GEORGIAN BAY LAND TRUST
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WINTER 2020

LANDSCRIPT

PROTECTING the WILDERNESS of our UNIQUE ARCHIPELAGO

Working together for species at risk

What do black bears do in winter?

Your guide to citizen science apps

Climate change and conservation

photo: Blanding's Turtle by Don Ford

Federal funding supports species at risk partnership on Georgian Bay

Eastern Ribbonsnakes are one of 50 species at risk that call the Georgian Bay area home. Photo by Sarah Koetsier

Georgian Bay organizations and governments are coming together in a new partnership to strengthen our collective capacity for the protection of species at risk. Designed to improve regional natural heritage planning and resources, facilitate information sharing, and implement on-the-ground species recovery efforts, the partnership will have a positive impact on species survival now and well into the future. The project has been awarded $1.9 million from Canada's Nature Fund, a $500 million investment in land and species protection announced by the federal government in 2018.

The project was conceived in the spring of 2019 in response to a federal call for applications to the Community-Nominated Priority Places (CNPP) program, a subset of the Species Stream of the Nature Fund. The CNPP program was designed to fund collaborative, community-driven projects that will improve outcomes for at-risk species in important geographic areas. Recognizing the enormous potential for this kind of work in the Georgian Bay area, the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve brought together community partners to discuss our common goals, challenges, and opportunities. What emerged was a proposed 4-year project that would harness the partners' combined expertise in research, planning, and mitigation work to significantly strengthen species protections throughout the region.

On September 4, 2019 then-Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna visited Toronto to launch the CNPP program. We were delighted when she announced that Georgian Bay was chosen as one of 15 inaugural CNPPs across the country. The award recognizes the immense ecological importance of Georgian Bay within Canada, and the significant impact that our collaborative partnership will have on species at risk. Environment and Climate Change Canada will provide $1.9 million over 4 years to the project, which will be shared among our community partners. Each dollar provided by the Canadian government must be matched by recipient organizations through fundraising and in-kind contributions, so we will need the ongoing support of our community through matching dollars.

Georgian Bay is an ideal place for this work because of its concentration of species and strong local support for protecting them. The Georgian Bay Biosphere is recognized by UNESCO for its unique and high quality habitat, which is home to 50 species at risk including Blanding's Turtle, Massasauga Rattlesnake, Algonquin Wolf, and Eastern Whip-poor-will. The area has become a refuge for many animals whose numbers have significantly declined in other parts of the province, but even here they face increasing threats from road mortality, habitat loss, and climate change. Despite this, our coastal region at present lacks a region-wide conservation strategy to scientifically guide land use and assist species at risk in their quest to survive. Responsibility falls to the numerous separate governments, institutions, and community groups operating within the region.

Core Project Partners

- Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve
- Georgian Bay Land Trust
- Magnetawan First Nation
- Shawanaga First Nation

Supporting Partners

- Birds Canada
- Carling Township
- Georgian Bay Township
- Killbear Provincial Park
- Township of the Archipelago
- Wasauksing First Nation
- West Parry Sound Geography Network

An Eastern Musk Turtle found on a roadway in Honey Harbour. Road mortality is one of the leading causes of death among reptiles in our area, and is an issue that this project will help address. Photo by Sarah Koetsier

This new partnership is designed to "accelerate our collective capacity to address threats to species at risk with better planning and policy tools, science-based management, and strategies to reduce the threats to these species," says Greg Mason, General Manager of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve. By creating a collaborative structure focused on species conservation, the project will facilitate constructive knowledge sharing and coordinated planning to improve outcomes for species across the region. Each organization will see their effectiveness improve as we share expertise, tools, and momentum.

One of these tools will be a new Decision Support System that will help municipalities, First Nations, and other organizations align their activities with best practices for species at risk. The system will incorporate scientific and traditional knowledge, and include protocols for collecting pertinent information and applying it in a variety of situations. For example, townships will be able to find guidance on when to grade roads so as not to disturb nesting turtles, or when to cut and not to cut roadside vegetation in order to encourage and protect Monarch reproduction.

A second outcome will be improved land use planning tools for use by the region's seven municipalities and nine First Nations. The Georgian Bay Land Trust is taking the lead on updating our ecosystem mapping, which will feed into a digital biodiversity atlas accessible to everyone making planning decisions in the area. The project will also establish a multi-stakeholder Conservation Planning and Action Framework to draft collective planning guidelines for the region that incorporate Indigenous leadership and expertise.

A specific focus of the project will be road mortality, which together with habitat loss poses one of the biggest threats to species in the region. We will be drawing on the road ecology expertise of Magnetawan First Nation to

Monarch Butterflies are one of many at-risk species that will benefit from improved tools for local decision-making. Photo by Sally Lennox

identify priority sites for monitoring and data collection, and using this information to recommend key places for mitigation measures. One of the options considered will be ecopassages (tunnels that allow species to move safely beneath roadways), which have been used successfully to protect populations of Massasauga Rattlesnakes at Killbear Provincial Park. We will also be working with municipalities to prevent further road development in critical areas.

The Georgian Bay Land Trust's role in the project will focus on mapping critical habitats and corridors for species movement, increasing our array of Motus bird tracking stations, and working with municipalities to reduce habitat fragmentation. We are already benefiting from the increased collaboration this project has inspired, and are excited to continue to grow our impact as it proceeds.

In the words of Greg Mason: "Over four years, our project will result in more effective landscape governance for priority species in the Georgian Bay Biosphere region. It will protect ecosystem services, and will help to mitigate the impacts of climate change, while creating jobs in the conservation sector." We're so grateful to Environment and Climate Change Canada for their support, and are looking forward to working with our capable and committed partners and the many other community groups, First Nations, and organizations that will be part of this project over the next four years and beyond.

Members of Wasauksing First Nation, Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, and Georgian Bay Land Trust with Minister Catherine McKenna in Toronto

Georgian Bay **QUERY:**

What do black bears do in winter?

Martyn Obbard and Black Bear yearling

Answered by Dr. Martyn Obbard

Black bears are often demonized in our society, in part because their biology is sometimes poorly understood. With increased knowledge can come an enhanced appreciation. Hopefully some of the following aspects of their biology will provide a new perspective on these fascinating animals.

Black bears mate in June or early July when they are in the poorest physical condition of their annual cycle. Their main foods may be weeks away, and if natural foods fail, females likely will not be able to raise cubs successfully. Females exhibit a phenomenon called *delayed implantation*, whereby the fertilized egg begins to develop but then pauses and floats free in the uterus until the fall, when the main food sources become available. If it has been a productive food year and the female is in good body condition, and by inference could raise cubs successfully, the fertilized egg then implants in the wall of the uterus and active gestation of about 60 days begins. If the female is in poor condition, the zygotes are simply resorbed and the female passes up the opportunity to reproduce. Because females typically implant in October in Ontario, most black bear cubs are born in the first or second week of January each year. They are small (~ 300 g, or about a half pound), blind, and naked when born but grow fairly rapidly on mother's rich milk. When spring arrives and the family leaves the den, cubs are about 4-5 kg in weight, and may be ten times this by the following fall when the family group enters a winter den again.

Black bears spend up to 7 *months* in a winter den in Ontario. During that time they neither eat nor drink, nor do they urinate or defecate. How they do this is another example of their amazing adaptations. Hibernation is a response to an extended time of the year when no food is available. In response to lack of food in winter, mammals such as jumping mice store food, then lower their body temperatures dramatically during hibernation to reduce energy demands, however they must rouse frequently to urinate, defecate and feed on stored food before slipping back into torpor. Black bears do it differently. Rather than having food stored in the den, a black bear's winter food supply is the fat stored on its body. When fat is metabolized and the energy is used to maintain body processes, including body temperature, the end products are water and carbon dioxide. Water is retained for body processes and carbon dioxide is exhaled when breathing. In contrast, when protein is metabolized, ammonia is a toxic byproduct which must be removed from circulation. Because bears largely depend on stored fat for energy in winter, they don't metabolize much protein, but any ammonia that accumulates in the blood is broken down quickly into amino acids and then used as the building blocks for protein repair during normal processes. As a result, there is no buildup of toxic ammonia and no need to urinate. Because bears aren't eating solid food once in the den, there is also no accumulation of waste in the intestines and no need to defecate.

A pregnant female black bear will awaken from her sleep to give birth. She will eat the placenta and wake at further intervals to groom and nurse her cub(s). Thus an active mother spends more time awake in her den than do other bears.

Other physiological responses seem aimed at conserving energy stores while hibernating. For example, heart rate can drop to about 20 beats per minute and breathing rate to less than 10 per minute. However, body temperature only drops a few degrees meaning that bears can be easily roused while in the den. Humans who are bed-ridden must be moved frequently, otherwise they can develop bed sores, and perhaps more importantly they lose muscle mass. Black bears adjust position often while in the den, but they also have endogenous (internal) rhythms of muscle twitching, which means there is little loss of muscle mass over winter. The force of gravity acting on leg bones is required to stimulate the re-building of bone tissue, which is why elderly people are encouraged to keep walking as they age. However, black bears don't show evidence of bone density loss while fairly inactive in the den. It turns out that bone is continually re-building in bears in the winter and this is under hormonal control—another example of the truly fascinating adaptations that enable black bears to survive the long period of winter dormancy and be ready to greet the new spring season.

Dr. Martyn Obbard is an emeritus research scientist formerly with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and probably the foremost expert on bears in Ontario. Dr. Obbard has studied both American Black Bear and Polar Bear for most of his career.

Walking for Wilderness

Our adventurous crew at the end of the hike.

Fundraising is always more fun when you can do it on Georgian Bay! The Georgian Bay Land Trust's inaugural "Walking for Wilderness" event was held September 28 on Beausoleil Island, and was a resounding success with over $11,000 raised to benefit the Land Trust's conservation efforts.

19 people joined us for a 4-hour hike around the northern trails of Beausoleil, where we transitioned from southern moraine to Canadian Shield, and from morning drizzles to afternoon sunshine. Along the way, we encountered all sorts of interesting flora and fauna with the help of our knowledgeable and passionate guide, Georgian Bay Islands National Park naturalist Mike Lavin.

We came across bear scat—still full of berry seeds, indicating that they hadn't yet switched over to their fall diet of nuts and acorns—and multiple flocks of warblers who were gathering together to prepare for southbound migration. One of our guests nearly walked right into a caterpillar on a leaf, which was an opportunity to learn about the allergic reaction-inducing histamine contained in its black tufts.

Mike also told us the story of Fairy Lake, the beautiful lake within the island. Anishinaabe legend says it is the home of Miinkekwe (Blueberry Picking Woman), who often picked berries in the area until she was captured and killed by the beast Migcheshibzhii. After a struggle with the spirit Nanabozhoo, Migcheshibzhii was also killed, and his body now forms the outline of Beausoleil. Miinkekwe's spirit still lives in the area, and it is said that you can sometimes hear her singing around Fairy Lake.

The highlight of the day occurred towards the end of the walk, when we encountered five juvenile Massasauga Rattlesnakes curled up in close proximity to each other, soaking up the afternoon sunshine. A sixth, slightly older snake was found a few hundred metres away. As anyone familiar with Georgian Bay knows, these threatened snakes have a history of persecution by humans, and in the past even national parks were not a safe refuge. However, as awareness of the threats facing rattlesnakes and their important role in our ecosystem have spread, interest in living alongside these magnificent creatures has grown. Beausoleil Island is once again home to a thriving population of Massasauga Rattlesnakes, and it was so wonderful to see a new generation making their way into the world.

All of the hikers had an excellent time, and before the day was over talk was already turning to next year. We're thrilled by the success of this event and look forward to making it an annual expedition. Thank you to all who came out and donated to the cause, and to Georgian Bay Islands National Park for their generous partnership.

We hope many of you will join us when we head out again next year!

Conservation and Climate Change

LandMark Speaker Series with Dan Kraus, Senior Conservation Biologist, Nature Conservancy of Canada

Climate change—if you're not worried about it, you're not paying attention. Biodiversity loss—likewise. These two challenges, whose consequences touch most aspects of our lives, are intimately connected. The solutions are connected too. This past summer, Dan Kraus of the Nature Conservancy of Canada joined us to talk about the role that conservation plays in climate change mitigation, and how we can all contribute to progress on both of these critically important issues.

The basic science of climate change has been well established for many years, and we are now in a position where the effects of climate change are being increasingly felt. In addition to a well-documented global temperature rise, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, sea levels are up 17cm (almost 7") and continuing to rise, wildfires are more frequent and severe. At the same time, the world is experiencing a human-caused biodiversity crisis, with 1 million species at risk of extinction according to a recent UN report. Climate change will increasingly feed into and worsen this crisis as it changes habitats, facilitates the spread of invasive species, and wreaks havoc on seasonal patterns.

Dan's message is that, while we're feeling concern for the natural world, we should remember that nature itself is remarkably resilient and holds many of the solutions that we need to combat the climate crisis. By taking the kinds of conservation actions that protect species and their habitats, we can also protect ourselves against some of the worst forecasts of climate change.

One of the primary reasons nature is important in the fight against climate change is because of the amount of carbon it stores. The role of forests in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is well known, but equally important are the wetlands that can store centuries or millennia worth of carbon in their slow-decaying soils. It's estimated that the carbon stored in Canada's forests and peatlands is equivalent to about 1/5th of all the carbon in the atmosphere today. If those areas were to be degraded, our global greenhouse gas levels would rise dramatically.

In addition to keeping greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere, nature is incredibly important in helping to temper some of the expected effects of climate change. Wetlands have always played an integral role in flood control, and as extreme rainfall events increase, it's more important than ever that we retain these "sinks" to slow and absorb excess water. Some economists have put dollar values on the services that ecosystems provide, from temperature regulation to air and water purification to drought prevention. All of these services will be essential as we grapple with climate change in the coming decades.

The same natural spaces that will help us adapt to climate change also provide habitat to those 1 million threatened species, so by protecting these spaces we help more than just ourselves. One of the best things we can do to help other species withstand climate change is to protect natural networks and habitat corridors that allow them the flexibility to move in response to changing conditions. No matter how much we reduce carbon pollution in the coming decade, the climate changes we have already created will be with us for generations, and we know this means many species will need to alter their home ranges. In Dan's words, "ecological corridors … are absolutely critical if we want to provide nature a chance to adapt to a world that is changing."

Dan believes "there isn't any better investment we can make than in nature". So how do we encourage this investment in society at large? One place to start, Dan says, is to stop framing the issue in ways that separate people from nature. Imagining the world as split into a strict dichotomy of natural or human spaces is inaccurate and unhelpful. Humans have always been a part of nature, and we need to re-emphasize this relationship as we find ways to live more sustainably in the places we call home.

We can reignite the human relationship with nature by talking about the ways everyone benefits from and can engage with it, and not just passionate naturalists. We should work on increasing our local environmental literacy—teach kids about Ontario's at-risk turtles in addition to Giant Pandas. We should honour Indigenous knowledge and land management practices, for example, forest management strategies that include regular small fires instead of unpredictable large blazes. Dan recommends that we recognize the current situation as a crisis (because "as a species, we're better at responding to crises than being proactive") but that we simultaneously emphasize the hopeful opportunities for transformation that this presents. Humanity has worked together to solve crises before; we should be able to do it again.

Ultimately, re-connecting people to nature and protecting the wild places around us has the power not only to help us through humanity's biggest crisis, but also to improve life for communities and individuals all over the world.

What are we waiting for?

***Dan Kraus** is the Nature Conservancy of Canada's Senior Conservation Biologist. He has extensive experience in landscape and species conservation, ranging from ecological inventories and population studies to long term recovery strategies and conservation planning. Dan serves on the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) and is a founding member of the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. Dan is also an expert on the Great Lakes, and has co-authored conservation strategies for all four Canadian Great Lakes.*

Species Spotlight:

Smooth Greensnake:

The Gem of Georgian Bay

by Kenny Ruelland, Reptile and Amphibian Advocacy

Smooth Greensnake by Kenny Ruelland

A Smooth Greensnake in habitat. Photo by Kenny Ruelland

The Smooth greensnake (*Opheodrys vernalis*), known to some as "Ontario's Gem", is an exceptionally pretty snake species whose range extends throughout most of the province. Their broad range is challenged though by localized populations and a spotty distribution. In Georgian Bay, Greensnakes seem to be relatively abundant with many observations submitted annually from the area. In 1965, it was noted that the species seems to be rare in the Sturgeon Bay area of Georgian Bay (Pointe au Baril), but has more recently been described as common elsewhere in the eastern Georgian Bay area. There is much that is not known about this species across its global range. In this Species Spotlight, we will examine what we do know about my personal favourite, the Smooth greensnake.

Description

This intriguing little snake will leave you in awe—if you are lucky enough to spot it. It is a "cryptic" species, meaning very well camouflaged to blend into its surroundings. Sometimes growing up to a length of 66 cm, but generally reaching around 30-50 cm, they are considered a small-medium sized snake species. Smooth greensnakes examined in the 1970s in the Georgian Bay area averaged 45.7cm in length. As implied by their common name, they sport an olive to lime green colour with no pattern, and a creamy white to yellow belly, making them extremely hard to detect in vegetation. The "smooth" part of the common name is derived from the species having unkeeled scales. This feature is what makes them look like a rubber toy and feel incredibly… well, smooth! By comparison, the Northern Watersnake (*Nerodia s. sipedon*) and Massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*), two other snakes species found in Georgian Bay, have keeled scales, giving a rough appearance and feel.

Behaviour/Habitat

Due to the behaviour and incredible camouflage of the greensnake, they are less commonly observed than other small, diurnal snake species in the province. In many cases, the only observations are of individuals killed by cars or lawn mowers, further demonstrating their crypsis. Greensnakes are known as an extremely docile species as they typically never bite or even musk (a foul smelling secretion to deter predators). They can be found in a wide variety of habitats such as wooded areas, rock barrens, prairies, and even developed areas, but are most commonly associated with grassy meadows and fields close to a permanent water source. In the Georgian Bay area, they are often found along the edges of bogs and fens.

Diet

The Smooth greensnake is one of the few insectivorous species of snake in Ontario. A study of the stomach contents of 19 snakes from London found that caterpillars (particularly Phalaenidae) and spiders made up the majority of their diet, the remainder being moths, crickets and surprisingly Praying mantis. In the Georgian Bay area, "hairless" caterpillars have been reported to form an important part of the species' diet.

Interesting Facts

An oviparous (egg-laying) species, the Smooth greensnake has been known to have an extremely short incubation period of only 2-4 days. Pesticides likely affect Smooth greensnake populations through the reduction of prey densities and bioaccumulation of toxins. This species turns from bright green to a brilliant blue colour after death due to the yellow pigment quickly breaking down, leaving only the blue pigment behind. This is known as "post-mortem blue". Interestingly, completely blue, live individuals have also been reported from eastern Georgian Bay over the years. This genetic mutation is known as "axanthism".

Do you have a species you'd like to see spotlighted in an upcoming issue? Send us your suggestion at ***info@gblt.org****.*

Citizen Science and Nature Apps

Have you ever spotted an amazing butterfly that you have never seen before? Or wondered what that beautiful wildflower growing near your cottage is? Well, there's an app for that! Not only can you use your phone's camera to help identify just about any plant or animal you encounter, you can also use apps and interactive websites to discover which rare species are in your area, connect with other amateur naturalists, share photos, and organize your checklists. Most importantly, by simply recording an observation of what you see around you in nature, you are helping to create a large, real-time record of local flora and fauna that scientists can use to monitor and protect biodiversity across Canada and the world.

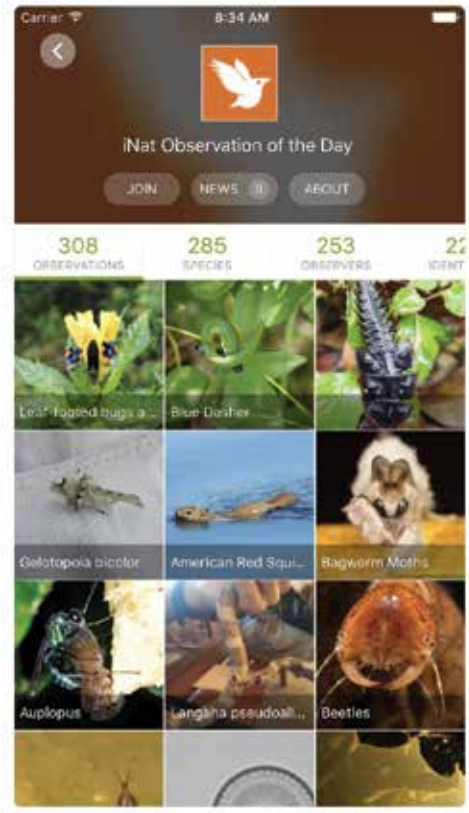
Below, we've rounded up a few of our favourite apps and websites that can turn you into a citizen scientist.

iNaturalist Canada

(free app for Android and iPhone)

iNaturalist Canada has over 52,000 users across the country, and has documented more than 21,500 species. With the app, you can 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. You can also help with specific projects, like local "bioblitz" events to track a certain species at risk, or canvas a specific area. The Canadian version of the app is run by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Parks Canada, NatureServe Canada, and the Royal Ontario Museum, and it is part of a global iNaturalist network.

For more information, visit *www.inaturalist.ca*



eBird

(free app for Android and iPhone)

eBird is the world's largest birding community, with more than 100 million bird sightings contributed each year. You can use the app to upload your birding checklists, then login to the website to explore detailed distribution maps, learn about birding hotspots, and find out about rare birds spotted in your area. You can also participate in global birding events, like the Christmas Bird Count and Global Big Day. eBird is run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

For more information, visit *www.ebird.org/content/canada*

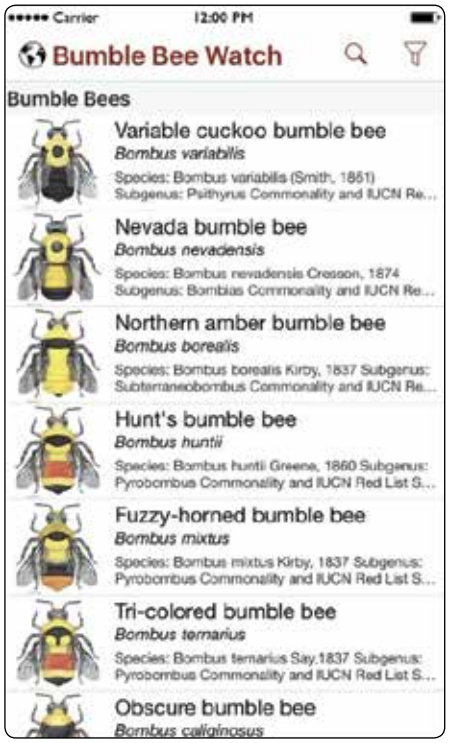
Note that many of these apps need to use your phone's location and access your camera in order to work properly. To make sure you are comfortable, please review the terms of agreement and adjust your privacy settings before downloading any apps.

Bumble Bee Watch

(free app for Android and iPhone)

Bumble Bee Watch is a collaborative effort to track and conserve bumble bees across North America. It has over 8,300 users across North America and has received over 40,000 observations with photos. You can submit a photo of a bumble bee, use the online key to help you identify the type based on your location and the bumble bee's color patterns, and then a volunteer expert will verify your ID. The data collected is used to enhance bumble bee conservation efforts, such as planning habitat for pollinator parks. Bumble Bee Watch is run by The Xerces Society, the University of Ottawa, Wildlife Preservation Canada, BeeSpotter, The Natural History Museum, London, and the Montreal Insectarium.

For more information, visit *www.bumblebeewatch.org*



eButterfly

(website)

eButterfly is an international, data-driven project dedicated to butterfly biodiversity, conservation, and education. You can create an account to record and track your butterfly observations, explore interactive maps, learn more about butterflies, and share your photos on their interactive website. Experts will review your submissions before they are entered into the database. eButterfly was developed at the University of Ottawa, and is run in partnership with Espace pour la vie in Montreal, the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and the University of Arizona.

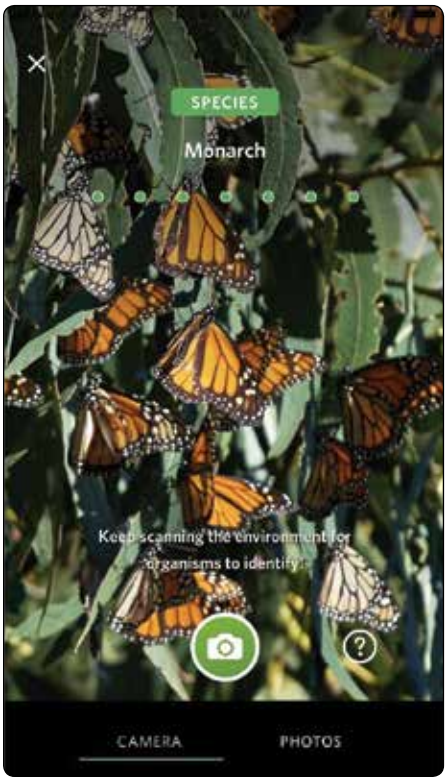
For more information, visit *www.e-butterfly.org*

Seek

(free app for Android and iPhone)

Seek helps you identify plants and animals using your smartphone's camera. Using image recognition technology based on observations submitted to iNaturalist, Seek shows you common flora and fauna in your area, and helps you identify and learn more about what you are looking at. Seek is family friendly, and includes fun monthly observation challenges to earn badges. Seek was made by iNaturalist, with support from Our Planet on Netflix and WWF, among others.

For more information, visit *www.inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app*



EDDMapS Ontario

(free app for Android and iPhone)

EDDMapS Ontario tracks and maps invasive species across the province. Users can submit information and photos about suspected invasive species, which are then reviewed by experts. Once confirmed, the information is made publicly available for use by scientists, conservationists, and the public. Since its launch, over 51,000 records of invasive species have been logged across Ontario. The Ontario version of the app is supported by the Canada/Ontario Invasive Species Centre, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

For more information, visit *www.eddmaps.org/ontario/about*

Property Spotlight:

Alexander family history at American Camp Island

by Andy Alexander, American Camp Steward

According to the Deed of Land between my great grandfather, Sir Douglas Alexander, and Walter Gillespie, American Camp Island (aka Island 251) officially became an Alexander island on June 30, 1906. However, for all practical purposes, American Camp was already "in the family," since the property was transferred to Sir Douglas for "consideration of the sum of two dollars lawful money of Canada" by his brother-in-law.

The Alexander Islands—a name I don't think the family has ever used—largely took shape in the first decade of the 20th century. The now inhabited islands, including Island 8 where the original cottage of Wah Wah Taysee still sits, were purchased a bit earlier, but in 1906, Sir Douglas, the newly minted president of Singer Manufacturing Company, felt sufficiently flush to purchase no fewer than 132 parcels of land in 25 deeds of transfer in less than one month's time. More land was added in the next two decades, including large swaths of mainland extending northwest up the shore.

As an amateur photographer who developed film in a bathroom/darkroom while in residence at Wah Wah Taysee, Sir Douglas' wife Hilly documented activities on the Bay extensively, which is primarily how we know that American Camp has always held a special interest for the family. Like my family now, my ancestors were particularly drawn to American Camp during dramatic weather: howling westerly winds, impressive rollers, and the towering and explosive sprays that punctuate the shoreline. They visited in all conditions, of course, including for picnics and various recreations. Family lore is that the name American Camp was coined because Sir Douglas and Hilly were New Yorkers, unlike everyone else in the family who had elected to remain in Canada after Sir Douglas' father Andrew Alexander emigrated from Scotland in 1871. I like to think of the unusual name of the island as further evidence of just how important the land was to my great grandfather.

The Crown's original asking price for American Camp is lost to history, but it is certainly safe to surmise that it was much closer to the two dollars my great grandfather paid for it than its assessment value for taxes in 2004 when my father donated it to the Nature Conservancy of Canada so that it could ultimately become part of the Georgian Bay Land Trust. My family, from the very beginnings of Sir Douglas' era, has been fiercely protective of the land, so the decision to donate American Camp did not come easily. The decision was, of course, in part a financial one, but ultimately it came down to the question of keeping the land in as natural a state as possible for as long as possible. Such hopes depend entirely on dedicated, capable stewardship. For about 100 years my family stewarded American Camp—a small blip in geological terms—and now this task falls to the Georgian Bay Land Trust and all those who visit this magnificent island.

In the summer of 2018, my wife Rachel and I had the opportunity to join one of Dr. Nick Eyles' "rock walks" on American Camp, where for us the crush and expanse of geologic history finally coalesced with what we knew of family history. American Camp and the surrounding archipelago are geologically significant in the sense that they have (for now) outlasted all the other geological layers of earth under which they formed over billions of years. The rock itself is beautiful evidence of the island's violent origins, but also a reminder of just how important it is to know and respect our histories, our origins. American Camp was and still is an important part of my family's origins on the Bay. I hope all who visit now and in the future will consider themselves to be as fortunate as my family has been to steward such a special island.

Central pond at American Camp

Members of the Alexander family at American Camp

American Camp and Alexander Islands
Guest Conduct Guide

American Camp Island is one of the Georgian Bay Land Trust's best-known Nature Reserves. American Camp and the Alexander Islands were received through the generosity of conservation-minded donors Doug Alexander and Lyn Gillespie. We ask all guests to accept responsibility for preserving these islands' ecological values by following the guidelines below.

Public-access vs. non-public conservation lands

- GBLT's conservation work on public-access Nature Reserves allows "leave no trace" interaction with the natural environment while preserving ecological integrity
- GBLT's conservation policy on non-public-access Nature Reserves allows biodiversity to thrive free from human stressors
- This balance preserves the ecological health of the Georgian Bay coast, and benefits all

To satisfy these mandates, American Camp Island and its immediate neighbour, Andrew's Island, are the only public-access parts of a larger GBLT-protected Alexander archipelago. The non-public areas of this larger island group contribute significantly to the maintenance of ecosystem health and biodiversity in the Wah Wah Taysee area. Several of these islands have been painted with conspicuous red dots to reinforce that they are non-public access and are off limits to visitors.

Visitor limits

In accordance with conservation goals, we have to limit the number of visitors to American Camp and Andrew's Island.

A red flag or flags flying from American Camp Island signifies the property is at its visitor capacity. At these times we ask that visitors cooperate with the GBLT Students and Stewards and **not land**. We will have real time web-based technology in place by summer 2020 for visitors to check if the island is at capacity.

The busiest times at American Camp are fair weather summer weekends, particularly those before, during and after the August long weekend. The wisdom on these days is to arrive early, or to choose another destination.

A few rules to follow when visiting American Camp or Andrew's Island:

- When the red flag is hoisted, please do not land anywhere in the Alexander Islands
- Please leave no human trace
- Please leave no trace of any pet
- Please limit the length of your stay to 4 hours on busy days so that others can visit
- To allow fair access to all, please do not arrive with a group of more than 10 people**
- Please honour the wildlife and vegetation on this island, and appreciate its unspoiled beauty
- Our "no loud music policy" respects that this is a place for tranquility, for the sound of the birds, the wind, and waves
- Please read the VISITOR'S GUIDE available on the island and on our website: www.gblt.org/enjoying-land/property-visiting-guidelines. These rules protect the integrity of American Camp and all other GBLT properties.
- Please come, enjoy, and help preserve this place

***Any group larger than 10 people wishing to picnic on American Camp Island must contact Brooks Greer at 416.440.1519 x103*

Red flags mean American Camp is at capacity and cannot accept additional visitors

2019

Photo contest winners

Congratulations to the winners of our 2019 photo contest! This year we wanted to see how you experienced the Georgian Bay Land Trust's protected properties, and the results were beautiful. Thanks for sharing your special moments with us.

People & Pets

WINNER: Tara Pape, The Lizard, Cognashene

RUNNER UP: Linda Gillespie, The Lizard, Cognashene

RUNNER UP: Abigail Sorensen, Little McCoy, Pointe au Baril

Sensational Scenery

RUNNER UP: Sarah McCoy, Little McCoy, Pointe au Baril

RUNNER UP: Linda Gillespie, American Camp, Wah Wah Taysee

WINNER: Jan Dowling, American Camp, Wah Wah Taysee

Wonderful Wildlife

WINNER: Tassie Brautigam, The Lizard, Cognashene

RUNNER UP: Jen Kernaghan, Little McCoy, Pointe au Baril

RUNNER UP: Jen Kernaghan, Little McCoy, Pointe au Baril

A wedding gift for Georgian Bay

This fall, Amanda Fracz and Dallas Taylor celebrated their marriage with a special tribute to the place that brought them together. In lieu of thank you gifts, the couple made a donation to the Georgian Bay Land Trust on behalf of each wedding guest.

Amanda and Dallas have a close connection to Georgian Bay. They met completing their graduate research in its picturesque coastal wetlands and spent three summers travelling along its beautiful coast, completing water quality work, and fish and turtle surveys. Contributing to the protection of land around Georgian Bay is important to the couple and they wanted to do what they could to help preserve the pristine Georgian Bay coast that means so much to their past, present, and future.

Thank you and congratulations Amanda and Dallas! We are so honoured to be a part of your special day, and we wish you many more years of happiness exploring Georgian Bay.

The Grant Moose Bay Reserve: A Land Gift Transition

The Georgian Bay Land Trust's latest protected property is one that we already know well.

In 2017, Doug and Ruth Grant entered into a Conservation Easement Agreement (CEA) with the Land Trust on a 13.4 acre parcel of family property, a commitment to leave the land undeveloped forever while still retaining ownership. At the end of this past August, the Grants made the generous decision to transition their CEA to an outright (Fee Simple) land donation to the GBLT.

The **Grant Moose Bay Reserve** is located in the central-west portion of the community of Wah Wah Taysee. The immediate area is largely mainland and is just inland from open Georgian Bay.

The Grant Moose Bay Reserve has been identified as a high priority area for biodiversity, and provides habitat for at least five documented at-risk species: Snapping Turtle, Eastern Ribbonsnake, Eastern Musk Turtle, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and Five-lined Skink. Its rich coastal marsh and inland thicket swamp are ideal turtle habitat, and are likely home to additional species.

Grant Moose Bay Reserve and neighbouring Kofman Reserve

The Grant reserve connects to the neighbouring 51-acre GBLT Kofman Moose Bay Reserve and is just across Moose Bay from the large O'Donnell Point Conservation Reserve, increasing the size of a valuable connected corridor. Such connections between protected areas greatly enhance the individual properties' conservation value, as they allow species to move freely within the habitat ranges they depend on for survival.

Thank you Doug and Ruth for your important additional contribution to this protected area.

Sponsors

Thanks to our generous sponsors

Thank You Jan Ruby!

by David Doritty, Incoming Chair, GBLT Board of Directors

How two years fly by! It seems like yesterday that a small group of directors ambushed Jan... rather, approached Jan to consider becoming the Chair of the GBLT. With a promise that continuity would remain regarding board members, and with Janny Vincent's guidance with transition to the role of Chair, Jan was in with both feet.

Jan's dedication to her new role, her kind and supportive nature, and most of all a desire and ability to get results, has made her term as chair a resounding success. I know that the board and the management team would agree that Jan was always respectful and inclusive in her approach as Chair of the GBLT.

Under Jan's watch, the GBLT has continued to gather momentum with many exciting new initiatives and land acquisitions. I would like to highlight two accomplishments that stand out in my view.

As many of us would agree, messaging the GBLT story line has been difficult for many individuals that we approach as donors. Messaging now has a new look under the Conservation Wheel, emphasizing not only our existing pillars of land conservation, planning and stewardship, but expanding our pitch to include conservation research and education. This new look has already begun to bear fruit as we approach existing and new donors.

Secondly, Jan would be the last one to take credit for any of the many land acquisitions that the GBLT has secured over the past two years, but I would be remiss if I didn't mention the time Jan spent on the negotiations for the Tadenac Conservation Initiative. Before her time as Chair, Jan also played an active role in protecting Pointe au Baril's Steamboat Channel Reserve.

Jan, we will all miss you in your role as Chair, but feel better knowing you will remain on the board for the following year. From all of us on the board and the management team we thank you for your time and dedication to the GBLT.

Board retirement: John Catto

This past June marked the retirement of the Georgian Bay Land Trust's longest-serving board member, John Catto. It is difficult to express how much John has contributed to the Land Trust since joining in 2005. Over the past fourteen years, John has served as a highly committed Treasurer, Stewardship Chair, property Lead Steward, and general volunteer. Accomplished naturalists, John and his wife Margaret have been among the most steadfast donors to our land protection work, ready to support the conservation of nature wherever it needs a helping hand. They've even protected it, literally, in their own backyard, by donating 20 acres of their Georgian Bay property to serve as a permanent, publicly-accessible nature reserve. Thank you, John, for your innumerable contributions to the Georgian Bay Land Trust and the natural world over so many years. We will miss you!

Welcome to our new Board Chair, David Doritty

by Jan Ruby, Outgoing Chair, GBLT Board of Directors

It is with great pleasure that I welcome David Doritty to the Chair of the Georgian Bay Land Trust Board. I have enjoyed an amazing experience as Chair for the past two years, and know that we are in very good hands with David at the helm.

David has served as a Director since 2012, holding many portfolios: Annual Fundraising Chair, Fundraising Chair, Board Development, Nominations, Governance and most recently, Vice Chair. In addition to these more formal roles, David has pitched in to help with many GBLT events, such as hosting a *LandMark* speaker event this summer, and supporting *Bayscapes* annually.

In addition to his broad experience with the GBLT, David recently completed the Rotman School of Business Institute of Corporate Directors certification, a comprehensive education program for directors. David is up to date on all contemporary requirements for successful directors and boards; a very important knowledge base for the GBLT going forward as we expand our conservation footprint on the east coast of the Bay, expand our influence with government funders and partners, and manage a growing asset portfolio. The roles of the GBLT's Board and its Chair are changing, and David is a perfect fit for these times.

David and his family have cottaged in Pointe au Baril for many years and although not born to it, David has become a passionate convert… the best kind!

All the best David!

WINTER 2020

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PROTECTING the WILDERNESS of our UNIQUE ARCHIPELAGO

Remembering Ed Bartram and Karl Schiefer

Ed Bartram
1938-2019

The Georgian Bay community has lost a beloved citizen and artist in Ed Bartram.

Ed painted Georgian Bay's rocks like no one else, showing the world the beauty and drama found in the bedrock of our bay. His passion for the natural world was evident not only in his art but in his life, on his beloved island and in his pursuits.

The Georgian Bay Land Trust was one of many organizations that benefitted from Ed's generosity and kindness throughout his life. His paintings, prints, and photographs were always a favourite at our Bayscapes auctions, and he was equally generous in sharing his time and knowledge in numerous ways. We are so lucky to have learned so much from him over many years.

It was always a joy to spend time with Ed, whose warmth, wisdom, creativity, and sense of humour shone through in everything he did. Georgian Bay won't be quite the same without him.

Karl Schiefer
1944-2019

It's hard to imagine someone more knowledgeable and passionate about Georgian Bay than Karl Schiefer. Karl dedicated his life to the natural world, and he helped shape the Georgian Bay Land Trust into what it is today.

Karl's academic background in ecology and lifelong career in the environmental sector made him a most valuable board member in the early days of the Land Trust, and later advisor and volunteer. Karl played an integral role in several land protection projects, and was known for his eye-opening presentations on the fascinating ecology of Georgian Bay. He was always willing to share his expertise and thoughtful advice with those who requested it.

Karl is remembered by many members of the Land Trust community not only for his valuable contributions to conservation but also for his incredible kindness, generosity, and friendship. He was someone who truly cared about others and the natural world around us, and he lived out those values every day of his life. We are forever indebted to him.

TributeGIFTS

Received from April 13th – November 5th 2019

In Honour

Doug Alexander
Fred Beck
Swith Bell & Geordie, Louisa, Marigold & George Dalglish
Barry Breeze
Vicki Carruthers
Dafel Family
Wedding guests of Amanda Fracz & Dallas Taylor
Hon. William G. Davis
Paul Deckert
Donna Kovacs
Doug & Brenda Malvern
Maggie Pepper
Susan & Tony Pigott
Michael Tafts
Everitt & Lillian Youngkin

In Memory

Ron Andrews
Ed Bartram
Claude Belcourt
John Birnbaum
John Paul "JP" Jeffrey
Mary Christine Karn
Steve Konoval
Garfield MacInnis
Dr. Mark McDermott
John McGuirk
Mike Mulholland
Gerald W. & Gail H. Murphy
Douglas Ross Norris
Anthony John Ormsby
Karl Schiefer
John Shipman

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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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