

## HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS LAND TRUST

### REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

JUNE 10, 2006 TO JUNE 9, 2007

The past year, only the second full year that the *Haliburton Highlands Land Trust* (HHLT) has been in existence, has been very busy and remarkably successful. Of course our major success has been the acquisition of our first property, **Norah's Island** in Kennisis Lake, but before describing in detail the events of the year I wish to announce with regret that two of our 2006 Board members will not be standing for re-election.

**Stephen Foster** has been an active and responsible board member since September 2005. Because he previously held the position of Coordinator for the Haliburton County 911 program, Stephen knows most of the nooks and crannies of Haliburton and was able to give sound advice on a variety of issues. He took responsibility for developing a strategic plan and for negotiating the Board's insurance coverage. He readily responded to requests to edit funding proposals and other communications. We are appreciative that Stephen will keep in touch with the Board's future activities.

**Brent Wootton** resigned from the Board in March 2007 so that he could give more time to his many other academic and research activities and especially to his young and growing family. Brent was one of the original Board members before incorporation, stayed with the Board since its first official meeting in April 2005 and became a "Founding Member" in Dec. 2005. Brent's background as a professor of ecology was invaluable when the Board had to develop a set of objectives before incorporation. His biological expertise was vital in documenting and securing speedy approval of applications for Norah's Island under the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Plan and the federal Ecological Gifts program.. He also took the leadership role in seeking funding, hiring staff and monitoring the various aspects of Natural Heritage Mapping and Planning. Brent has assured us that he will help to the extent possible in the future.

#### **NORAH'S ISLAND – KENNISIS LAKE**

Last year at this time I reported that Mr. Bruce Carruthers had offered to donate the largest island in Kennisis Lake to the HHLT and that we were working with the Kennisis Lake Property Owners Association (KLCOA).to bring this about. I am pleased to report that the ownership of the property was transferred to HHLT on March 23, 2007.

Many steps had to be taken before the property was acquired. In order to take full advantage of the available tax incentives, it was decided that HHLT should take the lead in applying for recognition of this property as ecologically significant under the Ecological Gifts Program of Environment Canada. (ECOGIFTS Program). As mentioned

previously, a thorough analysis of the ecological characteristics of the island was conducted. This information then was incorporated into an application for the Ontario MNR *Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program* (MFTIP). Provincial MFTIP approval with a focus on wildlife habitat protection not only helped to gain federal approval under the ECOGIFTS Program but also results in a property tax reduction now and in the future. A requirement of ECOGIFTS was that an appraisal be conducted of the property to reach an accurate fair market value. This amount later was stated in the receipt for income tax purposes provided by HHLT to the donor. HHLT created a list of qualified appraisers, interviewed several of these, selected one, and entered into a contract. Environment Canada accepted the value stated by our appraiser.

HHLT agreed to pay up front the costs of acquisition, including technical descriptions of the property, preparation of applications, costs of the appraisal and legal expenses. Some of these services were provided free of charge. After the property was acquired, HHLT then asked for and received from the Ontario Land Trust Alliance a grant of \$7,000 to cover almost all of HHLT's acquisition expenses.

During the past year at the same time KLCOA followed up on their commitment to raise sufficient funds to be placed in the Norah's Island Kennisis Lake endowment fund (NIKL fund). At the time of writing the amount collected specifically for the NIKL fund was slightly less than \$40,000, a major accomplishment for which the HHLT is of course extremely grateful. HHLT and KLCOA reps also worked together over the past 18 months to come up with an agreement covering the shared monitoring of Norah's Island and the management of the NIKL fund. A ceremony to officially sign this agreement is planned by KLCOA for July 2007.

We have followed up Mr. Bruce Carruthers' initiative in making application to the MNR Geographic Names Board to have the island officially named "Norah's Island", in memory of his late wife Norah, who owned the property for 30 years. We are awaiting the results of a survey the Geographic Names Board intends to conduct in the summer of 2007.

Although the process involved in acquiring Norah's Island was obviously lengthy and complicated, the fact that the major partners, Mr. Carruthers, KLCOA and HHLT were totally dedicated to the same goal, meant that each step was in fact smooth and positive. HHLT is of course indebted to the executive, the Lands Committee and members of KLCOA and especially to those who donated either time or money.

HHLT wishes to recognize and thank **Environment Canada** for supporting land conservation in Canada through the ECOGIFTS program, the **Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA)** for its Land Acquisition Grant program, the **Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources** for its funding of land acquisition through OLTA, and for its **MFTIP** program, and the **Haliburton County Development Corporation** for assisting with capacity building of community organizations. All of the above have contributed to the successful acquisition of our first property.

## WEBSITE AND PROPERTY ACQUISITION

In November 2006 HHLT appeared on the internet with its own website [www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca](http://www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca). The site was developed by C. Daniel Gory, a student at Fleming college., under the guidance of Brent Wootton. We have received many positive comments about the website. Try it, you'll like it! However we do need to find each year a person responsible for keeping the website up to date, since out-dated information can become a source of frustration for web browsers.

Due to the website and some newspaper articles, the word is spreading about the HHLT. This is good, but it also results in more enquiries to members of the Board. Most of these enquiries come from land-owners interested in a possible donation of property or easements. On an average we receive two or three of these a month, and each deserves our attention. Some do not result in any follow-up, but at the present we have active files on four properties, one of which is in suspension because of the illness of the owner. Board members have to be knowledgeable about the various ways in which land-owners may be able to become involved with HHLT and we try to guide potential donors through the intricacies of actually concluding a donation. The Board does discuss each property and must measure it against the criteria established in 2006 for deciding on the relative ecological significance of a property. All of this takes time.

## NATURAL HERITAGE MAPPING AND PLANNING

During the 2005-2006 year a data-collecting project for the HHLT was conducted by Brenda Van Sleuwen with funding provided by *Haliburton County Development Corporation. (HCDC)*

In 2006-07 HCDC again allocated to HHLT the amount of \$10,000 for a student intern to continue work on Natural Heritage Planning. Jessica Matthews was engaged for this project, completed in March 2007. She prepared a report designed to assist the land trust in making decisions about the types of land in Haliburton most likely to need protection.

In addition funding of \$12,000 was made available from the Metcalf Foundation through *The Land Between*, a consortium of Land Trusts in Central Ontario for the further development of Natural Heritage Mapping and Planning. Paul Heaven of Glenside Ecological Services was engaged to prepare a summary in map form of the data pertaining to Haliburton County available online from our previous projects, from the MNR and from the *Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint*. His report, completed in May 2007 is entitled *County of Haliburton Natural Heritage Mapping: A Compilation and Preliminary Assessment*. The report includes a set of recommendations for Natural Heritage Planning in the county.

It is our current intention to take these three projects and edit them in a format useful to the HHLT and accessible as well to other members of the Haliburton community who may be involved in making natural heritage planning decisions.

We are extremely grateful to **HCDC, The Land Between and the Metcalf Foundation** for their funding support and to **Brent Wootton** for initiating and supervising these research projects.

## **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND FUND-RAISING**

In October 2006 Sheila Ziman, as Secretary of HHLT, submitted on our behalf a funding proposal to the **Ontario Trillium Foundation**. In April 2007 we were overjoyed to hear that we had been granted \$24,500 to assist with resource development and capacity building. The core of the proposal was the hiring of a part-time Resource Development Coordinator, whose responsibilities would include developing fund-raising plans for HHLT, identifying possible supporters, planning one major fund-raising event, surveying the community for volunteers and developing a training plan for these persons. We were again very pleased by the quality of responses received to an advertisement for this position. I am pleased to announce that the position of Resource Development Coordinator will be filled, not by one person, but two working together as “Fay and Associates”. These two persons are well known in Haliburton – Fay Martin and Michael Fay - and we cordially welcome them to HHLT.

Our thanks to the **Ontario Trillium Foundation** and to **Sheila Ziman** for the many hours she spent on the successful grant application.

## **BOARD STRUCTURE**

Acquiring an important property and receiving over \$50,000 in grants in one year is no mean accomplishment. Working as a volunteer on the Board of Directors has been extremely rewarding, but has at times demanded time commitments beyond normal expectations for a volunteer.

More mature and wealthy Land Trusts have found it necessary and cost-effective to hire part or full time staff to do the day-to-day management activities. We are a long way from being able to do this. We must expect a certain annual turnover on the Board and we must be able to recruit new Board members. We want to address during the coming year the need for more members to serve in a volunteer capacity without necessarily being Board members. Another way of involving more persons in our efforts is to establish a committee structure and we have plans to set up the following Board Committees as ongoing or standing committees

- Executive Committee
- Communications
- Membership
- Financial

Fund-Raising  
Property Management and Acquisition  
Technical Advice

We will welcome volunteers with expertise in the above areas.

In closing, I would like to say that I appreciate the hard work and support of the other Board members in making 2006-07 such a noteworthy year. I look forward to further successes next year.

Ian Daniel  
Chair, Board of Directors