauna.

Invasive species

When left unchecked, invasive plants can outcompete native plants and potentially locally eliminate native species. While the environmental impacts are obvious, there are less obvious social and economic impacts such as decreased crop yields, as invasive plants can act as a new host for introduced or existing crop pests. It's clear that management of invasive plants is key to limiting biodiversity loss and health, social, and economic impacts.

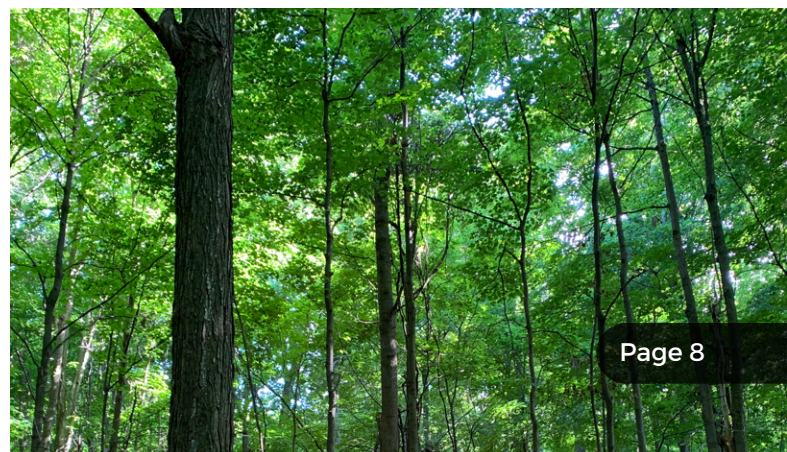
Thanks to a grant from the Invasive Species Action Fund, we were able to fund training for staff, creation of a regional invasive plants booklet, pay for professional services, and equipment purchases.



5,800 acres covered through invasive mapping, monitoring & management.
160 hours contributed by 23 volunteers.

Work focused on Garlic Mustard, Dog-Strangling Vine, Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed, Phragmites and Common Buckthorn.

Pictured: Brandon and Eric work on re-building a bridge. Quin and Carsten and BIG bags of invasive species. Church Woods Nature Reserve.



Conservation Research

Wildfire Smoke Impact

The summer of 2023 brought the impact of climate change to our door like never before. The haze, orange skies, smell, and taste of smoke in the air was an eerie and disconcerting new reality. We had to decide how to limit the impact of unsafe conditions while working outside, and developed a simple but effective smoke index guideline:

- High - work & monitoring is cancelled or rescheduled
- Medium - decided on a case by case basis

Carden Bird Blitz

25 volunteers and four staff completed point counts at 32 stations throughout Carden Alvar Provincial Park and Bluebird Ranch Nature Reserve. They observed 55 species, consisting of 607 individual birds and 6 different species at risk! This year we were able to increase the number of participants to include some new birders. This is a great way to introduce a new generation of conservationists to point counts and conducting this type of field work. This will help strengthen the program and ensure long-term continuity.

Wildlife on Roads

This program focuses on busy roads adjacent to nature reserves, and engages volunteers from our Community Science program and Youth Stewardship program. Our initial focus is the Monck Road in front of Whitney Wetland Nature Reserve and Kris Starr Sanctuary, and Riverdale Drive beside Alexander Hope Smith Nature Reserve and Mitchell Bruce Nature Reserve. Enough wildlife on road observations have been collected to determine that Whitney Wetland Nature Reserve and Starr Sanctuary are “hotspots” deserving of road enhancements such as Eco passages and exclusion fencing. The project to build these passages is underway, and is one of our commemorative projects to honour the memory of Angela Rehborn and the victims of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302.

Pictured: Carden Bird Blitz volunteers on a hazy day on the Alvar. Volunteers walk the roads alongside Wilson Point Wetland Nature Reserve and check ditches and roads for frogs and salamanders. Eastern Meadowlark with nesting material in Carden.



“Being a community science volunteer means that I take tangible steps every month to attune to the environment. Climate change can feel overwhelming and the despair can paralyze me and water monitoring is a small antidote to that despair. I get to volunteer with my partner in a meaningful way that aligns with our values.”





Youth Help Release The Wild

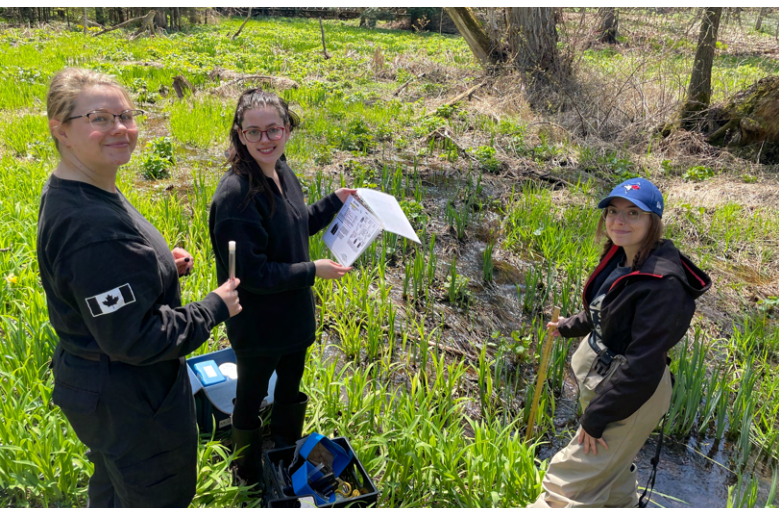
In 2023, we began a five-year Youth Stewardship program focused on accomplishing two goals: providing local youth with the opportunity to participate in and learn about conservation, and enhancing habitat connectivity. Barriers such as derelict agricultural fencing and busy roads can prevent wildlife from safely accessing conservation lands, and negatively impact their populations. Our Release the Wild program engages youth in the project of removing this derelict fencing, beginning with Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve.

This is part of the commemorative project to honour the memory of Angela Rehorn and the victims of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302.

250 volunteers contributed to 13 Community Science programs and monitored 39 reserves & easements. Staff & volunteers use a mobile app called Landscape for navigation and data reporting.

Accessible Trail Upgrade

This year a section of the trail at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve was upgraded to make it fully physically accessible. 230m of trail was framed with 4x4 lumber and filled in with limestone screenings that were compacted into a smooth and firm surface. Thank you to ScottInc Design + Build, the Miller Group, Orillia Home Hardware, Washago Timber Mart, and Sunbelt Rentals for their generous donations of labour and materials that made this project possible. Thank you as well to a small group of long-time supporters who wish to remain anonymous that provided generous financial support for this project.



Pictured: Youth volunteers undertake work to "release the wild" and remove old fencing at Sweetwater Farm Nature Reserve. Work on the accessible trail at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve. Water monitoring training with volunteers Heather, Brooke and Keira at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve.

Nature Reserves & Easements

14,935-acres

protected since 1993
(6,044-hectares)

57




nature reserves & easements

23.5km

of trails open to the public



Protected by:

The Couchiching Conservancy



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

Conservation Easement

Private land owners protecting land with help from the Couchiching Conservancy

-  Open to Public with trails
-  Not open to public

Ontario Parks

-  Open to public with trails
-  Not open to public

Nature Conservancy of Canada

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

Ontario Heritage Trust

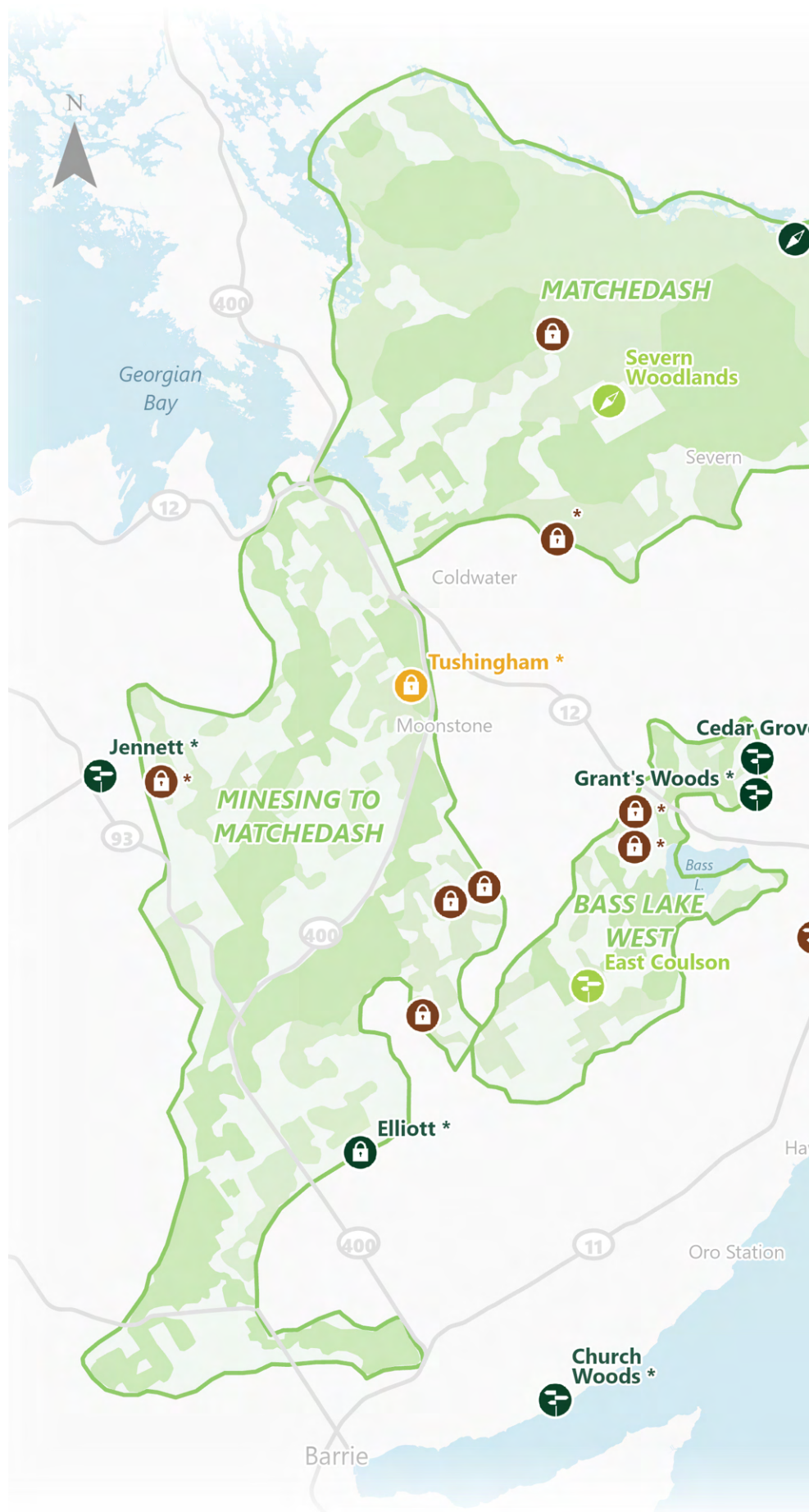
-  Not open to public

Areas of interest for conservation

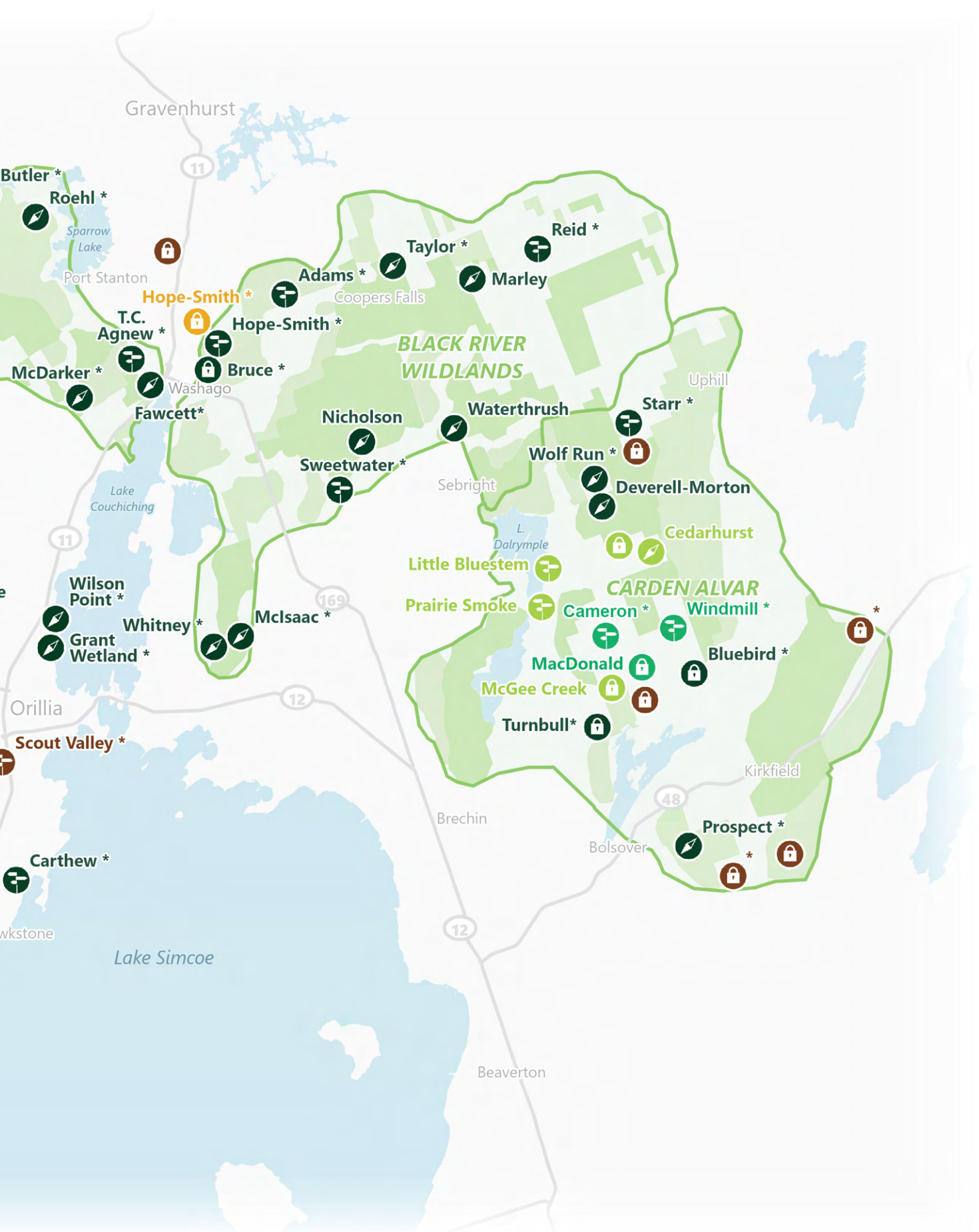
Conservation Corridor

-  Priority 1 Zone
-  Priority 2 Zone

"*" Indicates nature reserves with Couchiching Conservancy Community Science teams in 2023



Created by The Couchiching Conservancy, February 2024. Projected coordinate system NAD 1983 CSRS UTM 17N, Contains information from Ron Reid and The Couchiching Conservancy and digitized by Kawartha Conservation (2020). Nature Reserve symbols designed by The Couchiching Conservancy. Contact for details. The land on which we operate is the territory of Anishinaabeg.



In the Community



"I have a great concern about dwindling green space and appreciate what the Conservancy does."
- Ellen



"We are part of nature and nature is part of us"
- Thomas



Passport to Nature

Adventure beckoned at our Paddle Party on the Black River at Ron Reid Nature Reserve in August. Participants paddled from the newly upgraded canoe and kayak launch at Rosebush Landing to the foot of Ragged Rapids and back. Paddlers enjoyed the perfect weather and beautiful views, identifying species from the level of the river, and even a breeze to keep the bugs away! Thanks to our awesome leader Philip Careless, volunteers and everyone who attended. This was just one of the 16 events offered through our 2023-24 Passport to Nature program. This year sponsors contributed over \$22,000 to help make the program free for participants. A big thanks to the volunteers who make this program possible!

Carden Challenge

The annual Challenge continues to be one of our best events, delighting and inspiring participants to get out and count as many species as possible in 24 hours. The Dan Bone Memorial Can (a can of Beer) was added to the trophies and goes to the Biodiversity team who count the most butterflies. 74 participants raised over \$30,000 for Carden conservation efforts and counted an impressive 236 species!

Community Fundraisers

We have been blown away by the support from community partners this year! We are grateful to the following businesses who hosted fundraisers and contributed over \$30,000 to our work:

- Blundstone Canada
- Streets Alive
- Rustica Pizza Vino
- Dragonfly Room Salon & Spa
- Refillery District
- Creative Nomad
- BluMoose Alvar Ride
- Brewery Bay Food Co

Pictured: The Passport to Nature Paddle Party continues to be our most in demand event. Wilson's Snipe at Windmill Ranch Nature Reserve. Kristyn, Katherine and Bill of team Fauna Fanatics were the winners of the Biodiversity trophy and new Dan Bone Memorial Cup.

Grant's Greeters

Our volunteer Ambassadors had a busy season. Ambassadors are a passionate group of dedicated volunteers who use their voice to help spread awareness about the work we're doing. The main role is Grant's Greeters, where they talk with trail users and promote our work at the Grant's Woods Nature Reserve trail head. They also attend community events. Check out their stats:

- 119 hours volunteered
- 500+ visitors engaged
- 45+ new newsletter sign ups
- 140+ Passport to Nature booklets handed out
- \$380+ raised in donations

Trails: Connecting Communities

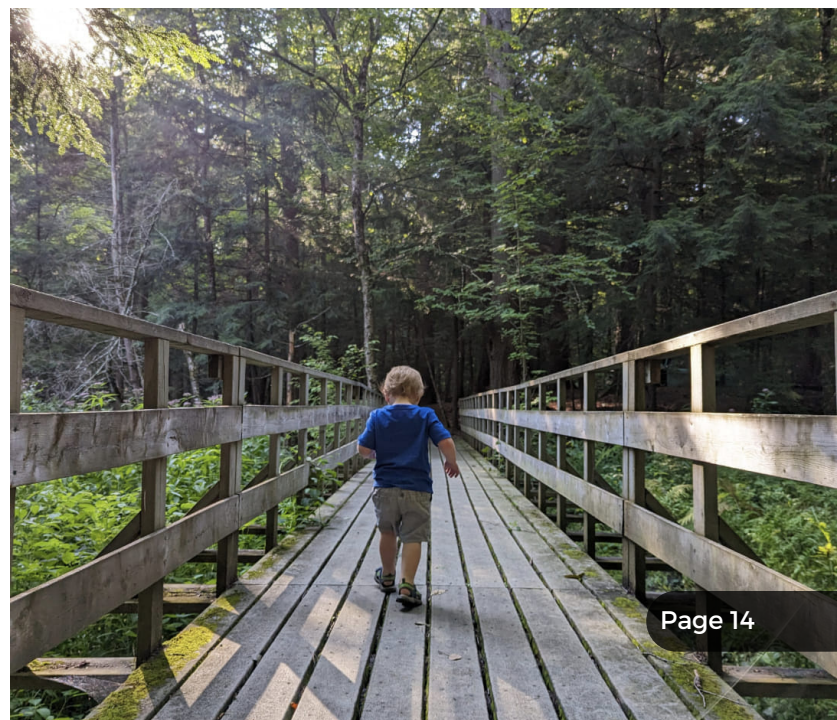
With over 23km of trails open to the public at no cost, our protected areas offer a vital respite. They not only enhance a community's overall quality of life but foster a sense of belonging, creating a shared green space where residents can connect with nature. In times when the price of...well, everything...is rising, being able to go for a walk without paying a fee is a relief.

These meeting places are host to thousands of people each year. Many groups and organizations visit our reserves to host their events including but not limited to the Ganaraska Hiking Trail Club, EarlyON Child and Family Centre, Orillia Naturalists' Club and many others.



I've got a toddler that loves the bridges!
A sure way to extend the walk is to ask
him to find the next one!
- Heather, Grant's Woods Nature
Reserve visitor

Pictured: The Night Out for Nature in memory of Angela Rehhorn was hosted at Brewery Bay. Thanks to the Bay staff and Joan Vincent and Roland Rehhorn. Lisa and Gary welcome visitors at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve with a smile and a song. A young visitor walks one of the 18 bridges at Grant's Woods Nature Reserve.



Volunteers



Volunteers play a crucial role in protecting nature by dedicating time and effort to conservation efforts. Their passion and commitment contribute to preserving ecosystems, fostering biodiversity, and promoting sustainable practices for a healthier planet. Thank you!

Aiesha Aggarwal & Brolin Devine
Sandy Agnew & Lynne Melnyk
Marion Aplin
Kimberly & Mike Ariss
Victoria Atencio
Eileen Atkinson
Ceylon Auger
Stevie Baker & Stella & Gilda Minges
Courtney & Hank Baker
Gordon & Jane Ball
Jon Ball
Scott Ballon
Homi Bam
Aileen Barclay
Craig Barrett & Cheryl Taylor
Charolyn Beaumont
Sharon Beebe
Ian Bender
Sue Benjafield
Eric Bennett
Joan Berndt
Ted Bigelow
Mark Bisset
Stewart Blackwell
Susan Blayney
Jane Bonsteel
Jack Booth
Lydia Bowden
Mercer Bowes
Bob Bowles
Jane Brasher
Holly Brown
Michael Bryden
Linda Buckland
Melissa Bulgutch & Reid Bulgutch-Rosenblum
Leah Burgan
Jacqueline Burlock-Bowes

Kevin Burnett & Kate Crawford
Kathy Callahan
Perry Camisso
Katie & Jacob Campbell
Philip Careless
Anita Caven & Matthew Wilson
John Challis
Melody Chamberlain
Joe Chen
Michael Chevrier
Nancy Chong
Doug Christie
Samantha Clapperton
Marilyn Clark & Peter Hayward
Tanya Clark
Kathy & John Connor
Shaye Copeland
Richard Cordery
Lorelei Cornish
Trudy Coughlin
Meagan Coughlin
David Cowl
Kaila Cramer
Susan Crowe
Katherine Culbert
Cameron Curran & Ali Gamble
Tricia Currie & Larry Hrivnak
Peter & Louise Dale
Carolyn Davies
Sue Deadman
Mamie Degroot
Carol Deimling
Brenda & Dave Dorward
Keiran Dougan
Michael Drescher

Meghan Edwards & Thomas Kaethler
Tina Elworthy
John Ewing
Heather Ewing
Thalia Felbert
Matthew Fells
Morah Fenning
Kristyn Ferguson
Cynthia & Tim Ferris
Sadie Fischer
Brooke Forward
Madeleine Fournier
Karen & Michael Fox
Mike Frances
Simon Francis
Evelyn Frantzke & Robert Williamson
Patricia Fulford
David Funnell
Heather Gaudie
David Giannunzio
Mandy Gibson
Kelly Gibson
Lisa Gillette & Gary Peters
Sarah Graham
Janet Grand & Ron Reid
Neil & Ann Gray
Steve Greidanus
Alexander Grout
Deb Halbot
Philip Hamilton
Ron & Sharon Hancock
Ruth Henderson
Amanda Henderson
David Henry
Alysha Henry
Emily Henry
Katherine Herington
Karen Hesser-Robinson

Sarah Hodgkiss
Glen Hodgson
Paul & Valerie Holt
David A. & Bonnie Homer
Mitchell Horn
W. Joseph Horne
Jordan Howard
Kyra Howes
Jordan Hultslander
Jean Humphries
Kathy Hunt
Katrina Hunt
Bo, Jennica, Juna, Sye & Nari Hwang
Edina Illyes
Morris Ilyniak
Jean Iron
Brendan & Lori Irwin
Mourad Jabra
Patrick Jackson
Jeramie Jenkins
Samantha John
Richard Johnston
Tricia Jones
Mary Juneau
Ian Kay
Karen Kennedy & Ravi Aggarwal
Heather Kerslake
Keira Knicely
Karen Koornneef
Glenn Kozak
Maryanne LaBrash
Jamie Laidlaw
Richard Lake
Cassy & Ryan Lamoureux
Ellen Larsen
Dale Leadbeater
Astrid & Gabrielle Leicht
Julia Litvinenko

Si & Wendy Lowry
Hannah Lye
Karen Lyn
Janet Machan
Pam MacLachlan
Carmen Madill
Cooper Madill & Karlee Riendeau
Ada Malmstrom
Kurtis Marleau
Jeff & Jane Marshall
Christine Mason
John Mayo
Rowan & Shawn McClinchey
Bill McIntyre
Kristi McKechnie & Don Scott
Tavish McLean
Lucas McLennan & Amanda Porter
Lois McSorley
Sara Meyer
Omer & Mary Mick
Claire & Josh Milligan
Judy Mitchell-Wilson & Tom Wilson
Amina Mohamed
Rhiannon Monague
Ginny Moore
Shirley Moorman
Kevin Moran
Joshua Morgan
Melissa Morrison
Chase Moser
Mary Ellen Mulligan
Mareesa Mungal
Barb Murkar
Brian Murrant
Lisa & Jim Neville
Mike Norton
Jaimee Ogilvie
Jodi Oscroft

Roz Owen
Kendra Patton
Cassie Pellerin
Kyra Pennant
Joni Pethick
Heather Philip
Margaret Pomeroy
Lindsay Porter
Valerie & Jamie Powell
Joy Poyntz
Bryn & Leslie Pressnail
Patie Ramnarine
Mary Reed
Pam Reekie
Roland Rehorn & Joan Vincent
Karlee Riendeau
Tricia Robins
Paul Robinson
Jim Robinson
Nathalie Rockhill
Chris Ronan
Barbara Rosebrugh
Anne & Jamie Ross
Alexia Roszczyk
Nicole Rulff
Aaron Rusak
Barbara Ryckman
Karl Schulz
Sam Sergeant
Kevin Shackleton
Victoria Shelep
Bill & Vicki Sherwood
Catherine, Connor & Mariangela Sherwood
Jim Shunn
Debbie Silverthorne
Rick Simpson
Carol Sinclair
Georgia Sisson
Jane Sloley
Alan Smale

From February to June we hosted a high school co-op student, Keiran. He helped with various office tasks such as database entry, filing, maintenance assistance, garbage cleanup along the trails, Grant's Greeters, a video project, and more! His co-op with us also contributed to his Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) in the Environment sector. We are grateful for all of Keiran's help and wish him the best in his future endeavours!



Judy Smith
Jane Smith
Willem Span
Laurie Stanford
Robert Stavinga
Barbara Sternberg
Mark Stevenson
James K. Stewart
Chris & James Stewart
Lauren Storey
Noella Storry
Grant & Tim Stott
Glenn Stronks
Bob Sullivan
Dagmar Teubner
Isabelle Thiess
Pamela Thistle
Rebecca Thivierge
Sol Thompson
Courtney Thompson
Allan Thompson
Ken Thomson
Adam Thomson
Jade Tibbett

Gloria Tozek
Adeline, Woodsley, Graham & Kim Trudeau
Don Trumble
Melanie & Allan Tuck
Josiah Vandenberg
Charon & Doug Varty
Terri Vellinga
John Walinck
Erin Wall
Kimberly Wand
Andrea Ward
Audrey Warren
David Warren
John Watson
Jesse Waugh
Kathleen Wiles
Jonathan Wilkinson
John Wright
Kaye Zoller

Pictured pages 15 - 16: This summer, we put on a Picnic in the Park volunteer appreciation event. We had perfect weather, wonderful live music performed by our volunteers Lisa and Gary, delicious food, raffle prizes, and smiles all around! We were also able to give some well-deserved recognition to Ontario Trillium Foundation for their grant that has meant so much to us over the past three years. The dedication of our volunteers is the driving force behind our conservation efforts, and we couldn't be more thankful for each and every one of you. Toby, Stella, Quin and Carsten at the Frantzke-Williamson Easement checking the snake boards. Our 2023 Board of Directors.



Supporters



Heartfelt thanks to our dedicated supporters whose generous donations have played a pivotal role in advancing our mission.

Heartwood Fund, our legacy giving program:

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Eight anonymous pledges and contributions.

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To oppose biodiversity loss, protect species at risk and build climate resiliency, I choose to donate monthly and volunteer my time to The Couchiching Conservancy so that land can be acquired and their habitats protected with corridors established for flora

and fauna movement. I have also pledged to leave a legacy gift to the Heartwood Endowment Fund to ensure these vital nature reserves and habitats continue to help address our environmental troubles long after I am gone. This "forever" fund will provide income into the future so that The Couchiching Conservancy can continue its stewardship work and nature can be protected, and the knowledge of this is a great comfort to me.

Lisa Neville is a long-time supporter with gifts towards the Heartwood Fund & Corridors Campaign. Lisa is also on the Board of Directors.

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 Diane Francoz

I have always been passionate about nature and the environment. The earth is a gift and we need to protect it. I feel so fortunate to live in Canada and here in Simcoe County. We have so many beautiful places to explore and the Conservancy plays a big part in protecting many of them. I have been a donor for years and now volunteer as well. I am looking forward to volunteering more after I retire later this year.



Leah Burgan is a volunteer, monthly supporter and member.



Pictured on pages 17-18: Anne Barbour (far left) and Dale Leadbeater (far right) provide a cheque on behalf of the Kawartha Field Naturalists' Club to Dorthea Hangaard and Kathy Hunt. Leader's Circle supporters visit what is now the Deverell-Morton Nature Reserve.



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*Pictured on pages 19-20: Mustard White at Adams NR. Bird's
eye view of the water connected to Mitchell Bruce NR and
Alexander Hope Smith NR. Monarch Monitors at Sweetwater
Farm Nature Reserve. And hey look, a Monarch butterfly!*

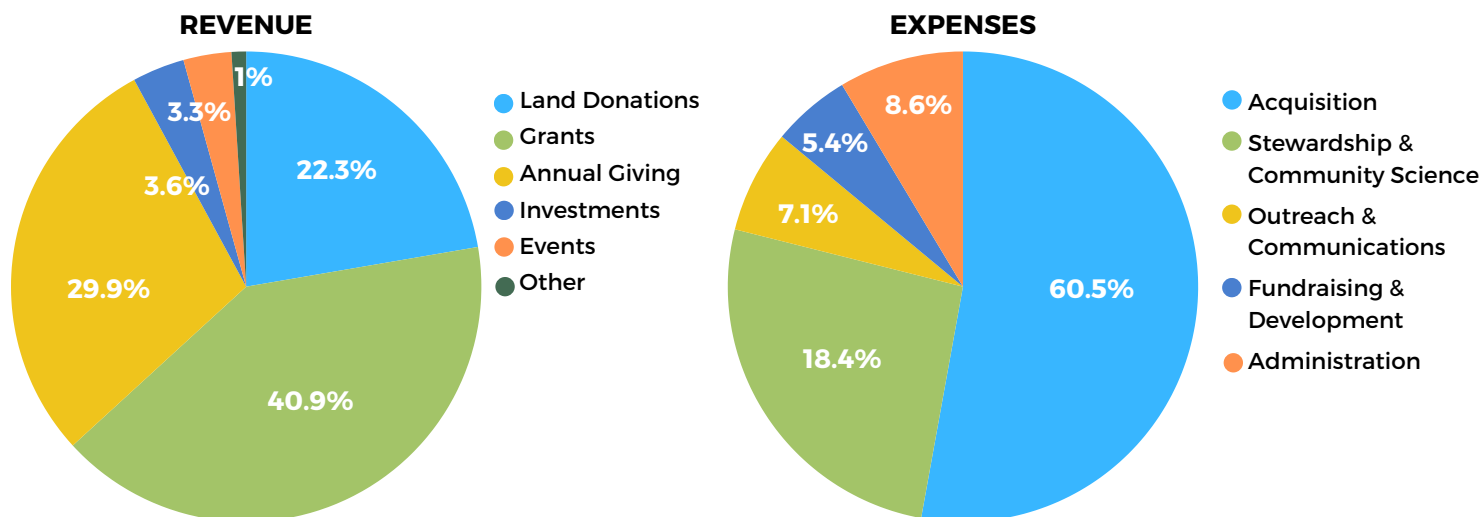


Financial Report

The financial results for 2023 were a significant improvement over the prior year. The doubling of revenue is primarily due to the support of our donors and grant partners, allowing for the acquisition of properties and easements. The recovery of our investments from the prior year assisted with the revenue growth and investments continue to play a critical role in the stability of our organization.

Despite upward pressure on salaries & expenses due to inflation, we kept overall expenditures under budget for the year. We were able to add \$52,000 to the Heartwood endowment fund and \$92,000 to the Stewardship endowment fund.

Note that we have revised the Annual Report presentation of Revenue and Expenditures this year for greater transparency and ease of understanding. For a full comparison of 2022 and 2023 please see the Audited Financial Statements by Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation for the year ending October 31, 2023 on our website.



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Assests	2023	2022
Current		
Cash and bank	\$162,771	\$231,581
Short-term investments	1,301,556	1,207,863
Accounts receivable	34,194	9,088
Government grants receivable	91,552	9,201
Accrued interest receivable	7,554	1,335
Prepaid expenses	12,348	9,218
	1,609,975	1,468,286
Endowment assests	906,851	714,476
Capital assests	6,254,849	5,492,183
	8,771,675	7,674,945
Liabilities and Net Assests		
Current		
Accounts payable	\$31,961	\$40,644
Deferred contributions	623,495	392,496
	655,456	433,140
Net Assests		
Unrestricted	\$63,421	\$64,818
Invested in capital assets	6,254,849	5,492,183
Internally restricted - acquisition	232,133	232,133
President's reserve	163,942	163,942
Internally restricted - other	1,066,669	1,045,524
Externally restricted - other	335,205	243,205
	8,116,219	7,241,805
	8,771,675	7,674,945

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Revenue	2023	2022
Land Donations	\$378,000	\$100,000
Grants	692,769	278,126
Annual Giving	490,348	449,832
Investments	61,413	(73,394)
Events	55,658	58,516
Other	17,297	16,755
Total Revenue	\$1,695,485	\$829,835
Expenses		
Acquisitions	\$841,426	\$175,319
Stewardship & Community Science	414,788	355,769
Outreach & Communications	112,956	117,923
Fundraising & Development	85,929	80,940
Administration	136,977	139,887
Total Expenses	\$1,592,076	\$869,838

Pictured on page 22: American Bullfrog at Mitchell Bruce Nature Reserve. Golden Eagle soars over the Silk-Ironside Easement. Adams Nature Reserve.

What's Ahead in 2024



NEW NATURE RESERVES



WHITNEY WETLAND ECO PASSAGE

Working with municipalities to reduce road mortality.



INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS

Continuing to build relationships with Williams' Treaty First Nations rights holders.



TRAVERSING THE MINESING TO MATCHEDASH CORRIDOR



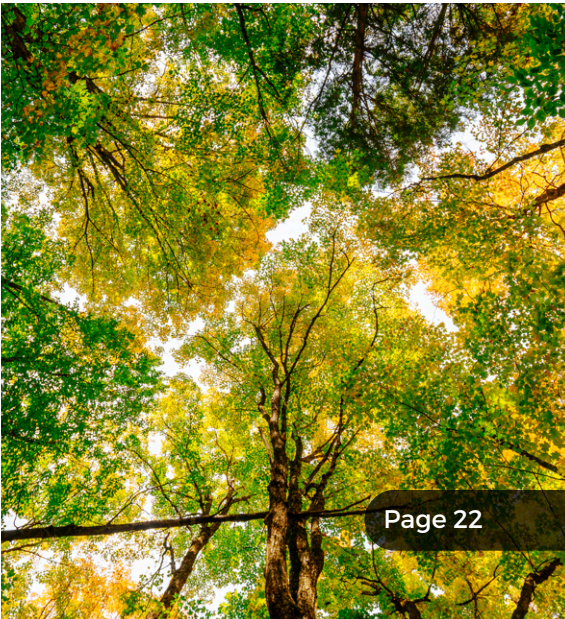
COMMUNITY SCIENCE

Refining some programs to include bioblitzes in order to find unique species.



ECOSYSTEM SERVICES STUDY

Partnering with University of Waterloo to calculate the value of the ecosystem services provided by our nature reserves.





Contact Us

Mailing address: Box 704, Orillia, ON L3V 6K7
Office address: 1485 Division Road West, Orillia, ON L3V 0X6
Phone: 705-326-1620 | **Website:** couchichingconserv.ca
Charitable registration number: 13972 5030 RR0001



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Photography by staff, contactors, supporters and volunteers.

Pictured on front: Meghan at Taylor Nature Reserve (NR). Hummingbird Moth. Gordon Ball, Valerie & Jamie Powell and Jane Ball take the accessible trail at Grant's Woods NR for a test run. Bird's eye view of Alexander Hope Smith NR. New patch! Blue Flag Iris at Deverell-Morton NR.

Pictured on the back: Fox and chipmunk (M. Fells). Frog monitoring volunteers in Carden. Snapping Turtle at Roehl Wetland NR. Passport to Nature participants at Turnbull Ranch NR. Kelsey was the winner of our 30th anniversary art contest - her design is available for purchase on our website. Views of Adams NR.

