



Haliburton
Highlands
Land Trust

Haliburton Highlands Land Trust AGM Chair's Report for 2016

The past year brought changes to the board with Dianne Mathes stepping down as the Chair after an extended term and my appointment as Chair after the May 2016 AGM. In addition, we saw the appointment of four new board members who have provided further strength and organization to the Land Trust.

We focused on what we believe to be our core responsibilities: conservation and protection of our properties, community education and outreach and research. We are committed to continue this focus as we go forward and to utilize our own properties wherever possible in an effort to create an increased awareness and understanding of the Land Trust and what we do.

In December 2016 we received notification from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) that the Dahl family has been recognized nationally as one of 150 Canadians who have donated land through the Ecological Gifts Program as part of Canada's 150th anniversary of confederation in 2017. ECCC has also recognized the Land Trust as the recipient organization for conserving biodiversity and promoting conservation and stewardship through partnerships. The Dahl family and the Land Trust have received a letter from the Minister as well as an engraved plaque to be installed at the property. The plaque dedication will take place in the fall of 2017.

Our fundraising efforts were rewarded with a very successful golf tournament and gala in 2016. Our Discovery Days events continue to attract greater attendance and community interest. Our membership numbers have increased through our events and as we utilize every opportunity to reach out and communicate with our community and cottagers through Lake Associations.

We cannot thank our stake holders, our volunteer property monitors, our fundraising and event volunteers, our donors, and our sponsors enough. Without them we would not be able to continue our work and fulfill our mandate to protect and preserve our properties in perpetuity. Our members continue to provide the financial support needed through their fees and financial donations to support our day to day operations.

We continue to partner with other members of our community wherever possible. We partnered with Abbey Gardens, Trent University and CFICE on a joint project involving the Land Trust and Abbey Gardens to develop a series of Educational Events. Our library collection is now complete and in the words of Bessy Sullivan "is circulating well". Our display at Nature's

Place in Minden is complete and provides the viewer with an overview of the Land Trust and our conservation efforts. We look forward to continuing these partnerships and developing more in the coming year.

2016 saw the final year for funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). Unfortunately due to budget constraints we have had to eliminate the paid roles of Director of Resource Development and Project Co-Ordinator which the OTF funding had provided. Many of the key responsibilities of the roles have had to be absorbed by board members. This is not an ideal situation and we are looking to hire staff as funding becomes available.

This was also the last year for our Turtle Road Mortality Mitigation three year project. While this project was extremely taxing from a resource perspective, it was hugely successful. We continue to hear from communities, individuals and municipalities asking for information on the project as they attempt to save the turtles in their own communities and municipalities.

In August we applied for Canada 150 Funding in the amount of \$ 29,200.00 and proposed three projects including a small one to build a Pollinator Garden with our partner Abbey Gardens, a small project to restore a portion of the Gull River with our Partner Minden Hills and a larger project to hold the first ever BioBlitz in the County at the Dahl Forest. We are pleased to announce that we have since received notice that we were successful and have been granted the full funding for these projects in 2017. We are proud to be one of the relatively few chosen out of thousands of applicants across Canada.

In October we applied to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, OSARS Fund for a grant in the amount of \$ 116,000.00 over a two year period to complete a "Bats at Risk Assessment, Endangered Species Monitoring and Management" project. We have since received confirmation that we will receive funding in the amount of \$ 104,000.00 to complete the study in 2017/18.

Other successful grants that will support our projects and our Discovery Days program include, TD Friends of the Environment, the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network (B.E.A.N.), the Gosling Foundation and the Haliburton County Development Corporation (HCDC).

We expect our coming year to be both busy and successful. Focus will be on attracting new board members who can help us with our fundraising efforts in order to augment our staff to provide program management and help to build our stewardship fund for future acquisitions. Our members can play a key role in helping us to recruit potential board members. Word of mouth is often the best form of advertising and we would be pleased to talk to potential candidates who are recommended by our members.

I would like to thank my fellow board members and our staff for all of their hard work and dedication.

We would like to thank our board members who are stepping down this year for their past contributions and commitment and offer a warm welcome to our new board members.

Mary-Lou Gerstl

Board Chair