

Eastern Ontario Land Trust/ Fiducie Foncière de L'est de L'Ontario Inc.
EOLT 2024 ANNUAL REPORT
February 25, 2025



January 1 – December 31, 2024

EOLT BOARD OF DIRECTORS & ADVISORS

Members of the EOLT Board of Directors

Cathy Ann Barr – Vankleek Hill, ON
Pierre Luc Byham – Lancaster, ON
Lisa Deacon- Russell, ON
Elise Deschenes- Montreal, PQ
Lisa Henderson- Vankleek Hill, ON
Sandra Illing- Vankleek Hill, ON
Nathalie Ladouceur- Hawkesbury, ON
Michael MacGillivray- Dalkeith, ON
Samme Putzel- Vankleek Hill, ON

Advisors to the Board

Mora Johnson – Ottawa, ON
Ian Attridge – Peterborough, ON
Tristy Mallette- Edmonton, Alta

Secretary to the Board

Maggie Winchester – Vankleek Hill, ON

BACKGROUND In 2017 initial discussions began in the community concerning the establishment of a Local Land Trust. During 2018 and 2019 information meetings took place with the objective of creating a land trust to preserve and protect local natural environmental resources, including forests and wetlands, sustainable farms and natural heritage features. In particular, one owner of a 200 acres farm in Vankleek Hill, Ontario expressed a desire to preserve and protect in perpetuity the heritage farm established in 1834, including forests and wetlands, known as McAlpine Farm situated in Vankleek Hill, County of Prescott and Russell. In 2018 an article published as a blog entry by Mora Johnson Barrister & Solicitor outlined the initial plan for the establishment of a Forest in Perpetuity.¹ To that end, a conservation easement to protect the property was drafted and the search for an appropriate recipient of the easement began. In 2020 discussions proceeded with the goal of establishing a local land trust. In 2022 a community advisory meeting was held online to inform the community of intentions to establish a local land trust. Interested stakeholders

attended via Zoom and potential board members were invited to stand for nomination to the first Board of Directors of a local land trust. A Board of nine directors was confirmed and organized. Two board members of the newly named Eastern Ontario Land Trust attended a national conference of the 2022 Canadian Land Trust Summit in Ottawa, Ontario. Ian Attridge was engaged as legal counsel. The Eastern Ontario Land Trust registered as an Emerging Associate of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. November 15, 2022 the first official meeting of the Board of Directors took place online for the incorporated Land Trust under the name of Eastern Ontario Land Trust/Fiducie Foncière de l'Est de l'Ontario. Nine (9) members of the board and two legal advisors and a meeting assistant were in attendance. A copy of the Bylaws for the new incorporation were adopted.² A motion to apply for charitable status was approved.

CHARITABLE STATUS

In July 2024, the Eastern Ontario Land Trust Inc. Fiducie Foncière de l'Est Ontario obtained official charitable status with the Canadian Revenue Agency and is now listed as a charitable organization with the CRA.

WEBSITE: www.eolt.ca

EMAIL: EOLandTrust@gmail.com

mc AlpineForeverForest@gmail.com

SOCIAL MEDIA: Facebook Page managed by Eastern Ontario Land Trust

DOCUMENTS and RECORDS: Stored on Google Drive

AUDIO VISUAL PRESENTATION PACKAGE: Power Point presentation on EOLT available on Google Drive



ECOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

2 Field Trips to McAlpine Forever Forests



Two Field Trips into the forests and wetlands were conducted in May and July, 2024

in coordination with the Ottawa Field Naturalists.

The group identified a multitude of species of plants, reptiles and birds, including several species at risk.

An Ecological Sensitivity Report of McAlpine Forest and wetlands was prepared by Elise Deschenes in order to complete requirements for the Ecological Gifts program. Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust has been very helpful and supportive in this process.



According to the report:

“The deciduous woodlands are dominated by sugar maple and american beech, with associates including white, green and black ash, elm, eastern hemlock, bitternut hickory, eastern hop hornbeam, black cherry, large toothed aspen and quaking aspen. The wetland areas were dominated by speckled alder, canadian bluejoint, cat tails, avens, bur-reed, sensitive ferns, and various asters. The property’s wetlands provide suitable habitat for numerous species of reptiles and amphibians. In fact, multiple species of frogs, turtles and salamanders have been observed on the property.

This property is ecologically significant for its value as habitat connectivity, ecosystem services, and biodiversity values, including presence of several species at risk.”

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 – April 24, 2024 – Meeting of Board to prepare Mission Statement and Action Plans

Mission Statement

- Identify, secure, hold and care for lands of ecological, cultural, or landscape interest and value.
- Conserve and restore agricultural and forest landscapes and to develop trails within a framework of careful and sustainable stewardship.
- Research, learn and educate about the natural environment, environment, cultural heritage, and landscape elements using various knowledge systems
- Cooperate with other individuals, organizations, communities, and government entities having similar aims and to encourage them in their activities.

Defined Goals to include Community Engagement; Solicit Land; Conservation; Organizational Development.

Defined Objectives to include Charitable Status; Developing resources; Creating questionnaires for potential donors; Conducting stewardship activities; Fundraising activities; Grant writing for special projects

Developed Action Plan for 2024

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Project Management approach and detailed timeline is used to track the processes of Property Acquisition, Conservation Easements and EOLT Activities. Cathy Ann Barr, Elise Deschenes and Samme Putzel collaborated to develop this project management plan. The plan will be recorded with EOLT documents stored on the Google Drive accessible through EOLandTrust@gmail.ca

ECOLOGICAL GIFTS PROGRAM

In October, 2024, two members of the EOLT Board attended a conference presented by a representative of the Ecological Gifts Program offered by the Canada Revenue Agency.

EOLT will use the Forms and Procedures involved in the process in order to help donors access the CRA Ecological Gifts Program. EOLT will also have access to consult with the representative of the Eco Gifts Program for assistance in filling out forms and completing the necessary steps to comply with the program.



FINANCES

A bank account with TD Bank is in place as an operating account for funds to be used to cover expenses incurred by the EOLT.

Three EOLT Board signatories will sign for funds to be disbursed. Pierre Luc Byham, Samme Putzel and Sandra Illing are the authorized Board Members. Two signatories must sign for funds to be released.

ONTARIO FARMLAND TRUST

McAlpine Conservation Easement – Through partnership with the EOLT, Ontario Farmland Trust has agreed to hold the conservation easement for the McAlpine Farm property including forests, wetlands, and agricultural fields.

Funding for initiating the Conservation Easement was provided thanks to a generous donation of \$25,000.00 in the name of William Laing in Memory of Johanna Klaase.

Future Partnerships with EOLT – In view of mutual and complimentary goals, the two land trusts will have opportunity to continue partnership agreements into the future.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Local Ecological Farmers Group - This new community gathering has evolved to promote, enhance and enable sustainable farming methods and lifestyle through regenerative farming practices and preserving the environmental resources in natural habitat. They have aligned themselves to support the Eastern Ontario Land Trust. Their goals include resource sharing, marketing of agricultural products, and working towards a commons-oriented land stewardship. In October a very successful gathering took place at Creating Centre where over forty guests shared food and ideas. Future such efforts will combine building community awareness of the Farmers group in partnership with the Eastern Ontario Land Trust. Maggie Winchester is the liaison between these two groups.

Vankleek Hill Nature Society - Two members of the EOLT Board were invited to attend a meeting of the Vankleek Hill Nature Society. To that end, Cathy Ann Barr developed a Power Point presentation that can be used for future presentations and is available for download to anyone interested in knowing more about the EOLT.

Trees of Remembrance - Over 100 trees of several varieties were planted in May in the fields designated to be reclaimed for extending the deciduous forest areas of the McAlpine Forever Forest. The trees are planted by volunteers and Hillcrest Funeral Home each spring.

INDIGENOUS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Eastern Ontario Land Trust recognizes the Algonquins whose presence here reaches back to time immemorial as the customary keepers and defenders of the Ottawa River Watershed and its tributaries. We honour their long history of welcoming many Nations to this beautiful territory and uphold and uplift the voice and values of our Host Nation. The EOLT acknowledges the historical oppression of lands, cultures and the original Peoples in what we now know as Canada and fervently believes land trusts contribute to the healing and decolonizing journey we all share together.