

***Magnetawan Watershed Land Trust***

***Annual Stewardship Report***

**2015**



Submitted to

American Friends of Canadian Land Trust

By

Magnetawan Watershed Land Trust

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*Cover Photo: Almaguin High School Students, Valerie Fieldwebster*



## Welcome

2015 is our 6<sup>th</sup> year as an incorporated organization. It has been another year of growth and valuable experiences. The Land Trust's various committees worked together to demonstrate the commitment of the organization to the preservation and protection of our precious resources. Briefly, the Communication Committee focused on enhancing the education and donor communications tools, and facilitated the completion of a 3 year Strategic Plan with annual Work Plans, and a Board Governance Manual, while the Stewardship Committee worked to keep the trails open and safe for public use and the Development Committee once again met their fundraising target.

It has been truly rewarding and successful year for the Land Trust's Lands Committee, after two years of paperwork, stewardship, U.S. IRS charitable status acquisition, etc., ownership of OMC Reserve given to American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts by Ted Rouse was transferred by American Friends to the Magnetawan Watershed Land Trust on July 24th. We are truly thankful for the support we receive from the American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts. All of this would not be possible without it.



Autumn Colours on the Old Man's Creek

Photo credit: Les Green

## Stewardship Activities

### Property Monitoring

The monitoring of all of the all of the Land Trust's properties is part of the Stewardship Committee's critically important and ongoing activities. Monitoring reports are completed by a team made up of volunteers, Board members and staff. An early spring monitoring visit to the Old Man's Creek Reserve revealed a downed hemlock tree. The tree completely obscured the hiking trail. It was important to deal with this tree quickly to prevent the early spring hikers from trampling the forest floor and making a new trail around the obstruction. The Land Trust's monitoring visits revealed no other issues or non-compliant uses throughout the rest of the year.



*Photo Credit: Ed Foster*

### Trails

The stewardship team works continuously on the ongoing upkeep of the Land Trust's public trails. The safety of these trails is of utmost importance to us. Early in the spring a monitoring visit, by Ed Foster, revealed a downed hemlock tree, which had completely obscured the trail, other woody debris had fallen along the trail. Brian Chemnitz, led a quick spring clean up to assure the trail was passable. In July a public trail clean-up was organized. Parts of the trail were rerouted to avoid sensitive habitat, wet areas and hazardous areas, where the creek bank was eroded by the river to the edge of the trail. A plan for an elevated walkway is planned for a wet section of the trail.



*Photo Credit: Brian Chemnitz*

### Interpretive Signage

Land Trust staff made a presentation to the Magnetawan Lions Club which resulted in the Land Trust's receiving OMC Reserve Trail maintenance financial support of \$1500. This money will be put toward improving the trail, particularly over wet spots and interpretive signage. The proposed signage is to explain acceptable trail users, trail location and a natural history interpretive sign at the falls.



## Education

### Donor Education

Areas of focus over the past year include enhancing the educational and donor communication tools. The Land Trust developed a series of single page information sheets on topics ranging from bequest giving to conservation easements and land acquisition policy, an improved overview brochure (Appendix A), the Old Man's Creek trail map brochure (Appendix B) and continued updates on the website. Overall, the Land Trust has continued to work to provide timely and current information. This includes our newsletter, website and Facebook page to ensure our members have regular progress reports on activities and events in a timely fashion. In July the Land Trust hosted our 5<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting at the Ahmic Lake Golf Course club house. It was a well-attended, informative session with an attentive and lively audience.

### Public Hike

Land Trust staff led the annual nature hike on the Old Man's Creek property. The walk looked at the forest ecology, with special attention to the mushrooms which were in fine form that day. The hike was well attended and included participants from the local community, Land Trust members, and the young and the old.



*2015 Forest Ecology Hike  
Photo credit: Cathy Gauthier*

### Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Presentation



The Land Trust supported the attendance of one staff to participate in the University of Waterloo's Ontario Benthic Biomonitoring Certification Course. Land Trust staff, Val Fieldwebster, successfully completed the course and was invited by neighbouring environmental groups Protectors of the River Magnetawan, (POWRMAG) and the Kearney Watershed Environmental Foundation (KWEF) to give a workshop on the Benthic Biomonitoring procedure.

## School Classes

In June Land Trust staff led a program for Almaguin High School students on Habitat Restoration. The program introduced the students to different types of habitat restoration and allowed the students to take part in a hands on storm water management pond restoration project. The initial study of the storm water management pond revealed a low biodiversity in the aquatic food web. This was evident by a number of key species, typically found in a healthy pond ecosystem, that were not found by the students. Missing from the pond were any invertebrates from the sensitive category. Sensitive invertebrates require clean, clear, highly oxygenated water. Also absent were, the pond's primary consumers: isopods, cyclops, and midge larvae. These primary consumers, usually found in abundance, eat the plants and algae in the pond, and provide an attractive and stable food source for the other pond inhabitants. Other than the large number of leeches, most of the catch consisted of species which were able to fly, hop or slide into the pond such as dragonflies, diving beetles, water striders, frogs, and turtles. As a result of the findings the students added leaf litter and pond life from a neighbouring pond to try and establish a population of primary consumers. A no grass cutting zone was established to allow the pond bank vegetation to regenerate naturally, to provide cooling shade to the pond as well as food and habitat.



## Community Engagement

### Annual Celebration

On August 2nd the Trust's Annual Celebration took place at Indian Point, the camp of the Land Trust's past President, Dexter Coolidge. It was attended by a large and lively crowd despite the cool, rainy, windy weather.



### Magnetawan Lions Soap Box Derby

The Land Trust sponsored one of the sixteen racer/cars in the Magnetawan Lions Soap Box Derby held on August 8th which we hope will draw visitors to the village and become an annual event. The Land Trust's driver was an 8 year old Magnetawan young lady, Willow Brown (Great name for a conservationist supported racer!). Willow's father designed and built the car using sponsorship funds provided by the Trust. While the MWLT Team did not bring home the trophy, Willow, her family, and all the Team had much fun. We are sponsoring the Team again next year, GO, WILLOW and TEAM!





"To preserve the natural, historical, scenic, and recreational value of the Magnetawan River Watershed for the benefit of future generations through land and conservation easement acquisition for the purpose of conservation and stewardship"

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of the Magnetawan Watershed Land Trust, I am writing to acknowledge receipt of a total of \$19027.50 USD from American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts to further the conservation purposes of our organization. Our mission is to preserve the natural, historical, scenic, and recreational value of the Magnetawan River Watershed for the benefit of future generations through land and conservation easement acquisition for the purpose of conservation and stewardship.

The grant from American Friends was used to support the functioning of our organization so that it could successfully carry out its work in this past year. Thank you for helping the Magnetawan Watershed Land Trust achieve its objectives.

*Barry Graham*

*President*

*Magnetawan Watershed Land Trust*



## Old Man's Creek Reserve Monitoring Form

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

RECORDED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT #: \_\_\_\_\_

### WEATHER

TEMPERATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

% CLOUD COVER  75%-100% mostly cloudy or overcast;  50%-75% Sunny periods;  
 25%-50% Mostly Sunny with some clouds;  0%-25% Clear

PRECIPITATION  None;  Light intermittent Rain;  Steady Rain;  Heavy Rain;  Light Snow;

Heavy Snow;  Hail;  Other \_\_\_\_\_ We strongly recommend not monitoring within 30 of thunder or lightning.

WIND SPEED  0 km/h Calm;  1 to 20 km/h light to gentle breeze;  20 to 38 km/h small trees sway;  29 to 38 km/h weak branch can snap off trees proceed with caution  Over 39 km/h We strongly recommend not monitoring the forest trails in winds over 39 km/h.

### CHECK ALL AREAS VISITED

#### Access Points

- A1 - Ahmic Lake road access point south of creek leading to falls
- A2 - First Ahmic Lake road access point north of bridge
- A3 - Trail access from Old Man's Creek

#### Perimeter Points of concern

- P1 - Cut line between lot 3 and OMC
- P 2 - Cut line between Lot 3 and Lot 2
- P 3 - Old Logging staging area N/West of Creek

#### Trails

- T1 - Trail south of creek to first waterfalls
- T2 - First trail north of creek to waterfalls
- T3 - Trail north of creek through property to river access



## MONITORING RESULTS

Signs of non-compliance observed (please give ID, or GPS coordinate, or mark on map, or detailed written description of location)

- Motorized vehicles
- Hunting
- Camping
- Fire Pit
- Off trail use
- Dumping

**CONDITION OF RESERVE,** (please give ID, or GPS coordinate, or mark on map, or detailed written description of location)

- Sign down/ not visible (provide location details below and any action taken/ required)
- Tree down across path
- Path wet or showing signs of erosion
- Any threats to the forest due to natural causes, i.e. beaver chews, heavy browsing by deer, tree damage by drought or insect infestation
- Wildlife sightings (provide details below on species, numbers, and activity)
- Other (provide details)



