



The Unsinkable Janet Lougheed

By David Doritty and Fred Dalley, GBLT Directors



After 9 years of unflagging dedication to the GBLT, Janet Lougheed is retiring from the position of Communications and Development Director.

While Janet's contract read that she was a part time employee, nothing could be further from the truth. There just weren't enough days in the week for

Our Janet. She was never shy about picking up the phone, sending a letter or email, or preferably jetting off in her boat and landing (sometimes unannounced) on cottagers' docks in order to perform that most difficult task, asking for a donation. A true Georgian Bay woman, Janet presented such wonderful enthusiasm for the cause that it was unlikely anyone would say no to her request. Also a master delegator, Janet was a genuine *director* who could recruit, gather and guide our many volunteers to the best advantage of the organization.

Aside from raising money, Janet has contributed to many other aspects of the ongoing development and progress of the GBLT, helping to build the organization and to set it on course for years to come. There is in fact no aspect or program area of the GBLT that has not benefitted from Janet's unbridled energy. Janet built and directed capital and stewardship campaigns that raised in excess of \$2 million. She developed the GBLT donor list from 182 individuals, foundations and businesses to 600 today. Janet also rolled out several successful initiatives, including the email GBLaTs, Kids' Conservation Quest, and the Bursary program.

Fun was a very important ingredient in Janet's recipe for success. She loved to organize picnics and parties and believed, "Fun first and the money will follow!" She possessed a social imperative and a personal touch which we all enjoyed, and will really miss. Janet will claim today that over countless visits to GBLT properties, to supporters and events that she attended on the Bay, Janet's boat never hit a rock.

From all of us we wish Janet and her husband George the same smooth sailing as they enjoy their trips ahead.

Message from the Chair, Janny Vincent



It has been a busy year in which the staff and dedicated volunteers of the GBLT have shown how much you can accomplish when you work together. This year we truly enhanced our community and educational engagement and set the stage for further development of the organization, both in terms of programs and land protection.

New communication materials with compelling images and messages were created and will be carried through to the new website, which has now launched. Reception to the new materials has been very positive.

We drilled down on ensuring that our stewards' land use reports covered virtually 100% of our properties, and the new website will allow mobile updates for reports which stewards can upload when they are on the properties. The stewarding of our properties is a vital part of the GBLT commitment and this facility will really enhance our ability to perform.

Our educational and community engagement programs got a real boost when Bill Lougheed, Nick Eyles and I visited with the Coast Guard/DFO late last winter and were able to negotiate a partnering opportunity for Brebeuf Lighthouse whereby we could erect a field research station that would allow students to do research, and the organization to hold learning opportunities for the community. Stay tuned for more to come on these initiatives in the future.

The GBLT is looking forward to having a presence at the Boat Show in the winter of 2015 and 2016 and at all of the other outreach programs in which we participate to both continue and grow the wonderful support we currently enjoy.

We are excited to have closed on the Longuissa Bay property this year and are actively working on over a dozen properties that we hope to soon be able to add to the trust. Work on a GIS project to proactively identify properties of interest is also being done.

Thanks to all of you who make this wonderful organization what it is and help us to accomplish what we do. We had a great year and are aiming for further positive outcomes in 2015.

Catto Philanthropy Award



It should come as no surprise to anyone that this award was given to Charles Wallis (aka Wally) King this past June 2014. Indeed, when one goes on to describe Wally, certain words come to mind: visionary, intelligent, freight train, driven, generous, funny and more.

Wally King has been an indomitable force in the GBLT for the last twenty-three years. It started, according to Carl Spiess, when Wally stood up at a GBA meeting and said, "We need a land trust". Then Wally set about doing just that. Carl followed him along with Stephen Griggs, Gary French and Neil Davis, among others. The best part is that all these people, like Wally, are still with us. They remain advisors on whom we call from time to time as they provide great counsel and continue to be keen supporters of the GBLT.

There rarely is a week that goes by that a gift isn't received from Wally in memory of a Georgian Bayer who has passed away. With the cheque comes a detailed note of Wally's connection and the place they resided on the Bay or just a short line saying, "I didn't know this person but I saw the obituary and sent this on". Wally started the *In Memory/ In Honour* program at the GBLT.

The program regularly contributes about \$10,000 to the GBLT coffers each year.

Wally's financial support has in fact gone well beyond that. He has supported the Founders lunch, the NCC Joint Venture with the GBLT, the Sandy Island campaign and has created, with his wife Marilyn, a bursary that supports writing, arts, history and science on Georgian Bay.

Wally's gifts are not small; they total over \$300,000 to date and match his large heart and love of Georgian Bay. As always, his wife Marilyn, a philanthropist and unflagging volunteer for many charities, is beside him fully supporting his involvement with the GBLT.

Our profound thanks go to Wally for all he does for the GBLT including his generous financial and moral support in times of important decisions. We are a success because of his kind and unending commitment.



Wally King

Brébeuf Island



An important step forward for environmental education and research on Georgian Bay was made this year with the opening of the GBLT's Brébeuf Island Field Station and the beginning of a partnership with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Located just 300 metres from Beausoleil Island, Georgian Bay's largest park, Brébeuf is ideally situated for environmental and ecological research and education, and an important resource for professors and students of the natural sciences.



Brébeuf Event

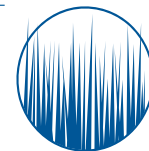
The project began in earnest in March 2014, when after many discussions, Janny Vincent, Nick Eyles and Bill Lougheed travelled to Sarnia and gave a presentation to the Canadian Coast Guard and Fisheries and Oceans Canada regarding a research and education field station. We are extremely grateful for how quickly and enthusiastically the Coast Guard welcomed the GBLT, coming back to us with a "License Agreement" for use of the island.

By June, GBLT staff Brooks Greer and Bill Lougheed had erected a 16' by 16' tent platform, followed by a full field prospector tent put up by our very able summer students Tom Tawaststjerna and Lindsay Potts. On August 6th we celebrated the opening of the Research Station with an enormously successful gathering. Over 90 attendees joined us on the island to celebrate this milestone.

This opening marked the beginning of student research on Brébeuf Island. As part of the first field courses, students from the University of Toronto conducted geological surveying of the rock formations on Brébeuf. These classes will continue in the coming years, with bigger plans next year for professors and their students.

The GBLT would like to sincerely thank Peter Cooper and Rick Hayward who were key players on the "Lighthouse Committee", Michael Brown of the Coast Guard who bent over backwards to make this partnership happen on such a compressed timeline, Bill Ariss, DFO Director of Real Property, as well as all of the Coast Guard staff, with special mention to coxswains Shannon Matthews and Greg Campbell. Thank you all!

Property Spotlight: The Jean Northey Longuissa Bay Conservation Reserve



Longuissa Sedge Meadow Marsh and Mixed Forest

After a lengthy process that began in 2006, the donation to the GBLT of the Northey property in Longuissa Bay, Cognashene, is complete.

The property donation is 11.5 acres in area, and includes two very small islands at the northern end of Longuissa Bay. The approximately 1000 feet of shoreline on the mainland portion is rich and productive wetland habitat. The inland sections of the Longuissa Bay area are known for their high quality forest communities, including examples of hardwood forest types that are uncommon throughout the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. This is due to better and deeper local soil development than is typical of the coast, in fact the northern end of the property contains a Hemlock - Sugar Maple forest, a community that has been documented from only a handful of other natural areas along the entire eastern coast of Georgian Bay.

McMaster University, under the leadership of Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser, has done extensive research on the wetlands of Longuissa Bay and has characterized them as "excellent". The property also includes representation of Type 1 fish habitat as determined by the Ministry of Natural Resources, and according to Chow-Fraser

provides critical spawning and nursery habitat for largemouth bass and yellow perch.

Says Dr. Chow-Fraser: "Every effort should be made to ensure this wetland is protected from any human development, so that it will have the best chance to recover naturally when water levels resume to where they are more favourable for the aquatic plant community, and which would allow fish to migrate easily to and from the wetland".

Longuissa Bay itself has a rich history. The late nineteenth century was a boom period for the Ontario lumber industry. The many rivers draining into the east side of Georgian Bay including the Severn, the Magnetawan, the French, the Spanish, the Go Home, and the Muskoka (now the Musquash), provided both transportation of logs into Georgian Bay and access deep into rich pine forests inland for harvesting. Additionally the American markets had opened up to free trade of natural products, and rail links had been established connecting ports to products and customers.

Archibald H. Campbell, in partnership with four American and two other Canadian lumbermen, established the Muskoka Mill and Lumber Company on the Muskoka River in 1875. Within ten years he effectively owned the company outright, however by 1895 the mills were closed when the company's timber limits were depleted.

The Campbell family built and maintained a large family cottage compound nearby to the lumber concern on the peninsula overlooking Longuissa Bay. The property passed, through the marriage of his daughter Muriel, to Leighton Golden McCarthy, who purchased it from the eldest Campbell daughter in 1918. Generations of the McCarthy family have since spent their summers at Longuissa Bay. The original cottage, built in 1887, still stands today on the east shore.

The GBLT is delighted to be entrusted with the Northey Longuissa property that has both environmental sensitivity and local historical significance.

It's bursary time again!



This year the GBLT is offering two bursaries of \$3500. Last year's award winners were writer Andrea Curtis and visual artist Tim Laurin.

The Wally and Marilyn King Endowment Fund provides support for research, educational programs and other opportunities that further advance the GBLT's mission to promote the appreciation and the unique environment of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and the North Channel. The second bursary is supported by an anonymous donor who shares the King family's desire that we support creative

projects focused on Georgian Bay. Scientists, academics, artists, authors, musicians, writers and others are encouraged to apply.

"Marilyn and I are simply delighted to see our endowment activated with this bursary and very pleased to see the additional matching donations/bursary as well. We wish the recipients good luck and success in whatever project that is selected," says Wally King.

The two bursaries will be awarded in the spring of 2015. Applications close on January 31, 2015. Please see the website for more details and application form.

GBLT Land Use Policy



By Bill Loughheed, GBLT Executive Director and Jen Kernaghan, Chair, Communications Committee

Background

This year the GBLT celebrates 25 years of preserving open spaces and wilderness areas of Georgian Bay. The GBLT properties include several destinations for recreation that are spectacular examples of rock barrens. These properties are open access for all to swim in the waves, have lunch and then leave with no trace. The Trust presently stewards 1555 acres and 42 properties. This is a wonderful accomplishment but we must remember there is much more work to do. There are some 21,000 acres on our coastline that could see development in the years to come. Official Plans and their changing rules come and go, but land conserved by donation or easement remains that way in perpetuity for all. There are real demographic changes occurring right now as the baby boom generation passes through and properties are passed on or sold, bringing capital gains and other issues to bear. It is GBLT's responsibility to be a resource and a receptacle when landowners choose to protect wilderness. It is their choice, not ours.

Perhaps less well understood by the greater public is that all land trusts protect important natural habitats and corridors for flora and wildlife. To this point the exceptional ecological importance of our coast is witnessed by its designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Because the GBLT reaches out to protect ecological jewels, it should come as no surprise that a significant portion of GBLT properties have been classified and certified as ecologically sensitive by the Government of Canada. As such, the Land Trust faces financial penalties should denigration or ecological damage occur to these certified properties (half the value of the land as receipted).

How our charity's property resources are used is important. The GBLT's status as a conservation trust mandates the preservation of a balance of undisturbed wilderness areas.

The GBLT Land Policy uses scientific method to balance preservation with recreation, and determines permitted volume and type of use by performing scientific work: Baseline Studies, Cases For Conservation, species at risk inventories, Ecosensitivity Reports and Property Management Plans. In this scientific approach we use data gathered on site as well as global, regional and other pertinent data and ranking systems to scientifically assess the ecological systems on each property. This is then used to drive and determine the degree and type of permitted public use (in conjunction with any limitations imposed by the Government of Canada or any legal, liability or safety issues).

While the general public benefits from the sole act of conservation of green space, regardless of access, the GBLT has a further duty as a charity. All GBLT lands are to be managed so as to ensure that:

1. There is no actual or perceived benefit to the donor, and
2. The stewardship does not allow donor use of the land that is denied the general public (as defined below).

Categorization of Properties and Use

The GBLT has a policy of transparency, and this applies very much to permitted property uses. The general public benefits from the GBLT land conservation efforts in many ways. This applies irrespective of whether the specific property is open access or whether it is a highly ecologically sensitive area where public access is very limited. All of us, young and old, benefit from open spaces and wilderness and it is indeed a dominant reason that individuals from all walks of life come to and enjoy Georgian Bay. GBLT's protection of natural space brings with it mental and physical rejuvenation.

Based upon all of these considerations, the GBLT has placed each of its properties into one of three classes. These red, yellow and green classes listed below are denoted by their colour on the map on the opposite page.

Natural areas (green) - Managed to protect unique natural features and also to provide quiet, low-impact, nature-based activities like picnicking, swimming and hiking. These properties typically have a history of use. All visitors are required to follow the GBLT's Property Code of Ethics and to watch for "Ecologically Sensitive Area" signs and avoid use of those areas.

Preserves (yellow) - Managed to protect more fragile ecosystems. Visiting occurs through appointment or by a phone call to a GBLT Stewardship manager. This contact information is on the GBLT website. Regular staff- or volunteer-guided educational nature walks are advertised and are conducted on a rotational basis on these GBLT properties.

Critical reserves (red) - These are properties that are better left alone due to fragile ecosystems that could be threatened by the slightest human impact. Public access is not allowed at these properties except for occasional visits by volunteer stewards or staff for monitoring purposes.

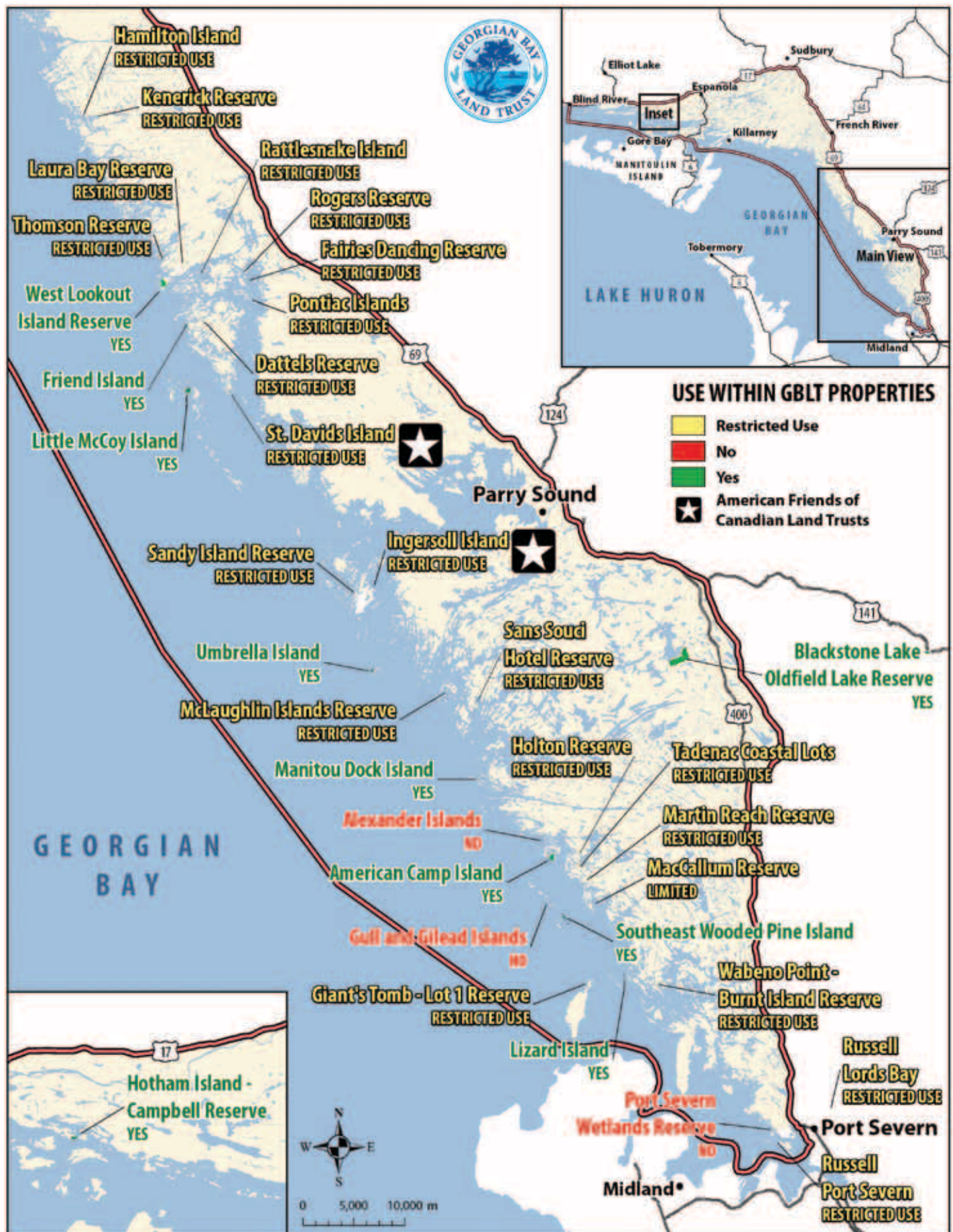
Scotiabank Charity Challenge 5K Walk

by Shannon Beddoe, GBLT Director

On Sunday October 19th, a solid crew of devoted GBLT supporters woke up bright and early and laced up their walking shoes to participate in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge Waterfront Marathon in support of the Land Trust. The team, consisting of Bill Loughheed, Brooks Greer, Janet Loughheed, Sarah Koetsier, Janny Vincent, Peter McCann and Shannon Beddoe, had a blast taking in the lakefront views and basking in the early morning sunshine during the walk. Together with our supporters, we raised \$7,790.00 for the Georgian Bay Land Trust - an outstanding result. Many thanks to all the participants and our donors for making the 2014 Scotiabank Charity Challenge a huge success for GBLT.

We hope to see all of you out next year.

Use Within Georgian Bay Land Trust Properties



Take a Minute to Stop and Smell the Climate Change



By Bill Loughheed, Executive Director and Sarah Koetsier, Administration Assistant

The next time you wander in the white pine forests of the Bay you should stop and smell the air. Why? Because that very smell is helping to combat climate change.

Climatologists have known for years that forests emit vapours that block sunlight and aid in cloud formation, but new research shows the important role that pine trees play in this process. In a landmark study completed in 2014, climatologists from Germany, USA, and Finland have identified the particles responsible for this climate-altering phenomenon, and at last put some scientific understanding behind the magic of forests.

To study the interaction of forest and air molecules, researchers collected air samples from the Finnish pine forest Hyytiälä, and simulated natural particle formation in an air chamber at Germany's Jülich Research Centre. They were able to observe and recreate the ways that particles emitted from trees combine with others in the atmosphere to create molecules essential for regulating Earth's climate.

The results show that the compounds emitted from pine trees, called terpene α -pinene, react with oxygen in the air to form what are called low volatility vapours. These vapours then condense irreversibly onto atmospheric aerosol, creating large quantities of secondary organic aerosol, the particle with climate-altering effects. Due to their large size, these secondary organic aerosols are able to attract water molecules and cause cloud formation, as well as to refract sunlight, altering the Earth's radiation balance.

These particles already play a large role in regulating the Earth's climate, and scientists believe that they will be instrumental in dampening some of the effects of rising CO₂ levels in our atmosphere. They are of significant interest to organizations such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as to

climatologists, who had until now been unsure as to the details of their creation, and unable to explain the ability of boreal forests to create so many.

We now know that it is the pine trees that we have to thank. It is the particular nature of the particles created by the mixing of pine emissions and oxygen that allows secondary organic aerosols to be created in such large numbers. Indeed, approximately half of all such aerosols observed above forests can be attributed to the work of pine trees.

This new research emphasizes the importance of boreal pine forests in the Earth's natural environmental mechanisms and the planet's response to climate change. It shows us that we cannot afford to lose such ecosystems, not only for their importance to local wildlife, but also for their effect on the planet as a whole.

We are fortunate to have so many beautiful pine forests around Georgian Bay. Worryingly, however, more of this forested land is found outside protected areas than within them. The GBLT would like to see this change. Many GBLT properties include white pine forest, and we are proud to support Carling Township in the preservation of Franklin Island, one of the few remaining sites of old growth pine forest in Georgian Bay.

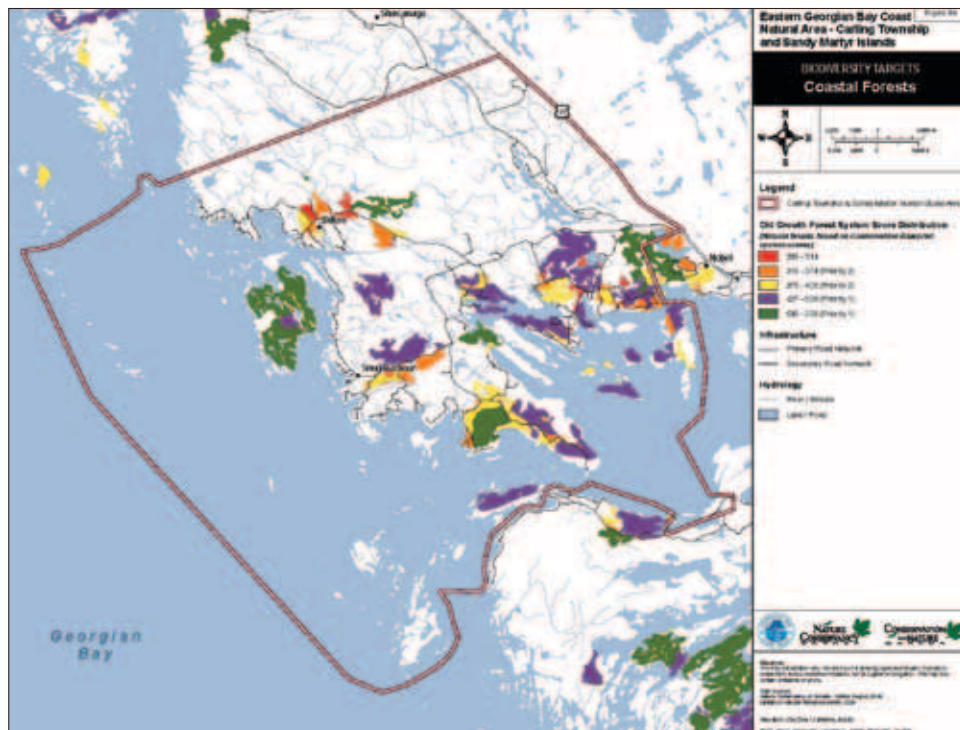
As we enjoy the environment of Georgian Bay, we must remember that it serves a purpose beyond our local and recreational needs. As this research shows, there is more to discover every day about the extraordinary role that natural areas play in maintaining the Earth's balance and creating a liveable world. The preservation of these remarkable areas is our responsibility and our legacy to future generations and to the planet.



White pines, Hamilton Reserve Norgate



Pine Forest at Tadenac



This map shows coastal forests in Carling Township, with priority old growth forests in green and purple. The large island to the left is Franklin Island, which Carling Township is conserving with GBLT support.

Sources

1. Ehn, M., Thornton, J.A., et al. (2014). A large source of low-volatility secondary organic aerosol. *Nature*, 506, 476-479.
2. Jalava, J.V., Cooper, W.L., & Riley, J.L. (2005). *Ecological Survey of the Eastern Georgian Bay Coast*. Toronto: Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Peterborough: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.
3. McGrath, M. (2014, February 26). Smell of forest pine can limit climate change - researchers. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-26340038

Georgian Bay Query: What is the Relationship Between the Gooseberry and the Eastern White Pine?



By Ingrid Knight, Landscape Architect

The windswept Eastern White Pine embodies the quintessential Georgian Bay landscape. White Pine Blister Rust (*Cronartium ribicola*) is one of the world's best-known forest diseases and first appeared in North America in 1898. *Cronartium* appears to have originated in Asia, and arrived here when millions of white pine seedlings were imported from Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. It has what is termed an "alternate host relationship" between the Gooseberry (*Ribes*) family and the White Pine (*Pinus*) family. The Gooseberry is the alternate host to the pine, and is required to complete the disease's lifecycle since spores from pines do not infect other pines. This threat is of great concern in the Georgian Bay area since our indigenous landscape also includes many vascular plants in the Gooseberry family: Northern Black Currant, Wild Black Currant, Swamp Black Currant, Swamp Red Currant and Smooth Gooseberry. An additional introduced species, the Alpine Currant, is available in nurseries. The female of the Alpine species is also an alternate host to the fungus.

The lifecycle of the White Pine Blister Rust fungus begins in early to mid summer with hair-like projections emerging from the bottom of the Gooseberry leaf; spores subsequently grow on these projections and are released and carried by wind to infect the Pine needles. In 4 - 10 weeks spots are visible on the needles, and in 2 - 4 years after the initial infection, yellow/orange blisters are produced on the Pine bark. These blisters then produce spores, which infect the Gooseberry, and the cycle begins anew, with light yellow spots developing on the Gooseberry leaves.

Blister Rust infections of Pine occur in "wave years," especially in those years with a long cool and wet late summer, such as what Georgian Bay has experienced this year. High rust hazard zones occur where cool, moist air settles in lower areas with poor drainage, in which the wind can carry spores from 300 metres (optimal) to 3 or 4 km. (Spores have been documented to travel up to 480 km.) Upper slopes and ridges are less susceptible to infection. The fungus does not overwinter on the Gooseberry, and is only perennial on the Pine. Spores are wind-borne, and not carried by birds.

As the Gooseberry is an indigenous food source of the Georgian Bay ecosystem, culling of the species is not recommended, nor is it feasible to eradicate from difficult terrain. New plantings of any Gooseberry species in close proximity to Eastern White Pine should be discouraged, however. Monitoring for the disease, and proactive treatments to aid in promoting airflow and containing the disease, are important safeguards. Prune lower branches that are less than 3.5 m above the ground and infected limbs, being aware that pruning may affect drought resistance (never remove more than 30% of the trees' foliage), and remove limbs that have needles that have turned orange. Utilization of these measures will assist in the preservation of our precious Eastern White Pine Georgian Bay landscape.

Ingrid is a long-time Georgian Bay cottager, and more recently the happy owner of property near Copcog Island at the top of Sans Souci.

Mustelidae, anyone? (Also known as the weasel family)



By Don Buchanan, GBLT Steward for Sandy/Ingersoll Islands

Earlier this year, I was enjoying a conversation with Brooks Greer, the GBLT's Land Protection Program Manager. Brooks knows that I'm a bit of a nature nut, not an expert in any area but very enthusiastic. He asked if I would write an article for this publication and mentioned the name Mustelidae. I had a vague idea but was momentarily uncertain. Brooks then clued me in. "The weasel family, Don. Weasels."

This group of carnivores is represented by nine species here in Ontario. All of them have very well developed anal scent glands and often feature a musky odour. Think Skunk!

We have three mustelids that are actually called weasels. They are the long tailed, the short tailed (Ermine) and the least (smallest carnivore in the world). All of them are fast, secretive and often nocturnal. They turn white in winter and with the exception of the least, their tails end with a black tip. You may have seen ermine pelts worn on royal robes.

Some members of the group may be a surprise to you. Did you know that there are badgers in our province? A remnant population exists in southwestern Ontario.

And wolverines? You would have to visit our province's subarctic to see this spectacular wilderness animal.

Martens and fishers are mid-sized animals, bigger than the weasels and smaller than the wolverine. I have seen martens while on canoe trips in the north but have not encountered one in the Parry Sound District. Fishers, thanks to transplants, have returned to our area and seem well established along central Georgian Bay.

The mustelids that many of us will have seen on the Bay are the mink and the otter.

Mink are busy hunters and they often hunt during the day. They always seem to be in a rush, scampering frenetically along shorelines, swimming from island to island, rock to rock, in search of a meal, which could be a frog, a crayfish, a mouse, a fish, a snake or a bird. They are excellent swimmers and are almost always found close to water.



Fisher

Otters are a delight. Like the mink they hunt a variety of aquatic creatures. They often travel in a group and may approach very close if you are still and quiet. When they have a sense of your presence, they will often rise up, seal-like, head and shoulders above the surface and 'snuff' and 'snort' before they glide away. If you live on the Bay year-round, you may be lucky enough to see

an otter galloping and then sliding along the ice surface. They also make slides on muddy banks and rocky inclines.

But back to the fisher and a great Georgian Bay story.

First of all, let's deal with the name. Fishers don't "fish". The name probably comes from the French 'fiche' or the Dutch 'fisse', both names used for the European polecat.

Fishers are incredible hunters, fast on the ground and very, very fast in the trees. They are opportunistic and eat what they can catch: hares, squirrels, mice and birds. They also eat carrion, mushrooms, berries and nuts. And they eat porcupines. They circle the prey, nipping repeatedly at its face and then flipping the porcupine on its back, exposing the belly to the fisher. If they ingest a few quills it does not seem to bother them. Apparently they can pass quills through their digestive system with no ill effect.

Fishers were trapped out (extirpated) in the Parry Sound District long ago. The MNR decided to capture fishers and transplant them to their former territories including Parry Sound. There were two reasons for doing this. A new population of fishers could help the lives of local trappers, as fisher pelts are highly valued. Secondly, fishers could help control porcupine populations, which had grown large enough to be considered damaging to the forest and to human habitation.

For a number of years, Killbear Park hosted the Junior Rangers Program. The young rangers were housed in cabins behind the maintenance building. Plywood was used in the construction and porcupines found it appealing to shelter beneath these cabins. Plywood was also used for park signs. Lots of plywood and lots of porcupines, rodents that love salt and who discovered that the glue in plywood was an excellent source of salt. They had become a problem and hence the return of the fishers.

According to documentation at Killbear Park, ninety fishers were live-trapped in Algonquin Park in 1959 and re-introduced in the Parry Sound District. In 1980, three fishers were released at Killbear. Fishers prospered and porcupine numbers tumbled. A great success!

Then the ominous stories began to circulate. Free-roaming housecats began to disappear. Based on the anecdotes I have heard.... a lot of cats. What was happening? Fishers were blamed. Examination of hundreds of fisher scats in the northeast U.S. has found no cat hair or cat bones, even when scats were collected in suburban communities with lots of cats. I remain a skeptic. However, it is widely accepted that it's best to keep your housecat indoors if you live in fisher country.

Mustelids are a fascinating group of animals. We are so fortunate to share the waters and forests of eastern Georgian Bay with so many of them.

Species at Risk: Eastern Foxsnake



By Eugene Trusler, Go Home Bay

Many years ago I was climbing the stone stairs leading from the dock to our cottage when I heard a rustling sound in the bushes. I was wearing rubber boots, as it seemed a good precaution, having been startled too many times by snakes. On this particular occasion, I stopped and peered into the bushes and identified a nearly five-foot long eastern foxsnake that was as thick as my wrist in girth. It was yellow brown in colour with distinctive large black blotches on the back with offset smaller black blotches on the sides. The other identifier was the characteristic reddish brown head.

The foxsnake had stopped moving in the undergrowth when it felt the vibrations of my heavy rubber boot soles tromping up the stairs. Then, with surprising speed, it started moving towards the stair I was standing on. I immediately moved down two stairs, and then jumped down a further two as I watched this very large reptile coil itself up on the stair that I had been standing on. It suddenly struck out at me and came within an inch of contacting my midriff region. It recoiled to the stair from which it launched its strike, stretched out and carried on into the bushes to the right of the stairs. I had never experienced this aggressive type of behaviour from foxsnakes; it was quite surprising.

It turns out this is exactly what the foxsnake will do when feeling threatened. Foxsnakes are known to mimic rattlesnakes by twitching their tails in dry or loose vegetation in an attempt to produce a "rattle" sound. This behaviour has caused many people to mistake them for rattlesnakes and has led to the misleading name of "hardwood rattler". The other defense mechanism a foxsnake will employ is to secrete a pungent substance that smells like the musty secretions of foxes, thus the name foxsnake.

Many old time inhabitants of eastern Georgian Bay have considered it a mistake to kill foxsnakes due to the belief that foxsnakes keep rattlesnakes away. It is far more likely that foxsnakes exert a predatory pressure on a hunting territory by removing the food sources that rattlesnakes also hunt. Foxsnakes are constrictors and rodents are their main prey. Having a healthy foxsnake around your cottage might mean fewer mice inside. They are accomplished climbers and have been observed as high as 10 meters up in trees hunting for birds. These snakes are docile and with some training can be handled by humans, as experienced over the years by many campers visiting the biology building at Camp Hurontario.



Eastern Fox Snake

Foxsnakes will mate mid-May to June and lay an average of 14 eggs in July in rotting wood or organic debris. The young will hatch in late summer with a dark bar on the head, the body greyish with red brown blotches and are between 9 to 12 inches in length. The females will reach maturity in three years and are likely to reproduce every other year. In the winter foxsnakes will hibernate in a den, often with other species of snakes. Over 200 snakes have been observed using a single hibernaculum in the eastern Georgian Bay area.

In Ontario, the Eastern foxsnake is listed as *Threatened* under the Endangered Species Act, 2007, and Endangered under the federal Species At Risk Act. The foxsnake suffers from looking similar to the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake; one of the reasons cited for its decline is "human persecution". The species has also been designated as a Specially Protected Reptile under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act.

The Eastern foxsnake is an important and fascinating inhabitant of the eastern Georgian Bay environment. It is helpful for any Georgian Bayers to learn to identify it as well as its look-alikes, the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake and the Eastern hog-nosed snake.

Kids Conservation Quest 2014



After the huge success of the one inaugural session of the Conservation Quest program conducted by summer students Catriona Boyd and Paige Stewart on American Camp in August 2013, we decided that it had potential for regular weekly presentation this past summer.

CQ, as it came to be called, is intended for kids aged 8 through 11. It is designed as a series of nature- and conservation- themed stations through which they are rotated, and during a session there are as many stations as there are staff members for each group of kids. In the words of 2014 summer students Lindsay Potts and Thomas Tawaststjerna:

"The GBLT's Conservation Quest has been created to engage kids in the preservation of Georgian Bay's unique environment. The GBLT hopes that through a series of fun and interactive stations, kids will learn and become curious about Georgian Bay beyond the borders of their camps or cottages. By recognizing their role

as both benefactors and ambassadors of the properties they visit, we believe that kids will be inspired to act consciously to protect the Bay that they love."

The summer students' Thursdays were blocked off and devoted to Conservation Quest for most of the summer. Tom and Lindsay ran the program to great acclaim twice each at camps Queen Elizabeth and Kitchikewana, and then did a one-time free-for-all on the Lizard. The Ojibway Club Rec Program also took part. Thomas took a run up the coast to help them present it the first time in late July, then the PaBIA Marine Patrol and Ojibway staff ran it one more time mid-August.

In total, CQ reached 250+ kids over seven separate sessions, and from all reports (and actual testimonials) it was fun and educational for all groups. We were very lucky with the weather as it was remarkably cooperative given the marginal overall summer.

We received fantastic support for this new program from many parties: Mountain Equipment Co-op was very generous with their funding and made the whole show possible; Kelly Killoran devoted much of her time and considerable organizational skills to setting the students up and sending them off - and even accompanied them on the one foul-weather CQ day. The staff at the respective camps was welcoming, enthusiastic and helpful: special thanks go to Ben Rabinovitch (Kitchikewana), Nancy Knyf (Camp QE) and Andrew Bryce (Ojibway Club). A particularly big round of applause for Janet Loughheed and students Thomas and Lindsay who executed the program with great aplomb from concept right through to delivery.

Given the resources and staff availability, we hope to diversify the program stations for summer 2015 and possibly to expand presentation to include a couple more local communities. Stay tuned!



Conservation Quest lunch on the Lizard

Toronto International Boat Show Partnership and 14 foot Rossiter Lottery



The GBLT is happy to announce our new partnership with the Toronto International Boat Show (TIBS). This partnership will promote awareness of both organizations and provide the GBLT with exciting new fundraising and outreach opportunities.

The one and a half year arrangement will involve GBLT booths at both the 2015 and 2016 Boat Shows and a fundraising lottery for a 14ft Rossiter boat with motor, sponsored by Rossiter Boats and Desmasdon's. Tickets for the lottery will be sold year-round from January 2015 through January 2016, including by volunteers walking the halls at both Boat Shows. The final draw will take place at the GBLT booth on the last Sunday of the January 2016 Boat Show.

As part of the partnership, TIBS has provided the GBLT with a

booth in a prominent location at both Boat Shows. We will have promotional materials at the booth as well as with our lottery canvassers who will circulate and sell tickets at the shows while advertising the GBLT. TIBS will advertise the Land Trust on its website. In exchange, the GBLT will feature the TIBS logo on our website, and distribute posters and advertising materials in our usual locations from Midland northward. This will give TIBS expanded exposure on Georgian Bay.

The GBLT wishes to send our utmost thanks to Lizanne Madigan of TIBS, Scott Hanson of Rossiter Boats and Andy Blenkarn of Desmasdons who were all instrumental in making this arrangement happen.

A Painting, a Friendship, a Donation

by Kathy Weekes Southee, Cognashene



This is the tale of a painting, a friendship that began in 1952 and a common love of Georgian Bay. Our parents, Jack and Joyce Weekes, had been spending holidays at my uncle Napier Simpson's land in Honey Harbour for several years. By 1952 they had decided to buy their own piece of land. My father's law associate, Nelles Starr, knew that there was land available on the East Shore of Ship Island, in the Cognashene area. The current owners of this property were an American couple named Stuart and Nancy McKenzie.

Mom and Dad, with my two older brothers, went to visit the McKenzie's at their rambling old cottage on McLeod Island. My parents' goal was to buy a property large enough that it could eventually be split into four pieces when their children were old enough to settle into their own cottages. Stuart had property on the east side of Ship Island that was the perfect size but he had plans to sell this property as three lots.

When it became clear that the goal of Stuart and Nancy McKenzie was quite different than the hopes of the Weekes family, my parents got up to leave. Twice this happened and each time Stuart and Nancy called them back saying, "But we'd like for you to have the land." The McKenzie's were quite taken with my two older brothers, 9 year old John and 4 ½ year old Bob, and with my young parents who were enthusiastically trying to find their own piece of paradise in Georgian Bay. By the end of that visit, Stuart had promised my parents two of the three lots with a suggestion that the third lot might be sold to them at a later date.

With great delight, my Mom and Dad agreed to this plan. During that fateful afternoon, the McKenzie and Weekes families began a friendship that continued until the McKenzies died years later having sold their island and left Georgian Bay.

Stuart's parents were among the first cottagers in the southern part of Cognashene. They were friends with other early cottagers, Orville Wright on Lambert Island and Esther Williams on Waubeck Island. In those early years, the McKenzie family acquired a number of paintings by Tom Thompson and the young artists who

became the Group of Seven. By 1970, Stuart had died and Nancy had fallen on hard times. She had previously given my mother a JEH MacDonald sketch painted in Thornhill, called "Among the Wheat". Mom and Dad, wanting to help Nancy, decided to take the painting to the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg to see if it might fetch some much needed cash for Nancy. Mr. McMichael told my mother that there had been a burst of enthusiasm for the Group of Seven but that now, in 1970, this small painting would not be worth more than \$500 if you could find a dealer to sell it. Upon hearing of the visit to the gallery, Nancy wrote back to Mom, "I gave you the painting because I so much wanted you to have it. Both of you have been so wonderful to me. The least I could do is share the beauty of Canada with you."

Now we will fast forward to 2014. John, Bob and I had one more decision to make regarding our parents' estates - what to do with the JEH MacDonald? Bob contacted several galleries who were not interested in it. We then approached Heffel Auction House and met with their JEH MacDonald specialist from Calgary, Lisa Christensen. She was very excited to see this "undiscovered" small painting that had never been sold in the open market. At this point, we decided that it would make sense to put the painting into the Heffel auction and then donate the sale proceeds of our little painting to the Georgian Bay Land Trust in memory of our friendship with Stuart and Nancy McKenzie and our common love of Georgian Bay. This is what happened; a friendship that started in 1952 with the purchase of our land has been honoured by this gift. There is a lovely sense of the circle having been closed.

In memory of Stuart and Nancy McKenzie who generously shared their love of Georgian Bay with the Weekes Family

Bayscapes Art Auction

by Mary Ann Sayers, Chair

If you were in attendance at this year's GBLT Bayscapes Art Auction, you are probably still remembering all the fun, art, media and folks who raised more than a few glasses to support our Land Trust. In fact, we raised more than \$40,000 during the event that took place at the spectacular St. James Cathedral space this past November.

This event was a bit of a departure from Bayscapes in the past in that we had our first 'selfie station', we offered up very cool branded sunglasses and kookies, and we created our very own Georgian Bay Breeze cocktail!

We also built on our history and successes of the past with beautiful paintings from local artists and picture postcards from young aspiring artists from various recreation programs.

Our thanks go to every volunteer who made this event possible, to Janet Loughheed for her energy and leadership, to our generous sponsors and to our creative and talented artists. And a special thank you to everyone who participated in the evening's event. Another great GBLT memory!

Winterlude



Featuring our two Rock Stars
Ed Bartram and Nick Eyles

Thursday March 5th
Bishop Strachan School -
6:00 pm Reception 7:30 pm Talk
Come and join us for an evening
featuring a partnership in appreciation of
rocks. Listen as Ed and Nick, who have
both featured on documentaries about

Georgian Bay, discuss their respective work with rocks and share their love
of the Canadian Shield with you.

Ed Bartram

Over the past 30 years, Ed Bartram, one of Canada's foremost painter/
printmakers, has consistently found his source of inspiration to be the
rugged northern landscape of the Precambrian Shield.

Unlike his predecessors, such as the Group of Seven, Bartram explores
contemporary techniques and influences to focus upon the abstract and
dynamic elements in the landscape. With his innovative techniques,
he effectively captures the powerful forces that were at work during the
formation of Georgian Bay's metamorphic bedrock.

Nick Eyles

Nick Eyles, P.Geo, holds a Ph.D (East Anglia) and D.Sc. (Leicester) and is
a Professor of Geology at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
where he has taught for more than 30 years. Nick's prime research interest
is in glacial sedimentology and he has over 30 years experience of field
work on modern glaciers and ice sheets from Antarctica to the Arctic.

In 2013, he was awarded the McNeil Medal by the Royal Society of
Canada for his outstanding ability to promote and communicate science
to students and the public across Canada. Previous award winners include
Jay Ingram and David Suzuki.

The GBLT thanks Ed and Nick for their long-term commitment to preserving
the wild places on Georgian Bay and sharing their interest with us.

See the website for more details about the evening.

Alan Milliken Heisey Sr., May 20, 1928 - Nov 2, 2014



Al spent almost 80 years in the Honey
Harbour/Cognashene area, first as a
camper then as a cottager. He founded the
quarterly newspaper Georgian Bay Today,
was the originator of the Honey Harbour
Patriotic Wooden Boat parade and he and
his wife Barbara were active members of
the Cognashene Community Church.
To quote from his obituary, "he was an
active promoter of civic beautification, the

wearing of ties, the art of the sung grace, bread and gravy as dessert, do-it-
yourself plumbing, wiring and taxes, and being generous with hugs". Al was
a great supporter and promoter of the GBLT through his newspaper and
daily life and now through the many memorial donations that have been
received in his name.

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Tribute Gifts

Received from April 23 to December 18, 2014

In Honour

Swith Bell
Jennifer Beretta
Jamie and Gillian Coyles
Geordie and Louisa
Dalglish
Brien and Nancy Dane
Suchitra Davies-Webb
Adrienne, Bob, Doug, and
Jamie Deeks

Frank Huggins
Wally and Marilyn King
Bill Loughheed
Bill Montgomery
Brad Netkin
Elizabeth Ross
Mary Sarjeant
Gregg Scott
Betty Stanley

The wedding guests of Geoff Graham and Heather Howes
The wedding guests of Jordan Huibers and Jessica Clarke

In Memory

Sara Bastedo
Stephen Blundy
John Boynton
Patricia G. Christie
James Clark
Mary Gray
Ross Gray
Irving Harris
Norman Hayward
Alan Milliken Heisey
Peter Kewin
George Kilpatrick
Larry Later
John Leishman

Hartland MacDougall
Neil MacNaughton
Frank Martin
Stuart and Nancy McKenzie
Sally McLarty
T.D. Melhuish
Tim Nesbitt
Terry Nichol
June Nichols
Dr. Norman Pearson
Durelle Sanderson
Jean Veach



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