

ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

2009 ANNUAL REPORT (01-Jan-09 to 31-Dec-09)



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ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

Letter from the President

Dear Friends of the Algoma Highlands Conservancy,

The year 2009 will certainly be celebrated by friends of the AHC as a milestone in which the goal of conserving and protecting the Algoma Highlands was fulfilled in a major way. On November 30, 2009, the AHC purchased 2600 acres of land that extends behind Stokely Creek Lodge, across to Stokely Lake, and down to AHC-owned property at the Robertson Lakes Cliffs. The area includes all three peaks of King Mountain and harbours delicate ecosystems on and around the mountain, old growth forests, rare flora and fauna, and, as many of you know, a world class silent-sport recreation resource, right here in the Sault Ste. Marie area! This is an accomplishment that dedicated volunteers have been striving to achieve for more than 2 decades and truly represents a legacy of the late Charles (Chuck) Peterson, and

many others who have shaped this success through their vision, hard work, and financial contributions.



Dr. Doug Pitt, AHC President, photo by Jennifer Allemang

The new land purchase together with the Robertson Lakes Cliffs property now forms a contiguous 3000 acre (1215 ha) area set aside for silent sport recreation, research, education, and conservation – in perpetuity!

For those new to our cause, the AHC was formed in 1992 as a binational, non-profit land trust with the mission of conserving and enjoying the unique recreational attributes of the Algoma Highlands. We are governed by a volunteer Board of directors comprised of conservationists, educators, silent-sport enthusiasts, researchers, and naturalists, all

sharing a love for the region and a passion for the protection and conservation of its natural wonders. Past achievements of the AHC have included the purchase of Norm Bourgeois' "trapper's cabin" at Bone Lake (1996), conservation easements on 300 acres of land adjacent to the Stokely Creek Lodge (1999), the purchase of 300 acres encompassing the Robertson Lake Cliffs (1999), and an exclusive 2007-2017 agreement to use the entire Stokely trail system on the 6000 acres immediately to the north of existing AHC lands, for silent-sport recreation.

In our success, we are extremely grateful for the support garnered from our many partners and friends. A key AHC conservation partner is Stokely Creek Lodge (and particularly the Byker and Byker-Phair family owners). The AHC is also deeply indebted to a number of organizations and individuals for their generous financial contributions (please see a detailed list at the end of the report).

On behalf of current and future generations that will benefit from this partnership, generosity, and collective effort, the AHC offers a sincere and appreciative **THANK YOU!**

As we move forward to write a new chapter in the history of the AHC, I invite you to join us in meeting the important challenge of being good stewards of this cherished land. We look forward to now being able to dedicate expertise and time to our core values in environmental education, silent sport recreation and scientific research, ultimately enhancing the reputation of the Algoma Highlands as a renowned focal point for these activities. There is (and will likely always be) considerable work to do on the fundraising front, but I do feel a sense of confidence buoyed by the synergy of our success to date.

Folks, let's keep the momentum going!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Pitt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doug" being more prominent than the last name "Pitt".

President,
Algoma Highlands Conservancy



ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2009

OFFICERS

Dr. Doug Pitt (President)
Karen Streich (Treasurer)

Dr. Gaylen J. Byker (Vice President)
Ken Coulter (Secretary)

DIRECTORS

Kim Pyykonen
Dr. Dean Thompson
Dr. Dieter Hohnke
Laurie McBay

Michael O'Connor
Mark Harvey
Dr. Lisa Venier
Dr. Kristin Arend

John Waller
Ian Phair
Craig Howard

STAFF Jennifer Allemang and Anna Rodgers (Conservancy Assistants)



AHC Board members celebrate the successful King Mountain Purchase!

Clockwise from upper left Ken Coulter, Mark Harvey, Doug Pitt, Craig Howard, Ian Phair, Lisa Venier, Dean Thompson, Dieter Hohnke, Laurie McBay, Karen Streich, and Gaylen Byker.

MISSION

The mission of the AHC is to conserve and protect the unique beauty and ecological integrity of key areas within the Algoma Highlands region. Our mission is addressed directly through pursuit of several different activities aligned with our core values or related operation needs.

This annual report documents our significant achievements in relation to this mission for the reporting period January to December 2009. Our collective achievements reflect the dedication and passion of our Board volunteers, our staff and many other individuals, agencies and partners who provide grass-roots support.



Stokely Falls, photo by Anna Rodgers

AHC CORE VALUES

CONSERVATION

The AHC seeks to conserve and protect the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the Algoma Highlands region, while facilitating access to enhance awareness and appreciation of our natural heritage by the broader human community.

SILENT SPORT RECREATION

The magnificent terrain and unique beauty of the Algoma Highlands provide silent sport recreation, leisure, and artistic opportunities in every season. The trail system meanders through mixed-wood forests, along tumbling creeks and climbs to the summit of King Mountain. Low impact recreational pursuits such as: cross-country and backcountry skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, hiking, trail running, as well as more leisurely and artistic activities including nature photography, painting, and bird watching are all actively encouraged and practiced by many members of the public from both the Canadian and U.S. sides of the border, with occasional visitors from much further afield.

Photo by Bob Yankus

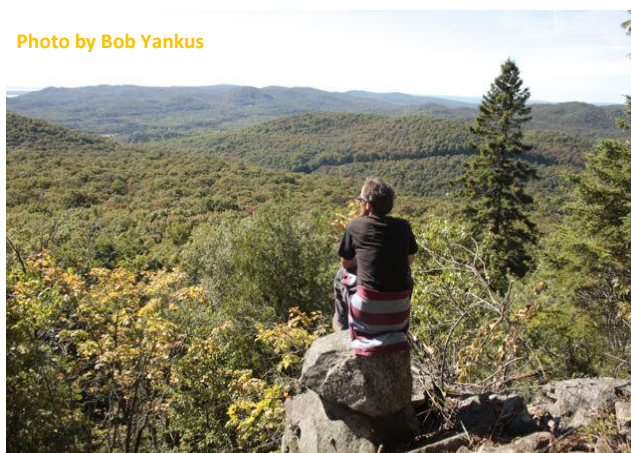


Photo Source: SCL website

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The AHC has always recognized the need to further our understanding of natural systems and to transfer this knowledge to current and future generations. The Algoma Highlands, and particularly our own lands in the vicinity of King Mountain, are a living classroom—an excellent site where ecological concepts and conservation biology can be learned and observed first hand. In addition, much of the area immediately adjacent to the King Mountain site contains ideal locations for demonstrating the concepts and practice of biology, sustainable forest management and ecological restoration.



PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The AHC believes strongly in the concept of balancing environmental protection with the economic, recreational, and spiritual benefits humans can derive from forests. Sustainable Forest Management is the philosophy, science, and art of maintaining or enhancing the long-term health of forest ecosystems while providing environmental, economic, and social opportunities for the benefit of present and future generations. Through a combination of forest protection (on lands that the AHC owns outright) and promotion of sound sustainable forest management activities in the region more generally, we strive to enhance the long-term health and value of the diverse forests of the area.



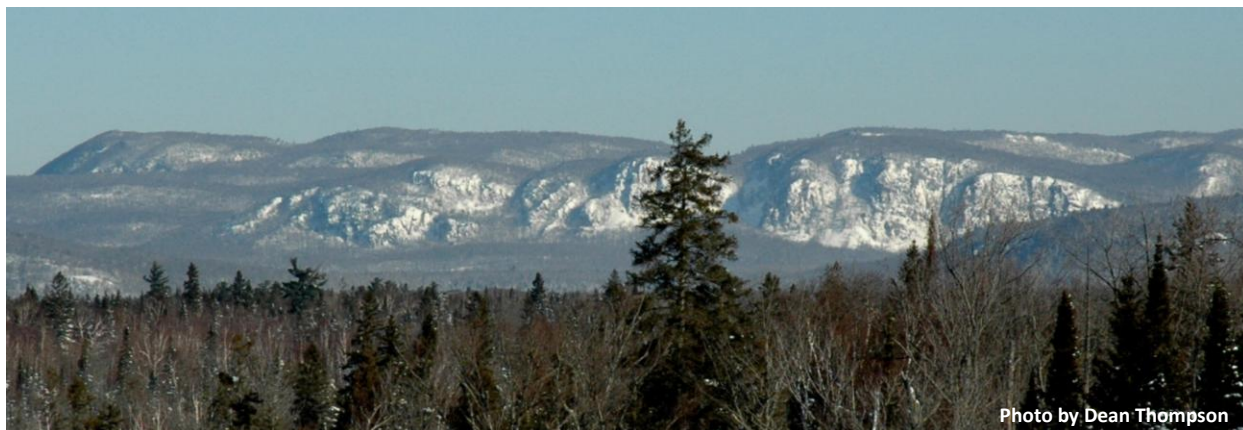


Photo by Dean Thompson

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2009

KING MOUNTAIN LEGACY LANDS

On November 30, 2009 the AHC became the official proud owners of the 2600 ac (1050 ha) we refer to as the King Mountain property! King Mountain is an ancient landform, typical of the Algoma Highlands, which stands on the horizon of our viewscape and our minds as a constant reminder of the power and beauty of nature. King Mountain is also a geological legacy, a remnant of ancient landforms which have endured through the centuries, including the last continental glaciation.

As such a unique and dominant landform of the Algoma Highlands we are absolutely ecstatic that our years of hard work and the support of so many agencies, organizations and individuals have finally come to fruition! The final realization of this objective ensures that the entire 1215 ha (3000 acres) of property can now be maintained and managed as a conservation forest for many generations to enjoy.

The AHC will continue to practice and promote all of our four core values as well.

NEW OFFICE

Our friends and partners at Stokely Creek Lodge graciously provided us with a new office location in their clubhouse loft, which is proving to be an ideal setting for planning/conducting stewardship activities on the property and fostering relationships with friends and supporters of the AHC; many of whom frequent the lodge, particularly during ski season.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

In 2009, several changes to the Algoma Highlands Conservancy Board of Directors took place. These included appointment of Ken Coulter as secretary, replacing long-standing Board member and previous secretary Greg Zimmerman, who stepped down to focus on other priorities. Many thanks to Greg for his years of effort with the AHC. Three new Board members, Laurie McBay, Dr. Kristin Arend and Craig Howard were appointed to the Board through the year, bringing new expertise, enthusiasm and skills that will help us in the



continued support of our goals. In addition, thanks to the Northern Ontario Heritage Foundation Corporation, we were able to take on two new interns each for a period of one year. The successful applicants, Jennifer Allemang and Anna Rodgers, have already contributed significantly to the AHC in many ways and will continue to assist us by effectively covering the many day to day conservancy duties both in the office and in the field.

AHC OPERATIONAL PLAN

With the acquisition of the King Mountain property now essentially complete the AHC has begun to transition from an organization necessarily focused almost entirely on fundraising, to an organization dedicated to showing leadership in all four of our fundamental principles: Conservation, Environmental Education, Silent Sport Recreation and Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management. In this regard the AHC has developed strong linkages to many other agencies and organizations with similar principles and values and has already made several proposals for new programs in environmental education and additional aspects of silent sport recreation that already are beginning to blossom. Several local educational institutions including; primary, secondary and post-secondary schools, have approached the AHC, or are being contacted by us, to develop ways and means of including time in our natural classroom as an exciting value added element of their standard curricula. We have also developed strong ties to several agencies and have a proposal under review to establish a long term seminar series dedicated to learning and demonstrating practical methods of conservation and sustainable land management – watch for more details on this exciting new adventure in the near future.

Among the many other highlights of 2009, the following subcommittee action plans and accomplishments have prime significance:

SILENT SPORT AND RECREATION

- Completion of a 30 km snowshoe trail system by the exhaustive and extensive efforts of Bob Yankus and Lucie Gagnon. The trails criss-cross much of the King Mountain property and for the adventurous – lead right to the King Mountain hut and beyond to some of our more hidden natural treasures
- Encouraged and facilitated plans for the development of a long-distance single track mountain bike trail in partnership with the Sault Cycling Club
- Hired a student as a weekend host for skiers at Norm's Cabin during the 2009 the ski season



Lucie Gagnon, Photo by Bob Yankus

CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION

- Achieved major goal of acquiring the 2600 ac King Mountain property to be preserved as an easily accessible conservation forest
- Currently mapping and marking all boundary lines, property corners and existing trails on the property



Photo by Lorna Pitt

- Baseline documentation of all significant natural and cultural heritage features on the property has also been initiated and will be completed prior to December 2010
- Developed a MOU with the Batchewana First Nations which is currently under review

BOARD DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- Welcomed three new enthusiastic members to the Board
- Further developed sub-committees that cultivate and promote AHC core values and ideals
- Bid fond farewell to Ted Curry (Executive Director) and Nicolle Thompson (Executive Assistant) who are pursuing other ventures

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND FUNDRAISING

- Raised \$250,000 in private donations
- Approved for a \$400,000 grant through Greenlands Challenge - An Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources competitive funding program that helps conserve Ontario's biodiversity
- Awarded a \$150,000 EJLB grant
- Awarded a \$10,000 McLean Foundation grant
- Received a \$3000 "Local Initiatives Fund" grant from the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie
- Undertook a \$300,000 mortgage to allow the outright purchase of the King Mountain property by the established deadline date
- Initiated contacts and development on several new proposals, aimed in whole or in part at retiring our mortgage debt

COMMUNICATION

- Hosted a donor recognition event with 50 people in attendance to unveil a permanent monument showcasing the AHC's eternal appreciation for key agencies and individuals contributing to the King Mountain land acquisition
- Featured in seven local newspaper editions detailing the AHC's progress towards acquiring King Mountain
- Worked with professional writers to publish magazine articles in both Superior Outdoors and Nature Ontario
- Completed numerous upgrades to the AHC website; posted articles for ongoing projects and research, improved and made revisions to the Friends and FAQ pages
- Held public relation presentation for the Rotary club at Stokely Creek Lodge
- Provided two evening presentations to guests of Stokely Creek Lodge to inform them about the AHC, our partnership with Stokely Creek Lodge and Astina Forest AG and to provide a forum for direct questions and answers on all aspects of AHC operations
- Prepared and distributed two newsletters to our extensive mailing list (>1400 individuals)



EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

- Conducted forestry field day course with Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology, (led by Professor Mark Harvey) on the slopes of King Mountain with 20 students participating; an article highlighting the event was written by Anna Rodgers (now an AHC intern) and published on our website.
- Continued with multiple ongoing research projects including:
 - o Response of Algoma tolerant hardwood forests to selection/restoration harvesting
 - o Response of Algoma songbird communities to tolerant hardwood selection/restoration harvesting
 - o Ecological restoration of white pine in small canopy gaps, with monitoring and protection from white pine blister rust and white pine weevil
 - o Establishment of long-term research and monitoring sites to monitor climate change effects on the biological diversity and ecological function of small ephemeral wetlands



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2010 & BEYOND

- The major priority of the AHC is to retire the recently acquired “mortgage” debt. We will continue to work hard in seeding new corporate sponsors, as well as garnering support from philanthropic foundations and from new and existing private donors.
- Complete Baseline Documentation Reporting on the new property.
- In accordance with our Operational Plan, host a series of internationally recognized, knowledge-sharing forums on relevant conservation/scientific research topics.
- Develop and Implement the AHC’s first Membership Program, through which we hope to solidify our deep bonds with the local and regional community, as well as harness a more secure and sustainable basis from which we can operate.
- Construct a high quality and exciting singletrack mountain bike trail system that meanders through the AHC's property for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public.
- Continue "branching out" to the broader community to increase our public profile by forming new partnerships, developing environmental education programs, and maintaining the accessibility of our land base.



2009 FINANCIAL POSITION (Canada)

(Audited)

ASSETS

Current Assets.....	\$472,044
King Mountain Property, at cost.....	\$1,522,147
Robertson Lake Cliffs, at cost.....	\$48,412
Norm's Cabin, at cost.....	\$35,000
TOTAL ASSETS.....	\$2,077,603

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	\$3,977
Long Term Debt.....	\$754,193
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,319,433
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS.....	\$2,077,603

2009 FINANCIAL POSITION (USA)

(Audited)

ASSETS

Cash..... \$2,794

TOTAL ASSETS..... \$2,794

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable \$1,751

Unrestricted Net Assets \$1,043

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS..... \$2,794

OUR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

The Algoma Highlands Conservancy (AHC) recognizes the many supporters and partners that have contributed to our major success in acquisition of the King Mountain property. Throughout our endeavors to date, Stokely Creek Lodge and the extended Byker-Phair family owners have been key partners and supporters. We are also very grateful for the generous support provided by individual donors, as well as the following businesses, agencies, foundations, and silent sport recreation clubs.

AHC PARTNERS:

- Stokely Creek Lodge

FOUNDATIONS:

- The EJLB Foundation
- The Ontario Trillium Foundation
- The McLean Foundation

MAJOR INDIVIDUAL DONORS:

- Charles (Chuck) Peterson Legacy Gift
- Gaylen and Susan Byker
- Howard and Cheryl Feit
- Paul and Laurie McBay
- Brian and Elizabeth, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
- John and Mary Clark
- Harry and Madeleine Peterson
- Mark and Rhonna Shatz
- Mary Underwood
- Karen Streich and Ronn Hann
- Julien and Trudie Hutchinson

(Several individual donors have chosen to remain anonymous; however their contributions are equally appreciated)

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

- Supported by the Greenlands Challenge - An Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources competitive funding program that helps conserve Ontario's biodiversity
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- The Nature Conservancy (US)
- Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area

SILENT SPORT RECREATION CLUBS:

- Federation of Ontario Naturalists
- North Star Ski Touring Club
- Voyageur Trail Association
- Sault Cycling Club
- Skinnyski.com
- Washtenaw Ski Touring Club
- Hike Ontario
- A Michigan Nordic Ski Racer

FRIENDS:

- Soo Mill BUILDALL
- Lake Superior State University
- Sault College of Applied Arts and Technology



Community Development Corporation
OF SAULT STE. MARIE & AREA
A Community Futures Development Corporation



Ontario



THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO



Ontario
Northern Ontario Heritage
Fund Corporation
Société de gestion du Fonds
du patrimoine du Nord
de l'Ontario