

Conserving and protecting the unique beauty and ecological integrity of the Algoma region



Canadian Address

PO Box 20076
150 Churchill Blvd.
Sault Ste. Marie, ON
P6A 6W3 CAN
Phone: 705-649-5751
Email: info@algomahighlandsconservancy.org

American Address

c/o CBSI
3303 I75 Business Spur
Sault Ste. Marie, MI
49783 US

Algoma Highlands Conservancy



Annual Report

January 1 – December 31

1/1/2014

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

The Algoma Highlands Conservancy has had another busy year in 2014 including many significant accomplishments that are outlined in the 2014 Annual Report. I hope that you will take the time to read through the report to see what we have been up to but I would like to tell you about a few of the highlights:

Environmental Education - One of our most significant success stories of the year is our growing environmental education program. This past year our new Environmental Education Coordinator, Shannon Ramsay, has developed and implemented new and motivating programming for over 900 students to rave reviews from both students and teachers. We are very excited to have Shannon working for the AHC. Her enthusiasm for the outdoors and teaching is inspiring to all of us.

Silent Sport - Norm's Cabin Rebuild – I don't think Dean Thompson really knew what he was getting into when he started this project but wow, he has done a superior job to bring this rebuild to completion. Kudos also to Richard Kargl for creating such a beautiful building. Please pay a visit to the new and improved Norm's Cabin this winter and enjoy its beauty and comfort.

Conservation and Research – **The AHC is proud of the progress being made on our first major conservation research project on wood turtles.** Jennifer Cross and Dean Thompson have had another successful year of research on the endangered Wood Turtle. **Integrative application of advanced monitoring technologies and cutting edge spatial analysis techniques is providing significant new information on how turtles utilize and move through their habitat. The new data are expected to contribute significantly to scientifically sound risk assessments and best management practices that will help to assure continued protection of this endangered species. Project funding is continuing into 2015.**

Fundraising – Through various fundraising efforts this year we have made good progress in reducing our debt. Paying off our mortgage is our number one priority to ensure the protection of the King Mountain property. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our fundraising campaign this year but please remember that our Foster a Forest Campaign is ongoing so please consider fostering an acre for yourself or someone you love.

As you can see, the AHC has had a hugely successful year but that wouldn't be possible without the hard work and enthusiasm of our great staff, volunteer board of directors, friends and supporters, members and volunteers. Please see page 7 for a list of all of our supporters.

It has been an honour to serve as President for my third and final year. Thanks to everyone who supported our efforts in 2014.

Sincerely,
Lisa Venier

Contents

President's Letter	Page 1
Mission	Page 2
Core Values.....	Page 2
Governance and Staff	Page 3
Highlights of 2014.....	Page 4
Friends and Supporters	Page 7
Financial Reports	Page 8

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 provides silent sport recreation opportunities in every season. An extensive 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, and bird-watching are actively encouraged and engage visitors from local and far-reaching communities. The natural landscape also lends itself to artistic pursuits including nature photography and painting.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The AHC recognizes the need to further our understanding of natural systems and to transfer this knowledge to current and future generations. The Algoma Highlands, and particularly the lands in the vicinity of King Mountain and Robertson Lake Cliffs, are a living classroom—excellent sites where ecological concepts and conservation biology can be learned and observed first hand.

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. Through a combination of forest protection on lands that the AHC owns outright and promotion of sound sustainable forest management activities regionally, the AHC strives to enhance the long-term health and value of the diverse forests of the area. 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.



©Lorna Pitt

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 grassroots support."



©Mark Harvey



©Anna Rodgers

GOVERNANCE AND STAFF

Board Members

The AHC is very fortunate to be governed by a motivated and passionate volunteer Board of Directors. Many thanks go to Lisa Venier for serving her third and final year as President. Lisa has skillfully steered the AHC through a number of key projects and initiatives in her time as leader, and in 2014 proved to be no less demanding than previous years. The Board saw many changes in 2014, including the departure of Vice-President Kristin Arend. Kristin served on the Board for four years, two of those years as Vice-President. A wonderful career opportunity in her home state of Ohio led to her difficult decision to resign. Board member Jillian Wilson stepped up to fill the leadership vacancy. Bob Beggs demonstrated exceptional financial administration skills in his second year as Treasurer. The Conservancy is grateful to have Laurie McBay serving her fourth year as Secretary. Laurie has played a major role in the AHC's many achievements since she joined the Board in 2009, and we are thankful for her commitment and support. One of the Conservancy's longest standing Board Members, Mark Harvey, resigned at the beginning of the year. We sincerely thank him for his dedication and guidance over the years and wish him all the best in his future endeavours! The AHC also welcomed Ngaire Roubal and Kara Webster to the Board. Both bring valuable experiences and skills to the table. Ngaire will focus primarily on improving the AHC's organizational policies and Kara has expressed interest in fundraising and scientific research opportunities.

Conservancy Staff

Jennifer Cross continued in her fourth year as Executive Director of the AHC, playing an essential role in almost every activity and initiative in 2014. Unfortunately, high staff turn-around is often the tendency of non-profit organizations, and the AHC is no exception. The Conservancy relies primarily on grants to fund staff positions and these have expiration dates. We say hello and goodbye to wonderful interns and summer students every year. An exception to this, however, was the Environmental Education Coordinator position. After our grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation was complete in early 2014, the AHC was able to support the position, part-time, as the Environmental Education programs became self-sustainable. This was all thanks to a partnership between the AHC and the Algoma District School Board. We welcomed our new Environmental Education Coordinator in 2014. Shannon Ramsay, an Ontario certified elementary school teacher, is passionate about administering high quality instruction in a natural setting that directly ties into elementary and secondary Science, Geography, and Physical Education curriculum. Just before the end of 2014, we said hello to business intern Kaila Maumbaed who is tasked with developing and implementing a comprehensive business plan for the Norm's Cabin Ecotourism initiative.

2014 Board of Directors

Lisa Venier, President
Jillian Wilson, Vice President
Bob Beggs, Treasurer
Laurie McBay, Secretary
Doug Pitt
Dean Thompson
Gaylen Byker
Dieter Hohnke
Ian Phair
Brian Anstess
Richard Greenwood
Kim Mihell
Elisa Muto
Ngaire Roubal
Kara Webster

2014 Staff

Jennifer Cross, Executive Director
Shannon Ramsay, Education Coordinator
Robert Cross, Wildlife Biologist
Kaila Maumbaed, Ecotourism Business Intern
Anthony Sulpizio, Conservancy Assistant
Mitch Comrie, Conservancy Assistant

2014 Members: Carole Blaquière, Christopher Hamilton, Conor Mihell, Dieter Hohnke, Don McGorman, George Harvey, Jeff Pike, Kim Pyykonen, Paul McBay



©Anna Rodgers

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2014

The following documents the AHC's significant events and achievements for the reporting period of January to December 2014.



©Doug Pitt



©Anna Rodgers



©Lorna Pitt

CONSERVATION

Research

This year has been exceptionally productive for research initiatives here at the Algoma Highlands Conservancy: Our research study on the wood turtle continued into its third year. Although our work on this project is ongoing, we are confident that our research efforts will contribute significant new scientific information contributing to protection of this forest-dependent species at risk. We are proud to be leading this multi-agency collaborative project examining wood turtle habitat preferences, movement patterns and responses to disturbance factors. The project has been effectively led by Jen Cross and board member Dean Thompson and has provided important field research experience for a number of local students. We would like to recognize, in particular, one of our long-standing volunteer supporters – Paul McBay – who has once again gone beyond the call of duty in volunteering to assist in this project. We thank our funders: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry Species at Risk Stewardship Fund, Great Lakes Power Transmission, Hydro One, and Algoma Power Inc. for making this important work possible.

Foster a Forest

Since the launch of our Foster a Forest Campaign in the fall of 2012, the AHC has made great progress towards eliminating its mortgage debt. Thanks to the generosity of individuals, groups and businesses both local and far-reaching, as well as matching funds from the Echo Foundation, we have reduced our mortgage by over \$100,000 in just two years! The fundamental idea of the campaign is to protect the unique beauty and conserve the ecological wonders of King Mountain and Robertson Cliffs by "fostering" one or more acres. Acres are priced in four categories with costs being proportional to perceived ecological, aesthetic or recreational value of the fostered acre.

Funds raised through this campaign will be used to pay down our outstanding mortgage and as a result, will ensure that King Mountain and Robertson Cliffs will remain open and available to the public for silent sport recreation for many years to come.

We will erect a trailhead monument to commemorate those that donated \$500 or more to this campaign in 2015. In late 2014, we commissioned builder, Richard Kargl, to construct the monument, which will be reminiscent of his many beautifully crafted timbered creations located throughout Stokely's ski trail system (including the new Norm's Cabin). The monument will be located in the "Beaver Meadow" which is an important recreational hub where the majority of Stokely's popular trails branch out, such as Peterson, Walker/Evans, Erling Strom, and Dustin. The site is also fitting because it is at the core of our conservation land with King Mountain is clearly visible from it.

SILENT SPORT RECREATION

Norm's Cabin

The project to rebuild “Norm’s Cabin” was launched in 2013 to provide infrastructure that supports AHC goals of enhancing silent sport recreation and environmental education opportunities. By the end of 2014, the once legal and financial liability, has been transformed into a stunningly beautiful multi-purpose facility.

Erected on a cement block foundation, the two storey structure is constructed of squared pine-timbers with chinked seams. The main floor of the cabin is open-concept consisting of a kitchen area, dual dining areas with views of Bone Lake, and a lounge area with wood stove. The upper floor is divided into two large bedrooms and a small storage area. Both bedrooms feature large windows overlooking the lake and separate walkouts to the shared balcony. The ceiling and partition wall of the upper floor are finished with stained tongue and groove cedar with a floor of varnished pine. The cabin is capped with an attractive high-pitch red metal roof built to withstand heavy snow loads typical of the region.

Like the original cabin, the lower-floor will continue be open to skiers and snowshoers, serving as a destination/safe refuge throughout the winter months. Looking to the future, the cabin will also provide infrastructure supportive of regional ecotourism and our continuously developing environmental education program.

The relatively remote location of this high quality cabin, combined with the associated silent-recreational opportunities (hiking, mountain biking, canoeing/kayaking, skiing, snowshoeing etc.) that exist in the immediate vicinity, provides a unique ecotourism experience anticipated to attract a significant number of persons interested in low-cost “wilderness get-away” experiences. Moreover, the cabin provides additional and unique capacity for our developing environmental education program. As a safe, comfortable and secure overnight base, the cabin could provide for extended experiential learning opportunities for environmental education or outdoor recreational students in fall, winter and spring seasons.

Funding from FedNor’s Youth Internship program has allowed us to hire an intern who will dedicate her time to developing and implementing an effective business plan and marketing strategy for the successful start-up of our ecotourism business. Kaila Maeumbaed, a business grad from Sault College, has already begun putting her business knowledge and skills into action, assisting the AHC in realizing our goal of enhancing the ecotourism available to visitors of the naturally gifted Algoma Region. Although close to completion, it will take time to iron out important details for a smooth launch of the business. Our hope is to be ready to book overnight guests before the end of 2015. We wish to warmly thank the major contributors to this endeavour: FedDev (Community Improvement Fund), NOHFC (Infrastructure and Community Development Fund), and Stokely Creek Lodge. In addition, we thank Joseph Meating, BioForest Technologies Inc., and Michael O’Toole for donations that helped us accomplish critical finishing work. Our sincerest appreciation goes out to Richard Kargl for his unyielding commitment to quality craftsmanship and special thanks to the many people involved, both paid and volunteer, for helping us make this dream a reality!



©Jeanie LePage



©Jeanie LePage

Top Left: Shannon Ramsay teaching elementary students in her outdoor classroom.

Top Right: Standing along the banks of Stokely Creek.

Bottom Left: Experiencing the elements during an outdoor WAFA exercise.

Bottom Right: Learning how to create braces and slings with camping supplies or other regular items.



©Doug Pitt



©Doug Pitt



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Educational Programming

The Algoma Highlands Conservancy has long recognized the need to further our understanding of natural systems and transfer this knowledge to current and future generations. We view the Algoma highlands as a living classroom, perfect for demonstrating key concepts of biological and ecological sciences while directly engaging students, young and old, in learning more about our natural world, potential human impacts thereon, and ways in which we can lessen those impacts to ensure long term sustainable use.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in 2011, the AHC succeeded in formalizing its educational programming. The grant allowed us to hire our first ever Environmental Education Coordinator (Cynthia Marcinkowski), and financed her position for nearly two years. Cynthia established several curriculum-based programs in conjunction with a vital relationship between the AHC and the Algoma District School Board (ADSB). By the end of 2013, a dozen school groups, varying in size from 10-50 students, visited the AHC. In 2014, our new Environmental Education Coordinator, Shannon Ramsay, continued to enhance the relationship between the AHC and the ADSB and served around 984 students in the course of the year.

Wilderness Advanced First Aid

Early in the year, the AHC hosted its second Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFA) course in partnership with the Kinsmen Club of Sault Ste. Marie and Wilderness Medical Associates. A total of 18 participants got a taste of how to handle a variety of potential wilderness injuries in this scenario-based practical course and will be bringing their skills to a backcountry location near you! The opportunity was organized as part of the AHC's Environmental Education program, which aims to meet the education needs of the local community, including folks who work and play in remote settings. Future offerings of the course will be based on sufficient demand.

FUND RAISING EVENTS

Curling for the Conservancy

The AHC's first annual Curling Fun spiel event was held on April 6 2014 at the Soo Curling Club. The event was a tremendous success with 15 teams registered, and over \$5000 raised! From the great deal of positive feedback received, it is clear that this will certainly be an annual fund raising event. More than 90 people donated to the event. A beautiful bicycle, generously offered up as a prize for top fund raiser by Algoma Bicycle Company, was won by Philip Wiebe, who donated \$600 to the AHC.

The curling activities raised \$4418, and the silent auction raised \$637 (thanks to wonderful prizes generously donated by many local businesses!). A big "thank you" goes to Lisa Venier for spearheading this event. Laurie McBay was a big help at the registration desk on event day. Other volunteers that were essential in the event's success were Kim Chapman, Nancy Neave, and Brad Pheneuf.

Gear-Swap Fundraiser

Just in time for spring weather, the Algoma Highlands Conservancy, in partnership with the Sault College Adventure Recreation Program, invited all outdoor enthusiasts to take part in its second annual gear-swap fundraiser. The event gave recreationalists the opportunity to buy and sell lightly used outdoor recreational gear, such as bikes, kayaks, camping gear, hiking equipment/accessories and much more! Sellers set their own price and our volunteers provided the forum and collected payment. Sault College's Essar Hall venue was ideal for displaying the wide variety of lightly used outdoor gear. Hundreds of items were sold and consignment proceeds went towards the AHC Operating Fund. The AHC plans to continue this annual event in spring 2015.

Waterwalker Film Festival

As part of the Gear Swap fundraiser, the AHC, again in partnership with Sault College Adventure Recreation and Parks students, presented Paddle Canada's Waterwalker Film Festival. This film festival is a tribute to the late Bill Mason, the great conservationist, canoeist and filmmaker. Passionate in his beliefs, always speaking from the heart, his films inspired many people to dedicate themselves to the enjoyment and conservation of Canada's wilderness and waterways. The event was well attended and proceeds went toward the AHC Operating Fund.



CARBON OFFSETS

Validated, Verified and Available for Sale

On May 28th, 2014, the AHC successfully completed validation and verification of the carbon stocks associated with the protection of its 1159 ha of tolerant hardwood forests. The project involved an extensive forest inventory of the property through the measurement of more than 300 plots and the development of a comprehensive project design document. Environmental Services Inc. was commissioned to provide third-party review the AHC's data and documentation under the International Standards Organization (ISO) 14064 framework and standards. The project made available some 75,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents for sale as offsets in the voluntary market over the next 20 years. During 2014, the AHC sold a total of 10,000 T, leaving a balance of 65,000 T available for future sale. Revenues from the initial sale were used to pay for validation/verification costs; proceeds from future sales will be directed at debt reduction.

SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS

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



Grant funding support:

- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) – Infrastructure and Community Development
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev) – Community Infrastructure Improvement Fund
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) – Species at Risk Stewardship Fund
- Hydro One Networks Inc.
- Great Lakes Power Transmission
- Algoma Power Inc.
- The Echo Foundation
- Canada Summer Jobs Program

Major individual donors in 2014:

John Harvey
Bioforest Technologies
Phyllis Filipetti
Don McGorman
Dieter & Carol Hohnke
John Reaume
Ken Baldwin
EJM Financial
Laurie & Paul McBay
Lisa Venier

Wendy P Hoernig
2341429 Ont Inc.
Michael O'Toole
David E. Massignan
J.D. Irving Ltd
Echo Foundation
Dean & Nicolle Thompson
Joseph Drouillard
Robert Routledge

Friends:

- Algoma Bicycle Company
- Algoma District School Board
- Algoma Power Inc.
- Bioforest Technologies
- Corridors For Life
- Echo Foundation
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
- Great Lakes Power Transmission
- Hike Ontario
- Hydro One Networks Inc.
- Lake Superior State University
- Leave No Trace Canada
- Natural Resources Canada
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
- North Star Ski Touring Club
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Ontario Nature
- Sault Cycling Club
- Sault Naturalists Club
- Sault College
- Soo Mill Build All
- Stokely Creek Lodge
- Velorution
- Voyageur Trail Association
- Washtenaw Ski Touring Club



2014 Financial Position (CANADA)

(Notice to Reader)

ASSETS

Current Assets	\$55,658
King Mountain Property, at cost	\$1,522,147
Robertson Lake Cliffs, at cost	\$48,412
New Norm's Cabin, at cost	\$245,446
TOTAL ASSETS.....	\$1,871,663

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	\$31,591
Long Term Debt.....	\$138,698
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,701,374

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS..... \$1,871,663

REVENUES	\$301,134
EXPENSES	\$138,887
Less Grant Advances	\$19,000
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$143,247*

*Note: \$50,000 of the \$143,247 surplus for 2014 was paid towards the mortgage, the majority of the remainder was used to build the New Norm's Cabin.

2014 Financial Position (U.S.A.)

(Notice to Reader)

ASSETS

Cash & Receivables.....	\$5,819
TOTAL ASSETS.....	\$5,819

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts Payable	\$1,199
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$4,620

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS..... \$5,819

REVENUES	\$2,780
EXPENSES	\$1,397
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$1,383