

MISSISSIPPI MADAWASKA LAND TRUST

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Cover photo of
Keddy Nature Sanctuary
by Simon Lunn



Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust
Preserving the land  Protecting the future

President's Message



I want to express my sincere thanks to the MMLT Board and our volunteers for the tireless hours spent on providing public events, streamlining our policies, and creating a viable organization worthy of your trust and support. Why do we do it? Speaking for myself, when I was invited to help start a local land trust over fifteen years ago I accepted the challenge because I knew the people I would be working with intimately knew and loved the local landscape.

In the intervening years things have changed, making me even more certain the decision was the right one. The increasing onslaught against nature has placed land trusts under extreme stress. The larger ones prioritized their resources by sending their troops to the front lines - to areas under immediate pressure. MMLT supports and partners with these mainstream conservancies but we are now alone in the hinterland. We are now the sentinels - to protect and preserve the beautiful larger tracks of wilderness within our own catchment area.

When I was young I did not know why wild places, old growth forests, and places where the blight of human intrusion is less evident awakened my slumbering soul. I was only superficially aware that habitat equals wildlife, they're interactive. When I took deep, wonderful breaths of wilderness scents I thought I was breathing in odours produced by leaves - not appreciating that many of the scents I loved were the product of chemical reactions between insects and trees. It's only recently that research confirmed that true biological health is best found in unmanaged old growth forests. When sitting in the forest, watching life around me, I was unaware of the unimaginable complexity of life forms holding hands under the soil while life above reaches for light.

I knew when I was in an old forest grove I must speak quietly, if at all. A feeling of reverence was part of the ambiance. In this special place I was not the Commander-in-Chief but a humble subject of nature. We are often inspired by paintings that were inspired by nature, but here I felt like I was stepping into the painting. It's not only a place to hug a tree, but to be hugged by Nature. It is a poignant moment - immersed in an utter mystery - profound wisdom forever beyond our grasp. Yet, paradoxically, we can sense fragility. There's a realization that nature's strength depends on all its subjects, including us, to play their role. What a sacred undertaking.

Fragility? How many places within a hundred miles of Ottawa are more than 1000 feet from a road. Where can you sit in solitude - in a sanctuary of silence - where you can still see the full majesty of night skies?

Someone once spoke an eternal truth, "Life is not measured by the number of breaths you take but the number of moments that took your breath." I have witnessed such moments when visitors to cliffLAND uttered "Wow!" as they contemplated ridges beyond ridges covered in forest as far as the eye could see. Friends of John Muir said he died of a broken heart when they flooded his beloved Hetch Hetchy. I can understand - I would be broken hearted too if the view from Blueberry Mountain or Pike's Peak became despoiled by the blight of man-made intrusions. Maya Angelou reminds us that we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors who made possible what we have and we should live so that our descendants can stand on ours. It is so much better to say: "Forever protected" than "Forever too late"!

Howard Clifford

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016

- We launched our Wild Child Initiative with several youth activities (see Page 4.)
- With assistance from our excellent facilitator Christine Peringer, we prepared a Strategic Plan to help focus our efforts for the next five years.
- Following the development of our new Property Management Procedure, we are proceeding with detailed documentation of species and management plans for our protected properties to support long-term planning.
- We held nine outdoor education events which had over 600 people in attendance.
- This year 1838 visitors were documented to have visited Blueberry Mountain. CliffLAND hosted 12 organized groups. "A Gathering" group came to share wilderness skills, including over 50 came from as far away as Montreal to the east and Manitoulin Island to the west.
- We launched an MMLT Facebook Group to help us promote events and to provide an opportunity for friends to post comments and photos after visiting our properties.
- Ed Lawrence offered his time and expertise for an MMLT fundraiser at Centrepointe Theatre in Ottawa. With Rob Clipperton moderating, Ed answered a wide variety of questions about plants. Cynthia McKellar of Almonte had the winning raffle ticket for a consultation with Ed in her own garden.
- Chad Clifford filmed some excellent drone videos of [cliffLAND](#), [High Lonesome](#) and [Rose Hill Nature Reserves](#) that are just stunning!
- We raised over \$8,500 at our Go Wild Gala with Silent Auction and presentation by Michael Runtz. We raffled off three great vacation packages to lucky winners.
- We have set up PayPal on our website so that donations can be made more easily.

LOOKING AHEAD

- With the 2015 grant from Mountain Equipment Co-op, we have been moving ahead with our project to renovate the storage shed at High Lonesome into a Welcome Centre. Work will be completed this spring.
- We will be offering a commemorative bench program so that donors will be able to purchase a bench, with a plaque, to celebrate the lives and achievements of special individuals.
- We will be offering a special event for members only. Simon Lunn will host a Photography Workshop at High Lonesome. Stay tuned for details at mmlt.ca/events.
- We are planning an Afternoon Tea at Temple's Sugar Bush which will include a garden tour with Ed Lawrence, live music, and a silent auction for a consultation with Ed in your own garden. Mark June 4th on your calendar!
- We plan to continue our Wild Child initiative with youth centred activities throughout 2017.
- Further development of our bio-acoustic monitoring program is planned this year.

2016 Financial Report

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2016



<u>ASSETS</u>	2016	2015
Cash	\$73,711	\$83,128
Accounts receivable	\$7,732	\$2,837
Prepaid expenses	\$585	\$585
Restricted cash	\$227	\$227
Total Operating Assets	\$82,255	\$86,777
 <u>PROPERTY</u>		
Nature Reserves	\$313,000	\$313,000
Conservation Easements	\$597,501	\$597,501
Total Property Assets	\$910,501	\$910,501
 Total Assets	 \$992,756	 \$997,278
 Note: Endowment Investments	 \$124,936	 \$113,243
 <u>LIABILITIES</u>		
Accounts payable	\$3,000	\$2,000
Deferred restricted contributions	\$227	\$227
Deferred operating revenues	\$31,800	\$37,075
 Total Liabilities	 \$35,027	 \$39,302

MMLT Registered Charity #87859 1007 RR0001

New Grants Received in 2016

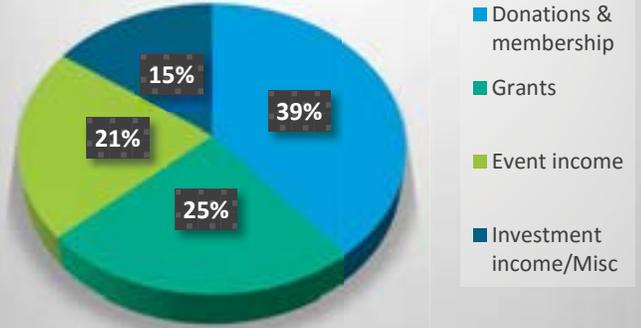
Perth & District Community Foundation: We received a \$2,200 Youth in Nature grant, in partnership with two local youth organizations, YAK Youth Services in Perth and Lanark Highlands Youth Centre in Lanark. MMLT organized several outdoor adventures for youth at Blueberry Mountain and High Lonesome Nature Reserve. The activities were led by experienced naturalists who introduced the young people to this fascinating world, providing interesting insights into the native flora, fauna and habitats. Without this grant, youth clubs would not have been able to fund the costs of busing to access these remote wilderness properties.

Nature Conservancy of Canada: NCC awarded us \$4,040 to recover the costs associated with the preparation of policies and procedures to help us meet the practices derived from the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices. MMLT focused its efforts on improving its Procedure for Securing Conservation Easements, developed a Property Management Procedure and revised Assessment Criteria for Property Acquisition. This capacity building grant was offered with assistance from Environment Canada.

2016 Financial Report

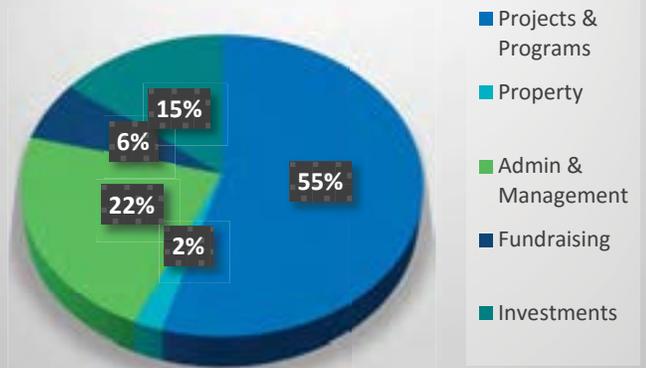
REVENUE	2016	2015
Donations & membership	\$35,380	\$50,188
Grants	\$22,469	\$68,424
Event income	\$19,446	\$14,109
Investment income/Misc	\$13,854	\$1,200
TOTAL REVENUES	\$91,149	\$133,921

2016 Revenues: \$91,149

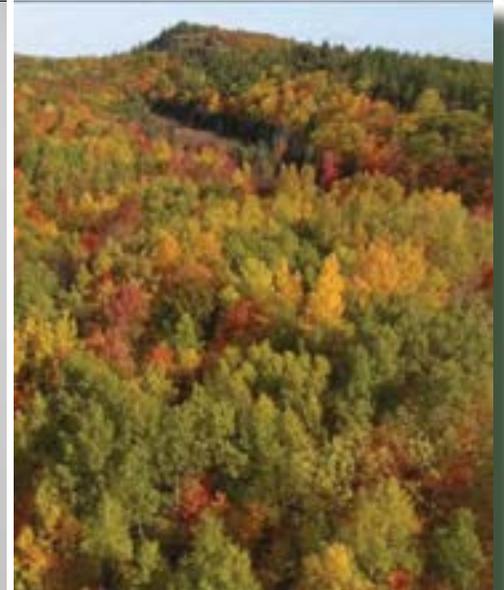
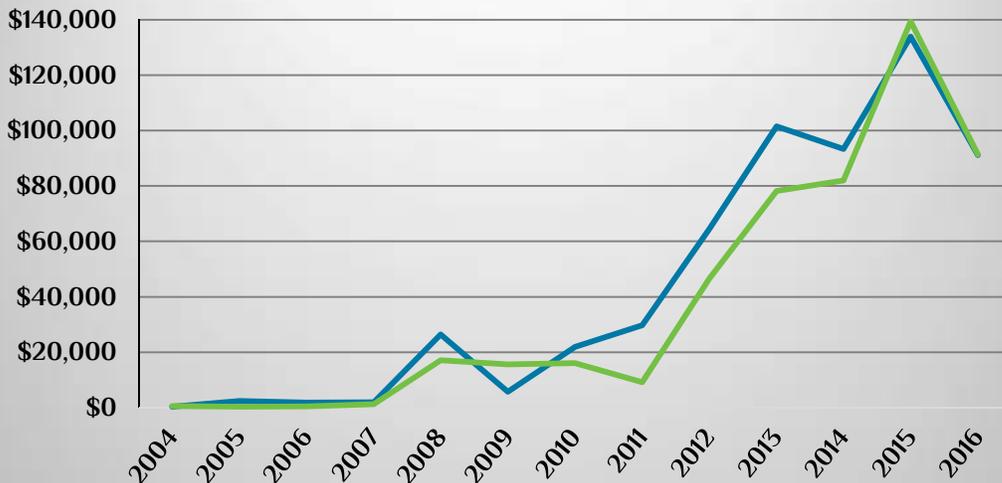


EXPENSES	2016	2015
Projects & Programs	\$49,761	\$38,372
Property	\$1,956	\$2,655
Admin & Management	\$20,430	\$21,777
Fundraising	\$5,888	\$4,578
Investments	\$13,361	\$72,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$91,396	\$139,382

2016 Expenses: \$91,396



MMLT HISTORICAL FINANCIAL TREND
Revenues & Expenses



Invest to Sustain the Wild

To mark Canada's 150th birthday, MMLT has set a goal to grow its Sustainability Fund by \$150,000. The Sustainability Fund is a permanent endowment held and administered by the Community Foundation of Ottawa on behalf of MMLT. It provides an annual disbursement used to ensure the operational stability of the mission, programs, staffing, and ongoing operations of the Land Trust.

Achieving financial sustainability will advance land conservation in the region and strengthen MMLT in its work to care for land conserved forever for the benefit of Nature and the community. Help MMLT sustain the wild and celebrate many more birthdays with Canada.

Wild Child Initiative

In 2016, MMLT launched its “Wild Child Initiative” with the goal to offer opportunities for children to visit our wild natural places. With assistance from a grant from the Perth & District Community Foundation, local youth clubs visited Blueberry Mountain and High Lonesome Nature Reserve. The Children’s Place Day Care Centre also spent a day of outdoor adventures at High Lonesome. Local children’s author Jan Andrews, recently awarded the Order of Canada, read from her book *The Twelve Days of Summer* to a group of children who then explored the trails of High Lonesome to find the flora and fauna described in the book. These activities are just the beginning of what we hope will be a very successful ongoing emphasis in our outdoor education programs.

Research shows that among predictors of human health - physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual - engagement in nature activities is critically important. In the past, kids were sent outside to play until the street lights came on, exploring nearby ravines and forests, climbing trees, cliffs, slithering into caves, frequently housing live critters in pockets, happily arriving home dirty or muddy, occasionally with cuts and bruises and clothes that needed re-patching. Today children, either assigned or by choice, spend most of their time indoors. Activities are usually highly organized and structured, under close adult supervision. Children are being denied the opportunity to connect freely with the natural world, and all the fun, wonder, and benefits that come from that experience. Parents and those holding special places of influence in the child’s life must rewild themselves as well - for their own well-being and that of their children. MMLT has the perfect environments for these unstructured outdoor activities.



2016 Nature Education Activities



Author Dan Rubinstein signs his book *Born to Walk* at our April nature walk at High Lonesome.



‘Grey Owl’ led the children in nature activities before they hiked up Blueberry Mountain at our Spring Nature Walk.



Children’s author Jan Andrews reads to children from her book *Twelve Days of Summer* before they explore the trails.

Children from youth clubs in Lanark and Mississippi Mills learned wilderness safety measures before they explored the trails at High Lonesome.



Ed Lawrence, with moderator Rob Clipperton, answered a wide variety of questions about plants at the Centrepointe Theatre in March.



Michael Runtz explains various flora and fauna during his ‘Walk on the Wild Side’ event at High Lonesome in September.



The group paused for a picnic at Fufflemucker Pond at our annual Rose Hill Nature Walk.



The mist was slowly rising as we arrived at the Blueberry Mountain lookout at the annual Fall Colours Nature Walk.



Learning how to etch leaves was one of the activities at our annual Creativity Blitz in May.

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

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