

MUSKOKA
CONSERVANCY



Muskoka Steward

SUMMER 2021



In Memory of Bill Dickinson

I write this sitting on a bench immersed in nature, surrounded by the sounds of jays and the wind singing through the trees. Smelling the refreshing smell of hemlock and pine and enjoying the sight of an awe-inspiring wetland. I sit in a nature reserve that Bill Dickinson helped protect. In fact, I can't think of a single property that we protect that Bill didn't have a hand in protecting. Bill's impact on nature conservation in Muskoka was immeasurable and his passing was a heavy blow to all. Today I wanted to share the legacies that Bill left behind.

Bill was many things, but most people knew about his staunch love of nature and his desire to see it protected. Bill was the advocate for nature conservation in Muskoka and he talked at length about it to any who listened. Bill imparted that passion and concern to everyone he met with, be it a donor, landowner, staff member, or volunteer. It was easy to want to protect Muskoka when talking to him; he just made it sound so appealing. He had a hand in almost all 46 of the properties we currently protect, and will have



Janet Dickinson and Dory alongside Bill on Turner Island, Lake Muskoka.

been a part in several that are still to come.

That was not the only legacy Bill left. One of his other legacies was his education of the next generation. He was a mentor and teacher to so many people and taught in an affable and friendly manner. He welcomed questions and was always willing to listen. His teachings also inspired a love of nature in everyone who went on a hike or paddle with him.

As I sit here, I am reminded of another of Bill's legacies, his annual snowshoe to inspect the wood duck boxes at the Upjohn Nature Reserve. Even now I see the legacy of that work, as a wood duck flies past me over the wetland. I always loved that snowshoe with Bill and I know his spirit will live on in that annual outing.

The wetland at which I currently sit is a testament to Bill, a testament to his love of the wild and natural spaces of Muskoka. Bill's legacies will continue on in this place and all the other places he helped protect. It will live on in the people he taught and mentored and passed on his passion for nature to. Because Bill didn't leave just a legacy, he left many legacies.

Aaron Rusak

An Upbeat Summer and One Tearful Goodbye

Muskoka Conservancy has had an incredible summer with all kinds of wonderful news for nature conservation in Muskoka. We should be dancing a jig. Yet sadly, we are feeling the loss of one of our most important and influential honorary directors, Bill Dickinson.

In this newsletter you will find our goodbye to Bill D. written by Aaron Rusak. Bill was all about offering support and guidance to “the kids” as he sometimes called us (though some of us are over 50!) He influenced many generations of young conservationists including many staff that have made their way through our office. I have seen Aaron and before him, Jenn LeMesurier, both greatly influenced by Bill’s passion for wilderness and for sharing his knowledge of nature. I know I speak for all staff and volunteers—past and present; Bill is greatly missed.

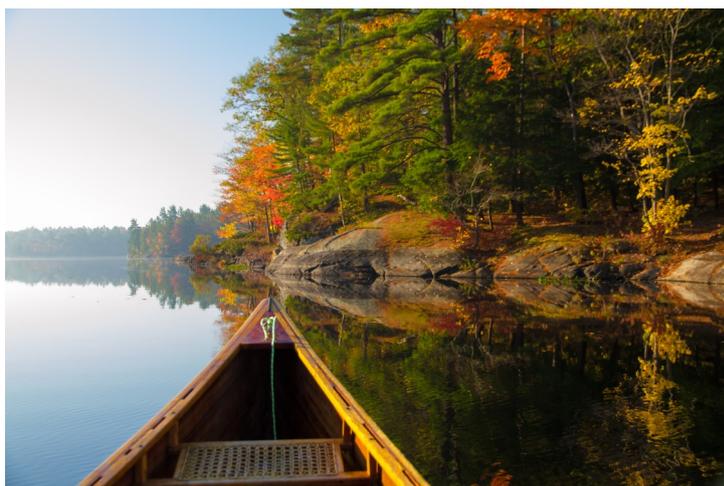
Anyone who knew Bill would agree, he would be thrilled with the way things are going with our little conservation outfit. We have just acquired a major new nature reserve that protects some key source water for Three Mile Lake. Our team has had a terrific field season with many volunteers on numerous adventures scoping out a variety of natural areas. These assessments are essential to both protecting the land we have and identifying land that needs to be protected. As a result, we have several new conservation projects in the queue.

Being out on the land is what makes nature conservation one of the best jobs you can have. But what makes it all tick? You guessed it. It’s hard to acquire 46 properties in Muskoka without some cash. And on that front

MC has had another incredible edition of Muskoka on the Edge. This year, our generous donors really stepped up and gave over \$140,000 to support our nature conservation efforts. Look for our list of MotE’21 donors in this newsletter. There is no way for us to thank them enough!

We hope you too have had a summer of mostly good news. Muskoka Conservancy is dedicated to the long-term protection of Muskoka, and we do that by protecting the very nature of Muskoka—nature itself. Over 35 years we have protected thousands of acres featuring beautiful forests, natural shorelines, and species rich wetlands. We would never have achieved half of it without Bill D. As we celebrate our successes, we carry his memory in our hearts, and a feeling that he is right here with us.

Scott Young



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN US TODAY!

An annual membership is an easy way to show your support for nature conservation in Muskoka. Donors of \$95 or more will be added to our membership list.

Online

Visit muskokaconservancy.org and click donate in the top right:

DONATE

Mail

Send cheque or credit card information to:

Box 482
47 Quebec Street
Bracebridge, ON
P1L 1T8



Phone

Call 705-645-7393 ext. 200 to make a donation over the phone



In person donations are always welcome!

Nelson Head Cleanup

On August 13th we had a successful clean up of our Nelson Head Nature Reserve in Huntsville. We had about 10 volunteers helping us do a walk through and clean up of the property. The property is in a relatively urban area, which causes it to accumulate more garbage. We were able to fill a truck with garbage from the nature reserve, but managed to get the nature reserve cleaned up. We'd like to thank all the volunteers who helped make this possible and who were will to get dirty in the name of nature!



Upcoming Webinar

Muskoka Conservancy's September webinar will be held on September 21st at 10 am. The webinar will cover fall migration and be presented by Aaron Rusak, our Land Stewardship Coordinator and a Regional Coordinator for the Breeding Bird Atlas of Ontario. Come learn about the wonders to look out for in the fall!

To register for the webinar, call 705-645-7393 ext 200 or email info@muskokaconservancy.org.



New Nature Reserve

Muskoka Conservancy is pleased to announce its newest nature reserve, the Source of Three Mile Lake Nature Reserve. This 150-acre property is located north of Bracebridge that includes large tracts of wetland as well as some upland forest. A survey team went out earlier this year to check on the property and found many species of plants including a species of native orchid. They also found a population of Band-winged meadowhawks as well as some Trumpeter swans. The property was acquired through a generous donation from the Kenneth M Molson Foundation and we'd like to thank them as well as all our donors for helping us acquire this significant property.



MOTE Thank You

The following families care so deeply for nature in Muskoka that together they raised over \$140,000 toward the conservation efforts of Muskoka Conservancy!

This support enables us to maintain and expand the 3,050 acres of forested land, over 51,000 feet of shoreline, and 575 acres of wetlands currently under our protection. Muskoka Conservancy is purchasing property, working with land owners and land donors to protect the Muskoka we love.

PRESENTING FAMILIES -\$5,000+

Don & Karen Lang Family • Rob & Elizabeth Jennings Family • Hope Thomson & Phil Haynes Family • Colin Glassco Family • Donna & Bob Poile Family • Selby Martin & Kathy Varley Family • Theresa & Seth Mersky Family • Suzanne & Dan Cook Family • Richard Boxer Family • Lulu Hamlin • Guy & Margaret Carr-Harris Family • Francis Carmichael, Jack Cashman & Family • Nancy Cohen, Stephen Goldhar & Family • Liz Lundell & Guy Bury • Jim Christie & Sarah Pepall Family • Anne Surdam Family • John and Cathy Phillips Family • Laurie Thomson & Andy Chisholm Family • Linc & Melissa Caylor Family • Silvercrest Foundation • Kim & Stuart



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BIRD LEVEL SUPPORTERS < \$1,999

Earle Nestmann Family • Dan & Sandra Sullivan Family • Ian Lancaster Family • Barbara Dutton Family • Jane Garratt Family

Upcoming Nature Quests

We have a full fall schedule with tons of upcoming outings! On September 13th, we will be doing a paddle quest on Peninsula Lake out to the Strawberry and Wolf Mountain Conservation Reserves. The paddle will be around an hour and there will be a short hike to a beautiful lookout point. Following that, we'll be hosting a fall migration birding Nature Quest at the Bert Cross Family Nature Reserve near Henry Road. Last time, we saw over 40 species, so we're hoping to see just as many this time.

If you want to learn more about upcoming *Nature Quests*, call the office at 705-645-7393 ext 200 or email Aaron at info@muskokaconservancy.org.

Aaron Rusak



Photos from the Field



Sphinx Ladies' Tresses Orchid



Mottled Darner



Barred Owl



Diervilla Clearwing



Great Spangled Fritillary

Our Nature Quest program runs year-round, so be sure to check our website and social media for updates on upcoming events!

Muskoka Conservancy's Shop Items Available at the Muskoka Conservancy Office, 47 Quebec Street, Bracebridge or in Toronto from Elizabeth Mason at (416) 924-4868!

Our items include coffee mugs, toques, books on butterflies and reptiles, note cards, and "Made in Canada" tea towels.

For shop inquiries, email info@muskokaconservancy.org

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Thank you to our official partners!

UNIQUE
Muskoka