

# ALGOMA HIGHLANDS CONSERVANCY

2012 Annual Report (01-Jan-12 to 31-Dec-12)



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**Dear Friends,**

*This has been my first year as President of the AHC and I had big shoes to fill. Doug Pitt was our president for six years and during that time he piloted the AHC through some incredible milestones. I won't review them all here but obviously the one we are all most proud of is the purchase of the 1200 hectare King Mountain property. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Doug for all of his hard work and to point out that Doug remains a key member of our Board of Directors and continues to work hard to further the conservation efforts of the AHC. Thanks Doug!*

*So what did we get up to in 2012? Well, with the help of our volunteer Board of Directors, our terrific staff, friends and supporters, members and volunteers we got up to quite a lot. What amazes me about the Conservancy is how many other organizations we work with over the course of the year to meet our objectives in education, research, conservation and silent sport recreation. We are part of an impressive network of organizations that promote these core values in our community. See below for some great examples of cooperation.*



**AHC President, Lisa Venier on the AHC mountain bike trail**

*Photo by: Kim Chapman*

**Conservation and Research**

*Our Executive Director, Jen Cross, has been very busy spearheading numerous research projects within our conservation forest and in partnering lands including: conducting surveys for species at risk, researching the ecology of the endangered wood turtle, water monitoring of Stokely Creek and studying alternative vegetation management of power line rights-of-way. Collaborators on these projects include the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Canada, Hydro One, Great Lakes Power Transmission, Algoma Power Inc., and Sault College. This is an impressive network of collaborators to have working together to achieve our common goals!*

**Silent Sport Recreation**

*One of the things I like best about the AHC is our promotion of silent sport recreation. We do this by providing access to protected land for people who want to spend time outdoors without motorized vehicles. Building and maintaining trails is an important part of what we do and we rely on Stokely Creek Lodge, the Sault Cycling Club and the Voyageur Trail Association to help maintain a world-class network of skiing, snowshoeing, hiking and mountain biking trails.*



**Hiker at Robertson Cliffs viewpoint**

*Photo by: David Bell*

## Contents

President's Letter.....	Page 1
Mission.....	Page 3
Core Values .....	Page 4
Highlights of 2012 .....	Page 5
Friends and Supporters .....	Page 9
Financial Reports .....	Page 10

*(continued from page 1)*

*This year, AHC office administrator Carrie Ginou led a project to develop a new comprehensive trail map brochure for all of our trails to make it easier to get outside and have some fun.*

### **Education and Communication**

*Thanks to a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we were able to bring on an Environmental Education Coordinator, Cynthia Marcinkowski. Cynthia's job has been to develop an Environmental Education program for the AHC. Have a look at the following pages for some examples of what Cynthia has been up to this year. We are looking forward to some great education initiatives in the coming year.*

*Moving forward, our top priority is to pay off our outstanding mortgage of \$235,000. Our other top priorities are to provide first-rate silent sport recreation opportunities, carry out innovative conservation research and provide exceptional outdoor education opportunities to our community and beyond. Thanks to all of our outstanding supporters and friends (please see a list on page 9) for your continued support; it is vital to the AHC's success. Please make a donation to the AHC this year so that we can ensure the protection of the King Mountain property now and for the future.*

*Sincerely,*

*Lisa Venier, President*

*Algoma Highlands Conservancy*



## 2012 Board of Directors

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

## 2012 Staff

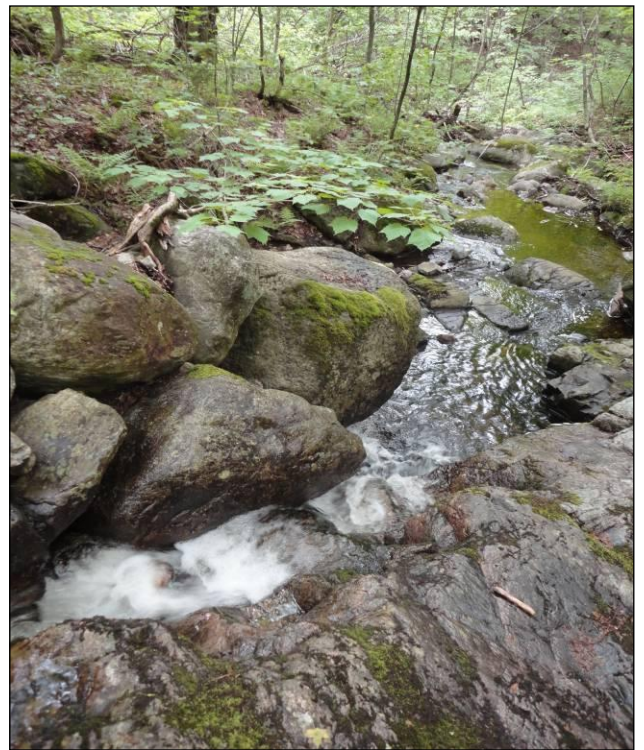
Jennifer Cross, Executive Director  
 Carrie Ginou, Office Administrator  
 Cynthia Marcinkowski, Education Coordinator  
 Stephanie Waite, Conservation Technician  
 Mhat Briehl, Conservation Technician

## 2012 Members

Greg Konieczny  
 Toni Lukenda  
 Don McGorman  
 Dieter Hohnke  
 Mark Harvey  
 Kim Pyykonen  
 Conor Mihell  
 George Harvey  
 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."*



**Waterfall at Peregrine Pass.**

Photo by: Stephanie Waite

*"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 with the following core values:

### Conservation

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

### Silent Sport Recreation

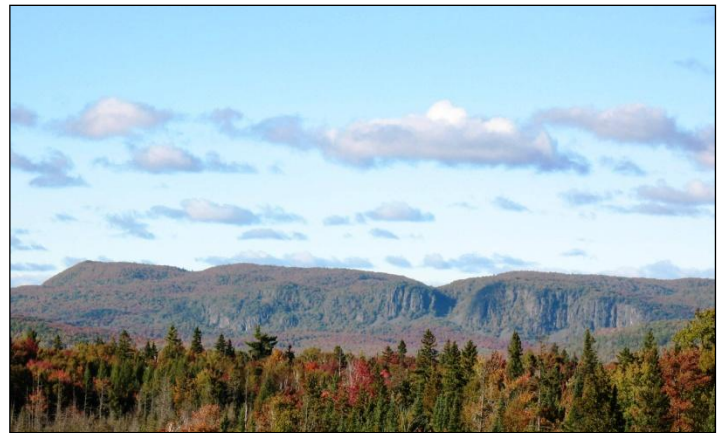
The AHC encourages and facilitates the practice of low-impact, outdoor activities including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, mountain biking, hiking, trail running, bird-watching, and nature photography.

### Environmental Education and Research

The 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 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 conducting and demonstrating ground-breaking scientific research related to wildlife biology, sustainable resource 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 our natural resources. Through a combination of forest protection on lands that the AHC owns outright and the promotion of sound sustainable land management activities regionally, the AHC strives to enhance the long-term health of the diverse forests and ecosystems of the area.



**Majestic view of King Mountain and Robertson Lake Cliffs**

*Photo by: Carole Blaquiére*



**Participants in the AHC's Annual Bike and Hike event**

*Photo by: Jennifer Smart*



**Stream assessment as part of the Envirothon competition held on AHC land in 2012**

*Photo by: Cynthia Marcinkowski*



## Highlights of 2012:

***The following documents AHC's significant events and achievements for the reporting period of January to December 2012.***

### Board Members

This year saw some major changes to the AHC's Board of Directors with Doug Pitt and Gaylen Byker, our past President and Vice President, taking a well-deserved break from the Board's Executive. Board Members Lisa Venier and Kristin Arend stepped in as our new President and Vice President and we are thankful to have their leadership continuing the work done by their predecessors. Later in the year, we welcomed new Board Member Kim Mihell, giving us a full team of 15 dedicated volunteers working passionately to further the Conservancy's core values for the benefit of communities and ecosystems of the Algoma Region and beyond.

### Conservancy Staff

Jennifer Cross continued in her role as the AHC's Executive Director leading a growing team of Conservancy staff. This included Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Intern Carrie Ginou, Canada Summer Jobs Students Stephanie Waite and Mhat Briel, and Ontario Trillium Foundation funded Environmental Education Coordinator, Cynthia Marcinkowski.

### Conservation

Our property is so much more than a great place for people to enjoy the outdoors – it is also a 1200 hectare sanctuary for wildlife, including many species at risk. This summer, AHC staff, students and volunteers embarked on several initiatives to meet the Conservancy's mandate of conservation.

An ambitious survey of the property confirmed that rare plants, Braun's holly fern and oval-leaved bilberry are maintaining populations in protected habitat zones. These species join the rare birds, Canada warbler and peregrine falcon, which have been identified as using habitat on Conservancy land during their critical breeding periods.

Results from the survey were a critical component of our successful 2012 application to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP). This voluntary program,



**Former Vice President Gaylen Byker (left) and President Doug Pitt (right) who remained on the AHC Board of Directors**

*Photo by: Unknown*



**AHC Staff in the field, summer 2012**

*Photo by: Mark Harvey*





### Silent Sport Recreation Accomplishments in 2012

Photo on right by: Carrie Ginou



### Official Ontario Trillium Foundation grant announcement at AHC Bike and Hike event

Photo by: Jennifer Smart

(continued from page 5)

established in 1998, recognizes, encourages and supports the long-term private stewardship of Ontario's provincially significant conservation lands. As a charitable conservation organization committed to protecting the natural heritage values within its land holdings, the AHC meets the Community Conservation Lands criteria and will be provided much-needed tax relief through the program.

### Silent Sport Recreation

In 2012 we furthered our commitment to provide local, well-established recreational opportunities in a number of ways. Firstly, we developed a comprehensive trail map brochure, thanks to support from the Community Development Corporation of Sault Ste. Marie and Area Local Initiatives Fund. The brochure includes a comprehensive map of the many cross-country ski, snowshoe, mountain bike, and hiking trails on our property, as well as trail suggestions, an explanation of the Conservancy's history and mission, and contact and safety information.

Also, with support from Mountain Equipment Co-op's Access & Activity Fund, and a partnership with the Voyageur Trail Association, there is now a trailhead sign welcoming visitors to the popular Robertson Cliffs trail down Robertson Lake Road. The multi-stage project included blazing a scenic new loop trail that travels along the backside of the cliffs, and installing directional signage for Robertson Lake Road and Highway 17. The trailhead was officially opened on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012 during the Voyageur Trail Association's Annual General Meeting.

Our second annual Bike and Hike Day was a great success thanks to all of the wonderful outdoor enthusiasts and volunteers who joined us on Sunday September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Hikers participated in advanced and beginner walks, which included rewarding views from King Mountain and Upper Stokely Falls, while mountain bikers challenged our 10km single track route. We had approximately 130 people from babies to grandparents come and explore our forest and relax afterwards for a BBQ and a chance to swap trail stories.

## Environmental Education

Support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation enabled the AHC to hire its very first Environmental Education Coordinator, Cynthia Marcinkowski, who worked on developing and delivering high quality and varied educational programs to the general public and visiting school groups in 2012.

To meet a growing educational demand in the community, the AHC organized an Advanced Wilderness First Aid Course in the spring of 2012, with help from the Kinsmen Club of Sault Ste. Marie and Wilderness Medical Associates. The course taught participants essential strategies for managing a variety of injuries and emergency situations while working and playing in remote settings.

The AHC and Stokely Creek Lodge also had the privilege of hosting the Algoma District's Envirothon, a unique team competition that encourages high school students to get outdoors and increase their understanding of forests, soils, wildlife, aquatic ecosystems, and human impact on the environment. Algoma Envirothon is coordinated by the East Algoma Stewardship Council, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Canada, City of Sault Ste. Marie, Sault College, Clean North, Clergue Forest Management, and the Algoma District School Board.

Cynthia also coordinated several additional elementary, secondary and post-secondary school visits, furthering the AHC's aim to connect people of all ages and backgrounds to the natural environment and inspire them to be good stewards of this ecologically sensitive land.

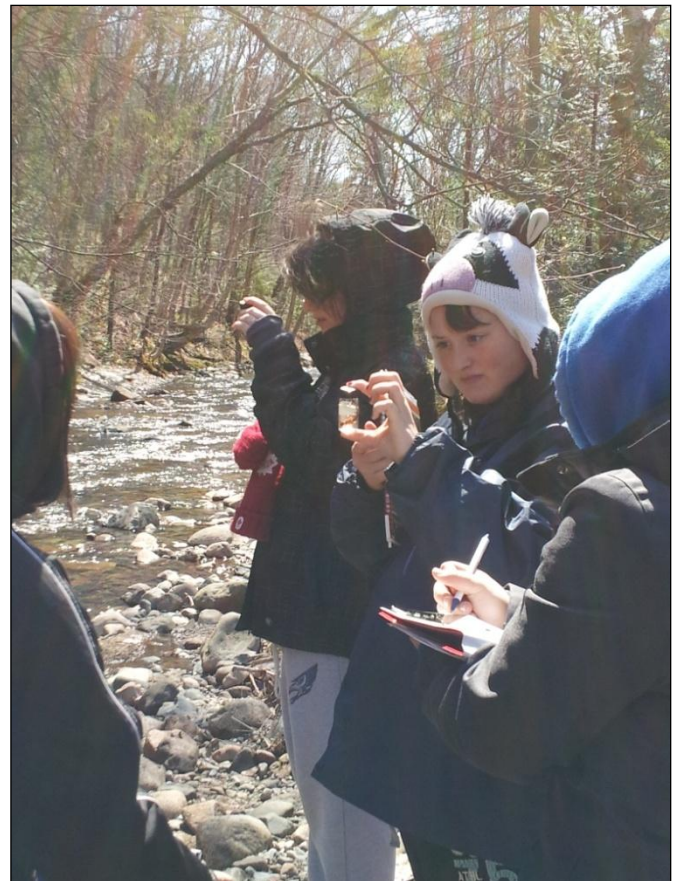
## Scientific Research

In 2012, under the capable direction of Dean Thompson (Natural Resources Canada Researcher and AHC Board member), Jennifer Cross continued to extend the AHC's commitment to Environmental Research through funding partnerships with Hydro One, Great Lakes Power Transmission, Algoma Power Inc., and the Government of Ontario. Current research focuses on the investigation and demonstration of alternative vegetation management strategies to enhance wildlife habitat within Algoma power line corridors, particularly increasing horizontal and vertical structure along



**Wilderness Advanced First Aid training course**

*Photo by: Cynthia Marcinkowski*



**Envirothon competition 2012**

*Photo by: Cynthia Marcinkowski*





### Wood turtle research project

Photo by: Mhat Briel



### Testing alternative vegetation management techniques

Photo by: Carrie Ginou

*(continued from page 7)*

corridor edges and using biological herbicides in controlling non-compatible vegetation species. The AHC is also employing novel bioacoustic techniques for detecting and monitoring avian and amphibian wildlife in and about power line corridors. In 2012, the AHC also initiated a study examining habitat preferences, movement patterns, threats and mitigation strategies for the protection and recovery of the endangered wood turtle.

### Fundraising

Late in 2012, the AHC launched an ambitious fundraising campaign in an effort to pay down a mortgage debt incurred as a result of the purchase of the 1,050 hectare King Mountain property back in 2009. This purchase was both the greatest victory and greatest challenge faced by the AHC since inception. Thanks to numerous supporters, 85 per cent of the \$1.5 million cost of the King Mountain property was raised, which allowed the AHC to take ownership of the land in late 2009, but not without assuming a mortgage to make up the difference.

The **Foster a Forest** campaign gives people the chance to foster one or more parcels of our conservation forest, with all proceeds going towards debt retirement. In return for every \$50 contribution, the AHC offers the choice of an acre of land on King Mountain to protect. Levels of support include Forest Friend (\$50), Trail Traveler (\$100), Creek Companion (\$500) and Peregrine Partner (\$2,000). The Echo Foundation (formerly EJLB Foundation), a long-time AHC supporter, offered to match donations made between November 2012 and June 2013, to a maximum of \$25,000. As of December 31, 2012 the AHC was on track to take full advantage of this matching opportunity with over \$15,000 in donations raised towards the Foster a Forest campaign.

## Supporters and Friends

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

In 2012 we received \$27,615 in individual donations and were awarded project grants of \$25,000 from Hydro One, \$15,000 from Great Lakes Power Transmission, \$7,000 from Algoma Power Inc., \$16,000 from the Echo Foundation, \$5,600 from Mountain Equipment Co-op, \$6,500 from the Canada Summer Jobs Program and received the balance of previously awarded grants of \$92,100 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and \$27,000 from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.

### Grant funding support:

- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
- Hydro One
- Great Lakes Power Transmission
- Algoma Power Incorporated
- The Echo Foundation
- Canada Summer Jobs Program
- Mountain Equipment Co-op

### Major individual donors in 2012:

Paul and Laurie McBay  
Howard and Cheryl Feit  
Elizabeth and Brian, Bloomfield Hills, MI  
Ken Baldwin and Mary-Lynn Murphy  
Dieter and Carol Hohnke  
Marcel and Cindy Delfgou  
The Family of Al Houghton  
Mark and Victoria Santana  
Joan Marie Foster  
Carole Hunter  
Karen Streich and Ronn Hann

John and Thora Harvey  
Kelly and Steve Rome  
Lisa Venier  
Doug and Lorna Pitt  
Dean and Nicole Thompson  
Toni Lukenda  
Don McGorman  
Kristi Arend  
BioForest Technologies Inc.  
Envision Strategy + Design

### Friends:

- Stokely Creek Lodge
- The Echo Foundation
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
- Voyageur Trail Association
- Sault Cycling Club
- Sault Naturalists Club
- Clean North
- Lake Superior State University
- Sault College
- Algoma District School Board
- Ontario Nature
- Hike Ontario
- Leave No Trace Canada
- MycoLogic Innovative Biologicals
- Natural Resources Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Corridors For Life
- Great Lakes Power Transmission
- Algoma Power Incorporated
- Hydro One
- Soo Mill Build All

***We appreciate every last one of our donors!***





## 2012 Financial Position (CANADA)

(Notice to Reader)

### ASSETS

Current Assets.....	\$60,145
King Mountain Property, at cost.....	\$1,522,147
Robertson Lake Cliffs, at cost.....	\$48,412
Norm's Cabin, at cost.....	\$35,000

**TOTAL ASSETS ..... \$1,665,704**

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable.....	\$42,159
Long Term Debt .....	\$234,710
Unrestricted Net Assets.....	\$1,388,835

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS ..... \$1,665,704**

**REVENUES ..... \$222,828**

**EXPENSES ..... \$188,624**

**Less Grant Advances..... \$32,566**

**EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES ..... \$1,638**

## 2012 Financial Position (U.S.A.)

(Notice to Reader)

### ASSETS

Cash.....	\$17,247
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**TOTAL ASSETS ..... \$17,247**

### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable.....	\$5,524
Unrestricted Net Assets.....	\$11,723

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS ..... \$17,247**

**REVENUES ..... \$10,729**

**EXPENSES ..... \$1,655**

**EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES ..... \$9,074**