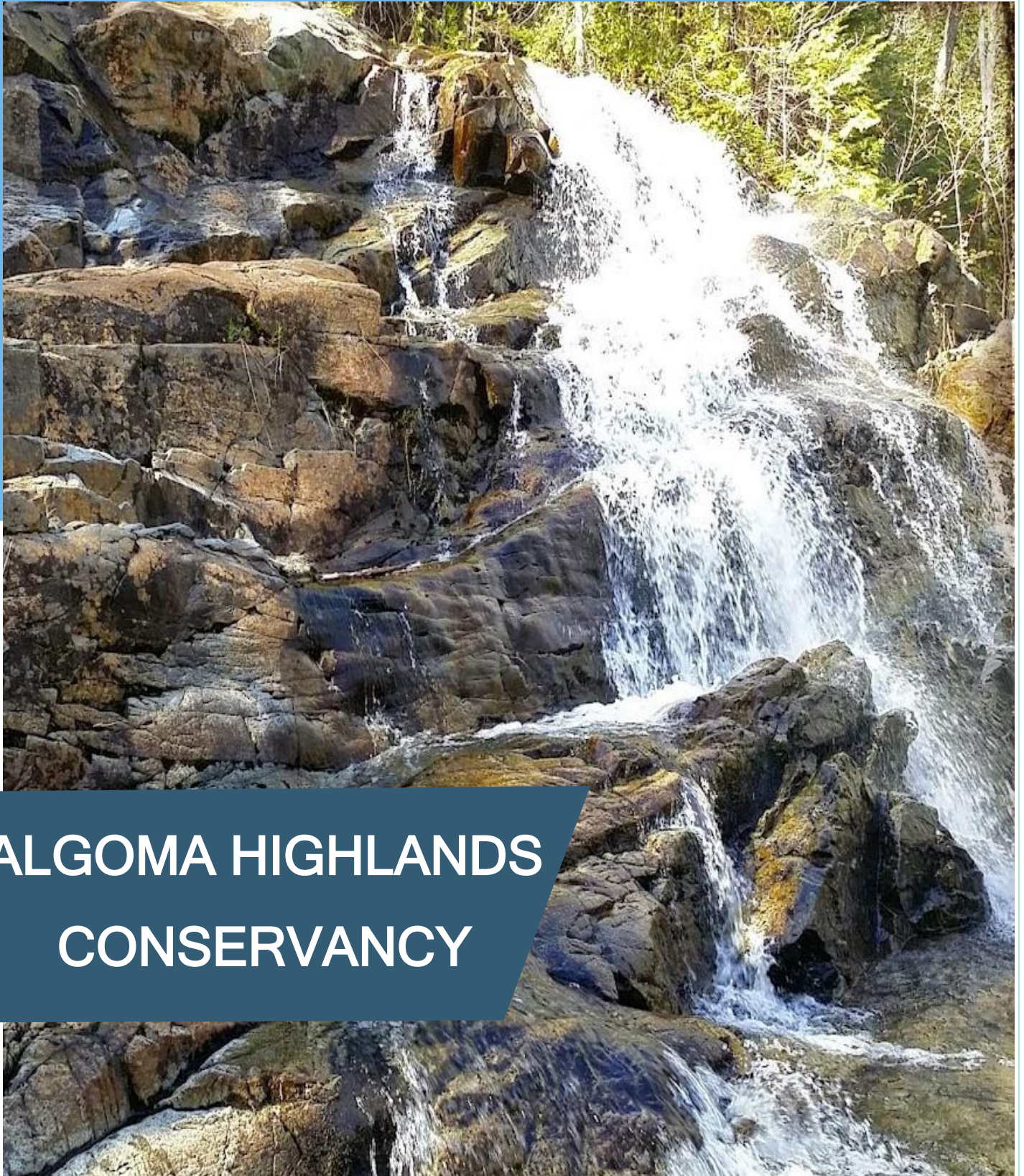


# 2022 ANNUAL REPORT



## ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Views from the Hakon Lien Trail

[www.algomahighlandsconservancy.org](http://www.algomahighlandsconservancy.org)

[info@algomahighlandsconservancy.org](mailto:info@algomahighlandsconservancy.org)





## MISSION AND CORE VALUES

*“Guided by core values of conservation, silent sport recreation, ecological research and environmental education, the AHC’s vision is to conserve and protect the unique beauty and ecological integrity of key areas within the Algoma Highlands region.”*

### **CONSERVATION**

Conserve the ecological integrity of the Algoma Highlands

### **SILENT SPORTS RECREATION**

Facilitate low-impact, non-motorized recreational activities to foster appreciation of the natural environment

### **ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

Promote knowledge and understanding of protected ecosystems and the species that live within them

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Enhance public awareness and appreciation of the environment



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kees van Frankenhuyzen, *President*  
Brian Anstess, *Vice-President*  
Sharon Seeler, *Treasurer*  
Dave Fanslow, *Director*  
Laurie McBay, *Secretary*  
Ruth Koskenoja, *Director*  
Emily Hope, *Director*  
Pam Jalak, *Director*  
Megan Butler, *Director*

## STAFF

Derissa Vicentini and  
Carmen Nantel, *Administrator*  
Rachel Alan, *Summer Student*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to preface our 2022 Annual Report with a few words. It has been a relatively quiet year, a year of adjustments after the COVID storm has abated.

This year saw a dramatic reduction in the size of our Board with the resignation of 3 Board members, resignations brought on by the realization that their AHC involvement required more time than they could commit. Fortunately, we were able to welcome one new Board member, Megan Butler, a conservation biologist from Lake Superior State University.

A very significant step forward was the decision to invest in the AHC future by hiring a part-time administrator. Carmen Nantel joined us for a 2-year contract in July and brings to the table an impressive array of experience and skills.

A key impediment to the AHC's financial sustainability is the disconnect with our community: despite the huge increase in popularity of our hiking trails, still few people are aware that the land is owned



AHC Bone Lake at Norm's Cabin

and managed by the AHC for the benefit of all.

Carmen's expertise in marketing and public relations is helping us turn that ship around. Success of her efforts is becoming evident in a more prominent social media profile and a dramatic increase in memberships and donations from folks who wish to support us in our work.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Cont'd:

Carmen was assisted in her efforts by Board members and volunteers. I wish to acknowledge in particular the invaluable help from Jay Kerr, media consultant (JAK media, [www.jakmedia.ca](http://www.jakmedia.ca)) from Toronto and seasonal Lake Superior resident, who is donating a large chunk of his time in helping us navigate the increasingly complex world of web-based functionalities and marketing.

Our sincere appreciation and many thanks also go out to Tammy Fiegehen Photojourney ([www.tammyfiegehen.com](http://www.tammyfiegehen.com)) for giving the AHC exclusive rights to use her stellar pictures of Robertson Cliffs for our marketing and promotion. Her pictures, like the one shown below, capture the essence of why we work so hard to protect this land!



AHC © Robertson Cliffs

The peak in interest in Norm's cabin as a highly desirable backcountry adventure destination during COVID years waned in 2022 to about 10 client nights during the winter and 20 during the summer and fall. Winter rentals were once again ably administered by Carole Blaquiére of Blaq Bear Eco Adventures. This was the last year of Carole's 3-year exclusive contract for summer rentals, and we want to thank Carole for all the work she did to put Norm's cabin on the national map as part of her ecotourism business and for helping us with winter rentals by taking care of reservations. Negotiations were initiated with the new owners of Stokely Creek Lodge, Bruce and Katrina Clement, to include Norm's cabin rentals in the suite of

ecotourism options offered by Stokely Creek Lodge.

The AHC Wildlife Research Project flourished and expanded its scope by adding Garden River First Nations as a partner. The new partnership was instigated by Fifi, one of the two female wolves that were captured and GPS-collared in March. Fifi turned out to be the breeding female of a pack whose territory covered most of GRFN lands which was henceforth invited to become the project's fifth research area. Ruby, the other female, which was captured just north of the city, had seen enough of Algoma and hoofed it all the way to the mouth of the St Lawrence River near St Anne de Beaupre in Quebec

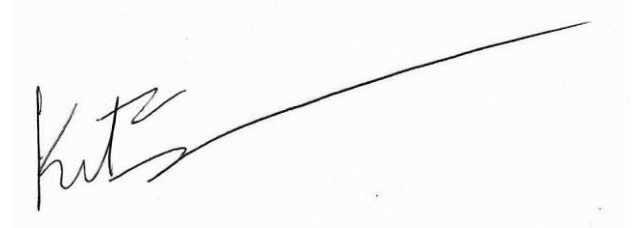
## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Cont'd:

before settling in a faunal reserve northwest of Quebec City, a 2500 km journey she completed in less than 3 months. You can read all about them on our website in a monthly Blog ([Algoma Highlands Conservancy - Blog](#)) that is created with great finesse and dedication by our newest team member, Michaela McIntosh.

I invite you to read more about these highlights in the following pages of our Annual Report. We will continue to do our best to keep you, our supporters, informed

of our activities and new developments. Please check our Facebook page and Instagram for updates and visit our new website. We look forward to your continued support!

Happy trails!



Kees van Frankenhuyzen

## CHANGE IN BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

### We said good-bye to:

#### Emily Hope

Emily joined the Board of Directors of the AHC in January of 2019. She was employed at the Great Lakes Forestry Centre and had experience in carbon sequestration. She managed our carbon file and this included submitting carbon surveys and monitoring reports which was a requirement of the sale of carbon offsets. Emily participated in Board meetings and offered suggestions and took on tasks regarding the website, conservation and membership. Emily submitted her resignation early in 2022 and she will be missed.

#### Sharon Sullivan Seeler

Sharon joined the Board of Directors of the AHC in December of 2020. She is a supervisor at Algoma Steel in Accounts Payable and Taxation and accepted the position of AHC treasurer in 2021. The tasks required for this role include payroll monthly financial

statements and assisting with the preparation of the annual financial statements and tax returns as well as participating in the monthly Board meetings and committees. Sharon found this volunteer role very time consuming and resigned in June of 2022. However, Sharon recognized that the Board was in need of her skills and agreed to continue doing some financial tasks as our book keeper. We were very grateful that she continued to work with us.

#### Pam Jalak

Pam joined the AHC in November 2021 on the Board of Directors. She was employed by Canada Parks and demonstrated skills in leadership and management. It was hoped that Pam would help develop AHC policies but she resigned in the spring due to time constraints. Perhaps, in the future, Pam will be able to join us again as the AHC would benefit from her skills in project planning and would be receptive to her suggestions.





King Mountain North

### **We said good-bye to:**

#### **Derissa Vincentini**

Derissa started her association with the AHC as a volunteer in 2018. She continued to develop our outreach through social media and was so effective at doing this that she was asked to accept part-time work as our administrator early in 2020. Derissa continued to support the AHC during the pandemic even when she was working full time as the Community Science Coordinator with the Invasive Species Centre. After Derissa decided to scale back her hours, she was still willing to stay on and help with the transition of our new administrator, Carmen Nantel. Derissa officially resigned at the end of 2022. Derissa's strong work ethic, her ability to generate fresh ideas and her offer to continue to support the AHC as a volunteer, were greatly appreciated.

### **And Welcomed:**

#### **Megan Butler**

Megan joined the AHC Board of Directors in July. Megan has her PhD in Natural Resource Science and Management. She is an assistant professor of conservation biology at Lake Superior State University and teaches classes in conservation, Parks and Recreation and land management. The program focuses on applied research projects but she is also interested in

providing experiential learning opportunities for her students and the AHC could assist with this goal. Megan's background as a conservation biologist filled a skills gap in the AHC Board and we were very pleased to welcome her.

#### **Carmen Nantel**

Carmen Nantel came to the AHC with superb qualifications as an organized and multi-skilled administrator with a variety of relevant experiences. Carmen has been working remotely part-time for an Indigenous Conservancy in British Columbia. She moved to Ontario after a long residency in the Yukon which included living off the grid. Carmen has stated that this lifestyle "fostered the awareness of my passion for wilderness living and respectful land stewardship practices". The Board of Directors of AHC look forward to Carmen's input and proposals and will greatly benefit from her organizational abilities and skills in office and project management.

#### **Rachel Alan**

Rachel was hired as the AHC's 2022 Canada Summer Jobs student. She was assigned a variety of tasks that required different skill sets. These included monitoring the insect trap line which was a Natural Resources Canada Project, processing images for the wildlife research project, monitoring designated Robertson Cliffs trail stations and acting as our trail ambassador.

# AHC HIGHLIGHTS: NORM'S CABIN

The 2022 season at Norm's Cabin was again affected by the pandemic. However, AHC hosts were able to treat Stokely Creek Lodge skiers to tea and cookies during the weekends unless restricted by public health advisories. Many skiers were able to enjoy a relaxing break by the warmth of the wood stove while taking the opportunity to chat with other outdoor enthusiasts.

Bookings for Norm's Cabin were low in 2022 compared to the previous 2 years. Winter bookings were plagued by another shutdown in January due to the pandemic and cancellations resulted from guests' unease of sharing the space. To accommodate this concern bookings were made by the room instead of a per person rate. It seemed that when the travel restrictions were lifted by the summer, people who had previously enjoyed a local experience at Norm's



Cabin took the opportunity to travel further afield. The AHC appreciated that Carole Blaquiére of Blaq Bear Eco Adventure Routes continued to manage the reservations.

Volunteers and Board members of the AHC put in considerable time and effort to maintain the cabin. In March, Paul McBay, Ronn Hann and Kees van Frankenhuyzen cut down some deadfall from around the cabin and transported it closer to the shed. Later, in the summer and over 3 days, the wood was split and stacked in the shed. Dean Thompson and Kees did spring cleaning chores and infrastructure tasks for Norm's Cabin which included making and installing new spindles on the upper deck and digging a new pit and foundation for both outhouses and moving the men's outhouse.

Visitors to Norm's Cabin arrive by bike or by hiking or skiing in. The AHC has welcomed many complimentary comments from those who have enjoyed their visits. For additional information on Norm's Cabin please check out our website.



Cut logs in front of the shed at Norm's.



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# AHC HIGHLIGHTS: KING MOUNTAIN



Kees, Paul and Dave working on the King Mountain Platform



The completed King Mountain Platform



Renewed entrance to the King Mountain Hut

The Board of the AHC realized that the viewing platform at King Mountain was deteriorating and in need of replacement. Unfortunately, this task was delayed by the pandemic until 2022.

In the spring Richard Kargl, Alex Lapensee and Dave Fanslow brought the lumber up to the site by the groomer. The cost of the lumber was shared by Stokely Creek Lodge and a

\$1,000 grant from Trans Canada Trails. The decking and supports on the King Mountain platform were rebuilt over 2 days at the end of August by Kees van Frankenhuyzen, Dave Fanslow, and Laurie and Paul McBay.

In addition, the boards of the deck entrance to the King Mountain Hut were replaced.

## AHC SCHOLARSHIP

Environmental Education is one of the four Principles of the Algoma Highlands Conservancy. As part of this mandate, the Conservancy proudly sponsors annual scholarships at Sault College and Algoma University. The awards are offered to 1 returning student at each institution, who embodies the Conservancy's Core Values.

For the 2022/23 Academic year, the Scholarship winners are:

1. **Kaitlyn Schneider**, School of Natural Environment, Sault College, and
2. **Daniel Hermann**, School of Life Science and the Environment, Algoma University.

This small investment in great minds and spirit will pay a lifetime of dividends. Your donation to the Conservancy can help fund this scholarship legacy, so consider making a donation today!



# EVENTS

## SNOWSHOE BINGO



Snowshoe Bingo on February's Family Day weekend was a self-guided fun and accessible event set up along the Below the Cliffs Trail

## SNOWGA



Our first annual SNOWGA - yoga and snowshoe event - was held in March along the Robertson Cliffs and Loop Trail. We partnered with Ivy Strom, owner of Yoga by Nature for the event. Of the participants, two were from Mexico and it was only the second time they'd been on snowshoes - brave to snowshoe up a mountain!



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## EVENTS Cont'd:

### GOULAIS RIVER COMMUNITY DAY



July saw us set up at the Goulais River Community Day. The first Community Day since pre-pandemic was well attended and our table was visited by many locals and a few out-of-town visitors as well.

### HIKE

CO-PARTNERED WITH SOO NATURALISTS



Kees, AHC's President led an **October** hike with Sault Naturalists, taking them along the transmission lines for fantastic vistas of the autumn splendor and to highlight work that was done on our pollinator project.



# EVENTS Cont'd:

## YOGA HIKE EVENT

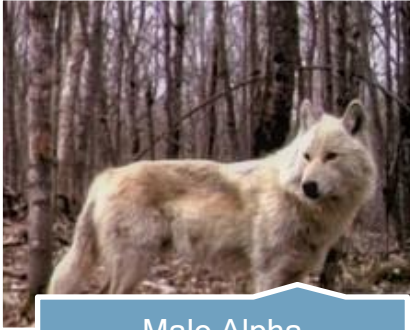


Our Yoga and Hike event in **November** was postponed a week due to a heavy rainfall warning. The day was chilly, but nine of us hiked up King Mountain via Eva's Way and Erling Strom and took yoga breaks along the way. The new and improved deck made for a great yoga platform!

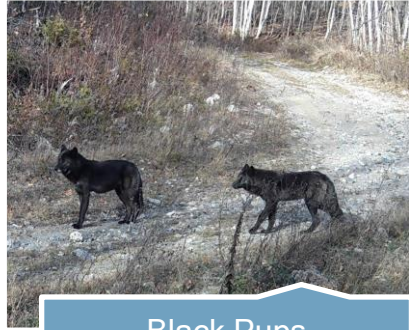


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# OUR WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECT



Male Alpha  
Sylvan Valley Pack



Black Pups  
Sylvan Valley Pack



A resident of Gladstone  
research area

In 2021 we launched our Wildlife Research project. An idea to study how human presence affects wolves and their primary prey species in the Stokely creek area morphed into a multi-agency project now spanning five study areas from Lake Superior to Iron Bridge. In each of the ~400 km<sup>2</sup> study areas we are deploying an array of 16 trail cameras on powerline right-of-way's, recreational trails, and forest sites without trails, for a period of 3 years. The cameras will allow us to monitor the occurrence and distribution of many wildlife species. We hope the data will shed some light on how powerlines and trails and associated human activity influence the occurrence and distribution of wildlife.

In 2022 we continued the field-work intensive task of servicing the trail cameras every 3 months, collecting hundreds of thousands of images. The job was made easier with the participation of 4 new volunteer research team members: Joe Meating, Aaron Jones, Sebastian Belleau and Steven Veldt. We initiated collaboration with the University of Guelph to have a graduate student (Haley Rechter) develop artificial intelligence models for automated identification of wildlife species in our trail cam images, an initiative that is being funded by OMNRF. We developed a

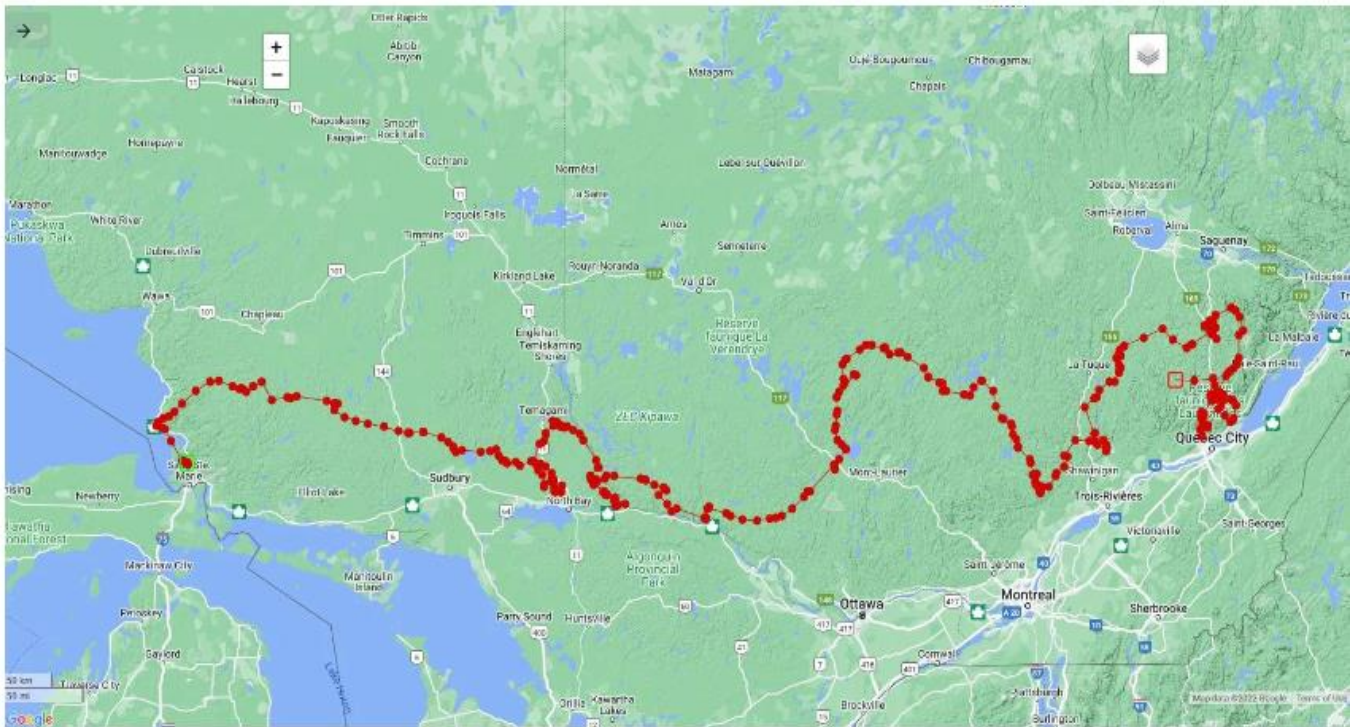
collaborative partnership with Garden River First Nations to add their lands and adjacent crown- and privately-owned land as a fifth research area. Funding from Natural Resources Canada paid for manpower to install and service our fifth array of trail cameras.

Most exciting of all, in mid-March we were able to capture two wolves and equipped them with GPS collars. The wolves were captured by Big Horn Helicopters, a BC-based company that specializes in catching wildlife by using a gun net. One of the captured females (Fifi) turned out to be the breeding female of a pack that uses the Garden River and adjacent lands as their territory. Satellite telemetry allowed us to pin-point the location of her den site, which is now being monitored with trail cameras.

The second female (Ruby) left the area a few days after capture and embarked on an exceedingly long-distance migration to Gulf of St. Lawrence shore past Quebec City, a traverse of more than 2500 km, which she completed within 3 months. Before losing her signal in October, we were able to determine that she finally settled in a territory in the Laurentides Wildlife Reserve located just NW of Quebec City.



# OUR WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECT



The satellite telemetry track documenting the amazing 2500 km trek by Ruby, a 28-kg female Gray Wolf captured and collared on our Prince Township research area and eventually settling in the Laurentides Wildlife Reserve in Quebec.

Fifi showing her GPS collar while standing at the entrance to her den.



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# 2022 FINANCIALS CANADA

## NOTICE TO READER

	2022	2021
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets	\$221,401 <sup>1</sup>	\$226,061
Property	\$1,823,326	\$1,823,326
Due from AHC (USA)	\$4322	\$2922
<b>TOTAL Assets</b>	<b>\$2,049,049</b>	<b>\$2,052, 309</b>
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>		
Current	\$21,020	\$9,995
General Funds	\$204,703 <sup>2</sup>	\$218,988
Invested in Capital Assets	\$1,823,326	\$1,823,326
<b>TOTAL Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<b>\$2,028,029</b>	<b>\$2,042,314</b>
Revenues	\$52,337	\$64,258 <sup>2</sup>
Expenses	\$66,622	\$58,097
<b>TOTAL Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>\$(14,285)</b>	<b>\$58,097</b>

### Notations:

1. Assets; A term deposit is reserved and dedicated to future land acquisition.
2. Any deferred revenue from the research grant is to be carried over into next fiscal.



# 2022 FINANCIALS USA

## NOTICE TO READER

	2022	2021
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>\$3914</b>	<b>\$3914</b>
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>		
Current	\$1200	\$1200
Due to AHC Canada	\$3191	\$2305
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balances</b>	<b>\$4391</b>	<b>\$3505</b>
Revenues	\$409	\$1499
Expenses	(\$886)	(\$1090)
<b>TOTAL Revenue over Expenses</b>	<b>(\$477)</b>	<b>(\$409)</b>



AHC's View from Robertson Cliffs

## Photo Credits



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Images courtesy of:

Marko Koskenoja	Views from Hakon Lien Trail
Dave Bell	Robertson Cliffs (under caption Mission & Core Values)
Joann Cavaletto	AHC Bone Lake at Norm's cabin
Tammy Fiegehen	AHC Robertson Cliffs
Bob McGauley	King Mountain North
Joann Cavaletto	Two photos of Norm's Cabin from left to right
Laurie McBay	Three photos from King Mountain Highlights
Laurie McBay	Cut logs in front of the shed at Norm's
Renee Wysynski	Snowga
Ruth Koskenoja	Goulais River Community Hike
Sault Naturalists	Hike co-partnered with Sault Naturalists
Marko Koskenoja	Yoga Hike event
Property of AHC	Three wolf photos for Wildlife Research Project
Property of AHC	Fifi, wolf collared
Property of AHC	Peregrine falcon, three black bears and golden eagle
Kassey Clock	AHC's view from Robertson Cliffs