

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**ALGOMA HIGHLANDS  
CONSERVANCY**

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

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# 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

## **Environmental Research**

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

## **Environmental Education**

Enhance public awareness and appreciation of our environment

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kees van Frankenhuyzen, *President*  
Brian Anstess, *Vice-President*  
Sam Emerson, *Treasurer*  
Laurie McBay, *Secretary*  
Emily Hope  
Colin Wilson  
Dave Fanslow  
Ruth Koskenoja  
Sharon Seeler

## STAFF

Shannon Ramsay,  
*Environmental Education Coordinator*  
  
Derissa Vincentini, *Administrator*







# FAREWELL

## We said goodbye to:

### **Kara Webster**

Kara was a member of the Board of the AHC from March 2014 until June 2020. She served as President in the last two years and while juggling a full-time job and a growing family, Kara remained committed to furthering the goals of the conservancy. She willingly took on other tasks, such as financial duties, when the need arose unexpectedly. Her warm demeanour and diplomatic approach were greatly appreciated. Kara works as a research scientist with the Canadian Forestry Service and her interests are focused on forest soil ecology, biogeochemistry and hydrology. She enjoys mountain biking, hiking and cross country skiing.

### **Shannon Ramsay**

Shannon was hired on staff of the AHC as our Environmental Education Coordinator in 2014. She continued to develop the program and through a collaborative relationship with the Algoma District School Board was able to share her enthusiasm and love of the outdoors to inspire thousands of children to engage with nature. Shannon also excelled as the Coordinator of the Algoma Envirothon Competition starting in 2017. Due to her innovative, dynamic approach and cheerful outlook Shannon was able to connect students to the outdoors through hands-on, authentic learning. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 health measures, field trips were suspended. Shannon continues to be active in the outdoors with her family and is expanding her teaching career.







# WELCOME

**We welcomed a staff member and a several new board members:**

## **Derissa Vincentini**

Derissa had been volunteering as our Social Media representative since October 2018. She was doing such a fantastic job of connecting the AHC with the public and contributing many creative ideas that the Board invited Derissa to support us as our part-time Administrator. She officially came on staff in March, 2020. Derissa has a degree in Biology and a certificate in Geomatics from Algoma University and has worked on several contracts with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Canadian Wood Fibre Centre. As expected, Derissa also engages in many silent sport activities and enjoys exploring by water or land.

## **Dave Fanslow**

Dave lives in Ann Arbour and became a member the AHC Board in January. He has been an avid Stokely skier for 30 years. As Dave owns property in the area, he is interested in fostering good relationships with neighbouring landowners of the AHC. In addition, it is expected that Dave will be able to broaden our American base of support. Dave is a research biologist with the NOAA Great Lakes Environmental Lab and is currently focusing on the lower food web and impacts of recent invasive species. Other talents include his skills as a union negotiator. Dave participates in many sports including canoeing, hiking, nordic skiing and road bicycle racing.

## **Sam Emerson**

Sam became part of the Board of the AHC in May of 2020 and was immediately thrown into the role of treasurer. This was particularly difficult as in person meetings were not permitted due to COVID-19 limitations. At that

time Sam was a Chartered Professional Accountant student at OLG and was also studying for her accounting exams. Sam attended Algoma University and had recently moved to Sault Ste. Marie. Sam is a biking enthusiast.

## **Ruth Koskenoja**

Ruth joined the Board in November and her skills as a recently retired educator helped to fill a gap. She promptly agreed to be responsible for our Environmental Education Program and work on expanding partnerships. Ruth worked for the Algoma District School Board for 28 years and was a department head, teacher, guidance counsellor and International Baccalaureate Coordinator. Although Ruth was an English teacher by training, she has 12 years experience as a Duke of Edinburgh mentor and expedition leader. Ruth has been involved in the community in many volunteer activities and is passionate about the outdoors.

## **Sharon Sullivan Seeler**

Sharon was welcomed on the AHC Board in December and it was felt she could make significant contributions given her 25 years of experience as an accountant in various industries in both the United States and Canada. Sharon is currently employed by Algoma Steel as the Front Line Supervisor for Accounts Payable and Taxation. She has recently acquired a love of nature and a fondness for trail running. She enjoys her time outdoors and has expressed appreciation for the peace and tranquillity of beauty that we experience in Northern Ontario. Sharon lives in Bruce Mines and is a dual citizen.





# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

My first year as President was a strange one indeed, as it was for everyone else around the world. It is utterly amazing to think that billions of people now share this common experience of COVID-19. Needless to say, the pandemic put its stamp on AHC activities and priorities this year in more than one way.

Besides imposing restrictions, the pandemic provided some unexpected opportunities. Summer rentals of Norm's cabin tripled compared to the year before, with clients coming from all over Ontario. Our trails on Robertson Cliffs and King Mountain have become even more popular, and are now being enjoyed in all seasons by people from all walks of life. We continued to monitor trail conditions and, with the help of students from Sault College's Natural Environment and Outdoor Studies Program, improved sections that were suffering negative effects from increased foot traffic. One activity of surging popularity is trail running. Unfortunately, the Ultra Trail Stokely Creek race planned for October 2020, the first-in-Ontario qualifying race for the Ultra Trail Mont Blanc, had to be canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

This year's operations were also disrupted by changes at the Board level. The departure in 2019 of our long-time Treasurer, Bob Beggs, left a huge gap that proved difficult to fill, resulting in several transitions and a steep learning curve for our new Treasurer, Sam Emerson. We were fortunate to fill other gaps left by previous resignations of long-standing Board members and welcomed Dave Fanslow, Ruth Koskenoja, and Sharon Sullivan Seeler to the Board.

Despite these transitions, the Board rallied around several priorities this year. One key goal was to better connect the AHC with our community and the folks using



our trails. Our administrator, Derissa Vincentini, made huge strides in improving our social media presence, and initiated several joint projects with local businesses, including the sale of AHC merchandise, using buffs as a test case. In addition, to enhance community connectivity, major investments were made to redesign and improve our website for a 2021 launch, and to design a new trailhead sign with an updated trails map, to be installed in 2021. Another key goal was to initiate the process of developing a new strategic plan for the next 5 years.

We also embarked on several initiatives to document the biodiversity and ecological values of our lands. The Sault Naturalists have agreed to head a project to document biodiversity using the worldwide i-Naturalist platform. We installed an array of 20 trail cameras to monitor the presence and movement of wildlife, in particular wolves and their prey species. The Board approved the development of a research project on wolves in southern Algoma, in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests, the Canadian Forest Service, and Hydro One, to be initiated in 2021.

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 stay tuned for our new website. We look forward to your continued support!

**Kees**





## AHC Highlight NORM'S CABIN

The year 2020 started off as a great year at Norm's Cabin. Stokely Creek Lodge experienced a wonderful ski season and there was a host at Norm's Cabin every weekend from January 11th to March 15th. Hosting duties were shared by Kees van Frankenhuyzen and Paul McBay with Mike O'Connor volunteering for one weekend in February. The hosts offered tea, cookies, conversation and a warm cabin to those who enjoyed the self-propelled trip to Norm's. Most of the visitors were skiers but on the final day of March 15th about 37 fat bikers enjoyed a wonderful day outing that included a gathering at Norm's Cabin. In addition, there were 18 overnight stays by guests at Norm's Cabin during the ski season.

Then, in the spring the cabin was shut down due to COVID-19 restrictions. When bookings started on June 19th many rigorous pandemic rules and procedures were followed. Rentals were made through Carole Blaquiere of Blaq Bear Eco-Adventure Routes who was diligent about putting protocols in place to ensure the safety of guests. The clients completed a COVID-19 questionnaire and the waiver was updated. Cleaning and handling procedures were strictly followed. Carole spent about 4 hours after each visit to clean and sanitize the cabin, an increase from the pre-pandemic routine of about one hour. Carole continued to shuttle clients gear to and from the cabin. There were 20 bookings from June 26th to October 23rd. All of the visitors were Ontario residents including about half from the Sault Ste. Marie area. Many clients were pleased that they were able to bring their dogs after the AHC decided to allow dogs on a trial basis.

Kees and Dean Thompson installed a new prefabricated 16' dock with a ladder in June, enhancing the swimming and boating experiences for Norm's guests. The old



dock was repurposed as a floor for the new firewood cradle in the woodshed. In July, Kees and Dean also took on the thankless job of digging a deep hole, building a crib and then moving the men's outhouse. The timbers for the crib were donated by Ronn Hann who had also helped Paul cut firewood in March. In September, Dean and Paul split and stacked the firewood and attended to other maintenance chores in preparation for the winter season. Kees organized a group of helpers later that month to disassemble the dock and put the sections on shore for the winter.

Late in the fall, the AHC received the unfortunate news that Stokely Creek Lodge would not open for the 2020/2021 ski season. This was a result of the restrictions due to COVID-19 and the fact that there seemed to be no indication when the border would re-open. Alternate private parking arrangements were made for guests to Norm's cabin who would need to be totally self-sufficient and bring their own gear into the cabin.

We look forward to the day when warm, welcoming communal visits to Norm's cabin can resume.





## AHC Highlight

# AHC AWARD

The AHC engages with our 'Education' Principle on many levels. One of our most important outreach methods is the Algoma Highlands Conservancy Scholarship. The annual prize is awarded to one student at Sault College in the School of Natural Environment, and one student at Algoma University in the School of Life Sciences and Environment. The criteria supports a well-rounded person:



The individual which best combines academic achievement with a commitment to one or more of the four core values of the AHC: (1) Conservation of Algoma Highlands, (2) Environmental education and research, (3) Silent sport recreation and (4) Sustainable resource management.

In 2020, the AHC scholarship was awarded to Ryan Walker from Sault College and Amanda Dubois from Algoma University. Both have since graduated and are putting their education to work!

### 2019/20 Sault College: Ryan Walker

Ryan recently graduated with honors from the Adventure Recreation and Parks Technician program at Sault College. He works as a guide for the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy and loves to create connections between people and the natural environment around them. "Since my time at the college, I have gained a lot of knowledge and tools to help me going forward with my future career and conservation efforts. Thank you so much to the Algoma Highlands Conservancy for the generous scholarship award and recognition".

### 2019/20 Algoma University: Amanda DuBois

Amanda is a recent graduate with Honours from the Biology Program at Algoma University. In her last year she completed a thesis with Dr. Isabel Molina on tobacco stigmas. She is planning on pursuing a career in the rehabilitative sciences, with the goal to become a physiotherapist. When she is not busy at school she enjoys spending time with my family and friends. The financial support she received from this award allowed her to focus on her studies and achieve academic success.



**SAULT**  
COLLEGE

If you are interested in supporting the scholarship and the people it empowers, consider making a donation to the AHC or joining our membership.





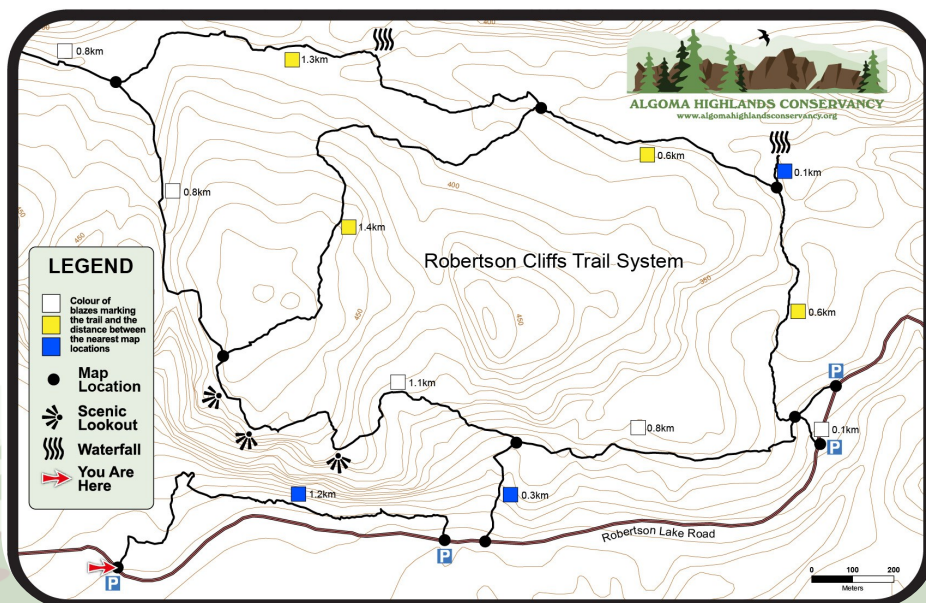
# AHC Highlight GUIDED HIKE



October 3, 2020

Kees led a 14 km hike up the South side Robertson Cliffs, into the valley and over to the top of King Mountain for lunch with a view at the height of the fall season. After everyone was nourished, Kees escorted the group via the Hakon Lien Trail back to Ila's loop to finish off the rewarding 7 hour hike.

# AHC Highlight NEW TRAIL SIGNS







# 2020 FINANCIAL POSITION CANADA

## NOTICE TO READER

	2020	2019
<b>Assets</b>		
Current Assets	\$211,616	\$235,196
Property	\$1,823,326	\$1,823,326
Due from AHC (US)	\$1,572	\$272
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$2,058,794</b>	<b>\$2,036,514</b>
 <b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current	\$362	\$5,519
General Funds	\$212,826	\$229,949
Invested in Capital assets	\$1,823,326	\$1,823,326
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,036,514</b>	<b>\$2,058,794</b>
 Revenues	\$11,412	\$147,125
Expenses	\$28,535	\$39,912
<b>Excess of Revenues over expenses</b>	<b>(\$17,123)</b>	<b>\$107,213</b>





# 2020 FINANCIAL POSITION

## United States

### NOTICE TO READER

	2020	2019
<b>Current Assets</b>	\$3,934	\$4,041
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current	\$1,200	\$1,200
Due to AHC Canada	\$1,235	\$210
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$2,435</b>	<b>\$1,410</b>
Revenues	\$0	\$991
Expenses	\$1,132	\$1,206
<b>Excess of Revenues over expenses</b>	<b>(\$1,132)</b>	<b>\$215</b>

