

Mission and Core Values

Guided by core values of conservation, silent sport recreation, environmental education and promotion of sustainable forestry, the AHC's vision is to conserve and protect the unique beauty and ecological integrity of key areas within the Algoma Highlands region."

SILENT SPORT RECREATION: to facilitate low impact, non-motorized recreational pursuits such as: cross-country and backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, hiking, trail running, wildlife viewing, nature photography and painting.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH: to realize the full potential of the Algoma Highlands as a *living classroom* where ecological concepts and conservation biology can be learned and observed first hand by current and future generations.

PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT: to balance environmental protection with the economic, recreational, and spiritual benefits humans can derive from forests. The AHC has committed to managing its land holdings primarily for nature conservation, in which natural processes of growth, succession, and species interactions are generally permitted to proceed without interference.

Board of Directors

Kara Webster, President
Kees van Frankenhuyzen, Vice-President
Bob Beggs, Treasurer
Laurie McBay, Secretary
Brian Anstess
Dieter Hohnke
Elisa Muto
Emily Hope
Colin Wilson

Staff and Volunteers

Jen Cross, Executive Director Shannon Ramsay, Environmental Education Coordinator Derissa Vincentini, Social Media



ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

www.algomahighlandsconservancy.org

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

We have lots of exciting updates to inform you about this year. This includes changes to the Board of Directors, events happening on AHC land, rentals at Norm's cabin, Environmental Education and trail and parking improvements.

Our Environmental Education Coordinator, Shannon Ramsay, had another wonderful year interacting with 1130 Algoma District students and coordinating the local Envirothon environmental program. At the post-secondary level, AHC sponsored scholarships were presented to Sault College recipients Amy Shewchuk (2018/19) and Ryan Walker (2019/20) and Algoma University student Amanda Dubois (2019/20).

On the silent sport recreation front, we continue to see increased use of Norm's cabin now both in winter and summer due to our agreement with Blaq Bear Eco Adventure Routes. Keep this in mind for any upcoming staycations you might be planning.

Under the direction of Kees van Frankenhuyzen, trail crews continued construction on the family friendly trail following Robertson Lake Road. Parking was improved to make the area safer during peak hiking periods such as the fall. Please make sure you follow the directions for parking! Two events used AHC property this year. The Crank the Shield mountain bike race returned to AHC property in August and an ultramarathon race in October brought many runners to the area to enjoy the many vistas on our land.

Brian Anstess and his Environmental Technology Group at Sault College hosted the Waterwalker film festival in April of 2019 and the proceeds were donated to the AHC. We also received some very generous donations this year from

private donors, but we are always looking for ways to expand our work and mission. Please continue to think of us when planning your annual charitable donations or in your Estate planning. Our Foster a Forest program is a wonderful present for those hard to buy for friends and family!

The AHC recognizes the importance of keeping you, our supporters, informed of our activities. Please follow us on Facebook (Algoma Highlands Conservancy) and Instagram (@algomahighlandsconservancy) for the latest updates.

Happy trails, Kara



AHC Highlights – Environmental Education

During the winter, spring and fall seasons of 2019, 1130 Algoma District students visited the AHC to participate in Environmental Education programs. The focus was on Biodiversity with the four learning areas of Soil, Stream, Wildlife and Forest Ecology tied into this overarching theme. Students were engaged in biodiversity challenges, trying to identify plant, tree and animal species to provide evidence of the variety of life at the AHC. Throughout the seasons, they took

part in the wide-field game of Cycles, which explored the concepts of producers, consumers and decomposers within an ecosystem. Students got their hands right into the soil to explore the function of this important resource, and in the spring and fall they added leaf-pack bags to the stream to attract the abundance of macroinvertebrates that call this water system home.



AHC Highlights - Envirothon



The AHC hosted the Forests Ontario Envirothon environmental program once again. In March of 2019 secondary level students took part in an Envirothon activity day hosted by Sault College students and instructors to learn about local wildlife. In May, an activity day, overnight event and Envirothon competition was held at Stokely Creek Lodge, with local scientists, foresters and technicians guiding students to use their knowledge to solve environmental issues through testing and a presentation challenge. In the fall of 2019, an activity day was held at Kinsmen Park, where students explored the forest, Crystal Creek and soil pit to learn about these amazing natural resources in a hands-on manner.

AHC Highlights – Robertson Cliffs Trails

2019 saw the completion of a 3-year project to improve the Robertson Cliffs trail system. The joint AHC-Voyageur Trail Association (VTA) committee for trail improvement proposed to deal with an unprecedented increase in foot traffic and associated vehicle congestion in recent years by creating more access points along



the 2-km cliff property boundary. Having a single access point with parking for only 15 vehicles lead to

trail erosion and unsafe road-side parking during

peak hiking season. In 2018, additional parking space for about 30 vehicles was created halfway between the western most parking and the existing trailhead on the eastern border; a spur trail linking the new parking lot with the main VTA trail was built; and the western most parking lot was established as a third access point by linking it with the new parking through of a 1.5 km family-friendly trail along the base of the cliffs. The trail visits a small pothole-type of wetland near the cliff base and



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meanders through a beautiful mature maple-yellow birch forest amongst giant moss- and fern-clad boulders that calved off the cliffs in ancient times. The trail offers spectacular views straight up the imposing cliffs during the leaf-free season,



and has already become a favourite destination for hikers and snowshoe enthusiasts. The main activity in 2019 was the construction of a ~300 m bypass on the main trail to avoid a section with multiple wet creek crossings and a badly eroding steep climb along a creek bed. We also installed trail maps at each trail intersection to improve hikers' comfort and safety.

We thank the volunteers from the VTA and Sault College's Natural Environment and Outdoor Studies Program for building the new trails. Plans for the near future include the installation of a new trailhead sign featuring an updated map of the entire AHC trail system, relocation of a few short trail sections to get around perennial wet spots, and the establishment of a self-interpretive family-oriented trail in an easily accessed location. Stay tuned and enjoy our trails!

AHC Highlights – Events

The ruggedness and unparalleled beauty of the AHC lands is starting to attract major outdoor recreation events with participants from far and wide.

In 2019 we hosted two such events. This was the second year Sean Ruppel from Superfly Racing chose Algoma for its annual Crank the Shield event, a 3-day (August 16-18) 160 km race from Batchawana Station on the Algoma Central Railway to Kinsmen Park in Sault Ste. Marie. Approximately 180 bicyclists, from the Sault and area, southern Ontario, Michigan and from places as far away as Arizona and Mexico enjoyed our trails across the top of King Mountain.



In early October, the AHC and Stokely Creek Ski trail system presented the ultimate challenge to about 150 runners

who participated in the first-ever Ultra Trail Stokely Creek race, organized by Nick Brash from Bear In Mind Running. The ambitious race featured distances between 5 and 83 km and drew participants from all over Ontario, Quebec, and as far away as Chicago, Colorado and Arizona. The race drew high praise from veteran ultra trail racers for its superb organization and outstanding terrain features, a combination of scenic diversity and elevation

profile. These features led the UTSC race being accredited as a qualifying race for the Ultra Trail Mont Blanc, the first in Ontario. The 2020 race will

be a 2-day event (October 2 and 3) as it features a 170 km course with an elevation change of almost 5000 m....better start training now!

Major events like these are putting the Algoma Highlands on the national map as a go-to destination for a wide range of outdoor adventures. The AHC anticipates that fees from these events will become a significant and ongoing source of revenue.



AHC Highlights – Norm's Cabin

The new Norm's Cabin was constructed in 2014. Since that time it has been an appealing destination for skiers, hikers and bikers. Many outdoor recreationists have enjoyed a day outing that included a visit to Norm's Cabin while overnight stays are slowly increasing in popularity.

On weekends during the ski season, a warm welcome is provided by AHC volunteer hosts. Board member Kees van Frankenhuyzen along with Paul McBay and Mike O'Connor served tea and cookies again this year coupled with conversation and trail advice. It is so relaxing to sit by the warm fire enjoying the camaraderie of ski enthusiasts that it is easy to neglect the time needed for the return trip.

Overnight reservations are managed by Carole Blaquiere of Blaq Bear Eco Adventure Routes. Carole reported an increase in bookings when Norm's Cabin was added to AirBnB from June 1st to October 31st. American visitors and others from Ontario travelled on foot or by bike to the cabin for 12 rentals this summer. Winter bookings for 36 client nights were made directly through the Blaq Bear website. Carole continues to transport gear for her clients in the summer. Winter guests have to be self sufficient and ski in carrying their own food and bedding.

Excellent feedback was received including the following comments from the mother of a family of four with two young children who enjoyed a visit to the cabin this summer. She reported that, "The cabin is rustic, but was clean and very comfortable. It was special to have the entire lake to ourselves. Highlights were swimming off the dock, exploring by canoe and listening to the loons and cranes in the evening".

It is nice to know that Norm's Cabin is offering rewarding and unique outdoor experiences to many people.



AHC Highlights – Changes to the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors was sad to accept the resignations of 3 long standing members at the end of 2019. Bob Beggs served as a member of our Board of Directors since 2011 and was the treasurer for 7 years. Bob willingly took on many complicated tasks, executed them promptly and dedicated considerable time to promote the goals of the conservancy. Bob has his MBA from York University and teaches business and economic courses on a part-time basis at the Algoma University.

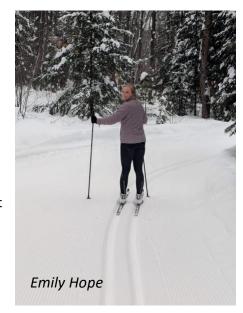
Elisa Muto served on the AHC Board for 6 years, including 3 years as President. Elisa has her Master of Science degree in Environmental Biology and led the AHC Pollinator Research Project. This research project provided regionally specific information on local pollinators and their preferred floral resources following vegetation management on utility rights of

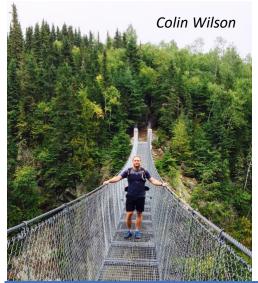
ways. Elisa currently teaches at Sault College in the Natural and Outdoor Studies

Department.

Our longest serving member, Dieter Hohnke, joined the Board in 2008. Dieter lives in Ann Arbour but has been an annual visitor to the Algoma district for decades due to his love of cross country skiing. As the AHC is a bi-national organization, Dieter has helped to promote our conservancy to American visitors and supporters. Dieter has his PhD in Physics and is retired from the Science Research Laboratories at the Ford Motor Company.

However, there was good news when Emily Hope joined the AHC Board in January. Emily is presently employed as a Forest Resource Economist at the Great Lakes Forestry Centre. She has experience with carbon sequestration from forests and offsets, media training and event planning. Emily has a great appreciation of trees and enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking and biking. She has already been making a contribution to the conservation of the Algoma Highlands by taking over several projects for the AHC. Emily is updating our website and is overseeing our carbon file which includes submitting carbon surveys and monitoring reports.





Colin Wilson became a Board member in November. Colin has considerable experience working in the community and economic sectors including volunteer activities. Colin is presently the Director of Strategic Advancement at Algoma University. The AHC is excited to have Colin help us develop our partnerships in the community and in particular with Algoma University. In addition, as a former program manager with the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Colin has skills that will assist the AHC with our fundraising proposals and grant applications. Colin is passionate about the outdoors and the AHC welcomes his enthusiasm and expertise.

AHC Highlights – A special thanks to Jen Cross

The AHC said our final goodbye to Jennifer Cross this year. Jen joined the staff of the AHC in 2009 as a Conservancy Assistant with degrees in both biology and fisheries and wildlife management. She quickly proved her worth and became our Executive Director as of 2010 and was very effective in promoting the core values of the AHC. Jen took on the

operational duties of the AHC and in short order completed many projects. These included the Robertson Lake Dump Cleanup, the completion of the single track mountain bike trail and the publication of a comprehensive trail map. In addition, Jen was instrumental in establishing our Foster a Forest campaign, one of the many fundraising efforts that she oversaw.

She was also involved in spear heading research projects including analyzing recordings of bird song to identify species at risk and studying alternative vegetation management on power line rights of way. An ambitious survey of AHC property confirmed that rare plants, Braun's Holly Fern and Oval- leaved Bilberry are present. These species join the rare birds, Canada



Jen Cross holds up a wood turtle, one of many the AHC has monitored as part of a research study aimed at protecting this endangered species. Photo credit Anthony

Warbler and Peregrine Falcon which have also been identified on AHC land. Jen used this data to support the successful application to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program which continues to provide an ongoing tax break to the AHC.

Jen, in conjunction with Board member Dean Thompson, conducted the wood turtle research project. Four years of extensive field work and data analysis resulted in published articles in peer reviewed journals in 2018. The wood turtle is listed as endangered in Ontario. They are at risk due to habitat loss, death by predators and illegal collection by humans for the pet trade. The wood turtle's slow growth, late maturity and low reproductive success rate increases its vulnerability to these threats. The multi-agency collaborative project examined wood turtle habitat preferences, movement patterns and responses to disturbance factors. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry is using this research as a basis for management decisions that will support the continued protection of this endangered species.

Jen accomplished these projects while she was also managing staff, preparing annual reports and newsletters, submitting proposals and applications, organizing meetings and events and communicating with the public. She kept our organization running efficiently in a friendly and exceptionally capable manner.

Jen moved out west in the fall of 2015 we were very pleased that she continued to support the AHC by working remotely. Therefore, it was with reluctance that we accepted her resignation this year. Jen is presently Executive Director of the Alaska Raptor Centre and we know that her multiple skills, strong work ethic and engaging personality will make her suitable for any role she chooses. We are extremely appreciative of Jen's dedication and commitment to the AHC.

AHC Highlights – Scholarship Recipients

Every year the Algoma Highlands Conservancy Award is awarded to Sault College and Algoma University students for their academic excellence and commitment to the AHC's four core values. Congratulations to all our AHC award recipients! Best of luck wherever your path takes you!

2018/19 Sault College: Amy Shewchuk

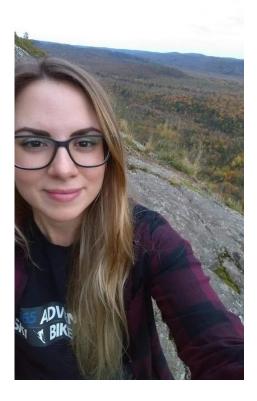
Amy, a student in the Natural Environment Technology Program at Sault College, received the 2019 Algoma Highlands Conservancy Award for her academic excellence and commitment to the AHC's four core values. Amy graduated in the Spring of 2019. Since graduating she has worked as an Operations Assistant for EACOM timber corporation as well as a ranger for the New Zealand Department of Conservation. She has plans to return to New Zealand in the fall. She is really enjoying doing short term contract work because it gives her the opportunity to travel and to experience many different career paths.

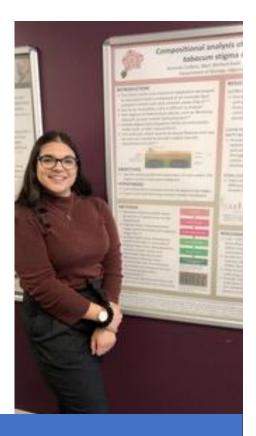


2019/20 Sault College: Ryan Walker Ryan recently graduated with honors from the Adventure Recreation and Parks Technician program at Sault College. He works as a guide for the Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy and loves to create connections between people and the natural environment around them. "Since 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.





AHC Highlights – Financial Statement

	2019 FINANCIAL POSITION (CANADA) (Noti	ce to Reader)		
I	ASSETS		<u>2019</u>		2018
	Current Assets	\$⇒√23	5,196	\$	135,389
2	Property	\$ 1,82	3,326	\$ 1	,823,326
	Due for AHC (US)	\$	272		
	TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 2,05	8,794	\$ 1,	,958,715
	LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS				1
	Current	\$	5,706	\$	11,668
	Due to AHC (US)			\$	985
	Fund Balances	TO SECURE OF THE PARTY OF THE P	3,088	\$ 1	,946,062
	TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ 2,05	8,794	\$ 1,	,958,715
	REVENUES	\$ 14	7,125	\$	122,695
	EXPENSES		10,099		64,805
	EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	THE STREET STREET AND THE STREET	7,026	\$	
No.		1			《
	2019 FINANCIAL POSITION (U.S.A.) (Notice	to Reader)			
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		to Reader)	2019 4,041	\$	2018 4,045
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	ASSETS			\$	
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4	ASSETS Cash & Receivables TOTAL ASSETS LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ \$	4,041 4,041	\$	4,045 4,045
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	ASSETS Cash & Receivables TOTAL ASSETS LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ \$	4,041 4,041	\$	4,045 4,045
	ASSETS Cash & Receivables TOTAL ASSETS LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS Current	\$ \$	4,041 4,041 1,410	\$	4,045 4,045 1,199
	ASSETS Cash & Receivables TOTAL ASSETS LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS Current Fund Balances	\$ \$ \$ \$	4,041 4,041 1,410 2,631	\$ \$ \$	4,045 4,045 1,199 2,846
	ASSETS Cash & Receivables TOTAL ASSETS LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS Current Fund Balances TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ \$ \$	4,041 4,041 1,410 2,631 4,041	\$ \$ \$	4,045 4,045 1,199 2,846 4,045
	ASSETS Cash & Receivables TOTAL ASSETS LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS Current Fund Balances	\$ \$ \$ \$	4,041 4,041 1,410 2,631	\$ \$ \$	4,045 4,045 1,199 2,846