

MUSKOKA
CONSERVANCY



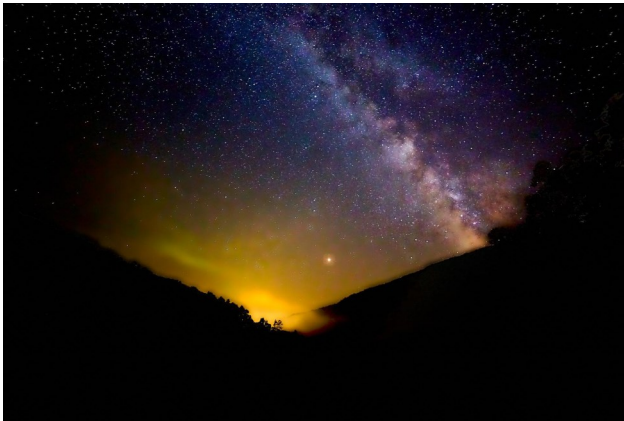
Muskoka Steward

FALL 2022



Night Light: A Fatal Attraction

Since the dawn of life on Earth over 3 billion years ago, the rhythm of day and night has encoded the DNA of life on this planet. As humans gained the ability to create their own light, they chased away the insecurity of darkness, even out competing the moon as the brightest light at night. While, people have taken comfort in the perceived safety of night lights, it has come with a cost, to us and to the other species who share the planet.



Light energy plays a key role in ecological function for many species, from the predator-prey relationship to breeding and migration. Light pollution has a drastic effect on migratory birds, for example, affecting their flight path, causing collisions with buildings, or exhaustion from disorientation during flight. “At night, when most birds migrate, lit-up buildings disorient and attract them, luring them not just off their migratory paths, but straight into collisions. These fatalities account for 2 to 9 percent of all birds in North America in any given year,” says Priyanka Runwal in her 2020 article for Audubon.

The problem goes beyond biological function, as some metropolitan areas can cause light pollution up as far as 150 kilometers away. This extraneous light can obscure the moon and brightest stars from the sky, deadening one of the most spectacular views we once took for granted—The Milky Way. Driven by astronomers, the protection of the night sky through Dark Sky Reserves has become an unfortunate necessity.

Muskoka Conservancy has played a direct role in protecting the night sky. As a director, the late Peter Goering, with the help of Jan McDonnell and Mike Silver, worked together to achieve the designation of the Torrance Barrens Conservation Reserve as a “dark sky preserve.” This was established in 1999 and was the first dark sky reserve in Canada. Muskoka Conservancy’s Musquash Nature Reserve is in the heart of Torrance Barrens, supporting the full complement of wildlife in Muskoka and fortunately for the inhabitants, maintains the darkness of night without artificial light.

What else can we do? Birds migrate during Spring and Fall, we recognize these seasons as times of change, and changing some of our lighting habits can lower the mortality rate of birds on their migration.

- 1) Turning off outdoor lighting between 12am and 6am
- 2) Closing blinds and turning off lights when leaving a room
- 3) Installing shielded, downward directed fixtures and/or motion sensors
- 4) Urge building managers and other homeowners to do the same

Light pollution is the easiest pollution to reverse and can be achieved at home. These small changes not only help wildlife, but your neighbour might appreciate a break from your porch light as well.



Look Ahead to 2023 and Know You Can Make a Difference

There's lots of heavy stuff happening out there in our world, so I try to keep this space mostly lighthearted even as we discuss some serious threats to nature in Muskoka. With this in mind, let's focus on the coming season as an opportunity to think about the change we'd like to see, and how we can each make the world a better place.

Yes, we have big problems on planet Earth, but being part of solutions is positive and that feels good! Believe me, nobody is going to solve Earth-sized issues alone, but by chipping in you are making a difference. The first step is not to get overwhelmed, and one of the best ways to avoid getting swamped is to think globally and act locally.

Muskoka Conservancy is the perfect example. We are your local land trust, and we act throughout Muskoka to protect nature. We protect wetlands, shorelines, forests, and species at risk right here, under our noses. But what makes that really impactful? Muskoka Conservancy is part of a much broader international movement that protects millions of acres of ecologically important land around the globe. The newly founded Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts reports there are 148 community land trusts protecting over 275,000 acres of ecologically sensitive land across Canada. Land trusts in the United States have protected over 61-million acres, and the Land Trust Alliance in the U.S. has set the goal of protecting another sixty million acres by the end of the decade. That's massive!

Together, we land trusts are enacting nature-based solutions to serious problems like climate change, habitat loss, and the biodiversity crisis. Our actions ensure that people continue to enjoy the benefits of ecological services. For example, wetlands provide flood mitigation that address societal challenges like population displacement.

We act locally and our impact is global, so even though we are small, we are quite a big deal! By supporting your local land trust, you are a part of it! You are a big deal, too!

Feel good yet?

As we look ahead to 2023 and plan our budgets, we can see some potential challenges. Thankfully, November and December have traditionally been busy months for us. It's the time of year we gear up our membership campaign, participate in Giving Tuesday, process donations of securities, cheques, and credit cards. Our supporters are the best! We may even receive notice that we've been named in a will as the beneficiary of a planned gift. That's one way an individual person can make a really big difference.

In all of this we are incredibly fortunate, and we have many of you to thank. So, thank you! We appreciate your support! No matter how large or small your contribution this giving season, we want you to know you are making a difference. Go ahead, feel good about that.

Scott Young, Executive Director

2023 Memberships are now live!

By renewing your membership each year, you drive nature conservation steadily forward.

Thank you for being part of a vibrant community of people dedicated to protecting nature!

Online

Visit
muskokaconservancy.org
click donate in the top right

DONATE

Phone



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

Mail

Send a cheque or
credit card information
to:

Box 482
47 Quebec Street
Bracebridge, ON
P1L 1T8



In Person



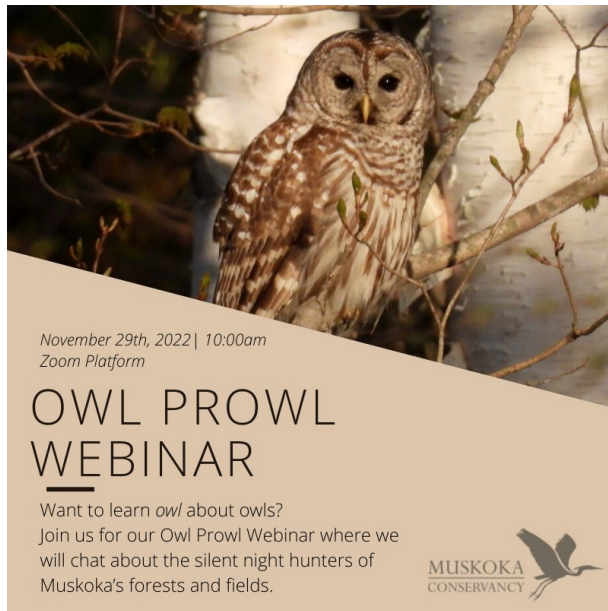
Always welcome to visit
our office at
47 Quebec Street
in Bracebridge

Webinars Return!

Want to learn owl about owls? Join us for our Owl Prowl Webinar where we will chat about the silent night hunters of Muskoka's forests and fields.

Learn how to identify Muskoka's owls by sight and call, and about all the unique features that make them such magnificent creatures!

The webinar will be held over zoom on Tuesday, November 29th, 2022 at 10:00am. Please register for this event by emailing info@muskokaconservancy.org or calling 705-645-7393 to receive the zoom link!



Giving Tuesday

SAVE THE DATE
November 29th, 2022



GIVINGTUESDAY

Giving Tuesday is a global generosity movement following Black Friday. This movement has motivated millions to donate or volunteer to the causes that matter most to them and generally do good for others.



**Stay tuned for
announcements of
donation matching,
where you can double
your impact!**

By supporting Muskoka Conservancy, you are helping to protect the habitat of species-at-risk like wetlands for Blanding's Turtles, and meadows where pollinators like the Yellow-Banded Bumblebees and Monarch butterflies feed.



Nature Quests

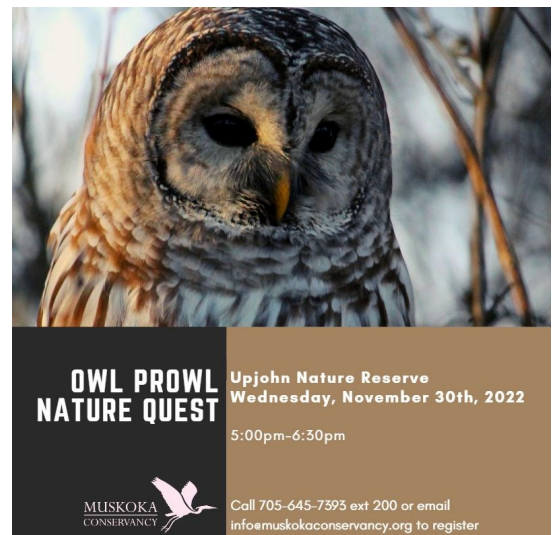
Although it might be cold, we will not be in hibernation! Nature Quests will be continuing through the winter, and we would like to take the earlier sunsets as an opportunity...

November's Nature Quest will be an Owl Prowl! Have (and hear) a hoot at Upjohn Nature Reserve in Bracebridge, shortly after dark when Upjohn's resident owls start their nocturnal hunt!

The Owl Prowl Webinar will be a prerequisite for this outing, if you are unable to attend the webinar, we will provide you with the slides as the goal of this outing will be to stay very quiet in order to hear the owl calls as the group hikes around the Beaver Pond Loop at Upjohn NR.

Registration is required for this event. **Registration capped at 10 participants.**

For this event you will need: a flashlight or headlamp, appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather, water and snacks.



Community Involvement

Or the third year, the Rotaract Club of Muskoka will be having their Wreath Fundraiser for local initiatives!

This year, the proceeds will go toward funding trail improvements on the Island Access Trail on Muskoka Conservancy's JP McVittie Nature Reserve found on Eileen Gowan Island, as well as funding local food banks throughout Muskoka.

The Rotaract Wreath Fundraiser has raised \$10,000 for local initiatives since beginning.

This year, their goal is to raise another \$5,500! Last year, 270 wreaths were purchased. This year, they want to sell over 300!

The fresh Balsam Fir Wreaths are 22-26" in diameter and the feedback they received has been incredible. Mentioning the quality of the wreaths and staying fresh for months.

Let's spread some holiday cheer, and hang up wreaths for a cause!



Scan this QR code to Purchase!
Orders must be placed by November 15, 2022

Wreath Fundraiser

Proceeds will fund:

- Food Banks throughout Muskoka
- Our trail restoration project
- High School Bursaries

\$40 per wreath

Available Online
rotaractmuskoka.com
or by QR Code above!

hosted by your
ROTARACT CLUB OF MUSKOKA

Visit rotaractmuskoka.com

Orders must be placed by November 15th at 11:59 PM.

Pickup will be available the first weekend of December.



Invasive Phragmites removal volunteers who helped to finish the last step of the process at Bert and Millie's Marsh last week!

National Philanthropy Day

November 15th is National Philanthropy day!

We would like to thank all of you. Those who volunteer, donate, and engage with us, for your help in our mission of nature conservation in Muskoka.

We would not be able to do it without your support!

Through the help of our volunteers, we have fought for the removal of invasive species from nature reserves; involved children and youth in the nature with the Little Sprouts eco-club; and are governed by our knowledgeable and dedicated Board members.

The donations of our supporters have resulted in protecting 3,758 acres of environmentally significant land, nearly 60,000 feet of shorelines and 675 acres of wetlands in Muskoka!

From Muskoka Conservancy President, Bob Weekes, **"Without you, and other like-minded supporters, pursuing new conservation opportunities would not be possible. "**

Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Change

Our friends at the Ontario Land Trust Alliance have put together this infographic that helps to depict the role that nature plays in reducing the effects of climate change.

Muskoka's forests, wetlands and meadows all work together to protect us. By keeping these lands natural or restoring them now, they can continue protecting future generations from the effects of climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE IN ONTARIO

OLTA

ONTARIO LAND TRUST ALLIANCE


FLOODING



HEAT WAVES

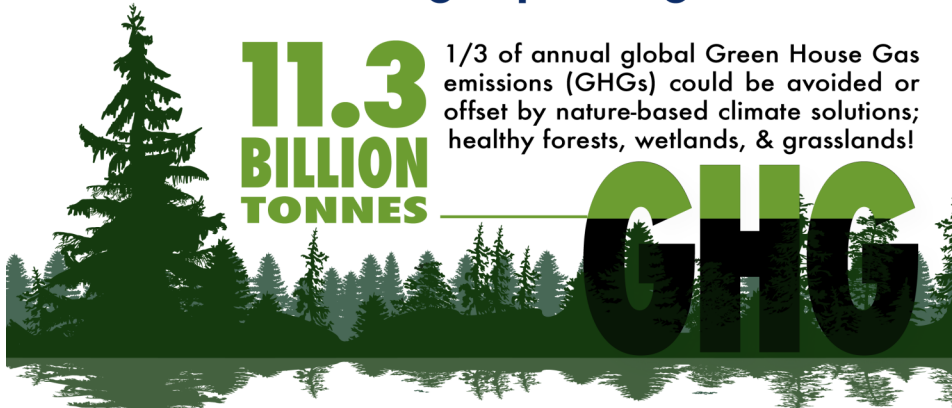


DROUGHT



WILDFIRES

The solution is hiding in plain sight – **NATURE!**



FORESTS

In 1 year, an acre of forest can absorb **2X** the CO₂ produced by the average car's annual mileage.



A single street tree returns over **\$90K** of direct benefits in its lifetime

Forests absorb **25% of the CO₂** pollution produced by humans worldwide



WETLANDS

Peatlands in Ontario's Far North annually sequester of Ontario's total carbon emissions

1/3

Wetlands filter pollutants & sediments, **increasing water quality**



Wetlands can reduce the financial costs of floods by up to **38%**

Wetlands provide habitat for **20% of Ontario's species at risk**



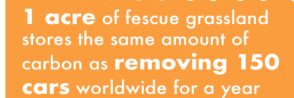
GRASSLANDS

Grasslands store **34%** of the global terrestrial stock of carbon



80% of the carbon is stored underground in the **roots & soil**

1 acre of fescue grassland stores the same amount of carbon as **removing 150 cars** worldwide for a year



Thank you to our
official partners!

UNIQUE

Muskoka

WILL POWER™

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

MUSKOKA CONSERVANCY OFFICERS

PRESIDENT BOB WEEKES
VICE PRESIDENT ELSPETH WOOD
TREASURER PETER LOVE

DIRECTORS

JOHN BURTON SUE SEDGWICK MARLENE MCBRIEN
ELSPETH WOOD JOANNE SMITH PETER LOVE
HELLE TÖSINE LAURA THOMAS

HONORARY DIRECTORS

RUSS BLACK JOHN FINLEY GEORGE SNIDER
WILLIAM CLARK PETER GOERING ROB PURVES
BILL DICKINSON ELIZABETH MASON ELIZA NEVIN

MUSKOKA CONSERVANCY STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SCOTT YOUNG
CONSERVATION COORDINATOR AMANDA PORTER
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT EMILY BROWN

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