

# ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

2011 Annual Report (01-Jan-11 to 31-Dec-11)



Canadian address: P.O. Box 20076, 150 Churchill Blvd., Sault Ste. Marie, ON, P6A 6W3

American address: c/o CBSI, 3303 1-75 Business Spur, Sault Ste. Marie, MI, 49783

Telephone: 705-649-5751

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

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





## Dear Friends,

*It's now been two years since the 2009 milestone King Mountain property purchase that made the Algoma Highlands Conservancy (AHC) a very significant conservation property in the Algoma Region. The Conservancy encompasses more than 1200 hectares that extends east behind Stokely Creek Lodge, across to Stokely Lake, and south to the three peaks of King Mountain and the scenic Robertson Lake Cliffs. Most importantly, the land harbors delicate ecosystems, old growth forests, rare flora and fauna, and a world class silent-sport recreation resource in the Sault Ste. Marie area!*

*During the 2011 calendar year, our dedicated volunteer AHC Board members, friends, and staff have been working hard on several new initiatives relating to our core values – proving that we are a true, working Conservancy. While these initiatives are detailed in this annual report, I'd like to take moment to highlight some of them and personally thank the many folks and organizations involved.*

**Conservation:** In 2011, funding grants from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, Hydro One, Canada Summer Jobs, and the YMCA allowed us to employ three full-time and three seasonal staff members to work on conservation and stewardship projects. This included Executive Director, Jennifer Cross, Interns Anna Rodgers and Carrie Ginou, and students Christopher Langshaw, Gideon Rodgers and Dean Lamming. Most exciting, was a grant received from the Ontario Community Environment Fund that allowed us to clean up more than 7000 pounds of junk metal and garbage at an illegal dumpsite adjacent to AHC lands along Robertson Lake Rd!

**Silent Sport Recreation:** Also in 2011, previous funding from Mountain Equipment Co-op allowed us to complete the construction of a world-class single-track mountain bike trail and trailhead that was officially opened at a gala "Bike and Hike" event held on September 18<sup>th</sup>. The new trail was supported by a subsequent grant from the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste.



**President, Doug Pitt**

Photo: Lorna Pitt

*Marie and Area, which enabled Jennifer and volunteer mapping specialist Bob Sinclair to map all of the recreational trails on our property and present them in a handy and informative trail brochure!*

**Education and Research:** This year we received a significant grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to bolster the AHC's delivery of environmental education and outreach in a big way! Teacher Cynthia Marcinkowski was hired as our Environmental Education Coordinator and she started the task of engaging local students, scientists, teachers, volunteers and community members in the development of a long-term, self-sustaining education program. Look for exciting news to roll from these efforts over the next year!

*Through partnerships with Hydro One and Corridors For Life, Jennifer worked diligently with Board member Dean Thompson in 2011 to expand the AHC's research capacity by conducting innovative bioacoustic monitoring and establishing experiments of vegetation management alternatives in the powerline rights-of-way on AHC property. These efforts and more will continue through 2012.*

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*With these solid examples of success, we do, however, still face significant challenges as an organization. Ultimately, as a Board, we are focused on fundraising to retire our outstanding mortgage debt. We are extremely grateful to the EJLB Foundation for very generously contributing \$100,000 during the summer of 2011 (adding to the \$150,000 contributed in 2009, and \$50,000 provided in 1999 for the purchase of Robertson Lake Cliffs).*

*The AHC also very much appreciates the contributions, assistance, and dedication of our many supporters and friends, and, especially, our partner, Stokely Creek Lodge (please see a detailed list on page 9). Our outstanding balance of \$243,000 is still significant, but I am confident that with perseverance, the steady emergence of tangible achievements with respect to our core values, and the generosity of our growing list of friends, we will achieve our goals!*

*As we continue to move forward, I invite you to join us in meeting the challenges that we face. Our intention is to secure our position as a local grass-roots organization that sets high-level goals in conservation, environmental education and research, and silent-sport recreation - and then delivers on them!*

*Sincerely,*



*Doug Pitt, President  
Algoma Highlands Conservancy*



## Board of Directors

Doug Pitt, President  
 Gaylen Byker, Vice President  
 Karen Streich, Treasurer  
 Laurie McBay, Secretary  
 Dean Thompson  
 Dieter Hohnke  
 Kristin Arend  
 Lisa Venier  
 Ian Phair  
 Mark Harvey  
 Brian Anstess  
 Richard Greenwood  
 Robert Beggs  
 Jillian Wilson

## Staff

Jennifer Cross, Executive Director  
 Anna Rodgers, Conservancy Assistant  
 Carrie Ginou, Office Administrator  
 Cynthia Marcinkowski, Education Coordinator

## Members

Dave and Cyndy Foley  
 Don McGorman  
 Jennifer Cross  
 Dieter Hohnke  
 Kim Pyykonen  
 Mark Harvey  
 Lisa Venier  
 Sally Waterhouse and Denny Radabaugh  
 Carole Blaqui re  
 Laurie and Paul McBay  
 Karen Streich and Ronn Hann  
 Magill Family  
 Doug Pitt  
 Leroy Bjerke  
 Jeff Pike  
 David Massignan  
 Jeanie Belhobek  
 Kristin Arend

## Mission

*"To conserve and protect the unique beauty and ecological integrity of key areas within the Algoma Highlands region, through the pursuit of the AHC's core values by dedicated board members, staff, volunteers, agencies, partners, and many individuals who provide invaluable grass-roots support."*



**Executive Director, Jennifer Cross**

Photo: Cas Evans Photography

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, that's the only thing that ever has."*

~ Margaret Mead

## Core Values

The Algoma Highlands Conservancy (AHC) is a bi-national not-for-profit charitable organization which was founded in 1992. It operates as an organization dedicated to showing leadership in accordance the following 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

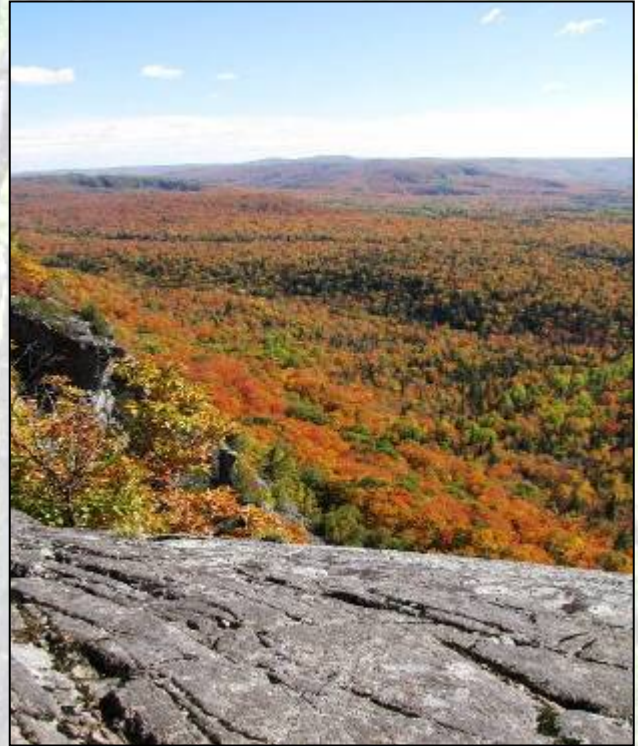
The AHC encourages the practice of low-impact, outdoor activities including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, hiking, trail running, bird-watching, and nature photography.

### Environmental Education and Research

The Algoma Highlands are a living classroom where ecological concepts and conservation biology can be learned and observed first hand. In addition, the area contains ideal locations for ground-breaking scientific research demonstrating the concepts and practices of biology, natural resources management, and ecological restoration.

### Sustainable Resource Management

The AHC believes strongly in the concept of balancing environmental protection with the economic, recreational, and spiritual benefits humans can derive from forests. Through a combination of forest protection on lands that the AHC owns outright and the promotion of sound sustainable forest management activities regionally, the AHC strives to enhance the long-term health of the diverse forests and ecosystems of the area.



***View from the Robertson Lake Cliffs lookout.***

*Photo: Lorna Pitt*



***View from the King Mountain Hut lookout.***

*Photo: Mark Harvey*



## Highlights of 2011:

### Board Members

This year we welcomed Brian Antess, Richard Greenwood, Robert Beggs and Jillian Wilson to the AHC Board of Directors and saw the departure of Mike O'Connor, Craig Howard, John Waller and Kim Pyykonen. Kim was our longest serving Board Member, at 12 years, and we thank him, and all our departing Members, for their dedicated volunteer service.

### Conservancy Staff

Jennifer Cross continued to boldly lead the day-to-day activities of the AHC as the Executive Director and was supported by Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Interns Anna Rodgers and Carrie Ginou, Canada Summer Jobs Students Gideon Rodgers and Christopher Langshaw, YMCA Eco-Intern, Dean Lamming and Environmental Education Coordinator, Cynthia Marcinkowski.

A generous grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an Agency of the Government of Ontario, allowed the AHC to hire its first Environmental Education Coordinator in 2011. This grant will allow the Conservancy to concentrate on developing and delivering education programs, and covers funding for a 2-year period, through until 2013.

### Silent Art Auction

Late in 2011, bidding in the AHC's Silent Art Auction began, with competition heating up in the final hours on December 30<sup>th</sup>. Many of our friends and supporters took home beautiful works of nature-inspired art, generously donated by talented Canadian and American artists. The event was a success thanks to the hard work of organizer, and Lake Superior State University student, Carla Marcellus, who undertook this ambitious project for the AHC. Support for the auction was also provided by the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre and Stokely Creek Lodge who provided venues to display and auction the art.



**Board Member Lisa Venier on the new mountain bike trail.**

*Photo: Kim Chapman*



**Artwork ready for auction.**

*Photo: Carla Marcellus*



### Conservation – Creek Protected

This year's largest conservation project was the "Robertson Creek Dump Clean-up", a major initiative in which over 100 bags of garbage, 7180 pounds of metal debris and 54 tires were removed from an illegal dump site located beside Robertson Creek. The project included installing "No Dumping" signs at the cleaned-up site and working with the Sault North Waste Management Council to encourage proper waste disposal in our community. The clean-up, which helps to ensure the long-term health of the Robertson Creek, was funded by the Ontario Community Environment Fund.

### Silent Sport Recreation – Bike Trail Completed

Recreation enthusiasts continued to explore the AHC's trails while enjoying year-round silent-sport opportunities in 2011. Updated digital maps, created by our friend and GIS specialist, Bob Sinclair, and funding received from the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area, allowed us to publish and distribute a comprehensive trail map brochure of the AHC property. The trail map is designed to guide visitors and act as both an informational and promotional tool.

This summer was especially exciting for mountain bikers who got to ride our newly-completed single-track mountain bike trail for the first time! A mountain biking Trailhead Sign was also installed in the parking-lot, thanks to the Mountain Equipment Co-op's Access and Activity Grant program, which allowed us to construct and promote the bike trails.

With a new trail to show off, we invited friends, family and long-time visitors to a September "Bike and Hike Day" where participants had the opportunity to join in guided bikes and hikes led by members of the Sault Cycling Club and the Voyageur Trail Association. Afterwards everyone gathered around for a delicious and well-deserved BBQ lunch served up by AHC Board Members and Staff.



***A few of the 54 tires removed in this summer's Robertson Creek Dump Clean-up.***

*Photo: Jennifer Cross*



***Mountain bikers took to the trails on Bike and Hike Day.***

*Photo: Lisa Venier*



***Dean and Nicolle Thompson fed happy bikers and hikers at the end of a long Bike and Hike Day.***

*Photo: Jennifer Cross*



### **Environmental Education – Teacher Hired**

Securing funding to launch a formal Environmental Education Program in 2011 represented an exciting step forward for the AHC in reaching its long-held objective of using its land base as an “outdoor classroom”. Thanks to the grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, local teacher and outdoor enthusiast, Cynthia Marcinkowski was hired in November and we are looking forward to expanding our educational activities in the coming years. Cynthia has already been hard at work liaising within the community and has given the AHC a social media web presence on Facebook – check us out!

School groups continued to be a focus for the Conservancy’s educational outreach this year, which included hosting Lake Superior State University’s ecology class, providing meaningful hands-on learning activities for Sault College Parks and Adventure Recreation students, and leading Korah Collegiate and Vocational School science students on guided hikes.

### **Environmental Research – Out in the Field**

Several new and exciting environmental research projects were implemented this year thanks to funding provided by Hydro One and Corridors for Life, a local initiative supported by Algoma Power Incorporated, Great Lakes Power Transmission and Brookfield Renewable Energy Partners.

In the spring, Jennifer Cross and crew installed bio-acoustic monitoring devices designed to record bird song. Jennifer is now digitally analyzing those recordings with a special interest in identifying the bird calls of species-at-risk using the hydro corridor.

During the summer, native shrub species were planted in test plots located in the hydro corridor. These plots are designed to provide enhanced habitat in the corridor, while not growing to a height that would interfere with power lines.



***Sault College students got hands-on training in recreational trail maintenance.***

*Photo: Jennifer Cross*



***Bio-acoustic monitoring devices were installed to determine bird species using the hydro corridor.***

*Photo: Jennifer Cross*



***Shrubs were planted in test plots to increase habitat availability in the hydro corridor.***

*Photo: Jennifer Cross*





***Trees were treated with an alternative fungal bio-herbicide.***

*Photo: Carrie Ginou*



***Cedar trees were planted on the banks of Stokely Creek.***

*Photo: Jennifer Cross*

*(continued from page 7)*

In the fall, alternate fungal bio-herbicide trials were conducted on trees growing in the hydro corridor. Trees were identified, cut, and their stumps treated with the fungal bio-herbicide "Chontrol Peat Paste" (fungus species: *Chondrostereum purpureum*) developed by our partners at MycoLogic. The trial trees will be examined next year, and compared to non-treated cut trees, to determine if the herbicide is a viable alternative to traditional treatments used to control tree growth under power lines. Special thanks to Beverly Duthie who guided the AHC research crew through the field trials.

Protection and monitoring of Stokely Creek continued in 2011. Silt fencing was installed, along the steep open slopes in the hydro corridor adjacent to the creek, in order to prevent erosion. In addition, sediment traps were deployed within the creek bed, to monitor the effectiveness of those erosion-control efforts.

Eastern white cedars, donated through Don McGorman and Clean North, were also planted on the banks of Stokely Creek to reduce erosion and increase shading over the creek.

Following the above projects, water quality measurements were taken regularly in Stokely Creek in order to monitor the suitability of the creek habitat for cold-water fish species such as brook trout.



## Supporters and Friends

The AHC recognizes the significant contributions of their many supporters and friends.

In 2011 we received \$12,000 in individual donations and were awarded grants of \$100,000 from the EJLB Foundation, \$25,000 from Hydro One, \$3,000 from the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area, \$4,200 from the Ontario Community Environment Fund, \$27,000 from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, \$6,500 from the Canada Summer Jobs Program and \$92,100, over the next 2 years, from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

### Funding support:

- EJLB Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Ontario Greenlands Challenge
- Ontario Community Environment Fund
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
- Hydro One
- Corridors for Life
- Canada Summer Jobs Program
- YMCA Eco Internship Program
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area

### Friends:

- Stokely Creek Lodge
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
- Voyageur Trail Association
- Sault Cycling Club
- Sault Naturalists Club
- Clean North
- Sault North Waste Management Council
- Lake Superior State University
- Sault College of Arts and Technology
- Algoma District School Board
- Ontario Nature
- Hike Ontario
- Leave No Trace Canada
- Algoma Power Incorporated
- Great Lakes Power Transmission
- Brookfield Renewable Energy Partners
- MycoLogic





## 2011 Financial Position (CANADA)

### (Unaudited)

#### ASSETS

Current Assets .....	\$87,021
King Mountain Property, at cost .....	1,522,147
Robertson Lake Cliffs, at cost .....	48,412
Norm's Cabin, at cost .....	<u>35,000</u>

**TOTAL ASSETS .....\$ 1,692,580**

#### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities .....	\$62,180
Long Term Debt .....	243,203
Unrestricted Net Assets .....	<u>1,387,197</u>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS ..... \$ 1,692,580**

**REVENUES ..... \$ 217,611**

**EXPENSES ..... 101,105**

**EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES .....\$ 116,506**

**LESS: DEFERRED REVENUE (GRANTS) .....(50,254)**

**\$ 66,252**

## 2011 Financial Position (U.S.A.)

### (Unaudited)

#### ASSETS

Cash .....	\$ 7,011
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**TOTAL ASSETS ..... \$ 7,011**

#### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities.....	\$ 4,362
Unrestricted Net Assets .....	<u>2,649</u>

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS ..... \$ 7,011**

**REVENUES ..... \$ 2,052**

**EXPENSES ..... 1,563**

**EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES ..... \$ 489**