



Chair's Message

As another COVID-19 summer comes to an end, it is useful to reflect on the positive things around us. RWLT has accomplished a lot this year. Besides the very successful campaign to acquire the Warren Nature Reserve property, volunteers, supporters and staff have worked to address the ongoing responsibilities that all land trusts have. The acquisition of a property is only step one in those perpetual obligations. Baseline studies, management plans, monitoring, maintenance, taxes, administration and problem solving are all required on an ongoing basis.

Help comes in many forms! Donations, grants and Rock Dunder revenue have allowed RWLT to employ several highly qualified and motivated staff to undertake many of these tasks, allowing us to catch up with some overdue items and take part of the burden off our volunteers.

RWLT's business supporters are too numerous to list but they know who they are. Professionals have undertaken tasks and donated their fees back to RWLT. Contractors, aggregate suppliers and others regularly supply materials and labour at reduced cost. We are very thankful for this ongoing support in the community.



Help comes in many forms; read about support to RWLT

donations. More information is included on the inserts to this newsletter (and the RWLT website). It is hoped that more predictable revenues will better facilitate staffing decisions and workload planning.

On behalf of the RWLT Board, thank you for your support. Have a healthy autumn.
Peter Hannah

Problem Solving



Stone barrier placed to control site damage by unauthorized ATVs

From time to time RWLT is faced with unique challenges that require unique solutions. ATV damage to the Trust's Red Rock property was increasing. The potential solution was to create a 23 ton rock barrier. Hikers and dogs can still get through it but hopefully motorized vehicles will be discouraged.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chair's Message

Problem Solving

25 Stories Series

Toward a Leap

Students & Staff

Trail News

Donate!

Celebrating 25 Years

RWLT works with:

- American Friends of Canadian Conservation
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance

25 Stories Series

In celebrating RWLT's 25th anniversary, 25 stories about past milestones help focus us for the future. Selected ones appear in this newsletter, and all will be posted on the RWLT website.



*RWLT is celebrating
25 years of success*

Why Volunteer

25 Stories Series: As busy as many of us are, the idea of volunteering for no financial reward seems a daunting and

unlikely task. Why then did I find myself standing in a parking lot, directing cars and providing information to hikers as they prepared to go for their hike?

I was new to the area and wondering how to meet people in my community. I had read about RWLT and thought they were an interesting organization though I knew little about land trusts and their role. Slowly each weekend I met more people and learned more about RWLT and its role. The sense of purpose that each interaction provided became an increasingly important part of my week. As well, the opportunity to be outside and active certainly helped my physical and mental health.

Much has been written about how volunteering benefits individuals but its importance for organisations is integral. Non/not for profits depend on volunteers as funding and donations rarely allow them to pay for all the things/services that are required. Equally, volunteerism helps organisations ensure longevity and purpose towards its long term goals. As well, volunteerism helps build and enhance community.



*Volunteering has rewards,
for you and RWLT!*

How can you help you ask? Help is needed with everything from parking to trail maintenance, special events and on our Board, Please contact us at www.rwlt.org. We look forward to hearing from you, and maybe I'll see you in the parking lot!

Brenda Carter Property Stewardship

25 Stories Series: RWLT's Brenda Carter Nature Reserve is an important ecological piece in the Rideau Watershed for the diversity of habitat it contains.

The habitat on this property ranges from wetlands to mature deciduous forests to a large open meadow. Parts of two Provincially Significant Wetlands are found on the property – the Brassils Creek PSW and Marlborough Forest PSW. Brassils Creek is home to several species of waterfowl, turtles and species at risk. The forest and meadows, along with the nearby City of Ottawa's Marlborough Forest, also provide habitat for a wide variety of birds and snakes including whip-poor-wills, common nighthawks, smooth green snakes, and ring-necked snakes.



*Monitoring of species and habitat is part of developing
property management plans*

only be gathered 'in the field'. Surveys are conducted over the course of three seasons to thoroughly inventory the species and other ecological values on the property. This means many late nights, early mornings, wet feet and mosquito bitten arms! Based on the findings, conservation targets are identified. Threats to these targets (such as invasive species, climate change, illegal hunting) are also considered in developing actions to steward the values of the property.

As described, preparing management plans is dependent on having staff and volunteers with ecological expertise; implementation is, too! Having and operating appropriate monitoring equipment and databases also helps. Fundraising doesn't end with securing property! The Property Management Plan for the next 5 years for the Brenda Carter Nature Reserve is in the final stages of development. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance was retained to provide guidance and training to RWLT staff.

*RWLT is a charity that has been conserving important natural lands and habitat in the
Catarauqui and Rideau watersheds since 1996 to support our community into the future.*

Young Professional Staff Development

25 Stories Series: Caring for the properties owned by the RWLT is an on-going and complex task. In

acquiring or accepting properties the Land Trust takes on the responsibility to inventory flora and fauna on the sites – especially species at risk –, designing and implementing plans to steward properties and in some cases rehabilitate them, as well as monitoring for trespass, damage from storms or vandalism, etc. Furthermore, the Land Trust needs to keep up-to-date with trends in broad environmental conditions and technology, and research on management.

Following up on these commitments, and living up to our obligations to preserve important natural lands and habitat in the Rideau Waterway corridor, RWLT relies on volunteers and partners, but more importantly on keen young staff.

In recent years, with the support of government funding programs and visitor-supporters to Rock Dunder, RWLT has been able to employ young staff with biology and ecology backgrounds to take on the tasks described above. We're very pleased to be able to give these individuals the opportunity to apply their academic qualifications in a real-time context, under the supervision of experienced members of the Board, and provide on-the-job training opportunities via issue-specific seminars.

In return, the Land Trust has benefited from the energy and insight of staff in supporting its stewardship responsibilities. For many, employment with the RWLT has led to more permanent jobs in the land conservation and management field, and we're pleased to have had a part in that. Check the RWLT website and social media occasionally for career opportunities.



RWLT provides course/career experience and gets science and technology

A Step Toward
A Leap

Recently the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its sixth report on the state of the global climate. You don't need a team of scientists to tell that something is changing. Periods of drought, then humidity and thunderstorms, together with floods and forest fires have occurred this summer – and that's just in Ontario!



Action engenders hope for a vibrant future; let's build resilience together

Locally, though, we have an opportunity to mitigate and adapt to the effects of the climate crisis. Land trusts and similar organizations have been forward-thinking. Besides places for recreation and education, the land conserved provides ecosystem services, carbon sequestration, and the protection of biodiversity and habitat – big, technical words to say that lots of large natural areas can help protect local people from irreversible change.

If you'd like to help advance this local solution please see, and use, the donation inserts included with this newsletter (or check www.rwlt.org). Your donation of any amount is an investment that will allow RWLT to manage the lands it has and seek more. COVID-19 has reminded us of our connection with nature and each other - let's use our gifts to steward the natural world for all to benefit. Many such gestures are steps toward a leap for us all.

The RWLT Team

Honourary Chair
Hon. Bob Rae

Chair
Peter Hannah

Secretary
Hunter McGill

Vice Chair
John Grass

Treasurer
Peter Walker

Members
Buzz Boles
Mike Freeman
Erica Kendrick
Steve Knechtel
Jim MacLachlan

Staff
Makayla Dewit
Alyssa Fiedler
Caroline Spang

Students and Staff

Over the summer period RWLT was able to hire seven (7) seasonal staff members with assistance from Canada Summer Jobs, ECO Canada SWILP co-op, and Project Learning Tree Canada remote-area wage subsidy programs.

We have had many friendly faces working at the Rock Dunder gate. Gillian Lackie, of Seeley's Bay, joined us for a second summer and will continue into the fall as our Rock Dunder Site Manager. Callum Diak, of Kingston, joined us for 8 weeks again this summer and helped us with signage design. Callum is heading to Harvard University this fall for Political Science studies. Rebecca Jackson, of Lansdowne, is finishing up her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Studies. She brings her expertise from working at both Charleston Lake Provincial Park and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere and is helping us develop our social media posts. Sisters Taylor McElroy, of Athens, and Melissa McElroy, of Brockville, are our two newest additions to the team helping at the Rock Dunder gate and also with general administration. Both Taylor and Melissa were avid hikers at Rock Dunder before working with us.

On the property maintenance side of things, RWLT was able to hire Michael (Mick) Baud and Corey Lichty, both of Kingston. Alongside the general maintenance of our properties, these two worked on some sustainability projects on RWLT lands. This included setting up solar power to both our off-grid office and our rental 'Covington Cottage'. The addition of solar power to Covington Cottage will provide a sustainable lighting source for our guests, who previously had to depend on flashlights and lanterns in the dim evening hours. Michael and Corey were also able to build an on-site composting privy for our Rock Dunder staff – for which the staff are very grateful! Michael will return to St. Lawrence College this Fall for his final year in the Energy Systems Engineering Technology program. Corey is working towards his Sustainable Trails Certificate at Fleming College and is moving to Alberta this Fall to begin the Outdoor Adventure Guide diploma program at the Timberline Canadian Alpine Academy.

In addition to the seasonal staff, Caroline Spang and Alyssa Fiedler, our Conservation Biologists, continue to conduct species surveys and monitor the ecologically significant properties owned by the RWLT. Behind the scenes, Makayla Dewit continues to work as our Operations & Development Coordinator.



Wage subsidy programs support sustainability at RWLT properties

Trail News

Trails at Rock Dunder and J H Fullard Nature Reserves are available **sunrise to sunset May 15th to November 15th**. Outside of that period please let Nature rejuvenate.

At **Rock Dunder**: COVID-19 protocols are in place (please wear a mask at check-in). Last admission one hour before sunset. Passes, day or season, are required and can be purchased in advance online at www.rwlt.org. So everyone is protected yet can experience nature, and to protect sensitive environmental features, please check our website and social media for measures during the fall related to visitation.