



Haliburton
Highlands
Land Trust

Chair's Report 2017

As I look back on the many projects, workshops and events that the Land Trust hosted in 2017, it is not surprising that the year seemed to fly by.

We continued to focus on our core responsibilities of conservation, education and research, and whenever possible, showcased our own properties for events and research.

Our Canada 150 Projects were designed to celebrate the importance of community and provide the opportunity for people of all ages to work together to enhance the rich biodiversity of Haliburton County. We partnered with Abbey Gardens to build a pollinator garden and with the Township of Minden Hills to plant native trees and shrubs along the banks of the Gull River, and held the county's first ever BioBlitz at the Dahl Forest.

Land Trust Discovery Days continued to be a very popular series of events, outings and workshops that educated on a variety of environmental topics. Many thanks to Joan Duhaime and Sheila Ziman for planning the program content and working with TD Friends of the Environment to arrange funding. Also thanks to all the great event leaders for making the workshops so much fun for all who attend.

With \$ 104,000.00 in funding from the Ontario Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, the Land Trust began a project to look at bat populations in Haliburton County. The public response to requests for bat sightings was amazing and recording

devices were set up at 56 sites for recording and analysis purposes. We received notification of approval for the second year funding (2018/19) and work on the second year has commenced. Statistics and data have been updated on our website and will continue to be as we complete our second and final year.

Our Lands Committee, chaired by Greg Wickware, has done some great work partnering with Fleming College to build the Land Trust's own Geographic Information System (GIS). Additionally, we partnered with U-Links and Trent University students to establish Permanent Sample Plots (PSP) at Dahl Forest and Smith Forest. The students chosen to work on both projects have done an excellent job and once completed, will enable us to better manage our current properties and allow us to be proactive and selective when planning future acquisitions.

Our fund raising team headed by Terry Carr did a superb job organizing our Golf Tournament in August and our Fundraising Banquet in October. It is truly amazing what a small group of people on a mission can do.

Other highlights include the permanent installation of a plaque at the Dahl forest from Environment and Climate Change Canada in recognition of the Dahl Family for their donation and HHLT for conserving biodiversity and promoting conservation and stewardship through partnerships. The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust also received the Warden's Choice Award for our conservation work at the Chamber of Commerce Business and Community Achievement Awards dinner. County Warden Suzanne Partridge in presenting the award stated that "HHLT is an organization which makes a huge contribution to our way of life in Haliburton County. Thousands of volunteer hours are contributed every year. Their activities and projects to preserve habitat and wildlife will make a lasting impact for future generations". Of course we are all very proud to receive both honours.

Looking forward to 2018, we will campaign to build our membership numbers. Our members are a key source of funding for our day-to day operations as well as building our stewardship fund. It is also time to reach out to a broader community for long-term funding support. The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust has reached a critical stage in our evolution and we need to engage individuals

and organizations with strong personal or corporate interests in ensuring we have the financial strength and human resources necessary to maintain and continue our important work in the Haliburton Highlands.

Finally, I would like to thank our many volunteers and members and Christel Furniss our office administrator, all of whom have worked so hard to make 2017 such a successful year for the Land Trust.

Mary-Lou Gerstl, Board Chair