

# FUTURES

YOUR ACTION REPORT FROM THE OAK RIDGES MORaine LAND TRUST

*'Your Moraine... protect water, land and life for tomorrow'*

## YOUR LAND TRUST: NOW 50 SPECTACULAR PROPERTIES— AND GROWING—THANKS TO YOU!

**WITH YOUR INSPIRING SUPPORT**, we finalized the protection of our 50<sup>th</sup> property!

Our new property in Simcoe is 25 acres of mixed forest, beautiful valleys and a sloping spring-fed stream. It's a stunning example of what Mother Nature—with a little love—can do. The forest has been managed for wildlife habitat for many years, and about two-thirds is "interior forest" (at least 100 metres from open land). Interior forest is precious and rare, offering shelter, foraging and breeding habitat for birds like Cerulean Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, as well as other species like Rusty Patched Bumblebee and a number of rare and spectacular ferns. And the trees! The diversity of trees on our newest property is simply amazing.

It seems that interest in our work is reaching beyond Moraine boundaries. Landowners in other parts of the Greenbelt and on the Escarpment are choosing our Land Trust to protect their properties forever. Many are of Moraine topography—rolling hills, deep valleys—and they provide similar ecology, like headwater streams, seeps and springs and wetlands.

We are proud beyond measure to offer a personalized, flexible approach to our work, guiding our partners through what can be a complicated and intimidating legal process. Working with landowners to protect the

land they love so much is genuinely joyful. Every day, we are moved by the stories and history that our families share about where they were raised or where they raised their own families.

Right now, we are working on a map of all our properties, which we will share with you in our upcoming



Upland, well drained, mature hardwood forest.

Gratitude Report. As always, if you have any questions about our properties, how our Conservation Easement Agreements and Eco-Gifts work, or if you would like to join us for a visit or a walk on our properties, we would love to hear from you.



# MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURS:

## George and Kittie-Marie Fells Protect Their Moraine Property Forever

**BY THE WAY KITTIE-MARIE SKIMMED HER HAND** over the wild grasses as she guided us to her old vegetable garden, we could tell that she—and George—loved this land deeply.

But they were troubled. We could hear it in their voices and see it on their faces. George and Kittie-Marie were afraid. They had decided to sell, but the idea that their land would be developed weighed heavily on their hearts. A Conservation Easement with our Land Trust proved to be the perfect solution to protect their legacy.

Today, this spectacular property is protected forever. Here's their story.

George and Kittie-Marie bought this 100-acre farming property, with rolling hills, fields and woodlands, in 1964. The house, barns and property were all derelict, and they worked every day to fix and erect fences and gates, regain pastures and repair the barn. Over time, they were able to restore a modest, well-maintained farm.

They had work to do on the property too. There was significant soil erosion that had left the landscape

looking more like a moonscape. They planted thousands of trees, stimulated thickets and added native plants and flowers. And they allowed their largest field to revert to a completely wild area, a “sanctuary field”. In winter, it acts as protection for small prey, in summer, a nesting ground for threatened species like ground-nesting Bobolink, Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows.

Today, there are 40 bluebird boxes, and George and Kittie-Marie kept flora and fauna journals. 40 years of painstaking love and attention has gone into their meticulous, joyful tracking. Thank you, so much, George and Kittie-Marie!

And there's a view on their land that will simply take your breath away. At the highest point of land, you can look south to picture-perfect view of the Toronto skyline. We would love to show you sometime! After all, you make it possible for us to work together with gentle, kind people like George and Kitty-Marie to protect more of our spectacular Moraine forever. Each and every gift we receive helps us create more stories like this one. Thank you.



## MEET YOUR WILD NEIGHBOURS TOO! Our Moraine BioBlitz!

When the snow and ice have melted and spring has returned to our glorious Moraine, we're undertaking a BioBlitz!

We'll inventory 2 properties to locate, identify and document as many species as possible. Volunteers and enthusiasts lend their eyes, ears, and recording skills. We also involve numerous specialists to ensure proper identification of mammals, birds, plants, reptiles, amphibians, insects and fungi. This 'snap shot' is a vital way to measure biodiversity today and changes to our ecosystem over time.

One of the properties is a 40-acre forest, which will be an oasis in the midst of residential development in 2017. Capturing data now and comparing the species inventory in future years will help determine the true impacts of development on adjacent forests.

Contact us for more information about getting involved our BioBlitz. You are welcome to join us and help listen for birds and count mosses (really, moss diversity is crucial data!), or you can support our work with a donation. Thank you for making this important and engaging work possible! Our Durham BioBlitz is May 13 & 14. Stay tuned for the York BioBlitz details and all the results!

## MEET MARSHALL: A Boy From The Future Summer, 2056

Marshall is 12 years old and he lives, as do 12 million neighbours, in the GTA. After watching a video about salamanders, Marshall charges up to his mother "Oh boy! Is it true that I can see a real live salamander in real life?!"

His mom smiles and says, "Of course, Marsh. We just have to drive 20 kilometers north and visit the Oak Ridges Moraine."

A few days later, the family has a marvelous visit and indeed, Marshall sees his salamander. In fact, he sees over 50 vibrant orange Red Efts. On the way back in the car, he pipes up from the back seat, "Dad. I'm going to be a biologist when I grow up. Is that okay?"

Marshall sees salamanders close to the city that day because 50 years earlier, in 2016, concerned people living on the Moraine had a will to protect it. They knew that the only chance we'd have to enjoy nature in the future is to protect precious properties now and forever. These people made a gift in their Will to the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust and became members of our Trust's Legacy Circle.

**Do you share our will to protect nature? Would you consider being one of these inspiring people? If so, I would love to talk to you. I'm also a member of the Legacy Circle and I would be delighted if you would join me. –Susan**

## NEWS ON YOUR MORAINE

# WE DID IT! YOU DID IT!

Many of our supporters added their voices and provided support and together, we convinced the Ministry of Transportation to suspend the Greater Toronto Area West Highway Corridor (GTA West) review study.

We are absolutely thrilled that our leaders considered the environmental impact of the proposed highway and listened to the local community's concerns. And we're delighted with their decision!

## Events and Activities FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY



You're welcome to join our Annual General Meeting on Sunday May 1<sup>st</sup> at Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre.

Free workshops at Scugog Library! All events are 6:30–9:30pm, call us to pre-register.

**MARCH 1: Trees and Shrubs**

**MARCH 24: Birds**

**APRIL 19: Wildflowers**

**MAY 3: Dragonflies, Butterflies and Moths**

**MAY 13/14: Durham BioBlitz**

**MAY 27/28: York Region Bio Blitz**

Also, join the spring York Region Forest Festival May 28<sup>th</sup> 10am–3pm, Hollidge Tract. Help create “Edible Aquifers” for kids of all ages!

Call our office for details about any of these events! And watch our website for more!



## MESSAGE FROM Susan Walmer, Executive Director

**AS WE LOOK INTO A NEW YEAR,** I'm reflecting on our past. I remember our energetic, intense meetings in the late 1990's as the public was becoming more active and vocal about the protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine against development.

Thousands of ordinary folks packed meetings to raise their voices and stand up for protecting nature. Many familiar faces, aged just a bit, are still actively engaged with passion and purpose and joined the conversation for the 2015 Plan Review. It was exciting to be part of the surging voice that challenged and inspired governments to freeze all planning applications and enact the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan in 1999. And it still is.

Collaborating every day with amazing donors to protect nature and its beauty is an honour and an inspiration to me. However, more work still needs to be done. Now is a good time for you to become a NIMBI (Now I Must Be Involved) as I did 25 years ago.

Learn about the Greenbelt, ORMCP, Niagara Escarpment Commission plan and Growth Plan review and the 2015 co-ordinated review report: Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015–2041. I'd be happy to share my dog-eared

and coffee stained copy if you can't find it online!

And here at the Land Trust, we're looking ahead to our next 5 year framework and our hopes and dreams for our Moraine. Would you like to join this conversation? I always love hearing from our community about what more we can do to protect the Moraine we all cherish.

Thank you for working with us to protect our Moraine!

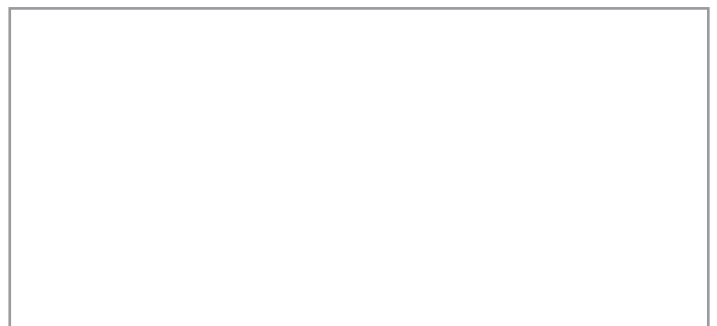
THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.



Possibility grows here.



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**OAK RIDGES MORAINE  
LAND TRUST**

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