



The Land Between

Cottage Country's Conservation Organization



Annual Report 2022–2023

**A Final Wilderness Refuge in
Southern Ontario**

Connecting People to Nature
to instill a sense of caring,
engender skills,
and responsibility
for future generations



The Land Between region is a rare and fragile ecosystem, which harbours 57 Species at Risk. It is also a refuge for many common yet disappearing species from northern and southern Ontario. The region boasts the highest habitat diversity in the province, and is still relatively intact at over 70% natural cover and is the last wilderness landscape in southern Ontario. The region supplies Ontarians with essential ecosystem services that support our wellbeing and the characteristics of the landscape make it essential to our ability to navigate Climate Change. The region is recognized as one of 15 Community Nominated Priority Places in Canada. To this end, the charity works hard to ensure that we can collectively care for this living land for the foreseeable future, by working with people and partners across all levels and jurisdictions.

I am very pleased to provide this annual report which showcases incredible growth, adaptation and yet focus on our mission to care for those without words; our wildlife and next generations. Covid-19 has posed incredible challenges in areas of engaging our communities, and also surprisingly in terms of increasing pressures on the natural world as people gravitate to natural and remote areas, extending ecological footprints, fragmenting habitats and displacing wildlife and undermining the tenants of ecological services that support our wellbeing.

To these ends, the charity has been able to take advantage of Federal wage subsidies, and to recruit and support youth in developing new leadership and sector-based skills, while helping the charity pivot and respond by adapting many of our volunteer and educational programs online, and increasing our digital presence. Meanwhile, the charity seeks to support people and communities in similar ways; in gaining new knowledge and skills to foster community leaders, care takers and change-makers across all demographics. Therefore we have ensured that the opportunities, experiences, and resources available to our communities are meaningful in terms of their impacts to the natural world, and also accessible in terms of systems and support. This year have created and enhanced our 10 Community Science Programs. We have developed new interactive curriculums for kids and teachers alike. We have conducted research on the state of the environment to help direct efforts and leverage support where it is needed most urgently, such as with cold-water lakes, rare turtles, and disappearing bird populations. Despite these achievements, the charity still faces challenges to keep up with the increasing demands in our sector. We continue to approach our communities, clients and partners to provide us with necessary feedback to guide our actions. By being inclusive and honouring diversity, we look forward to being responsive, accountable, accessible and also meaningful to our communities in the coming years.

Respectfully,



COO and Founder



7 Roads



The charity strives for bioregionalism: a sense of place that is rooted in the characteristics of the living land around, which inform our identities, form which our resources are extracted, and therefore which affect our economies and health. The understanding that everything is interconnected is inherent in our programs. Therefore the charity looks to address and integrate all of cultural, ecological and socio-economic aspects of the region in our program development, and looks to the Elders and knowledge holders to inform our actions and to next generations to inspire our goals. With this in mind we have outlined 7 main strategic pathways under our Mission.

THE LAND BETWEEN



The Land Between's role in supporting Ontario during Climate Change

The region has remarkable features that need attention and to remain intact if we are to navigate Climate Change effects into the future. These features are important and benefit, not only local communities, but a majority of southern Ontario as the region represents an ecosystem services refuge and also headwaters for this half of the Province.

These aspects generally include:

- Ecotone and mosaic- representative species from north and south, plus endemic food web— greater food web interactions and dynamic services
- Undulating landscape allowing for adaption in situ of species rather than a movement north
- Reptiles: pest control- the region is at the northern limit for ectotherms, which during Climate Change will be centrally found within The Land Between
- Many natural edges preventing the spread of invasives
- In addition, the region is home to 57 Species at Risk and is a biodiversity hotspot

Project Focus



The Blue Lakes project has distilled data from 2700 lakes and over 20 years to enable analyses at scales of the state of this fragile resource.

In 2022 a pilot analysis was conducted to assess if land use changes affected the health of lake ecosystems. It was found that increases in Phosphorous could be directly aligned with new developments and the removal of natural habitats within a lake basin. This is pioneering research and important for planning applications. The charity is seeking to find support for continued data mining and uploads, and continued data analyses, including those that prioritize areas for conservation actions.

The Blue Lakes project is more than simply a database; it is a grassroots collective platform for behavior change at community scales. Blue Lakes is also an ecolabel that is awarded to individuals and groups living at lakeshores, who take proactive actions to care for the natural environment. In 2022 the charity piloted this ecolabel program, and developed criterion and resources to support participants in the program. The success of the pilot was informative and the need for the program was obvious as 12 new lake associations have stepped forward to take part. In the coming year, the program will be furnished with more resources creating a “passport” to the Blue Lakes ecolabel.



Turtle Guardians



Turtle Guardians is by far the most recognized and prolific program of the charity, with over 120 active volunteers and 800 more children and people having completed educational training in turtle recovery.

The program is dynamic and multi-faceted to effect recovery of these very imperiled and yet fundamental species, and includes:

- Research (conducting population surveys)
- Community Science and Volunteerism across Ontario
- Education including curriculums across grades and subjects to meet Ontario School Curriculums
- Outreach to communities
- Incubation of turtle eggs under wildlife permits, and where in 2022 we became the third largest hatchery in the province
- Mitigation; where in 2022 we have assessed priority areas for mitigation on roads across the region through mapping modelling, and site reconnaissance, and further began testing new prototypes and materials to create ecopassages for turtles



Community Science and Camps



The charity developed and enhanced the Community Science portfolio. This portfolio is core to our Mission as it helps to foster new skills and confidence in people, enabling them to become leaders in their communities, caring for and advocate for nature. The programs are made to be accessible to all ages, especially those under the Turtle Guardians banner, where kids can graduate to different levels of knowledge and skills. Additionally, the charity runs "Turtle Camp" each summer, where an average of 70 children participate interactive learning. **Turtle Camp** is always overprescribed! Our community science programs include:

1. Turtle Crossing Guards
2. Turtle Nest Sitters
3. Turtle Road Researchers
4. Tunnel Assessors
5. Nightjar Surveyors
6. Snake Supervisors
7. Backyard Bioblitz Program
8. Phrag Fighters
9. Bird Buddies
10. 5K Birding Challenge



Agwaamtoon Mshkiikii- Protecting the Medicines

AS part of the Community Nominated Priority Places Initiative, the charity has been working with invaluable partners across the region to recover 57 Species at Risk. This effort includes extensive research including habitat suitability modelling, state of the resource models, but also direct sampling of insects to estimate impacts of human activities on aerial insectivore birds. In 2022 the charity initiated a broad sampling program to gather insects in different landscape treatments and scenarios and quantify the biomass related to each. This is a pilot year study. Meaningful results will require ongoing work to estimate trends and inform best practices. Furthermore, in 2023 the charity will work with partners to help with sampling and will create an moth monitoring program for landowners to help scientists, by sampling in their own backyards.

Other achievements included the installation of two Motus Towers in the Highlands to track bird migration patterns. For more information visit www.motus.org Another project delivered in 2022 was our Highland Habitats program. Here we offer landowners site visits and detailed nature inventories and related plans for private property owners to assist them in meeting their personal goals.



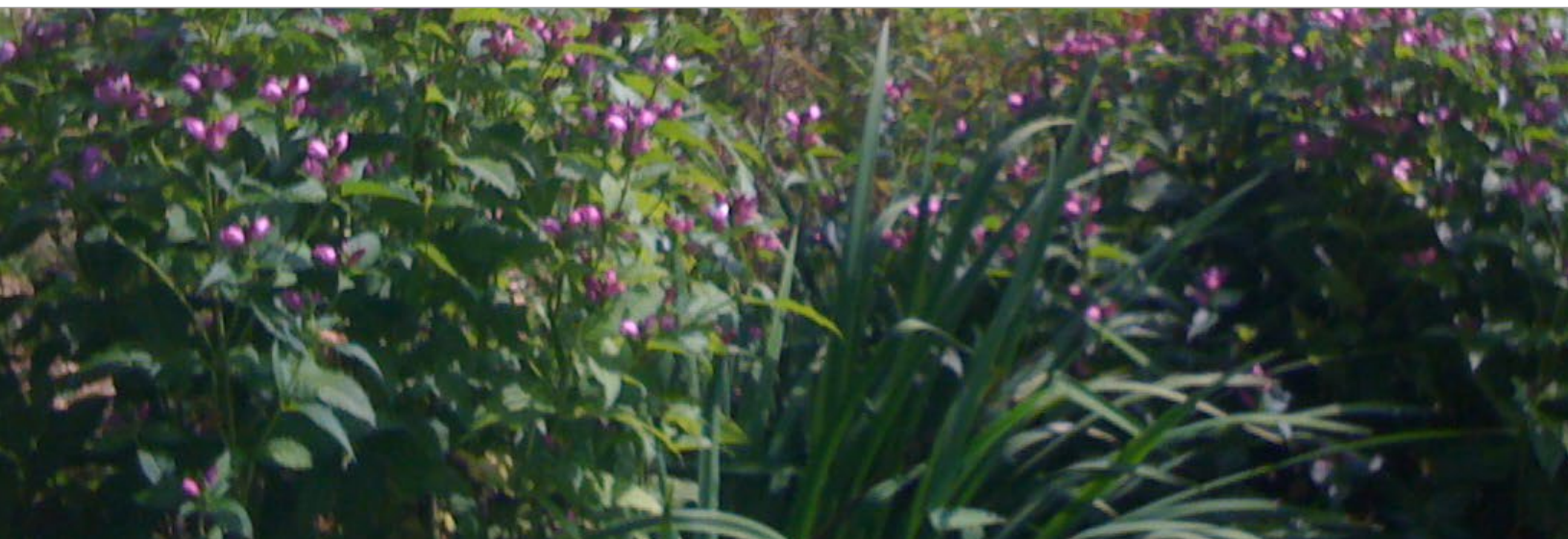
The Anishinaabek Land Trust



As part of our ongoing effort to reinvigorate and restore Indigenous Leadership and culture, as pathway to meaningful reconciliation, the charity has facilitated the founding of the Anishinaabek Land Trust. This organization is entirely Indigenous and operates using Traditional governance. The goals of the effort are to provide or obtain lands to Indigenous people; land that are free of the Indian Act of Canada and all its encumbrances. Land is a source of knowledge, language, healing and strength. In this way, it is hoped that the Land can restore the rightful place of Indigenous peoples and that the practice of organizing and caring for the effort and land, will reignite the leadership and original knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples. To find out more visit www.theanishinaabeklandtrust.org



Shoreland and Pollinator Gardens



The charity works with landowners to re-naturalize their properties but in creative ways; where they can consider their waterfronts or yards, functional native gardens.

Working in partnership with Watersheds Canada, the charity conducts site visits and designs custom native plant gardens to meet landowners' tastes and needs, while benefitting the environment.

The charity also runs Design Your Own Shoreland Garden workshops for lake associations and online, and further offers online consultations to help landowners design their projects. As of 2022 the charity re-naturalized 26 properties, planning in excess of 20,000 trees, shrubs and herbs.

We have expanded our scope to include pollinator gardens, and we have worked with municipalities to support projects at beaches and parks, which have the additional benefit of limiting erosion, deterring geese, and increasing lake health.

Special Projects



In response to emerging needs, the charity always chooses special discrete projects. In 2022 the charity focused on

- Ma-iingun, the Wolf

To bridge the divide between biologists and harvesters, the charity has undertaken to interview both parties and to chart the changes on the landscape that harvesters are seeing in and out of the buffer zone for the eastern wolf. The results were remarkable, and yet the issues remain complex: Where no culling of canids is permitted, decreases in mesopredators (small mammals) are evident. However, it is not the wolf that is the issue, but rather the coyote hybrid species – and yet, culling the coyote will only have the reverse effect to make their populations stronger. Simple solutions are not available, but communicating the issues are important for both the scientific community and the public at large.

- The Two Rainbows Travelling Children's Museum

Since Covid-19, already under-privileged and remote Indigenous communities have had increased challenges; and especially the children that are isolated and under-served. The travelling children's museum is an ongoing effort to bring a sense of connection to these communities and mainstream areas, and at the same time increase skills and confidence in kids through connecting them to nature- the theme of the interactive exhibits within. This project gained new momentum in 2022 with new partnerships and interests including expertise.

- Saving Grace. Climate Change and Civics

Development pressures along with those from Climate Change are on the rise, meanwhile municipalities do not have the capacity and some lack the tools to find balanced solutions. This was the reason Grace the ancient one eyed turtle was put in jeopardy. At the same time individuals are more engaged and need tools to understand opportunities for input and influence in their communities. We launched the Saving Grace campaign, and also summarized bylaws across Ontario related to natural heritage and identified gaps; and we began watershed mapping tools that will be available to all municipalities. We further created a guide for the public on civics.



Partnerships



We are forever grateful to the wonderful and invaluable partners, individuals and groups who, without, we could not have achieved a measure of success:

Scales Nature Park
Georgian Bay Turtle Hospital
Rotary Club of Peterborough
EcoKare International
Frontenac Arch Biosphere
Canadian Wildlife Federation
Couchiching Conservancy
Trent University
Ulinks
Wildlife Preservation Canada
Watersheds Canada
Kawartha Lakes Stewards
University of Ontario Technology
Trent University

Trillium Lakelands District School Board
Trent Severn Waterway
Haliburton County
Peterborough County
Curve Lake First Nation Cultural Centre
Sacred Water Circle
Ontario Fur Managers Federation
Ontario Headwaters Association
Think Turtle Conservation Initiative
Guelph University, Norris Labs
Blazing Star
And...
Numerous volunteers, businesses,
landowners and Lake Associations



Sponsorships and Funders



- Environment Canada and Climate Change
- Lush Charity Pot
- National Indian Brotherhood
- Johansen Larsen Foundation
- Ontario Wildlife Foundation
- Ganawemiin Mskiiikii- The Eastern Georgian Bay Initiative
- Canada Summer Jobs and the Youth Employment Strategy
- Soapstones Inc.
- Many local businesses in the sales of our annual Turtle Guardians calendar
- Since 2019 major capacity has been supplied by the Canada Covid-19 Emergency Wage Subsidy Program

General Financial Accounting

| Source | Amount |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Sales and honorariums/services | \$ 8,000 .00 |
| Workshops | \$ 10,000.00 |
| Partnerships | \$ 10,000.00 |
| Donations | \$ 16,000.00 |
| Matching Program Grants | \$ 78,000.00 |
| Subsidies | \$ 425,000.00 |
| Provincial Grants | \$ 55,000.00 |
| Federal Grants | \$ 250,000.00 |
| Foundation Grants | \$ 30,000.00 |
| | \$ 880000.00 |



Please see our published and audited Financial Statements for further details. The charity still relies on government grants, with a large portion being wage subsidy programs. However, there has been an increase in foundation grants and fees for service are on the rise. We will be undertaking new avenues to reach our audience and increase donors and sponsorships moving ahead.

We were lucky to benefit from the Covid-19 Emergency Wage Subsidy, Canada Summer Jobs, and funding from the Youth Employment Strategy in 2020-21 (provincial grants) which allowed us to hire +30 youth to advance our impact and support skill-development. This funding represented approx. 60% of this budget.