

Conservation Matters

A publication of the
Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust

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*Thousand Islands Watershed
Land Trust*

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The Executive and Board are assisted by an Advisory Committee, who have a broad range of knowledge and experience. They are Andy Graham, Joan Collins, Tim Truesdell, Jeff Leggo, Angus McLeod, Julia Wills, Kim Goodman.

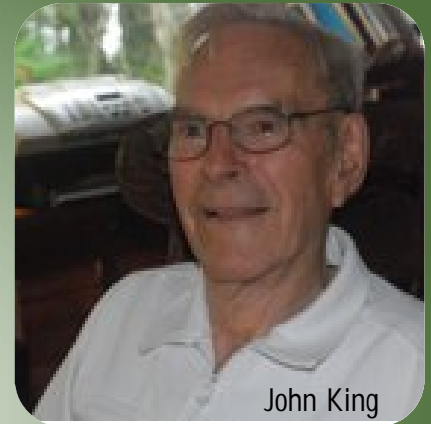
Cottage Tour 2008



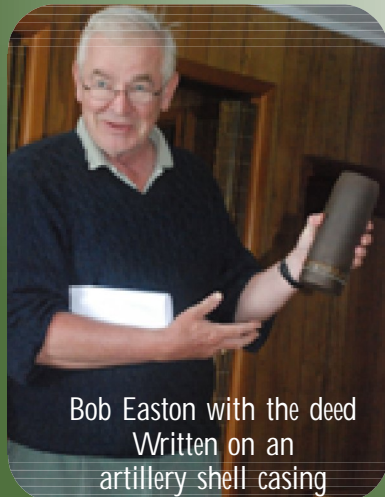
Paul Regan

We are stunned at the generosity of the cottagers who agree to have people into their homes and their lives for a day. Bob and Gay Easton, Paul and Susan Regan and Jean, John and Andy King are generous, civic minded people.

We thank them very much.



John King



Bob Easton with the deed
Written on an
artillery shell casing



Jean King
on her porch

Cottage Tour 2008 and a Look into the Future

We had something special this year on the Historic Cottage Tour. We heard the tale of three families that made the river their own. Jean King told us the story of two brothers who bought an island, of fire killing one brother's dreams and a young woman who fell in love with the island and the man at the same time. We heard the stories of the Turcotte farm, Grandy Hoyt, the Eastons and the Regans, - tales of generosity, hard work, love and hard times. Just when we thought we knew this little piece of island history, a visitor on the tour said, "I used to live here." and the saga continued. There was so much in fact that we wrote a small book complete with pictures.

The Land Trust made close to \$6,000 and sold 15 new memberships. The proceeds will be used in our Stewardship fund to help buy and maintain properties.

We are also offering a limited number of Cottage Tour 2008 books for \$30.00. They are about 24 pages in full colour. The content is the histories of the islands, the people, poetry and pictures from the tour day.



We are getting the jump on next year already. The tour will be Friday July 24th, 2009. We will have 3 tours leaving the Gananoque Inn. The 9:00 am tour will be on the boat first and then have lunch at 12:00 pm. The 10:45 am tour starts with lunch and goes on the boat at noon. The 1:30 pm starts with lunch and goes on the boat at 3:00 pm. Not all of the cottages are set but we will be back in the Bostwick area. Come and live another bit of history with us next year.

Many thanks to the helpers with special thanks to Andrew and Katherine Graham who hosted the post-tour party, Mary Jane Lamb who made the ticket and worked for weeks to publish the book, Chris and Joan Findlay who spend hours doing accounts, the Samuels, Kathleen Burtch and the Ross who donated boat taxi service, the Gananoque Inn, Capt'n Andy.

Thanks to Marlene Ross for the organization of the Cottage Tour, and for producing the tour book. Henderson's Printing are printing the book at reduced cost.





Adopt an Island


The Watershed Land Trust is fortunate to own two small islands in the St. Lawrence River, - Island 78e near Ivy Lea, and Blueberry Island near Gananoque. These two properties were donated by nearby Island owners, and tax



receipts for their market values were provided through the Land Trust. Islands generally, and in the St. Lawrence specifically, are significant because their littoral zone provides excellent fish habitat, their natural shorelines safeguard against water pollution, and they are sanctuary for other animals such as birds and herptiles. Even shoals have an important ecological function to play. In recent years, small islands and shoals have been used for large docks, boats and party equipment, causing destruction of the shoreline and pollution of the water as well as disturbance to neighbouring islands. This type of unfortunate development can spoil the aesthetic appearance of both the neighbouring island owner and visitor. The Adopt-an-Island program is designed to enable the Watershed Land Trust to promote the safeguarding of these small islands, and to react quickly to opportunities by earmarking funds for their purchase should they be offered for sale in the real estate market, or through municipal tax sales.

You can help the “Adopt an Island” program in a number of ways. If you own a small island, you may wish to offer it as a donation to the Land Trust. If you know of a small island which is for sale, contact one of our Board members; you and your neighbours may be able to help with its purchase. Cash donations towards such purchases will be earmarked for stewardship and placed in our Conservation Fund.

Although this program is highlighted for the Thousand Islands, it can also apply to other areas within the Land Trust boundaries, for example Charleston Lake. If you wish to discuss the Adopt-an-Island program, and how you can help, contact Marnie Ross at 613 659-4590, or Dave Warner at 613 923-2054.



Good Tax News for Our American Friends and for the TIWLT

The Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust has many American members and, in the past, they have been among our most ardent financial supporters, despite a tax system in the USA that does not recognize Canadian tax receipts. This has now changed. The TIWLT has become a charter member of the newly-created American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts (AFoCLT).

The AFoCLT has come into being through the determined work of a number of Canadian land trust officials, such as Bonnie Sutherland, Executive Director of the Nova Scotia Land Trust. It has recently been registered as a charity under the US Internal Revenue Service and Bonnie is its first President. The AFoCLT has an independent board of directors composed of US and Canadian citizens with extensive experience in land trusts, land conservation, and the laws that pertain to them on both sides of the border.

Many Americans with property in Canada have a high level of awareness and interest in land conservation but, to date, the Canadian land trust experience has been that American donors contemplating a gift of land, conservation easement, or cash to a Canadian organization have been deterred by the lack of a tax deduction for the gift and/or the anticipation that they will have to pay capital gains to the Canadian government on the donated property.

While the intent ultimately is to facilitate gifts of both land and money by Americans to Canadian land trusts, only the process for the latter is now in place. Donations of land and easements will only come into being once the AFoCLT has received special tax status in Canada. With such

status, donors of gifts of land, or interests in land such as conservation easements will be able to eliminate their capital gains tax liability on such gifts. The AFoCLT is currently working to receive that status and the TIWLT is supporting that work.

The TIWLT used the new process recently in selling tickets to its 9th Annual Cottage Tour. Those American participants interested in a tax receipt made their cheques payable to the AFoCLT for the TIWLT. The TIWLT will receive funds from the AFoCLT minus a small administrative charge that, together with the TIWLT membership fee, enables the AFoCLT to operate. For administrative reasons, under the new AFoCLT process, only donations of \$100 or more are eligible for a tax receipt. The TIWLT membership is \$40 but many members often donate additional dollars to our conservation fund. We will now be able to recognize those generous donations from our American friends as we do now from Canadians, with a tax receipt. Good news all around.

New Charity Status

Veteran supporters of the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust (be they Cottage Tour participants, loyal members, valued donors, or, best of all, all three) know that the Land Trust has had to ask you in the past to make your cheques payable to the Canadian Thousand Islands Heritage Conservancy (CTIHC). This is now a thing of the past!

Many readers will recall that three years ago, after consultations with the Rideau Waterways Land Trust, the Board of the CTIHC expanded its responsibilities to include the previously-uncovered area between the Thousand Islands and the Rideau River watershed. We changed our name to the TIWLT in recognition of our broader range of coverage but also because the term 'land trust' is a more modern and more common term for what we do.

We then learned that for some reason, still not entirely clear, the Province of Ontario would not accept the use of the term 'land trust' in the name of a provincially-incorporated organization. We applied for incorporation under the federal Corporations Act and our application was approved last year.

Following our federal incorporation as the TIW Land Trust, our legal advisors recommended that we register the TIWLT as a charity with the Canada Revenue Agency rather than simply ask the CRA to transfer charitable status from the CTIHC. Evidently, this approach, while taking longer, would facilitate the transfer of assets from the CTIHC to the TIWLT.

Last spring we applied and were informed that the process could take upwards of six months, after acceptance, for the CRA to review our application and decide. This complicated our lives and yours, having to keep the CTIHC alive and explain the difference, but what choice did we have? Well, three months ahead of schedule, the CRA informed us we were successful. Pleasant surprise! The Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust is now a registered charity. Cheques can now be made out to the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust.

We now start the process of transferring the Conservancy's assets to the Land Trust and then dissolving the Conservancy. In the upcoming year, the Board of the Conservancy, which is composed of the same people as the Board of the Land Trust, will call a Special General Meeting of all members to dissolve the Conservancy. Life will become a lot simpler for our poor Treasurer and for our supporters.

STEWARDSHIP AWARDS 2008

Each year we look for individuals, groups or agencies that deserve recognition for their efforts to protect our natural and cultural heritage. Since the mid 1990's we have given more than twenty Stewardship Awards. The Award consists of a framed print of Molly's Gut, a well-known scene from the Thousand Islands. Along with the print goes a "handshake agreement" that the recipients will continue their stewardship efforts.

This year the Water Shed Land Trust presented Stewardship Awards to the Thousand Islands Land Trust, and Save The River. Both of these American Agencies have for many years proved that they are worthy of recognition.

One Landowner's Green Gift

In these days when concern for the well-being for our environment is among the leading concerns of Canadians, here's a great example of how an individual can actually do something about it.

Douglas and Blu Mackintosh own a property between the Thousand Islands Parkway and the river, near the village of Ivy Lea. But it's no ordinary property, and in fact is quite a complex property of residential and garden use, has a marina in operation, and has as well many types of natural areas, from oak savannah to marshlands. A few years back, the Mackintosh family realized that the types of natural areas of their property were becoming less and less common—in fact now a rarity along the Thousand Islands waterfront— and decided to do something about it. They began to explore their conservation options with what was then the Canadian Thousand Islands Heritage Conservancy.

After some discussions and fact finding, they decided to place a conservation easement on their property. Such easements, they found, could have considerable flexibility and let them work out a strategy that would fit their needs today, and into the future.

The basic intent of a conservation easement is to ensure that the significant natural character of a property will be protected and not diminished in value into the future. Such easements are in effect a “will” for the property, charting provisions and actions that ensure ecological integrity. At the same time, there can be strategies in the conservation easement that allow for compatible and continued use of the property by its owners. An easement allows the property to remain in the landowners hands, and be sold or willed to future landowners. The easement is registered on the title of the property, so that it is deeded as part of the property.

The terms of every easement are as individual as is the property and landowner circumstance. In the Mackintosh case, the goals were to protect the oak woodlands, marsh areas and wetlands which have such an abundance of plants and animals, but at the same time allow for the continued habitation and continued operation of the marina. The solution was to define a footprint for the houses, marina and associated buildings, gardens and recreation areas. The marina, for example, had been quite “green” from the start, with no fuel or waste disposal infrastructure. Buildings can be modified and even expanded, to preset and fairly generous degrees. In the end, the conservation was a plan, without compromise of either the natural or human environments. The Mackintosh conservation easement is very close to its final signing and registration, and will be in place by the end of 2008. It is a great achievement by the family, and very important to the future ecological health of this very biodiverse region of Canada.

Laura Bell and Island 106

Laura Bell spends her summers at her cottage on the north side of Grenadier Island, and looks across the river to her other island property, Island 106, which her family has named Hart's Island. Island 106 is one of hundreds of small islands in the St. Lawrence which need protecting. At just under two acres, it is still large enough support docks and perhaps a cottage. Fortunately it is now undeveloped and will remain so. Thanks to Mrs. Bell it is protected by a conservation easement.

Many years ago, her mother's first cousin, Hart Keeler bought the island, and Laura and her late husband acquired it from the Keeler estate. Hart's Island has been used gently by the family for at least fifty years, mainly as quiet place for swimming, but also for occasional camping. The island lies a stone's throw or less from nearby Tar Island, and in fact a passing boater would guess that it is part of Tar.

As stipulated by Mrs. Bell, the conservation easement protects Island 106 in perpetuity, but allows her family to continue to use the island's walking trails and campsite. It will not have any docks.

Laura Bell says that she is sometimes called the “Dragon Queen” by the family campers. “I come out mainly at night, and rule the island and its inhabitants.” The easement ensures that the Queen's wishes will be upheld.