

St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation

2013 Annual Report

The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation is the fundraising arm of the Conservation Authority. The Foundation supports the programs of the Authority through a number of programs and through actively seeking the donation of conservation lands.

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Leaving a Legacy - Keith McLean Conservation Lands

The Keith McLean Conservation Lands was officially opened in a ceremony held on Thursday, June 27. Mr. McLean, who passed away on November 20, 2012, donated his 130-ha farm to the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation. "We discovered shortly after Keith's death that he was donating his land and a sizeable trust fund to our Foundation. It is a great gift and a huge responsibility," Duncan Skinner, President of the Foundation said.

The property includes wetlands, tallgrass prairie and farmland. The property is best known, however, for its lotus ponds.

"It truly is a remarkable gift," Steve Arnold, Chair of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority said. "Now it is our task and responsibility to see that this gift is transformed into the vision that Keith laid out for us."

Mr. McLean provided the Foundation with a letter. In the letter, Mr. McLean laid out a challenge for the Foundation: "To accept this property and, with vision and foresight, enhance the beauty of this site, continuing the conservation effort for the benefit of wildlife and the general public." Then he went on, "There may be many ideas and improvements that I have never imagined but always bear in mind that this is a place where the public should always feel warmly welcome."

While the land was donated to the Foundation, the Conservation Authority on behalf of the Foundation, will be managing this property. The first step will be the development of a management plan. In the fall, an open house was held to seek input on the plan. "The opportunities seem endless and will only be limited by our imaginations," Arnold said.



A plaque was unveiled at a ceremony to honour the donation of this beautiful land by the late Mr. Keith McLean.



Local Business Supports Conservation Education

The Foundation continued its efforts in 2013 to seek corporate support for Conservation Education. We wish to sincerely thank the following organizations for their support of conservation education this year.

Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association: The Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association (SLEA) donated \$30,000 to support two in-class education programs dealing with the use of benthic invertebrates to measure river quality and the importance of our groundwater resources. Over the last 17 years, SLEA has donated \$454,000 to conservation education.

RBC Blue Water Project: RBC Blue Water Project donated \$5,000 to supply trees and shrubs to be planted by students and community volunteers in Strathroy.

TD Friends of the Environment Foundation: A \$750 donation was made to help purchase binoculars for use by students participating in education programs.

Union Gas: Union Gas continued its support of the Spring Water Awareness Program with a donation of \$5,000. This program is offered to Kindergarten - Grade 6 classes.

Enbridge: Enbridge made a three-year commitment of \$10,000 per year to support an Alternative Energy Program. This program is taught both in the classroom and at the L. C. Henderson Conservation Area.



Memorial Forests

The St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation launched the memorial forest program in 1987 with the purpose of raising funds to reforest lands within our region. To date, 12,900 trees have been dedicated covering 44 different sites. Through the program, the Foundation arranges for the dedication of trees which have been planted from donations received directly from members of the community. In addition to these trees, the Foundation receives donations from the McKenzie and Blundy Funeral Home, Sarnia; Eric F. Nicholls Funeral Home, Wallaceburg; and the Denning Brothers Funeral Home, Strathroy and have established separate memorial forests to recognize this contribution to the environment.

Through the Foundation, trees can be dedicated at any of the Authority's Conservation Areas. In 2013, 538 trees were dedicated and more than 1,000 people attended dedication ceremonies held at the various memorial forests.





Ecological Gifts

Three of the properties have qualified as an Ecological Gift through Environment Canada. Canada's Ecological Gifts Program provides a way for Canadians with ecologically sensitive land to protect nature and leave a legacy for future generations. Made possible by the terms of the Income Tax Act of Canada, it offers significant tax benefits to landowners who donate land or a partial interest in land to a qualified recipient. Recipients, such as the Conservation Foundation, ensure that the land's biodiversity and environmental heritage are conserved in perpetuity.

Foundation Land Donations

The Foundation accepts land donations that further the objectives of the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority by preserving important natural areas. To date, the Foundation has received 16 land donations totalling 455 hectares. The Conservation Authority manages these lands on behalf of the Foundation.

- **Bates Conservation Lands**, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 29 ha, qualified as an Ecological Gift through Environment Canada
- **Clark Wright Conservation Area**, Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, 20 ha
- **Cochrane Property**, Enniskillen Township, 1 ha
- **Cuddy Woods**, Municipality of Adelaide-Metcalf, 7 ha
- **Evoy Woodlot**, Township of Enniskillen, 36 ha (irrevocable trust agreement)
- **Fraser Property**, Municipality of Lambton Shores, 1 ha
- **Gawne Property**, Township of Dawn-Euphemia, 40 ha
- **Harrison Woodlot**, The Township of Middlesex Centre, 8 ha
- **Huff Property**, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 12 ha qualified as an Ecological Gift through Environment Canada
- **Keith McLean Conservation Lands**, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 130 ha (awaiting transfer)
- **Maples Woodlot**, Town of Plympton-Wyoming, 3 ha
- **Murray Property**, Municipality of Lambton Shores, 1 ha
- **Reid Conservation Area**, Township of St. Clair, 69 ha, qualified as an Ecological Gift through Environment Canada
- **Sinclair Property**, Township of Dawn-Euphemia, 80 ha
- **Stirling Wetlands**, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 12 ha
- **Western Land Company Property**, Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, 6 ha

Conservation Scholarships Awarded

The Conservation Scholarship program rewards graduating high school students continuing their post-secondary studies in a conservation-related field based on their academic achievement and their demonstrated interest and involvement with the environment. In total, \$3,250 was awarded across the St. Clair region this year.



A.W. Campbell Memorial Scholarship: two \$1,000 awards
Derek Bulsink, Ursuline College, Chatham
Laura Williams, North Lambton Secondary School

Tony Stranak Conservation Scholarship: one \$500 award
Ian Van Arkel, Lambton-Kent Composite School

Mary Jo Arnold Conservation Scholarship: one \$500 award
Jordan Henry, St. Christopher Secondary School

SCRCA Conservation Scholarship: one \$250 award
Kurtis Smith, Northern Collegiate

The scholarships are made possible through trust funds established by the St. Clair Region Conservation Foundation and its donors.

Sydenham River Canoe Race

Fifty-seven canoes and kayaks braved high water to participate in the Sydenham River Canoe and Kayak Race on April 21. Over \$2,500 was raised for Conservation Education. The Award for the most money raised went to Steve Arnold and Corinne Lemieux and the fastest time for the 16-km competitive race was won by Dean Brown and Rene Boogemons at 1 hour 21 minutes and 2 seconds. Thanks to the fast current, this was almost 9 minutes faster than the fastest time last year.



Foundation Supports 2013 Projects

- \$8,500 - support trail development at the Strathroy and Clark Wright Conservation Area.
- \$5,000 - 3-D Mapping Project that will improve the quality of the Conservation Authority's mapping resources
- \$5,000 - assist with the purchase of the Peers Wetland
- \$15,000 - support purchase of equipment for benthic and water quality monitoring

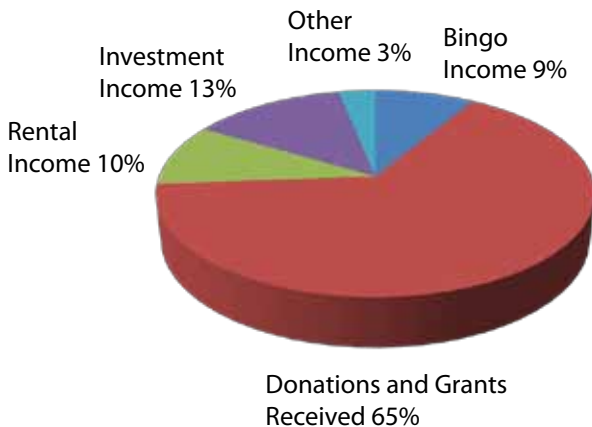


Bingo Supports Conservation

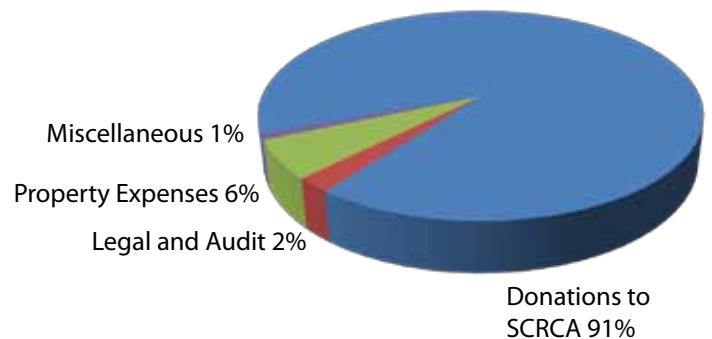
Thanks to the many Foundation volunteers who assisted with our bingo program in Sarnia, the Foundation was able to support several conservation programs in 2013. A total of \$19,600 was provided to support conservation education, trails, visitor services, and tree planting throughout Lambton County.



2013 Revenue - \$202,513



2013 Expenditures - \$164,385



St. Clair Region

Conservation Foundation

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