



**Algoma Highlands
Conservancy**

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY



MISSION AND CORE VALUES

“Guided by core values of conservation, silent sport recreation, environmental 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 environment

BOARD AND STAFF

Kees van Frankenhuyzen, *President*

Dave Fanslow, *Chair*

Cathy Larsen, *Treasurer*

Laurie McBay, *Secretary*

Brian Anstess, *Director*

Ruth Koskenoja, *Director*

Desiree Keene, *Director*

Jay Kerr, *Director*

Carmen Nantel, *Administrator*

Michaela McIntosh, *Administrator*

Roxanne Bergeron, *Canada Summer Jobs Student*



FAREWELL

We said goodbye to:

Carmen Nantel, *Administrator*

Carmen left her position as part-time administrator early in the year to pursue a new opportunity. She had focussed her attention on growing membership in the AHC, developing a marketing plan and improving our donor base. In addition, Carmen targeted increasing awareness of the AHC goals through social media, advertising and branding. She also compiled two annual reports and submitted an application for a grant to the Ontario Trillium Foundation with input from Board members. She had many accomplishments in her year and a half on staff at the AHC.

WELCOME

Jay Kerr, *Director*

The AHC Board of Directors was very pleased to welcome Jay Kerr as a Board member in February of 2024. Jay had already been working on developing our website on a volunteer basis since 2022. Jay owns his own web design and digital marketing company, JAK Media, and divides his time between Toronto and a second home on Lake Superior. Jay treasures natural beauty and untouched wilderness and his love of the outdoors is exemplified by his professional landscape photography. He enjoys hiking, camping and paddling and endeavours to promote the conservation efforts of the Algoma Highlands Conservancy to ensure that this area remains a place of exploration and inspiration.

Michaella McIntosh, *Administrator*

Michaella became the administrator for the AHC on a part-time basis in the spring of 2024. However, she was already familiar with AHC activities as the volunteer Project Science Communicator publishing about a dozen blogs on the wildlife research project. After Carmen resigned, Michaella was welcomed as our Social Media Coordinator but in short order, the Board recognized her enthusiasm and organizational skills and offered her the administrator's position. She has demonstrated creative ideas for community engagement and fundraising. Michaella is a graduate of the Fish and Wildlife Program at Sault College and is keenly interested in being an educator.

Roxanne Bergeron, *Summer Student*

Roxanne Bergeron came on staff as the AHC Canada Summer Jobs student and was an Algoma University student in biology. Roxanne was involved with the Wildlife Research Project and analyzed about 135,000 trail camera images. In addition, she assisted Carmen Nantel with marketing and outreach with organizations in the community.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

We have just completed another good year in Algoma Highlands Conservancy history. I will touch on some highlights here but please read on for details in the pages that follow.

Conservation through land acquisition is the Conservancy's primary mandate. After our 2023 purchase of the 332-acre Ebare Tract, which adds most of King Mountain's eastern portion to our holdings, we initiated the Ebare Tract Campaign with the goal to raise \$320,000. Funds are intended to:

(1) Pay off acquisition transaction costs and private loans (\$130,000 - received as a 2023 grant from the federal government's Land Trust Conservation Fund);

(2) Seed our newly established Stewardship Endowment Fund (\$90,000 - a mechanism that is being adopted by land trusts to uncouple stewardship expenses from unpredictable operational budgets and secure their payment from interest accrued by permanently invested funds); and

(3) Replenish our land acquisition reserve for future purchases (\$100,000 - our goal is to protect the entire King Mountain formation).

At the close of 2024, we had raised \$262,000 towards that goal.

Thanks again to all our donors and members on both sides of the border for your generous and ongoing support. Our campaign continues in 2025 to raise the remaining \$58,000 so please stay tuned for more to come.

In 2024 we made a contribution to Canada's goal of conserving 30% of its geography by 2030. We did so by registering our entire holdings (King Mountain, Robertson Cliffs and Ebare Tract properties, totalling 3248 acres or 1314 hectares) on the Canadian Protected and Conserved Area Database, a long and convoluted process that was completed in September. With this move our local conservation efforts have gained national significance. Press release available [here](#).

The Ebare Tract purchase secures the Hakon Lien trail as a permanent feature of the Stokely Creek trail system as a challenging but favourite ski route to our much-visited asset on Bone Lake, Norm's cabin. In 2024 we transferred the rights to operate Norm's cabin as a backcountry ecotourism destination during the summer and fall from BlaqBear Eco Adventures Routes to Forest the Canoe.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *con't*

The AHC continues to manage winter rentals and provides a volunteer host each weekend to connect with Stokely Creek Lodge guests and other day-skiers.

2024 saw the completion of our **Wildlife Research Project** and laid the foundation for extending our research activities. Trail cameras from the project were reassigned to a network of permanent wildlife monitoring sites on AHC lands, as a key component of our stewardship responsibility to track ecosystem health, in particular impacts of increasing trail use on biodiversity values.

In 2024 we received recognition for the contributions we make to our community by being awarded one of Sault Ste. Marie's Community Builders Award.

For the past 6 years or so we have been focussing our social media efforts to increasing community awareness that the well-known Robertson Cliffs are a public treasure thanks to the conservancy's efforts and hard work. This award is the first indication that we are getting that message through and that we are on the right track with community engagement and recognition, two components that are essential to our long-term sustainability.

I invite you to read about other aspects of our 2024 year in the pages that follow. We will continue to do our best to keep you, our supporters, informed of our activities and new developments. Please check our **website**, **Facebook** page and **Instagram** for updates and news. We look forward to your continued support! ■

—Kees van Frankenhuyzen, *AHC President*



Kees van Frankenhuyzen accepting Community Builders Award, 2024. [Sootoday, 2024]



BOOK YOUR STAY AT NORM'S CABIN

For additional information on Norm's Cabin including how to make a reservation please check out our website.



NORM'S CABIN

Norm's cabin is a remote destination for outdoor enthusiasts. The necessity to access the cabin by skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking or paddling makes the arrival feel truly rewarding. Norm's cabin overlooks Bone Lake and views of the water and surrounding hills are enticing throughout the year.

During the ski season, the Algoma Highlands Conservancy provides hosts during the weekends who keep the cabin warm and provide tea, cookies and the opportunity to chat. Regrettably, the 2024 ski season could be remembered as the year we didn't have winter due to the insufficient snowfall and temperatures that were too warm to keep the base. Kees van Frankenhuyzen and Paul McBay were the hosts again but their duties were limited from mid-January to the end of February due to the dismal ski season.

We are grateful that Carole Blaquiere of Blaq Bear Eco Adventure Routes continued to manage the bookings for the 2024 winter season and guests were able to make a reservation on a per room basis. However, after 6 years of doing an excellent job of managing Norm's cabin which included the summer rentals from promotion to customer service, Carole decided not to renew the agreement.

In June, Forest the Canoe, took over the right to operate Norm's cabin as an ecotourism destination. The bookings were made through AirBnB and for the entire cabin during the summer and fall. Unfortunately, there were very few bookings for Norm's cabin last year even though it had been very popular during the pandemic.



Unplug by the fire at Norm's Cabin this summer!

Back country enthusiasts are invited to book the cabin for an overnight stay or drop by for a day visit to experience the beauty of Bone Lake and the surrounding hills and forests. ■

SPECIAL EVENTS



Snowshoeing with Land Based Learning Class - January 2024

White Pines Grade 7-8 Land Based Learning Class came out for a snowshoe in the highland's outdoor classroom! We scouted tracks, looked for spoor, and did bum-slides down the ravines. Students learned about flora and fauna, conservation efforts and updates on the wolf project. They journaled, read and took photos for a class project.



Jane Goodall Reasons for Hope - March & November 2024

AHC was invited to participate in this event, hosted at the Bushplane Museum, and geared to teaching grade 4 students from ADSB and HSCDB about conservation and our initiatives. Hands-on activities and a slide show were developed and presented in 30 minute blocks of time and reached over 400 children. The activities focused on wolf research, perceptions of wolves, and food webs. The success of our outreach was evident in the feedback received from teachers, EA's and students.

SPECIAL EVENTS



Algoma Highlands Wildflowers and Birds at Robertson Cliffs with Sault Naturalists - May 2024

A hike up to the cliffs to scout for peregrines resulted in no sightings of the birds, but a great opportunity to discuss conservation efforts. Plenty of opportunities along the hike to look at emerging flowers.

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BioBlitz - June 2024

In cooperation with the Sault Naturalists and through independent citizen scientists, the species of flora and fauna on the AHC land holdings continue to be documented. This blitz resulted in 215 observations of 127 species! This expanding database is crucial to our ongoing conservation efforts.



Fall Colour Hike Stokely Creek with Sault Naturalists - October 2024

Kees led a hike along Stokely Creek to the Upper Waterfalls and gave an update on the wolf project and other AHC initiatives.

ALGOMA REGIONAL ENVIROTHON

Fall, Winter & Spring Workshops & Spring Competition

Sept 2023 - May 2024



Envirothon is an international team-based environmental learning competition for high school youth. Over three decades, Envirothon in Algoma has reached thousands of students, helping influence post-secondary education and career decisions, enabling a connection with the outdoors and the development of environmentally responsible citizens. Partnering with Canadian Institute of Forestry, the AHC has taken on the coordination of the regional workshops and competition for over a decade.

2023-24 was an active Envirothon year with three main events. The October 2023 workshop, held at the Sault Ste Marie Conservation Authority, focussed on soils, forests and the special topic. It was a wet day, so students were happy for the indoor session on Biodiversity in a Changing Climate. Sault College was the venue and organizer for the winter workshop in March of 2024, with 2nd year students in the Wildlife Management courses leading workshop events. Stokely Creek Lodge was the venue for the May workshops and competition where 50 students from 5 area high schools took part in the two day overnight event that was supported by multiple community partners and a fleet of volunteers.

Special mention goes to Paul Hazlett from Sault Climate Hub, who proposed a Legacy Project. With the help of Alex, from Invasive Species Centre, and a host of volunteers, we pulled a swath of periwinkle from parts of Stokely Creek Property. Periwinkle, an invasive species, spreads as a thick mat and chokes out native species. This project will continue for years to come, and educate students about the importance of fostering native species in the quest for more biodiversity. ■

2024 FINANCIALS CANADA

NOTICE TO READER

	2024	2023
Assets		
Current Assets	\$137,919	\$114,536
Property	\$2,107,059	\$2,107,059
Due from AHC (USA)	-	\$5800
TOTAL Assets	\$2,244,978	\$2, 227,359
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Current	\$10,592	\$27,399
General Funds	\$71,440	\$83,479
Invested in Capital Assets	\$2,107,059	\$2,107,059
TOTAL Liabilities and Fund Balances	\$2,234,386	\$2,199,996
Revenues	\$89,408	\$284,923
Expenses	\$55,018	\$76,957
TOTAL Revenue over Expenses	\$34,390	\$171,966

2024 FINANCIALS USA

NOTICE TO READER

	2024	2023
Current Assets	\$542	\$459
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Current	\$1200	\$1200
Due to AHC Canada	-	\$4312
TOTAL	\$1200	\$5512
Liabilities and Fund Balances		
Revenues	\$13,620	\$31,545
Expenses	\$9,225	\$36,121
TOTAL Revenue over Expenses	\$4,395	\$(4576)