GEORGIAN BAY LAND TRUST
gblt.org

SUMMER 2023

LANDSCRIPT

PROTECTING **GEORGIAN BAY'S** WILDERNESS LANDS

Lichens of Georgian Bay

New conservation properties

Ticks and how to ID them

Prairie Warbler & Whip-poor-will research

Photo: John Franklin

Property Spotlight:

Three New Easements

The Georgian Bay community has continued to embrace Conservation Easements as a fantastic way to conserve land forever while retaining personal ownership. We're so grateful to the donors of the three easements below, who have created their legacies for nature this year.

Katerjan Island

64 acres • Sans Souci • Donated anonymously

We're thrilled to secure the conservation of beautiful Katerjan Island. This spectacular property is one of the few remaining large, undeveloped islands in southeastern Georgian Bay, and to preserve it in its entirety is significant.

Katerjan contains a mix of forests, rock barrens, and coastal wetlands, and is big enough to support habitat for many species, including larger animals like white-tailed deer. It is home to at least two documented species at risk, and almost certainly more. While a number of species can survive amidst a certain amount of cottage development, there are animals and life stages that require habitat away from human disturbance. Protecting large, undeveloped places like Katerjan is so important for the survival of these species, and for the biodiversity of our communities as a whole.

Cognashene Reserve

5 acres • Cognashene • Donated anonymously

The Cognashene Reserve is a small but impressive property in central Cognashene. Its extensive open rock barrens with scattered Common Juniper, countless table rocks, boulders, crevices, and small caves are ideal habitats for several reptiles-at-risk, as well as for breeding Prairie Warblers and foraging Eastern Whip-poor-wills. Its 700 feet of shoreline are a mix of sand, cobble, bedrock, and a coastal meadow marsh, which provide ideal habitat for turtles and frogs. The property also contains a Virginia Chain Fern Bog, which is uncommon in Ontario and may contain orchids such as the White-fringed orchid. There are likely snake hibernacula and gestation-sites on the property, and numerous safe places for snakes to hunt, bask, and shed their skins.

Easement

6.5 acres • Sans Souci • Donated anonymously

This easement protects forever part of an ecologically important, developable island in Sans Souci. It contains a mix of treed rock barren and a small swamp, which are home to a surprising amount of animal life. The island is part of a group of islands that are known to support a high concentration of at-risk species as well as colonial waterbird nesting, and which are ranked as a high priority for conservation. This island is a documented home for several species at risk, which would suffer greatly were the property to be developed. In addition to the species that live on the island, this property serves as a migratory stopover site for the endangered Monarch butterfly and a number of bird species.

Grenville Volunteer Award winner: Jane-Anne Campbell

Jane-Anne Campbell (second from left) and her daughters (from left) Clara, Holly, and Mary

We are honoured to present this year's Grenville Volunteer Award to the very deserving Jane-Anne Campbell. For many years, Jane-Anne has been one of the Land Trust's most consistently passionate and dedicated volunteers. Her strong belief in the importance of caring for our environment is evident in everything that she does. Jane-Anne has been an exemplary Lead Steward of Umbrella Island, working diligently for many years to make sure this remarkable property is well monitored and looked after. She is often one of the first stewards to visit her property in the spring and one of the last in the fall, and her property reports are full of detailed observations about the wildlife she has taken the time to notice while visiting. Jane-Anne has also been a dependable help with all sorts of other Land Trust matters in the Sans Souci area, from event organization to fundraising to research assistance. We know we can rely on her to get things done and to care deeply about her work. Here's why she volunteers in her own words:

How did you first get involved with the Georgian Bay Land Trust?
My husband Glen and I purchased a cottage in 1997, after coming to the bay since about 1995. In '97 we became aware of quite a big property that had come up for sale, and decided to buy it partly for conservation purposes. We were looking into conservation options, and found the Georgian Bay Land Trust. I then got involved in the campaign to raise money for Umbrella Island when it came up for sale, and have been involved consistently ever since. It was Sandy Phillips who suggested to me that I become Lead Steward of Umbrella Island when he was ready to wind down.

What's your favourite thing about Georgian Bay?
You can walk in places in Georgian Bay that very few people go to. It has all of this pristine land. I get in the car and leave Toronto and within 3.5-4 hours I'm here, walking a trail. The beauty of it is incredible, and the number of threatened species – it's very special, and unique in the world.

Do you have a favourite Georgian Bay plant or animal?
Yes – the Massasauga Rattlesnake. They are so misunderstood, and such a docile species. I still get so excited when I see one. I have had some close interactions with them because of all the traipsing around the woods that I do. My foot has been within inches of them, but they won't hurt you unless you literally step on them. They're very beautiful animals.

Why do you think conservation is important?
Conservation is so important because all of the threatened species need a place to live and thrive. There's nothing we can do for them if we don't save their habitat. I think conservation is the most significant thing we can do for maintaining the diversity of species that we have in the world, and so important for climate change too.

What responsibility do you think we as Georgian Bayers have to our environment?
I think that we all need to try really hard to preserve the habitat at our own homes and cottages. There are so many things that I have discovered are important for wildlife – for example, junipers being necessary for nesting Prairie Warblers, or turtles needing natural shorelines. There's this temptation to come up and "do things" at our cottages – I have it too – like gardening, clearing out juniper, bringing in sand, building things. But we're in an area that is so important from a biodiversity perspective, and the beauty of Georgian Bay is its natural landscape. That's what we need to try so hard to preserve.

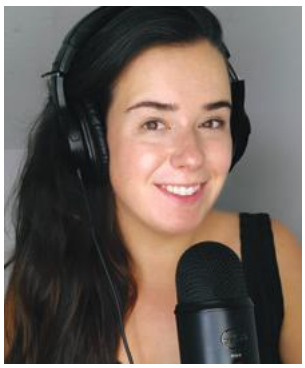
Why do you volunteer for the Land Trust?
As a busy parent, I've tried to focus my time on something that I feel will really make a difference, and I feel that the conservation of land has got to be one of the most important things we can do for the environment. Land Trust properties need stewardship, I can contribute on my own time, and I can choose how much to put into the role. I've done lots of fun things like learning how to document all the species – there's a lot that you can do. It's also something that my whole family has been able to be involved in. My daughters come along with me on stewardship visits, or even sometimes go out without me. They've learned a lot.

Do you have a favourite memory from your time as a steward?
My daughter Mary and I were at Umbrella Island, and we saw a pair of Red-breasted Mergansers. We had never seen them before, and we had such a lovely moment watching this pair of birds. We've had so many moments like that with wildlife over the years.

Thank you Jane-Anne for all your work – we're so lucky to have you on the team!

King Family Bursary Winner: Katy McNabb

Congratulations to this year's King Family Bursary winner, Katy McNabb. Katy will be using the bursary funding to produce the second season of her environmental cottaging podcast, *Rewind Design*.



Katy McNabb is a cottage interior designer, and sustainable design advocate, born and raised in the heart of the Thirty Thousand Islands, Parry Sound. Katy earned a degree in interior design at Ryerson University, having studied and worked in New Zealand as a part of her university education. She later worked in the French Alps, but was called home to Georgian Bay in spring of 2020 when presented with the opportunity to begin her career as a cottage designer. In an effort to reconnect with her hometown, she began to research the rich history of the area. She quickly realised the impact that cottages and cottaging have on our shoreline and ecosystems. She began to understand her impact as a designer, and what she could do to protect Georgian Bay through designing sustainable buildings. Her project, Rewind Design, emerged from her passion for history, cottage design, and sustainability. While season 1 focuses on intimate stories of cottage history, season 2 will focus on sustainable design along the shores of Georgian Bay, with an emphasis on protecting the shoreline via green energy, green building methods and the maintenance and preservation of natural landscapes.

With support from the Georgian Bay Land Trust, Katy will be interviewing a variety of guests for her podcast, including builders, contractors, architects and landscapers, to discuss best practices when building sustainably on Georgian Bay. The purpose of season 2 is to educate Georgian Bay cottagers and locals on the benefits of sustainable design, presented through her podcast and blog in an accessible and easily understood conversational format. Visit her website at rewinddesign.ca to listen to the podcast.

"I am extremely honoured to receive the King Family Bursary in support of my project Rewind Design, Season 2. I am a huge advocate for sustainable design and architecture on Georgian Bay's shorelines. Development on Georgian Bay is inevitable, however it is my goal to help current and future generations become more educated on sustainable ways of building and designing to protect our treasured Georgian Bay shores and ecosystems for generations to come." – Katy McNabb

STAY WILD with new summer clothing!

Wear your love of Georgian Bay and support the Land Trust with our new summer merchandise. **STAY WILD** designs are available on white and navy sweatshirts, short- and long-sleeved Ts, and baseball caps. Georgian Bay map designs are available on towels and totes.

Details at **gblt.org/merchandise**.

Summer research projects:
Prairie Warblers and Whip-poor-wills

Summer Research Students Stef and Bradley conducting a nocturnal Whip-poor-will survey

This summer marks an exciting beginning for the Land Trust, as we embark on two new research projects aimed at better understanding two quintessential Georgian Bay birds: Prairie Warblers and Eastern Whip-poor-wills. Spearheaded by our Protected Areas Manager Aaron Rusak and conducted through the work of our Summer Research Students and Conservation Interns, this is the first time the Land Trust has taken the lead on designing and carrying out our own scientific studies, intended to answer questions specific to conservation on Georgian Bay.

Prairie Warbler Territory Size Assessment

Prairie Warblers are one of the most fascinating Georgian Bay birds. Although common in the southern United States, they are extremely rare in Canada, and the eastern Georgian Bay coast is one of the few places that they are reliably and regularly found. It's estimated that we have about 400 breeding pairs along the coast. How does this population differ from the much larger one in the United States? What is it about Georgian Bay that they like, and how can we make sure they continue to have the habitat that they need?

We're hoping to answer some of these questions by tagging and tracking 30 Prairie Warblers this summer and fall. Using Motus wildlife tracking technology, we are able to attach tiny tags to birds, which emit signals that can be picked up by handheld tracking devices or stationary Motus towers. We are using both "short burst" tags, which emit signals every 7 seconds but have a limited battery life, and "long burst" tags, which signal every 30 seconds and can last for several months.

We'll use our 15 short burst tags to track Prairie Warblers as they move around their breeding territories in late June and early July. Our Conservation Interns will monitor the birds with handheld tracking devices, gathering data points that will show us how they move throughout the day, and ultimately allow us to build a map of the overall territory that each bird occupies. We hope to be able to see which specific habitat types and combinations the birds are relying on.

After July, we'll begin to follow the 15 birds that received long burst tags as they begin their southbound fall migration. Their movements will be picked up by the global network of Motus towers. We hope to gain an understanding of where these birds are going in the winter, which at this point we really don't know, and whether or not they integrate with other Prairie Warbler populations from the United States.

This project was supported by the James L. Baillie Memorial Fund of Birds Canada with funds raised through the annual Great Canadian Birdathon, and by the Bill and Betty Wasserfall Memorial Award of the Ontario Bird Banding Association. Both of this summer's research projects are also supported by the donors to our Big Day fundraiser (see page 12), including matching funds from the Weston Family Foundation, Jackman Foundation, and an anonymous donor. Thank you all!

Eastern Whip-poor-will Habitat Assessment

Alongside the Common Loon, the Eastern Whip-poor-will is one of the most evocative nighttime singers in cottage country, and a classic part of the Georgian Bay soundscape. Unfortunately, it is a threatened bird, and anecdotal reports indicate that it is doing well in parts of Georgian Bay while becoming less common in others.

We're looking to find out what specific habitats Whip-poor-wills rely on for nesting on Georgian Bay, which will help us to understand which places need to be protected for their survival. We've just begun year one of a three-year study, which is currently focused on presence/absence and nesting surveys. Our Summer Research Students have been busy this spring conducting nocturnal canoe surveys around Go Home Bay, recording the places where they hear Whip-poor-will song. In July, they will transition to daytime nesting surveys, attempting to locate some of the nests, and conduct detailed vegetation surveys and ecological land classification around the sites. This will give us better insight into any specific nesting requirements or preferences that Whip-poor-wills in this area may have. In years two and three of the study we will be attaching Motus tags to some of the individual birds, to help find their nests and track some of their migratory movements.

With both of these studies, our goal is to ultimately produce data that can inform future assessments and decision-making with regard to species at risk. Both the Eastern Whip-poor-will and Prairie Warbler are birds worthy of our attention and protection, and we hope to do our part so that we can enjoy their songs on Georgian Bay for generations to come.

Georgian Bay **QUERY:**

What are the most common lichens we see on Georgian Bay?

Answered by John Franklin, lichen photographer

photo credit: All photos by John Franklin

The 30,000 Islands of the Georgian Bay Biosphere is a remarkable habitat. Tucked among the many rare and beautiful plants and native animals that call the islands of Georgian Bay home are an amazing group of organisms called lichens. They are everywhere you look. They grow on the rocks, on the trees, and on the ground. They grow in mosses, on dead wood, and even on other lichens. They grow on almost every natural surface found and even grow on man-made surfaces like mortar, cement, roof shingles, and old wood. Many lichens are so small you can only see them well with a magnifying glass. Others are large and quite noticeable and can be found in an amazing variety of shapes and colors.

The open rocks in Georgian Bay have been exposed since the Wisconsin Glacier retreated over 12,000 years ago and the saxicolous or rock lichens here have had a long time to grow. As a result, some rocks are completely carpeted with a wide variety of lichens. The photo above shows many lichen species all nestled together, completely covering the rock.

Because of the remote access here, much of the pristine forests on many islands have also been spared the massive logging seen nearby on the mainland over the last few hundred years and parts of the area remain in old growth or even first growth. As a result, the lichen diversity is simply astounding, and the total number of individual lichen species present here is well into the hundreds.

So, what are lichens and what do they do? Lichens are really an astonishing group of organisms. Neither plant nor animal, they are a unique combination created by a symbiotic relationship between two separate Kingdoms, a fungus, and an alga and/or a cyanobacteria. Sometimes all three are involved. Together they form a whole that is definitely greater than the sum of its parts. The sturdy fungus provides protection and shelter for the fragile alga and cyanobacteria partners allowing them to survive out in the open in harsh environments. In return for "supplied housing," the resourceful alga and cyanobacteria, using only available sunlight, water, and air, use photosynthesis to create food

CRUSTOSE

FOLIOSE

FRUTICOSE

to support itself as well as the host fungus. In addition to the ability to photosynthesize and create food, cyanobacteria also have the unique ability to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere. Nitrogen compounds are critical for all plant and animal growth, and the lichen contribution to the total nitrogen content in the soil is extensive. All plants benefit from their conversion of gaseous nitrogen into usable nitrogen compounds.

Lichens are also succession pioneers, the first organisms to create soil. They grow on rock surfaces where no other organism can survive. Over time, they slowly break down the rocks and release minerals into the soil. As they create soil, other organisms like mosses and plants will start to follow in the cracks.

Lichens come in many forms and grow in many places. Those that look like old, dried paint are termed *crustose*. Those that form leaf-like shapes are termed *foliose*, and those that form vertical, bushy, or miniature tree-like shapes are termed *fruticose*. Lichens that grow on rock surfaces are termed *saxicolous*. Those that grow on trees are termed *corticolous*, and those that grow on the ground are termed *terricolous*.

Lichens do not produce seeds for reproduction like plants. They form new lichens most effectively by dispersing small pieces of themselves called *soredia* and *isidia* that contain both the fungus and the algae and/or cyanobacteria. These pieces blow or roll to another location and have everything they need to form a new lichen.

Although many lichens are quite hard to see, here are a few of the more common "macro lichens", or those that are large enough to see with the naked eye and the easiest to identify in the field.

These are but a few of the 200 or more lichen species found in this area. On your next trip to Georgian Bay, take notice of the variety and complexity of these simple organisms, they are bright and colorful and very photogenic. The best time to view lichens is shortly after a rain when the lichens have swelled up and stored water to begin photosynthesis when the sun comes out.

GEORGIAN BAY "MACRO LICHENS"

***Hypogymnia physodes* - Powdered Tube Lichen** is a very common lichen found here on conifer trees, both pines and cedars. It gets its common name from the white powdery *soredia* found underneath the turned-up tube-like lobe tips.

***Flavoparmelia caperata* - Common Green Shield Lichen** gets its common name because it is the most common lichen in the northeast. It is found on trees of all kinds, on rocks, and on mosses. It is usually very wrinkled, with noticeable white granular *soredia* along the lobe folds.

***Cladonia pleurota* - Red Fruited Pixie-cup Lichen** is often confused with red capped *Cladonia cristatella*, British Soldiers, but British Soldiers never creates cup shapes.

***Rusavski elegans* - Elegant Sunburst Lichen** is one of the most noticeable and colorful lichens, commonly found on west-facing open rocks near shore that are frequented by seagulls and seagull droppings.

***Vulpicida pinastri* - Powdered Sunshine Lichen** is a very noticeable lichen usually found on tree branches and bases close to the ground. It has light-yellow wavy lobes with a bright-yellow powdery soredia along the edge.

***Evernia mesomorpha* - Boreal Oakmoss Lichen** has very irregular branching.

***Cladonia rangiferina* - Gray Reindeer Lichen** is common, can cover large areas of ground, and is a staple food for reindeer and other mammals. Notice the branch tips all bend in one direction like they were blown in the wind.

***Punctelia rudecta* - Rough Speckled Shield Lichen** is probably the second most common lichen found here. When wet it has a noticeable blue tint. It is often covered in the middle with piles of grainy *isidia* lending to its common name. It is found on both conifers, hardwoods, and also on rocks.

Species Spotlight:

Ticks

Unfortunately, one creature that is becoming increasingly important to be familiar with in Georgian Bay these days is the tick. You might already have had to pull one off yourself or a pet, and you may be worried about the diseases they are known to carry. What are ticks, how are we likely to encounter them, and how can you keep yourself safe?

There are hundreds of species of ticks worldwide, but the two most important to us in the Georgian Bay area are the Blacklegged Tick (also called the Deer Tick) and the American Dog Tick. The Blacklegged/Deer Tick is the tick that can carry Lyme Disease. The American Dog Tick does not carry Lyme, and although it can carry Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, fortunately this is rare. We are currently experiencing an increase in the number of Blacklegged Ticks (and ticks in general) in our area due to climate change, so encounters with them are likely to become more frequent. There is another tick called the Lone Star Tick that is moving northwards from the United States, and may become something to watch for in our area.

Ticks are arachnids, meaning they are related to mites and spiders and have eight legs (except at the larval stage, when they have six). Their physical appearance looks quite different from a spider, and is characterized by a large, flat, teardrop-shaped body, with small legs coming out the side. Each tick species looks different at its various stages of life, and depending on whether it's male or female (see the illustrations below). Ticks that have fed on a host for several days will also look different as their body begins to swell with blood. Unfed ticks will generally be 2-6mm long, while an engorged tick can balloon to 1cm.

Ticks feed by taking "blood meals" from hosts (human or animal), and this is why we are likely to encounter them on our bodies. Ticks cannot fly or jump, and instead crawl onto us when we pass through grass or other vegetation, which they wait on in a process called "questing". Once they are on a body, ticks can crawl around for a while before latching on to feed, and tend to move upwards or into crevices. This is why they are often found on the scalp, around ears, under knees, etc. It's a good idea to get into the habit of checking your body all over for ticks when you come in from outside, including running your hands through your hair and checking in hard-to-see places.

Do ticks contribute anything to the ecosystem? They are eaten by a whole variety of animals, including birds, squirrels, frogs, and even spiders, but for most of these ticks are only an occasional part of their diet. The most prolific tick-eater is the Virginia Opossum, which is present in southern Ontario and whose range is also expanding northwards with climate change. It is also believed that ticks may help to control the population of other animals by spreading disease.

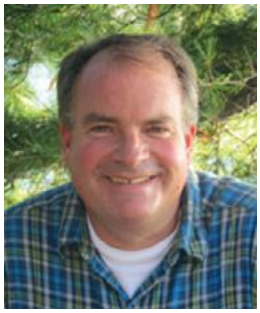
Ticks go through four life stages: egg, larva, nymph, and adult, and at each stage except egg, they take a single "blood meal" from a host. It is during these feedings that a tick can pick up and transmit the bacteria that cause illnesses. Ticks do not transmit illnesses themselves from parent to offspring, meaning that tick larvae are not born carrying Lyme or any other transmissible disease. They only become dangerous if they pick up the bacteria from feeding on an infected host. The good news is that if you get bitten by a tiny tick larva, this is likely its first meal and therefore it should not be carrying anything. The ticks we need to worry about more are the older ones, which are easier to see.

Feeding is a highly specialized process. Ticks fold back their outer mouthparts (called palps) to expose a long feeding tube called a hypostome, which is inserted into the host's body with the help of sharp blades called cheliserae. The hypostome is covered in tiny, backwards pointing barbs, which help it stay locked in place while feeding. All of this usually goes unnoticed by the host thanks to special components in the tick's saliva that suppress the body's immune response, allowing the tick to feed for several days undisturbed. Tick bites do not itch, sting, or ache. While feeding, some of the tick's saliva can enter the host's bloodstream, which is how disease-causing bacteria can be spread. Fortunately, ticks tend to take a while preparing their feeding site before they reach this stage. Although some diseases, like Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, can be transmitted more quickly, studies show that a tick must usually be attached for 24-36 hours before it begins to transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme. This is another good reason to conduct frequent tick checks, as finding a tick within the first 24 hours greatly reduces the chance of it harming you.

continued on page 11

Credit: tickencounter.org

Departing Board Chair: Ian Davis



These past two years have gone by quickly and smoothly under the leadership of Ian Davis, and it's hard to believe that it's already time to bid him farewell as our Board Chair.

Ian has been a very supportive chair, trusting the expertise of staff in day to day operations, and providing his own sound judgement when called upon. An excellent listener, he led board meetings with patience and respect, fostering an environment of democratic discussion where each director could meaningfully contribute.

As Chair, Ian has taken a keen interest in the Land Trust's conservation mapping and research work, which is making our conservation work more regionally relevant and science-based, and enabling us to contribute environmental knowledge and tools to the wider community. We're very grateful for the role Ian played in allowing these initiatives to flourish.

We are very happy to say that although Ian is stepping down as Chair, he will remain on the board, and intends to focus his efforts on progressing key land protection projects. We know that he will do as fantastic a job at this as he has as Chair, and feel very lucky that the Georgian Bay environment will continue to benefit from his dedication to community service. Thank you Ian, for all that you've done!

New Board Chair: Cathy Bongard

The Georgian Bay Land Trust is in excellent and very capable hands with our new Board Chair, Cathy Bongard.

Cathy is an experienced real estate agent and lifelong cottager in Pointe au Baril. She possesses strong leadership and management skills from her 30-year career in commercial real estate, and is well-practiced in working with stakeholders and delivering results. We've been very glad to have her on the Georgian Bay Land Trust board since 2020, and our Land Acquisition Committee for two years prior to that.

Cathy is a very positive person with a ton of energy. She rolls up her sleeves to do whatever is required, and has an excellent ability to assess a situation and make good decisions. As a board member, she has been a huge help on our Fundraising Committee, promoting fundraising events and developing new ideas. Her propensity to make connections and get involved in the community has made her an effective and well-respected advocate for the Land Trust's work.

We know that Cathy will make for a very hardworking and hands-on Chair, and we are so happy that she has decided to take on this important role. We're looking forward to some great years ahead!

SAVE THE DATE: Bayscapes is back!

Join us in Toronto on November 3 as we gather for our first in-person Bayscapes since covid! The event will look a little different than in the past, but what won't change is the opportunity to see all your Georgian Bay friends in the fall, while supporting the conservation of the place you love.

If you can't make it, you can still bid on all the wonderful art, experiences, and items online from October 26 - November 4.

More details to come at gblt.org/bayscapes.

Thank you Jen Kernaghan!

We are sad to say goodbye to Jen Kernaghan after 14 amazing years of service on our Board of Directors. Jen first joined the board in 2008, after volunteering on an initiative to help engage young people with the Land Trust. She served as both Communications Chair and Fundraising Chair before taking a few years off, and then rejoining the board in 2014. For the past ten years, Jen has served with dedication as Communications Chair.

Jen has been an absolutely fantastic board member. She is positive, helpful, encouraging, and full of great ideas. She is always ready to jump in with practical support, whether hosting meetings at her home, assisting with event setup, or recruiting her children to stuff envelopes. Jen led our communications team through several big changes, including refreshes to our newsletter, website, and general messaging, and provided reliable support and good advice during the many day to day communications questions and challenges that arose. Jen also served for several years as an extremely helpful chair of our Bayscapes art auction, providing much-appreciated support to staff. Last but not least, she has been very generous with her talents as a photographer, donating her beautiful work to Bayscapes and helping us capture Georgian Bay at its best for our digital and print communications.

Thank you so much Jen – we will miss you!

Welcome new board members

Lindsay Potts

We're thrilled to have Lindsay Potts joining the Land Trust board. Lindsay is a familiar face, having worked as one of our Summer Conservation Interns in 2014. She was a standout hire, and did an exemplary job both stewarding conservation properties and improving our community engagement. Since then, Lindsay has earned a Master of Science in Biology from McGill University, and now works as an Aquatic Science Biologist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Lindsay specializes in researching and conserving freshwater fish, and has been active in numerous volunteer roles advocating for clean water and Indigenous water rights. Lindsay is passionate about the nature around her family cottage in Wah Wah Taysee, and we know her scientific expertise will be an asset to the board.

Adam de Pencier

We are delighted to welcome Adam de Pencier to the board as our new Communications Chair. Adam's deep love of Georgian Bay comes from exploring the lands and waters around his cottage in Carling. Adam has a strong background in education and writing, and began his career as a teacher of English and Classics. For the past 20 years, he has served as the principal of several independent schools, where he successfully designed curricula, launched fundraising campaigns, and led a team of staff in providing top tier education. Adam is also a skilled writer, and has contributed to publications including the National Post and Lake Superior Magazine. We are looking forward to the knowledge and leadership that he will bring to our board.

Ticks from page 9

If you find a tick that has attached, you can use a tick key or pair of tweezers to carefully remove it from your body. A good way to kill ticks is to put them in a cup with rubbing alcohol. Do not squish a tick that is attached to you, as this could release more of any bacteria that it may be carrying.

For more information about Lyme Disease and tick safety, visit Ontario.ca/page/lyme-disease, or consult with your doctor or veterinarian (pets tend to be tick magnets). If you'd like help with identifying a tick you've found, or you would like to contribute to community science, you can report your tick sightings on the eTick app or website (etick.ca). This is a collaborative effort by researchers across Canada to help the public learn about ticks and collect information on where they're being found.

Ticks are an unpleasant but growing part of our reality on Georgian Bay, and a little preparation can help us continue to enjoy our time outdoors safely and happily. Good luck and get the tick keys ready!

Big Day 2023

By Sarah Koetsier, Communications Director, Georgian Bay Land Trust

6:00 am: Eleanor and Aaron scanning the marsh at our dawn stop

On May 19, Georgian Bay Land Trust staff Aaron Rusak and Eleanor Proctor led our second-annual Big Day fundraiser: an attempt to see and hear as many bird species as possible within 24 hours, all for a good cause. Aaron and Eleanor were attempting to break last year's record of 128 species and raise funds through pledges to support our bird research and conservation work. They achieved both, seeing 131 species and raising over $20,000. This year our Communications Director Sarah Koetsier was lucky enough to tag along on the trip, alongside Ariel Estulin who was documenting the adventure on film. Here's what the day was like for an amateur first-timer.

12:15 am: The day begins with the sound of Eleanor's alarm. In an attempt to stay in bed a little longer, I roll over and pull out my laptop, and am thrilled to see an inbox full of new pledges that have come in since we went to bed four hours ago. I quickly tally the list with a rush of gratitude to everyone who pledged - we've surpassed our fundraising target! Spirits buoyed, it's time to get out of bed and ready to go.

1:15 am: We're on the road. Packed into Eleanor's car with 24 hours of snacks, gear, lists, and warmth layers, excitement and anticipation is high. We'll be spending the first part of the day driving around the Bracebridge and Gravenhurst area, before transitioning to Georgian Bay in the afternoon.

1:40 am: First stop, at a roadside wetland. It's cold out here! Aaron and Eleanor are hearing all sorts of things in what sounds to me like near silence (except the peepers). They're good.

2:45 am: A mini-celebration at our second stop as we hear a rare Least Bittern. I'm grateful for the wool car blanket I brought along, which is now wrapped around me as we stand silently outside in near-freezing temperatures. Aaron and Eleanor don't seem to feel the cold.

3:00 am: Lots of strategizing going on in the car. Which locations are worth the travel time to visit, and which to leave out based on what we've already heard. Discussions of the different tactical ways teams can approach a Big Day. I think this would be a good sport for TV – it's surprisingly gripping.

3:45 am: I'm waiting for the road noise to pass so I can record the natural soundscape – then I realize that it's ever-present, even at this time of night.

5:00 am: Light is starting to appear in the sky, and our list is up to 22 species. We're getting ready to walk into our "dawn stop", a marsh where we anticipate hearing the highest concentration of birdsong of any point in the day.

5:30 am: The world has awoken. Birds are singing, chirping, and calling all over the place, and it feels like we've been part of some grand shift, witness to one of the most elemental

and unifying forces of nature. Mist rises from the wetland, a Pileated Woodpecker drums very close to the path, and Eleanor teaches me how to recognize the "bee buzz" of Golden-winged Warblers. We spend over an hour at this stop and hear 45 different bird species.

7:18 am: We're working our way through a series of short roadside stops around Muskoka, driving with windows down to get maximum listening time. Eleanor thinks she has just heard a Black-throated Green Warbler out her side of the car, and we double back to confirm. Some dozing is happening in the backseat.

8:45 am: The roads are filling up with cars and school buses, and I have to remind myself that in normal times, the day is just beginning. We've already been out birding for the length of an entire workday.

9:00 am: Milestone passed – our list has hit 100 species!

9:30 am: We get a tip-off from Aaron's mom Cindy that a rare Ruddy Duck has turned up at the Bracebridge Sewage Lagoons (a birding hotspot), and decide to change course and head there as soon as possible. After a bit of a hunt the duck is spotted, and we add a few other shorebirds to our list.

1:15 pm: We've made it to Georgian Bay! We start at the Port Severn Wetlands, where we meet up with one of our volunteer stewards, Aaron uses his scope to look for ducks, and we all sweat a bit under the sun. The temperature has changed dramatically since this morning.

3:00 pm: A highlight of the day for me: two beautiful Red-headed Woodpeckers in downtown Honey Harbour. I've never seen these endangered birds in person before, and it feels like a very special encounter.

3:30 pm: We're finally into the boat, and now it's a race against time to see the outer island birds before the oncoming rain. First stop is Aaron's cottage to listen for Prairie Warblers – a classic bird of the Georgian Bay coast – but the storm is coming and they're not singing. After our best attempts to find one, we have to move on.

5:00 pm: Rain has hit, but we haven't beaten the record yet. Aaron is in the bow of the boat in his rain gear, looking like an east coast fisherman. The rest of us are huddled under the roof. We're out by the Pine Islands, bobbing around trying to identify the many ducks and shorebirds through binoculars. It's a bit too rough to land.

5:21 pm: We've spotted a Spotted Sandpiper! Species #129 to break the record!

5:42 pm: And one more for good measure: species #130 is a pair of Long-tailed Ducks. Now, time to head in.

6:15 pm: Back unloading the boat in the shelter of Go Home Bay, we hear the beautiful song of a Hermit Thrush welcoming us home. Species #131, and a reminder that sometimes the loveliest things can happen right in your backyard.

7:30 pm: After a final walk around the island yielded nothing new, and with the rain still steady and record firmly broken, we decide it's time to head in. The Prairie Warbler will have to wait until next year. A quick dinner and early bedtime are calling.

It's been a remarkable, whirlwind day. 18 straight hours of birding – I can't quite imagine how people manage to stick it out for a full 24! I'm going to bed with my head full of the new bird songs I learned and the sound of rain on the roof. Overnight, I dream I hear a Prairie Warbler.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Big Day, including matching donors the Weston Family Foundation, Jackman Foundation, and an anonymous donor. We're so grateful for your support!

6:30 pm: Happy birders on our final walk of the day

5:15 pm: Hoping to break the record despite the rain

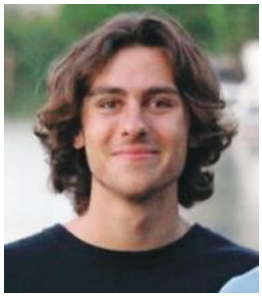
The whole crew the next morning

Welcome Summer Staff

We're thrilled to be expanding our summer hires this year, and welcoming two Research Students to the team as well as two Conservation Interns. Our Conservation Interns will be responsible for monitoring and stewardship jobs on Land Trust properties, delivering kids education programs, and assisting with our new Prairie Warbler research project (see page 5). Our Research Students will spend the majority of their summer conducting fieldwork for both the Whip-poor-will and Prairie Warbler projects. Welcome to the team!

Summer Research Students

Stefani Matis completed a double major in environmental science and biology at Trent University and has been pursuing a career in conservation biology ever since. She has always loved the outdoors and spends her time hiking and learning about the species she encounters, and as such is eager to move north and begin work with the Georgian Bay Land Trust. She is excited to participate in work that will directly influence preserving the integrity of the ecosystem and help guide conservation decision making in the future.



Bradley Squarek recently completed his degree in Biology and Environmental Science at McMaster University, and will return in the fall as a Masters of Biology student studying the endangered Blanding's turtle. Bradley spent many summers as a camper and staff member at Camp Queen Elizabeth on Beausoleil Island where he grew his passion for the Georgian Bay landscape, its species, ecosystems, and people. He is excited to expand his knowledge of local birds, plants, and animals, to make new connections in the community and to help the GBLT achieve its research goals.

Summer Conservation Interns

Joseph Gillan is currently studying Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph, majoring in Ecology. Joseph has grown up spending every summer at his cottage in Go Home Bay. Joseph is excited to get started as a conservation intern this summer. He is eager to learn more about the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems in the Georgian Bay region, as well as helping to protect and preserve them. Joseph also wants to help spread awareness to the community and younger generations about environmental issues, and how they can be prevented.

Evan Ward is currently studying Mechanical Engineering at Queen's University. Having spent every summer break at his cottage in Go Home Bay, Evan has developed a deep appreciation for Georgian Bay's biodiversity. He is thrilled to be returning to the Georgian Bay Land Trust, where he is eager to share his expertise and enthusiasm with the community. With an intimate knowledge of the local shoreline and reptile and amphibian species, Evan is excited to contribute to the organization's efforts to preserve and protect the environment for generations to come.

Bill McCoy, 1923-2023

The Georgian Bay Land Trust has lost one of our earliest supporters. Bill McCoy was a passionate cottager dedicated to preserving the beauty of Georgian Bay. He was one of the first founders and board members of the Georgian Bay Land Trust, and later founded the Great Lakes Basin Conservancy, a charity that encourages American cottagers to contribute to the conservation of Georgian Bay. Bill spent many years on the boards of these and other organizations, and generously contributed to a number of important conservation projects. On a personal level, his family were the previous owners of Little McCoy island, now one of the Land Trust's most beloved protected properties. We send our condolences to the entire McCoy family, and our gratitude to Bill for his many years of service to our beautiful Georgian Bay.

Georgian Bay Snapshot

"Osprey Perch"
by Michael Leckman

Michael captured this moment from a kayak, at the north end of Franklin Island, on June 17, 2023. Taken using a Nikon D850 and 200-500mm zoom at 1/4000s.

See more of his photography at michaelleckmanphotography.com.

TributeGIFTS

Received from January 1 – June 24 2023

In Memory

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SUMMER 2023

SUMMER EVENTS

PROTECTING **GEORGIAN BAY'S** WILDERNESS LANDS

***Nature Walk* – July 16, 10am–12pm,** MacCallum Reserve, Go Home Bay. Join us for a naturalist's tour of this beautiful island.

***Sandy Island BioBlitz* – July 21, 9am–12pm or 1pm–4pm,** Sandy Island, Sans Souci. Help us document all the amazing species that call this island home.

***Photography Workshop* – July 23, 2–4pm,** The Lizard, Cognashene. Focus in on Georgian Bay's small details with photographer Ariel Estulin, and learn how to unveil hidden textures, play with light, and frame intricate patterns.

***Nature Walk* – July 24, 10am–12pm,** Fairies Dancing, Pointe au Baril. Discover the diverse flora and fauna present on this island and throughout Pointe au Baril.

***Yoga on the Rocks* – July 26 & August 27, 10–11:15am,** American Camp Island, Wah Wah Taysee.
July 30 & August 17, 10–11:15am, The Lizard, Cognashene. Begin your day with invigorating yoga led by Angela Granziera. No experience required. $10 per participant.

*For more information about any of these events, and to register, please visit **gblt.org/events**.*

***Nature Paddle* – August 2, 10am–2pm,** Bayfield Inlet. Learn about coastal wetlands, aquatic plants, and fauna on this 5km guided paddle.

***Katerjan Island Celebration* – August 25, 11am–1pm,** Katerjan Island, Sans Souci. Join us to celebrate the protection of this spectacular island with a short tour and picnic lunch.

***Cocktails on the Lizard* – August 30, 3–5pm,** The Lizard, Cognashene. Bring your afternoon cocktails to the Lizard and enjoy this beautiful island with friends.

***Fall Bird Migration Walk* – September 16, 10am** – Roberts Island, Honey Harbour. Join us for a hike to check out some of the birds migrating through at this time of year.

SAVE THE DATE!

Walking for Wilderness

Sunday, September 17
North Shore Rugged Hiking Trail, Parry Sound

Bayscapes

Online auction: October 26 – November 4
In-person celebration! November 3,
Wychwood Barns, Toronto

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The Georgian Bay Land Trust acts to preserve the wilderness lands of eastern Georgian Bay and the North Channel through strategic conservation planning, land securement, stewardship, conservation research, and education.

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