



# Muskoka Steward

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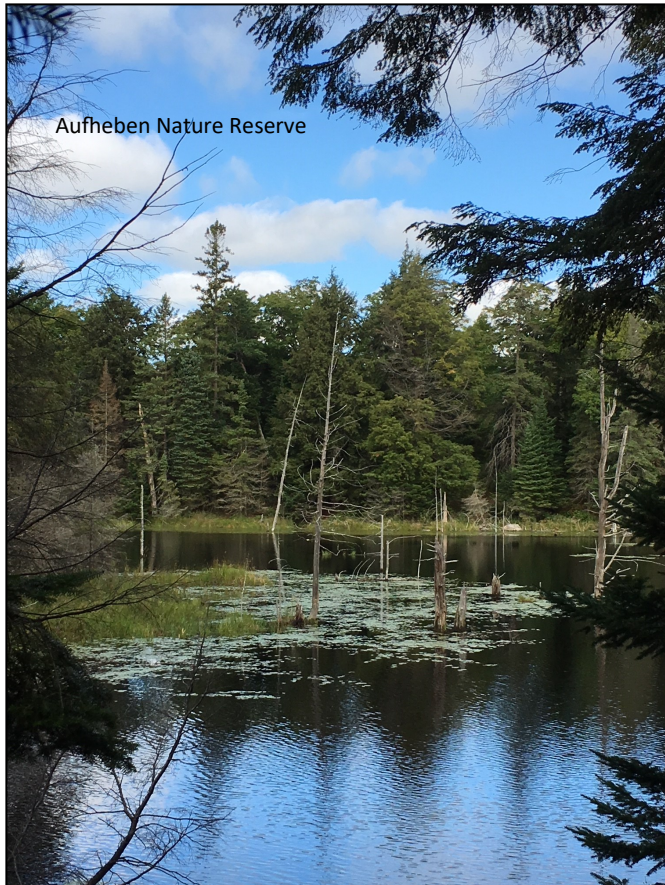
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## The Importance of Wetlands

The recent flooding in Muskoka really highlights the importance of one of Muskoka's most sensitive habitats: wetlands. Wetlands are crucial in storing stormwater, managing flood levels, and are important habitat for species at risk.

then moves through the water table and recharges the groundwater or helps feed streams or rivers. They also capture runoff water and slow the water down which cause pollutants to fall out of suspension. This keeps the running water clean as it flows through the water table.



Aufheben Nature Reserve



Upjohn Nature Reserve

Wetlands have several important properties that make them significant habitats to protect. Wetlands act as huge sponges that store large quantities of water. This water

Wetlands also provide habitat for several species at risk, including Least bittern, Painted turtle, and Snapping turtle. Muskoka Conservancy properties protect a total of 473 acres of wetland, which is substantial habitat for species at risk. Our properties provide habitat to numerous turtle and frog species as well as are breeding grounds for at risk birds.

All in all, wetlands are valuable resource for protecting both our natural areas as well as built areas from storms and floods. The value of a wetland is mostly unseen until these large occurrences, at which time it becomes very evident. Continuing to protect these wetlands and natural spaces will prove invaluable in the years to come.

*Aaron Rusak*





June Nature Quest

**WILDFLOWER WALK**

June 2, 2019  
10 am - 12 pm  
Upjohn Nature Reserve

\$10 Donation

Please call 705-6445-7393 ext. 200 to register

## Native Plant Sale Update!

The 2019 Native Plant Sale was a booming success with over 170 native plant orders! WOW! This only confirms what we had hoped for: there is growing interest within the community to help preserve Muskoka's natural beauty! Native plants are of ecological importance that lead to the survival of other native species, such as birds and the insects they feed on. The Muskoka Conservancy would like to thank Jan McDonnell who organized the event and led our group of hard-working volunteers to success! We would also like to give a big shout-out to all the volunteers, members and supporters of the Native Plant Sale! We couldn't have done it without you. Don't miss our Native Plant Sale next spring! In the meantime, come check out the Corner Garden for ideas.

*Amber Merritt*



## A message from our Executive Director

### Muskoka flood emergency! Second storm of the century this decade!

As I write this column, parts of Muskoka are both under water and under a State of Emergency. Some neighbourhoods are under evacuation orders, too. The last time this happened was six years ago in 2013. At that time, it was reported as a 100-year occurrence. Of course, none of this should surprise anyone. Climate scientists have been warning of more frequent more severe weather events for decades.



Knowing doesn't necessarily make it any easier for anyone who has been driven from their home by a flood. And talking about it while our feet are still wet likely won't help much, either. But this is, as they say, a teachable moment, and at some point, the conversation is worth having.

In fact, the news isn't all bad. We've come a long way since the early 1990's when scientific consensus emerged around the human causes of climate change. You might

remember the "big tobacco" lawyers who made climate change denial an industry. But today, most Canadians accept what scientists have been telling us, that climate change is real, and it is caused primarily by human activities like industrial production of materials and transportation. If you ask me, that's progress.

True, we are not moving fast enough, but what matters is most of us are willing to do small things we hope will help slow down climate change. It's important because it makes us feel good and if everyone does it, small things can add up. A friend of mine bought a hybrid car. Another is committed to reusable glass containers. I try to walk to work as often as I can. This is all positive stuff, especially as we learn from each other and try to do more. Good examples can be contagious.

An amazing example is being set by members of Muskoka Conservancy, who play a big role in protecting our communities from the direct impacts of climate change. Together we protect wetlands that help soak up rain and snow melt, ensuring floods aren't even worse. Together, we protect natural shorelines that help ensure Muskoka's famously excellent water quality. Together, we protect forests that sequester carbon and generate oxygen. What's more, when our local actions are taken collectively with thousands of other land trusts across Ontario, Canada, and internationally, we are having a major impact on climate change.

So, thank you Conservancy supporters! You are part of the solution!

PS: Please don't be shy about supporting the Conservancy! We need more people to follow your lead!

*Scott Young*

## Discovering the Wonders of Warblers

This spring, Muskoka Conservancy entered in a partnership with Shrike Birding to offer an instructional birding course on warblers in Muskoka. The course is taught by Shrike Birding, who are avid birders and are working on spotting over 200 bird species in Muskoka this year (a "Muskoka Big Year").

There are 32 species of warblers that can be seen in Muskoka, and this course covers them all! We have 24 eager students registered who are ready to get out into the field and identify their warbler species! The course is teaching about identifying warblers by both sight and sound and also describing feeding habits and behaviour of each warbler.

For additional information about birding courses, email [info@muskokaconservancy.org](mailto:info@muskokaconservancy.org) or call 705-645-7393 ext 200.

*Aaron Rusak*



## Volunteer Highlight: Karen Mason

Volunteer contributions are essential to the operations and success of Muskoka Conservancy! In this edition of The Steward, we wanted to highlight volunteer Karen Mason.

*Can you give us a bit of background on yourself?*

We moved to Muskoka a year ago. I'm a retired family doctor and learned to paddle at Manitoba Pioneering Camp. I used to live in British Columbia and volunteered with A Rocha Canada which is an organization that is involved with environmental education, conservation science, and creation care. I'm passionate about taking care of the world.

*What got you interested in volunteering for the Muskoka Conservancy?*

This was the closest thing to A Rocha that we have in Muskoka. It's a way to continue to do similar activities.

*What's been your favourite thing to do with Muskoka Conservancy?*

I've enjoyed the birding courses that have been offered. They've been really fun. I'm also very excited to be a Land Steward. It will be nice to have a property to take care of and monitor.

*What are some things you want to accomplish*

One of the reasons for volunteering is to get to know people. I'd also like to be able to give back in some way. I want to see us, as a community, take care of the beautiful place



we have.

*If you could turn into any animal, what would it be?*

The one that comes to mind is a beaver. My friends like to say I'm a busy beaver, so I think it fits me well.

We have been truly blessed to have Karen as a volunteer. She's been active in a number of programs and is a Land Steward, recorder for bird and frog surveys, and has helped out on trail building days. She is truly a volunteer with a wide range of talents and a valuable asset to the organization.

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## Little Sprouts Update

The Little Sprouts continue to spread Earth-loving vibes around Muskoka!

February included a Repair Café where the Sprouts brought broken, torn, or unused items to be repaired or repurposed! A big thank you to all of the "fixers" who donated their time to this initiative. In March, while Muskoka was still blanketed in snow, the Little Sprouts visited the VanSchyndt Greenhouses to plant impatiens and learn all about growing indoors! This event takes the prize for their greatest turnout yet, with over 100 participants!

April's events included an Easter gathering at Woodchester Villa in Bracebridge, and of course Earth Day was celebrated with an annual Earth Love Trash Walk to collect garbage from Kinsmen Park in Gravenhurst.

If you're interested in participating with Little Sprouts, email [info@muskokaconservancy.org](mailto:info@muskokaconservancy.org) or call 705-645-7393 ext 200 for upcoming events!



Christina Hunter



## The Frogs are Calling!

Now that spring is finally here, our Project Protect volunteers have been out in full swing! We have nineteen volunteers, covering nine Muskoka Conservancy properties. April, May, and June are the months of our amphibian surveys, and our early survey results are indicating Spring peepers, Wood frogs, and even Western chorus frogs on our properties. In June and July, our bird surveys will be starting up and we'll hopefully be hearing some species at risk. Even though it's still a bit chilly at night, our volunteers are getting out there and recording all they can. If you're interested in learning more about Project Protect, email info@muskokaconservancy.org or call 705-645-7393.

*Aaron Rusak*



## Wildlife Inspires! with Dan Kraus

*"Wildlife puts a face to our protected areas and can bring hope and imagination to conservation."*  
—Dan Kraus, 2019 keynote

Join your friends in nature conservation at Muskoka Conservancy's  
**2019 Annual Meeting and Awards**  
with special guest, acclaimed actor **RH Thomson**



2019 Michael Foster Photography Award Winning Photograph by Janet Butler

**When:** Saturday June 8, 2019 from 10:00am to noon  
**Where:** Dewey Institute (formerly Nipissing University)  
125 Wellington St, Bracebridge, ON P1L 1E2 Canada  
**What:** An inspiring morning among friends of nature conservation  
with light refreshments.

### About our Keynote Speaker



Dan Kraus is the National Conservation Biologist with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and previously an ecologist with Parks Canada. An engaging speaker, Dan applies his knowledge and passion of nature to help increase awareness about Canada's diverse wildlife. He is an expert on Canadian species and landscape ecology, and a member of the IUCN Species Survival Commission and the Committee on Species at Risk in Ontario.

**Plus!**

- Presentation of the prestigious Wayland Drew Natural Heritage Award, the Michael Foster Photography Award, and the Robert J. Boyer Award.
- Raffle draw for fantastic prizes from Westjet, Mindham Fine Jewellery, JW Marriott, Muskoka Brewery, and Lorne's Coats.

Inquiries: (705)645-7393



## Upjohn Nature Reserve Wetland Access Trail Extension!

The hiking trail at the Upjohn Nature Reserve in Bracebridge is expanding! This spring, we will have a new loop complete on the property that leads visitors along the beaver pond through the mixed upland forest and back to the stone cottage. The loop adds another two kilometers of trail to the property for users to enjoy!

A big thank you to Riley Norwood for constructing a footbridge across a creek that drains into the main wetland pond along the trail.

Stay tuned for our official trail opening day, and be sure to plan a hike at the property this summer! For more information, or if you're interested in doing some trail maintenance at the property, please call (705-645-7393 ext. 200) or email: info@muskokaconservancy.org

*Jenn LeMesurier*



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## June 2

**WILDFLOWER NATURE QUEST**  
Upjohn Nature Reserve, 10 am - 12 pm

## June 8

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
Dewey Institute, Bracebridge, 10 am

## June 23

**GARDENING WORKSHOP**  
47 Quebec Street, Bracebridge, 10 am

## July 26

**NATURE PADDLE QUEST**  
JP McVittie and Muskoka River Delta Nature Reserves, 10 am - 1 pm

## Aug 18

**SUMMER OF '19**  
Duke', Port Carling

**STAY IN TOUCH FOR MORE  
DETAILS AND TO REGISTER!**

"Look deep into nature, and then you will  
understand everything better" - Albert Einstein

## Muskoka Conservancy's Online Shop and Raffle Tickets Available Now!

Purchase all of your favourite Muskoka  
Conservancy gear online without leav-  
ing the comfort of home! Check out  
our online shop at [muskokaconservancy.org/shop](http://muskokaconservancy.org/shop)

### Raffle includes 5 fabulous prizes:

1. Gift of Flight—2 West Jet Tickets
2. 18kt gold earrings from the Jewel Cabin, Mindham Fine Jewellery
3. One night stay and breakfast for two at the JW Marriott
4. 58 Litres of Beer from Muskoka Brewery
5. Women's Wool Cape from Lorne's Coats

Tickets are \$20 each or 3 for \$50. The winners will be drawn on June 8th.

Items are also available at **47 Quebec Street**, or in Toronto, contact **Elizabeth Mason** at **(416) 924-4868**.

Save the Date!

**Summer of '19**  
*Cocktails for Conservation*  
**at DUKE'S**

in support of:

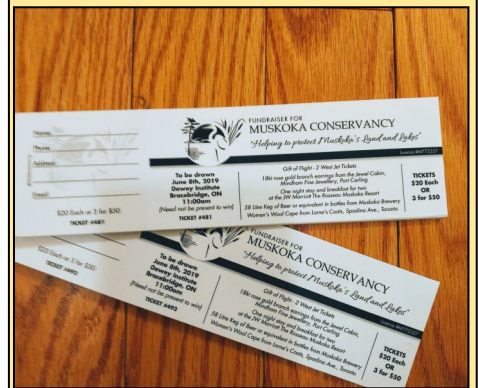


**MUSKOKA  
CONSERVANCY**  
[www.muskokaconservancy.org](http://www.muskokaconservancy.org)

Silent Auction

Cottage Games

Live Music



**Thank you to our official partners!**



UNIQUE  
**Muskoka**



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