



gbt.org

SUMMER 2022

# LANDSCRIPT

PROTECTING **GEORGIAN BAY'S** WILDERNESS LANDS

## *Frogs and Toads* of Georgian Bay



How protecting nature  
fights climate change



Species Spotlight:  
Flying Squirrels



21 hours  
of birding

Photo: Jen Kernaughan



## Three New Conservation Properties

We're delighted to introduce you to three new conservation properties that have recently joined the Georgian Bay Land Trust family.



### Ellie's Lookout

Ellie's Lookout is a beautiful 0.5 acre island in the Manitou community, near the mouth of Twelve Mile Bay. It is situated in an island chain that provides habitat for a number of at-risk species, including the Five-lined Skink, Northern Map Turtle, and Eastern Foxsnake. Bald Eagles and Monarch Butterflies have been documented visiting the island, and it is likely that other migratory species use this habitat as a nesting or stopover site. Protecting Ellie's Lookout in its natural state helps maintain the ecological integrity of the entire 75-island archipelago of which it is a part, allowing this area to continue to function as a corridor for species movement between other undeveloped islands.

Ellie's Lookout was donated to the Land Trust posthumously by Eleanor and Howard Edmunds. We are so grateful to the Edmunds and to their family for choosing to leave this legacy for Georgian Bay.



### Saunderson Islands Easement

The Saunderson Islands Easement consists of two coastal islands in the Wah Wah Taysee community, totalling 3.27 acres. The larger island has a healthy mixed forest habitat running the length of the island, while the smaller island is mostly rock with a few trees. These are classic Georgian Bay islands, and are home to many of the species that our coast is known for. Massasauga Rattlesnake, Eastern Foxsnake, Five-lined Skink, Monarch Butterfly, and Northern Map Turtle have all been documented on the property.

Although these islands are developable, landowners William and Meredith Saunderson would like them to remain in their natural state forever, and therefore decided to enter into a Conservation Easement Agreement with the Land Trust. Thank you William and Meredith for preserving Georgian Bay wilderness for future generations!



### Portage Preserve

The Portage Preserve protects 2.76 acres of forest, rock, and shoreline habitat on Cognashene's Portage Island. On our visits to the property so far, we have seen four species at risk:

Bald Eagle, Northern Map Turtle, Monarch Butterfly, and Eastern Foxsnake. It is likely that more will be observed on future visits. The northern part of the Portage Preserve shoreline is designated as Type 1 Fish Habitat (habitat fish rely on for food, reproduction, and/or cover), so protecting this property will contribute to the long-term abundance of Georgian Bay's fish populations.

Portage Island is home to a number of cottages, as well as a piece of federally protected land and the Georgian Bay Land Trust's Portage Island Reserve. Protecting the new Portage Preserve helps ensure that a balance is maintained between nature and development in this growing cottage area, and will strengthen the long-term health of the island's existing protected areas. Thank you to the anonymous land donors for this gift to the community!

## Do you own land that you would like to preserve in its natural state forever?

The Georgian Bay Land Trust works with landowners who wish to preserve the land they love and leave a legacy for the future. There are two main conservation options for your Georgian Bay property:

A **Conservation Easement Agreement** is a contract between you and the Georgian Bay Land Trust that allows you to designate some or all of your property to be protected as undeveloped wilderness. You maintain ownership and enjoyment of your land, and receive a tax receipt in return for the agreement.

A **land donation** involves transferring ownership to the Georgian Bay Land Trust. You receive a tax receipt for the value of the property, and your ecologically significant land is protected by our qualified staff and stewards without the burden of ownership or taxes.

Our staff and expert advisors are happy to work with you to tailor a program that meets your needs and fulfills our conservation goals to create a win-win outcome. If you are interested in learning more about conservation options for your property, please visit [gblt.org/landowner](http://gblt.org/landowner) or contact our Executive Director Bill Lougheed at (416) 440-1519 x101 or [bill.lougheed@gblt.org](mailto:bill.lougheed@gblt.org).

## Meet our new Protected Areas Manager: Aaron Rusak



Please join us in welcoming Aaron Rusak as our new Protected Areas Manager!

Aaron is taking on the extremely important jobs of managing the Land Trust's 67 protected properties, coordinating our volunteer stewards and conservation interns, assisting with new

land protection projects, and working with partners in conservation science.

Before joining the Georgian Bay Land Trust, Aaron worked for over four years as the Muskoka Conservancy's Land Stewardship Coordinator. He has also been a volunteer with Birds Canada for several years. An avid birder and naturalist,

Aaron spends much of his spare time outdoors or in wetlands, expanding his knowledge of different parts of Ontario. He is also a certified wetland evaluator and Ontario Master Naturalist and takes particular interest in birds, odonates (dragonflies and damselflies), and herpetofauna (amphibians and reptiles).

Aaron has been a cottager in Georgian Bay for his whole life, spending almost every summer in Go Home Bay. He grew up surrounded by loons, rattlesnakes, and the other flora and fauna that make up the natural world around the Bay. Because of this, he has a passion for the conservation of Georgian Bay and all the species that call it home.

Aaron is looking forward to meeting many of you on Georgian Bay this summer. If you would like to welcome Aaron or get in touch about conservation, he can be reached at [aaron.rusak@gblt.org](mailto:aaron.rusak@gblt.org).

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## Welcome Eleanor Proctor, Land Procurement Assistant



We're delighted to welcome Eleanor Proctor to the Georgian Bay Land Trust as our Land Procurement Assistant! Eleanor grew up in Go Home Bay as did her parents, aunts, uncle, and paternal grandmother. A childhood in canoes and rowboats—with binoculars,

field guides, and an insect net—fueled Eleanor's passion for the natural history of Georgian Bay. A Fish and Wildlife Technologist, with a Masters in Environmental Science, Eleanor has worked with Eastern Foxsnakes, Massasaugas, wetland and forest plants, aquatic invertebrates, pollinating insects, breeding birds, and Northern Saw-whet Owls. Hired as part of our Ontario Trillium Foundation grant to accelerate land protection, Eleanor is helping us survey properties, complete new conservation projects, interface with land donors, and more.



# ? Georgian Bay **QUERY:**

## *How does protecting nature on Georgian Bay help fight climate change?*

Answered by Bill Lougheed and Sarah Koetsier, Georgian Bay Land Trust



There are many important things we can do to combat climate change on Georgian Bay: use less fossil fuel in our transportation, reduce food waste, etc. But one of the most important things we can do is protect nature in our own backyard.

Eastern Georgian Bay's forests and wetlands remove about 265,750 tons of carbon from the atmosphere each year—equivalent to the annual emissions of 70,000 vehicles. How does this work? Plants take carbon dioxide from the air through photosynthesis, during which they break it down, release oxygen back into the air, and incorporate the carbon into their physical structure. In forests, this carbon is stored in trees and plants, as well as in the top 30 centimetres of soil.

Wetlands take carbon storage a step further. Wetlands such as bogs and fens can store carbon up to 3 metres below ground, where decaying, carbon-rich plant matter is slowly compacted into peat. Because this decomposition happens very slowly, and takes place deep in the anaerobic (oxygen-free) zone beneath the water line, very little carbon dioxide or methane is released back into the atmosphere. Instead, the carbon remains below the ground for millennia, until someone digs up the peat to burn, or drains the wetland for development or agriculture.

Wetlands are among our best systems for long term sustainable carbon sequestration on the planet. Peatlands can store 300 kilograms of carbon per square metre, which is 10-20 times more than is stored per square metre of tropical rainforest. Although these areas make up only three percent of the Earth's land, they store between 30 and 40 percent of our soil-based carbon, more than any other ecosystem on Earth. In total, there are approximately 600 gigatons (1 gigaton = 1 billion metric tons) of carbon stored in the planet's peatlands. This is 61 times the amount of carbon that humans released in 2021 through the burning of fossil fuels.

Preserving and restoring wetlands is one of the most important things we can do to tackle climate change (in addition to drastically reducing our consumption of fossil fuels, which is essential). Every intact wetland represents a significant store of carbon that has not been released into the atmosphere, and an opportunity to sequester more carbon that would otherwise warm our planet. We cannot afford to lose any more wetlands, and instead must work to regain some of what's been lost.

Over the past 200 years, 60-80 percent of the planet's wetlands have been drained, degraded or destroyed. In southern Ontario, 80 percent of wetlands and 70 percent





Photo: Sarah Koetsier

of forests have disappeared. The eastern Georgian Bay region is one bright spot in this sad story. In the area between the coast and Highway 400/69, from Port Severn in the south to the French River in the north, 80 percent of forest cover and 90 percent of wetlands remain intact. In this region, 271,000 acres of forest sequester 135,500 tons of carbon per year. 122,270 acres of inland wetlands sequester 130,250 tons annually. These habitats function as part of an interconnected landscape that thrives because of its relative lack of roads and intensive land use. They also do much more than carbon storage. Our inland wetlands are a vast network that function as the kidneys of our landscape, filtering and purifying our water before it reaches the bay, and protecting us from floods.

We are so lucky to reside in a place where nature retains a strong foothold, but we should not take it for granted, as increasing development and the potential for new roads threaten to impact our environment. The Georgian Bay Land Trust has submitted a proposal to Canada's Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund that would enable us to increase protections for our region's inland wetlands, and help to preserve them in their present condition or close to it. If successful, this funding will come in the form of matching funds, meaning that we will need community support which the government will then match.

Georgian Bay's forests and wetlands truly are not only a treasure for our community, but an asset to the long term health of our country and our world. We are committed to working alongside the Georgian Bay community to keep them that way.



Photo: Sarah Koetsier



Photo: Shawn Haokang-Wu



## Flying Squirrels (*Glaucomys volans* and *Glaucomys sabrinus*)

By Eleanor Proctor, Land Procurement Assistant, Georgian Bay Land Trust



Photo: Alexander Badyaev

Most of us are familiar with Red Squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) and Eastern Chipmunks (*Tamias striatus*), two members of the Squirrel family that share the forests of Georgian Bay. Both are active all day and aren't afraid to let you know what they think of you: they scold and huff and stamp their feet, while twitching their tails to let you know they see you and that you are too close to them, their nests, and their food.

The other small members of the Squirrel family that live in Georgian Bay, however, are rarely encountered—the flying squirrels. There are two species in our region: Southern Flying Squirrels (*Glaucomys volans*) are smaller and are found in deciduous forests, while Northern Flying Squirrels (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) prefer coniferous or mixed forests. They are both nocturnal, and quite frankly, adorable, with their soft grey-brown fur and huge, shiny, black eyes.

Unlike bats, flying squirrels are not capable of true flight—they are gliders. They have a large fur-covered membrane (a patagium) that stretches between their wrists and ankles on each side of their bodies, and a flattened tail. When they launch themselves from a tree trunk, their strong hind legs propel them into the air, they extend their arms and legs to form a parachute with their patagium, and they steer themselves around obstacles using their tail and subtle shifts of their feet. Flying squirrels can routinely glide over 50 metres and they have been described as “flying paper towels” by observers on the ground!

They only come out at night, or rarely, on very cloudy afternoons. During the day, they sleep in their dens, which are often in a former woodpecker nest in a dead or dying tree. Sometimes they build nests (called drays) of shredded

bark, twigs and leaves in the fork of a tree, but they only use their drays during the spring and summer. In winter, they are happy to share their dens with other flying squirrels, which keeps all of them warm on the coldest of days. Sometimes a squirrel will choose an attic or outbuilding for a nesting site and they will visit bird feeders during the night—two behaviors that alert us to their presence even though they can be as abundant in an area as their louder, day-active cousins, the Red Squirrels.

These squirrels rarely leave the trees—because of their gliding membranes, they are awkward on the ground and, unlike the other members of the Squirrel family, they cannot swim. They spend their nights leaping and gliding from tree to tree, searching for their favourite foods: fungi, lichens, tree buds, acorns, pine seeds, and pollen cones. They, like other squirrels, will also eat bird eggs and nestlings and, occasionally, carrion.

Unlike the territorial Red Squirrels and Chipmunks, “flyers” are not territorial and are quite social, sharing food sources and dens. Also unlike their cousins, they do not return to the same den every night, choosing to move around to several known refuges. As a result, standing dead trees with cavities are vital to their success, the lack of which can lead them to den in our cottages, boathouses, and sheds. Many other animals require dead trees with cavities, including owls, which are the main predators of flying squirrels, and cavity-nesting ducks like the Wood Duck and Common Merganser. A healthy forest always has standing dead trees, as they are a part of natural forest succession and should be left standing unless they threaten property or safety. With a diverse array of tree ages and stages, Georgian Bay's forests can house many animals, flying squirrels among them, which add to the biodiversity of our beautiful coast.



Photo: Tennessee Aquarium

## King Family Bursary Winner: Peter Adams

We are delighted to award this year's King Family Bursary to Peter Adams, who will document the flora and fauna of the Rose Island Nature Reserve through artwork.

Peter Adams is an award winning painter born in Scotland, raised in Toronto, and now living and working in Collingwood. He has a film degree from Queen's University, but now focuses all of his creative energy on his visual art practice. Peter has received numerous grants from the Ontario Arts Council and was a finalist in the Salt Spring National Art Prize in 2015. More recently, he was invited to participate in Brazil's Labverde Arts Immersion Program and was shortlisted for the 2017 Kingston Prize—Canada's national portrait competition.

Much of Peter's work has been centred around human and natural landscapes intersecting. In Brazil, he painted the remarkably grand and complex Amazon rainforest inside of handheld mint and cigar tins. He saw these pieces as tiny souvenir boxes which symbolized the human desire to always take something home from our travels, as well as echoing the desire of a scientist to contain a small specimen of a distinct ecosystem for further study. More recently, he has been making paintings within the uniquely beautiful packaging of Apple products, as a comment on the ubiquitousness of consumer packaging of all kinds, and an acknowledgement that the (essentially useless) packaging of many products is (strangely) part of the appeal of consuming the product itself.

He also sees these pieces as symbolizing humanity's changing relationship to the natural world, which more and more we are experiencing through miraculous pieces of technology.

Peter's bursary project will bring this work to the Georgian Bay Land Trust's Rose Island Nature Reserve. Peter will hike the trails of Rose Island, looking for artistic "specimens" that shed light on the unique flora, fauna, and geology there. After returning to the studio, he will create larger paintings that reflect the island ecosystem on a much grander scale. With the input of conservationists, ecologists, and geologists, he will then exhibit the specimen boxes and larger works with accompanying text exploring the significance of the depicted landscape.

*"I am thrilled to have received this year's King Family Bursary in support of my Rose Island Specimen Project. With its distinctive geology, old growth forest, and wetland area, I believe that Rose Island can teach us a great deal about the natural world, and our place in it. And it is the perfect landscape to further develop my 'Specimen' series. I think that these new works will create an interesting dialogue about how we value the land and how we relate to unaltered landscapes. I look forward to sharing this new body of work with the Georgian Bay Land Trust community!"*

– Peter Adams



*"Things We Take With Us" by Peter Adams*



# Frogs and Toads of Georgian Bay

By Aaron Rusak, Protected Areas Manager, Georgian Bay Land Trust

Now that the weather is warmer, the sounds of frogs and toads are being heard again throughout Georgian Bay. Georgian Bay is home to nine species of frogs and one species of toad, all of which can be easily identified by sight with some practice. During the breeding season, you may also hear them calling, as the nighttime temperature prompts them to begin singing. Different amphibians start calling at different temperatures and we can break those into three calling groups to make identification easier.

## The Early Spring Callers

Spring peepers, wood frogs, and western chorus frogs are the frogs that you'll most likely hear first, calling as soon as nighttime temperatures stay above five degrees. They are found mainly in wetland areas, but they'll also use vernal pools for breeding. Vernal pools are temporary pools of water that usually dry up in the summer, so they don't have predators and amphibians can use them as a safe breeding location.

### Spring peepers



Photo: Tom Murray

Spring peepers are a smaller species of tree frog and have one of the more distinctive calls, especially when in full chorus. Their distinctive, loud "peep" is well-known to anyone

who lives near a wetland. You can also identify them by the "X" on their back and small size when hopping around on the ground.

### Wood frogs



Photo: Brian Henderson

Wood frogs are a species most often seen and heard from isolated bodies of water, like the aforementioned vernal pools. Their call sounds like ducks quacking, so it can be sometimes

mistaken as the call of a bird. The large black "mask" beneath their eye is a diagnostic feature and is the easiest way to identify the frog by sight.

### Western chorus frogs



Photo: Douglas Mills

Western chorus frogs are the only frog species that is currently identified as a species at risk. Their call sounds like a finger being dragged along a comb. It is similar to the spring peeper's alternate

call, but it is more monotonous and often given several times. They look similar to a spring peeper, but the markings on their back are three parallel lines as opposed to an "X".

## The Late Spring Callers

American toads, pickerel frogs, and leopard frogs are the next three species to begin calling, usually near the end of April or start of May. You'll hear them once nighttime temperatures reach ten degrees, though leopard frogs sometimes start calling a bit sooner than that. Both of the frog species prefer wetlands, but American toad can be found in several different habitats as they are a habitat generalist.

### American toads



Photo: Douglas Mills

American toads are the only species of toads that we have in Georgian Bay, which makes them fairly easy to identify even though they can have large size variation. Their call is a long trill, which can last as

long as thirty seconds. When in chorus, each toad will call at a different pitch to make sure that potential mates can hear it. You can recognize them by their warty appearance and rough skin.

### Pickerel frogs



Photo: Matthew Beziat

Pickerel frogs like open water marshes and you can often find them in areas where water lilies are present. Their call sounds like a long, loud snore. Field identification of pickerel frogs is easy, as

they're the only amphibian species with rectangular spots. The spots run in two rows down their back and can be quite large.

### Leopard frogs



Photo: AllieKF

Leopard frogs are a commonly seen frog, with variable colouration and black spots on their body. They sound like a pickerel frog, with their call starting with a snore, followed by a low chuckle.

I prefer to think of their two-part call as a creaky door opening, followed by a ghost chuckling. The leopard frog has round or oval spotting on the back and is often a green colour, though there is colour variation in the species.



## The Early Summer Callers

The last four species of frogs to start calling are the American bullfrog, green frog, mink frog, and gray treefrog, who often start calling at the end of May or early June. These frogs start calling when nighttime temperatures are above fifteen degrees and prefer nights with low wind and precipitation. Due to their late breeding times, they can't use vernal pools and breed in a variety of different wetland types.

### American bullfrogs



Photo: Will Braun

American bullfrogs are the largest species of frog that we have in Georgian Bay and their large size is usually a good way to identify them. Their call is a low "jug-o-rum" which sounds similar to a low,

twangy hum. Outside of their size, bullfrogs can also be identified by the lateral folds that wrap around their tympanum.

### Mink frogs



Photo: Mike Ostrouski

Mink frogs are an uncommon frog in the area and like pickerel frogs, can often be found where water lilies are present. Their call sounds like a hammer striking wood, a quick "cut, cut,

cut". They are unique in that they don't often have distinct spots and instead have a mottled pattern to their back.

### Green frogs



Photo: Ryan Hodnett

Green frogs are one of the more common species around Georgian Bay, but are also very variable in colouration and patterns. Their colouration can range from brown to green, and they can

have some spotting or almost none. Their call is a distinctive "gunk" usually given frequently and sounding a bit like the twang of a guitar string.

### Gray treefrogs



Photo: Dave Huth

Gray treefrogs are a species of treefrog, so have distinct toe pads to assist with climbing. They also have the ability to change the colour of their skin, often appearing green or gray depending on where they

are. Their call is a bird-like trill, similar to the call of the Red-bellied Woodpecker, and it's often given from the canopy of trees.

Most of our frogs and toads will stop calling after they finish breeding, so their calling decreases as the summer progresses. In the fall, you may hear their calling begin again for a short period. This is due to the changes in daylight, as it is hypothesized that fall is similar to spring with regards to temperature and the amount of daylight. Learning how to identify frogs and toads can be a bit tricky, but it's rewarding, as many nights on Georgian Bay are filled with the calling of frogs and toads, especially if you live near a wetland.

To listen to these frog and toad calls, visit [www.naturewatch.ca/frogwatch/ontario](http://www.naturewatch.ca/frogwatch/ontario).



Do you have a species you'd like to see spotlighted in an upcoming issue? Send us your suggestion at [info@gbt.org](mailto:info@gbt.org).

## Improve your species ID skills and contribute to science with iNaturalist & Seek



iNaturalist is a popular smartphone app that allows you to record and share your nature observations, get help identifying species you are unsure about, learn more about local wildlife, and connect with other nature-lovers in your area. It is used by scientists and conservationists around the world to gather data on species distribution and trends, so every time you upload a sighting, you are contributing to important scientific work. iNaturalist also has a partner app called Seek, which uses your phone's camera to identify unknown species on the spot for you. You can download both [iNaturalist](https://www.inaturalist.org) and [Seek](https://www.inaturalist.org) for free from the app store, or access the web version of iNaturalist at [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org).



# Grenville Volunteer Award Winner: David Doritty

By Bill Loughheed, Executive Director, Georgian Bay Land Trust



All of our GBLT directors past and present are deserving of this award, but each year the staff has the difficult job of making a choice. Some of the considerations are those who have gone above and beyond in terms of years of work, volunteer workload due to position on the Board, participation in

events, providing year in year out support and encouragement, and hosting and participating in many events.

David Doritty is our staff pick for the 2022 Grenville Volunteer Award. If you sit back and conjure up “the super volunteer” it might be someone who never complains, puts up their hand when a job needs doing, brings competence and confidence in their volunteer work, and inspires others. David continues to be that super volunteer. At the staff-level, David has helped each of us succeed in our roles at the GBLT.

David first became involved with the Land Trust in 2012, as part of the newly formed Annual Fundraising Committee. Shortly after, David began providing expert steerage and wisdom as a fund manager on our Investment Committee. In this role, David has made an enormous contribution along with David Browne and Cindy Tripp. This effort has brought the

GBLT to a financial position that will see a healthy Land Trust for decades to come. David continues to serve as a member of the Investment Committee. His contributions don't end there. Add to this list 2 years as Vice-Chair, continuing on the Board General Fundraising Committee, Board Development Committee member, and roles in good governance. David has also been an incredible help with the monumental task of hosting GBLT events, and this continues! David played a key role in hosting the event in August of 2013 that helped secure the last funds needed to make Little McCoy Island a Protected Area forever. I had been on the job a short two weeks and this was a very warm and wonderful way to be immersed in the great conservation work of the Georgian Bay Land Trust.

David has recruited volunteers and sponsors, and fed and hosted staff and fellow volunteers. David has been indispensable to busy staff who have counted on his always sage advice, and willingness to help out with all behind-the-scenes jobs. David has also been a tremendous ambassador for the GBLT, talking us up without us asking, and spreading the word on the great conservation work we do.

David, we cannot thank you enough for everything you continue to do. Thank you for helping us tell Georgian Bay's conservation story and inspiring us all!

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## Thank you departing directors



### Peter Koetsier

It is with immense gratitude that we say a fond farewell to Peter Koetsier. Peter has served as Treasurer for all but one of his ten years on the Land Trust board, and has capably overseen our finances during a period of significant financial growth.

Peter is someone who listens to new ideas and embraces change for the better. He is very quick with numbers, understands good financial management, and has an ability to translate it effectively for those who are not experts. He has been enormously helpful to staff, who rely on him for his calm assessments and practical advice.

Peter is an exceptionally dedicated volunteer, who despite sharing his talents widely among the Georgian Bay community, has rarely missed a meeting or event. He is reliable, positive, and generous in his work. Peter, it has been a delight working with you, and you should be very proud of your role in guiding the Land Trust to its current position.



### Cindy Tripp

An extremely knowledgeable, practical, and hardworking individual, Cindy Tripp has been a tremendous asset to the Georgian Bay Land Trust during her five years on the board.

As Fundraising Chair, Cindy collaborated closely with staff

to launch and support a number of successful fundraising initiatives. Her quick mind and good judgement have grown the cohesiveness of our fundraising approaches. In addition to fantastic ideas, Cindy has the admirable qualities of excellent follow-through and a willingness to roll up her sleeves and help. She has been a reliable support to staff and a key ingredient in our fundraising successes of the past few years.

Cindy's professional investment knowledge and acumen has also been invaluable on our Investment Committee. This expertise is highly sought after elsewhere, and we are so grateful that Cindy has chosen to share it with us for the past five years. Thank you Cindy, we will miss you!



# Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts will strengthen conservation nationally



The Georgian Bay Land Trust is proud to have been involved in creating the new Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts. The purpose of the alliance is to provide a national voice and resource base for land trusts of all sizes, in order to do the best possible job of addressing conservation priorities on a national level. The alliance will offer capacity building, knowledge sharing, and networking opportunities, as well as concrete tools and services that member organizations can access. It will build partnerships with government and other key players in conservation, and work to secure funding sources and provide financial stability for conservation projects.

The inspiration for the alliance arose out of the successes of the Canadian Land Trusts Working Group (CLTWG), a committee of eight land trust leaders, including our Executive Director Bill Loughheed. The CLTWG was formed in 2017 to represent land trusts in discussions in Ottawa around the federal government's \$500 million Nature Fund, a major investment in conservation across the country. The CLTWG collaborated with other conservation organizations to respond to the government's request for proposals, and developed a national funding program that included land trusts as key players in achieving Canada's conservation objectives.



Land trusts have excelled under this program, exceeding the targets set for us in both land protection and fundraising. In the first two years we conserved over 6,000 hectares, and are on track to well surpass the target of 10,000 hectares over the entire 4-year program. We have also secured enough matching donations to quadruple the original investment made by the government. We are ready to do more to build on these successes.

It is clear that land trusts have a major role to play in the future of conservation in Canada. We are uniquely positioned to conserve important places within communities, and can mobilize quickly to respond to local opportunities. An organized national Alliance, led by an Executive Director and governed by representatives of land trusts across the country, will allow us to take the next step in effectively contributing to national conservation priorities.

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## Welcome new board members

### Ross Carter



We are delighted to welcome Ross Carter to the board as our new Treasurer. Ross and his wife Sue live in Aurora, and have a cottage on Governor Island in Cognashene that has been in Sue's family for the last 45 years. Sons Mitch and Alex, and Sheepdoodle Jagger, share their love of Georgian Bay.

Ross is a Chartered Professional Accountant who had a 17-year career in private mergers and acquisitions before deciding to open his own businesses. He now owns and operates several online businesses in the digital ecommerce and knowledge management software field. Thank you Ross for choosing to share your considerable finance and accounting skills with the Land Trust.

### Anthony Boright



We are very lucky that Anthony Boright will be taking on the Fundraising Chair role that his wife Cindy is departing. Anthony has 30+ years of marketing and sales experience in the technology, financial services and consumer packaged goods industries, spending the last 15 years of his

career launching and operating start-up companies. Since retiring in 2017, Anthony has spent time volunteering with youth and climate-oriented organizations including JA Central Ontario, Foundation for Environmental Stewardship, MaRS, and Futurpreneur Canada. Anthony and Cindy cottage in Cognashene with their kids Annie, John, and Andrew. Welcome aboard Anthony!



# 21 Hours of Birding: Big Day trip report

By Aaron Rusak, Protected Areas Manager, Georgian Bay Land Trust



Photos: Eleanor Proctor

On May 21st, Georgian Bay Land Trust staff members Aaron Rusak and Eleanor Proctor embarked on a “Big Day”: an effort to spot as many bird species as possible in a single 24-hour period. Aaron and Eleanor were attempting to break the Big Day record of 127 species within the District of Muskoka, while fundraising to support the Land Trust’s work to conserve bird habitat.

The day started off early, with the intrepid birders leaving at 1 am. We would be spending the first part of the day driving to various locations in Muskoka. We made three pre-dawn stops, listening for owls and other night-calling birds, and heard Barred Owls, Whip-poor-wills, a Least Bittern, and more. We recorded 23 species before our dawn stop, a very good number to be at before it was even light.

The dawn stop is important because it usually yields your largest number of species at any given spot for the day. We had selected our site strategically, and arrived right on time at 5 am. We found 37 species in total here, including Pied-billed Grebe, Golden-winged Warbler, and Northern Waterthrush. We made another stop just down the road and brought our tally up to 65 species, far ahead of where we had hoped to be at this point in the day.

We made the decision to take a different route on our way back, and the slow drive yielded several more uncommon

species, including one of the best birds that day, a Sedge Wren. We also saw quite a late Ring-necked Duck swimming in a roadside marsh. Then it was on to fields south of Gravenhurst for our grassland birds. By the time we wrapped up our grassland birding (9:30 am), we had managed to accumulate a total of 101 species. This was a monumental start to the day, with only 27 species needed to break the record.

On our way up to Bracebridge, we stopped at a couple of known locations, and added Canada Warbler, Vesper Sparrow, and Pine Siskin to our list. A quick stop at my house for lunch allowed us to refill water and coffee and get our first Northern Cardinal for the day. That species had eluded me the year prior, so hearing it sing in the backyard was a welcome sound.

The last stop before we headed out to Georgian Bay was the Bracebridge Sewage Lagoons. Despite the name, it’s one of the top places to bird in Muskoka, so it’s always worth a

quick check. A slew of shorebirds awaited us there, including Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Killdeer. We also picked up a Red-tailed Hawk soaring high over the treeline. Our total was up to 116 species as we headed out to Georgian Bay!

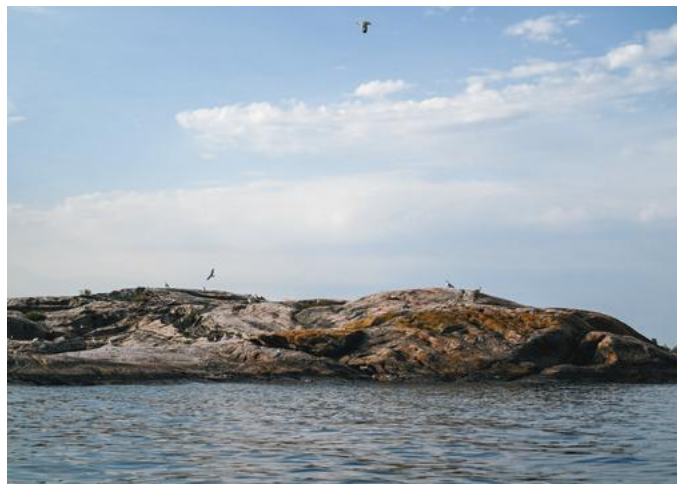
Honey Harbour was our first stop. There were no waterfowl to be found, but the usual spots for Marsh Wren and Red-headed Woodpecker turned up both of those birds. We were missing a Red-bellied Woodpecker, but that was just one that got away; we had no time to search for it, as we had to get onto the boat and out to Go Home Bay as soon as possible.

A quick stop at my cottage yielded a Prairie Warbler and allowed us to pick up my dad, who would be the designated driver for the remainder of the trip. Our first stop was Gray Island, part of Georgian Bay Islands National Park, and a key piece of the puzzle to get us to our final total. It did not disappoint. We found a Red-breasted Merganser upon arrival, and the rocky shores of the island revealed both Dunlin and Black-bellied Plover, species 125 and 126 on our list. Next stop was the Georgian Bay Land Trust's Southeast Wooded Pine Island, where the white head of a Bald Eagle appeared on the horizon, marking species 127.

With the record tied, we packed up and headed to Long Island where we hoped to get something flying over in the last hours of daylight. We landed at 7:55 pm. Most of the birds were already quiet, but as the last light was leaving the sky, a lone Merlin decided to fly off to a different location. Species 128 and record broken! We stayed a bit longer in hopes something else might show up, but soon our plans were foiled by the arrival of rain, and after being awake for 21 hours straight, we decided that we should call it around 10:30 pm.

A Big Day is no small feat, but despite the lack of sleep, it was an amazing day, full of exciting finds and neat birds. Ending the day on Georgian Bay was incredible and breaking the record while enjoying the sunset off Long Island will be an experience not soon forgotten. A huge thank you goes out to all our donors, supporters, and followers, whose engagement kept us energized, as well as Jim Rusak for chauffeuring us around Go Home Bay for the better part of an afternoon and evening. The support we received is fantastic, and we're already looking forward to next year!

*A full trip report for the day can be found at: [ebird.org/trip-report/57769](https://ebird.org/trip-report/57769).*





# Welcome Summer Conservation Interns



**Sarah Bowman** completed her JD at Western University and hopes to pursue a career in animal law or environmental law. Sarah has been a cottager her entire life, recently moving from a cottage on Lake Couchiching to the beautiful Wah Wah Taysee area of Georgian Bay. Sarah is

very excited to be returning as a conservation intern for the Georgian Bay Land Trust. She is eager to learn more about the region, and to work to preserve and protect the habitat of endangered species.



**Evan Ward** is currently studying Engineering Physics at Queens University. Evan has spent every summer break at his cottage in Go Home Bay, and has always had a great appreciation for Georgian Bay's biodiversity, especially its reptile species. Evan is beyond thrilled to start

his position with Georgian Bay Land Trust as a conservation intern. He is looking forward to exploring the region, bringing knowledge to the community, and helping to preserve the environment.

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## Blastomycosis in pets: what to watch for

By Janny Vincent, Advisor, Georgian Bay Land Trust

My dog, Lucy, was a wonderful, loving, sweet golden retriever. She was loved by me and my family, particularly my eldest granddaughter, Theresa. She died on November 9th at just under 5 and a half years old. Far too young. This short article is in memory of her and I write it in hopes that it will let others know about the fungal disease called Blastomycosis.

Blastomycosis is a fungal infection that can affect humans and animals, but is of particular concern to dogs. The fungal spores that cause Blastomycosis can be found in wet, sandy, acidic soil, where there is rotting organic matter. The fungus can be inhaled if it is dug up or it can enter the body through open wounds. The infection has an incubation period of 5 to 12 weeks before symptoms occur. Symptoms in dogs include a cough, shortness of breath, and wounds that will not heal. The fungus is found across Canada, and has caused Blastomycosis in dogs along the Georgian Bay coast line. Although there is no way to know for certain, my feeling is that this is where my Lucy may have been exposed to the spores.

Caught early enough, it is possible to treat Blastomycosis successfully with antifungal drugs. But if a pet owner is not familiar with the disease or the signs of it, it can be thought to be some other illness. In my dog's case, we thought it was

kennel cough for about a week. She was on antibiotics and by the time the x-rays of her lungs were finally taken and a biopsy done, the antifungals were too late



to be of help. One of my sorrows is that had I known earlier about this, I may have been able to seek the right treatment and push for the proper tests early enough to help Lucy.

I urge readers who have dogs, or those who simply wish to learn more about this disease, to read the information in the link below. This information can be helpful to learn more about the symptoms and dangers. Blastomycosis is a deadly disease if not diagnosed early. It is my hope that other dog owners can learn more about this, and hopefully can avoid the same outcome that befell our family.

<https://vcacanada.com/know-your-pet/blastomycosis-in-dogs>

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## Sponsors

*Thanks to our generous sponsors*



## Georgian Bay Snapshot

"Table for Two"  
by Sean Tamblyn



"Map turtles start the 2022 season off on a glorious May day in Moon Bay, Sans Souci. While the temperatures are dipping again, the season is most definitely here!"

See more of Sean's photography on Instagram @heartofstonephoto or at [www.heartofstonephoto.com](http://www.heartofstonephoto.com).



## Tribute GIFTS

*Received from December 11 2021 – June 11 2022*

### In Memory

Christy (Robson) Bacque  
Judy Baker  
Catherine & Derek Bate  
Sarah Bradshaw  
John Catto  
Margaret Cross  
Raymond Cross  
Hon. William G. Davis  
Brig A. Duncanson  
John W. Duncanson  
Robert G. Eakin  
Winifred & Doug Fearman  
Henry Grant-O'Grady  
Arthur Stirling Halpenny  
Roy Hlohinec  
Jack Hogarth

Bill & Marion Holton  
Scott & Josephine Inkley  
J.P. Jeffrey  
Jane Jeffrey  
Patricia Larson  
John Barker Lawson  
John Liscio  
Sandra Lumley  
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Audrey Stratton  
Sheldon "Pete" Towson  
Maggie & Mary Jane Tushingham  
Lucy Vincent  
Hiro Wakabayashi  
Alexandra Hall Whalen  
Walter & Stella Yusko

### In Honour

Doug Alexander  
Clair Balfour  
Chris Beck  
Fred Beck  
Sondra Cornett  
Sue & Fred Dalley  
Andy Fabens  
Amy Furness  
Antony Hilliard  
The Hive  
Wilson (Tait) Hyland  
Tom & Alice  
Kazmierowski  
Wally King  
Jamie Peterson

Sandy Phillips  
Eleanor Proctor  
Jan Ruby & Mary  
Thomson  
Calla Smith  
Greg Swick





gbt.org

SUMMER 2022

# SUMMEREVENTS

## PROTECTING GEORGIAN BAY'S WILDERNESS LANDS

### In-person events



#### **Nature Walk – July 4, 10am**

Rose Island Nature Reserve, Carling Township. Join us to explore the natural wonders of this unusually rich forest ecosystem.



#### **Motus Wildlife Tracking**

##### **Presentation – July 7, 12pm**

Little McCoy, Pointe au Baril. Come see our Motus wildlife tracking tower and learn how it is helping researchers discover more about the habits and conservation needs of birds.



#### **Photography Workshop –**

##### **July 20, 7pm, MacCallum Reserve,**

Go Home Bay. Learn how to take your Georgian Bay photography to the next level with photographer Ariel Estulin, who will lead this workshop focused on maximizing end-of-day light.



#### **Yoga on the Rocks –**

**July 24 & August 7, 10am,** American Camp Island, Wah Wah Taysee.

**August 3 & 28, 10am,** The Lizard, Cognashene. Begin your day with invigorating yoga led by Angela Granziera. No experience required.

\$10 per participant.



#### **Rock Walks – July 28, 4pm,**

The Lizard, Cognashene.

**August 6, 10am,** Wreck Island, Sans Souci. Join “rock star” Dr. Nick Eyles for a fascinating tour of the secrets seen in the rocks beneath our feet.



#### **Three Waters Documentary Screening – August 17, 7pm**

Stockey Centre, Parry Sound. Join us for this inspiring film made by King Family Bursary winners Scott and Acadia Parent, about a father-daughter paddling expedition on Georgian Bay.



*For more information about any of these events, and to register, please visit [gbt.org/events](https://gbt.org/events).*

### SAVE THE DATE!

#### **Walking for Wilderness**

Saturday, September 24  
Rose Island Nature Reserve, Carling

#### **Bayscapes**

Online auction: October 21 – 29  
Virtual celebration: October 29



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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.



We are a registered Canadian charity (#13195 8811 RR0001)

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