

INSIDE: TWO NEW BRUCE TRAIL FRIENDSHIP TRAILS TO OPEN

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Mountain People

Blue Mountains Bruce Trail Club
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CONSERVANCY

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Realizing the Dream

ESCARPMENT LEGACY CAMPAIGN HONORARY PATRONS: ROBERT BATEMAN, SHEILA COPPS & JIM CUDDY

When Sue and John Lillie first saw what was to become their property – their private natural haven on Dyer’s Bay – they recognized it was national park quality land.

That thought stuck with them over the years and the result is an amazing cross-border land donation to the Bruce Trail Conservancy (see page 16).

Sue and John were students living in Ann Arbor, Michigan, when they found out about the new Bruce Trail being built along the Niagara Escarpment “by accident”. They were on holiday in December 1965 when their van got stuck in the mud near Collingwood,



Jan Graves

Ontario. Lights were on at the house nearby, so they knocked on the door and were taken in by an enthusiastic Bruce Trail member. During the evening, they were blown away by the description of this exciting new Trail and walked a section of it.

Later on, they took their two daughters for a backpacking adventure on the Bruce Trail at Dunks Bay and it was enjoyed by all. By this time, they wanted to purchase some wilderness land, but prices in Michigan were high. In 1972, they decided to look at land on the Bruce Peninsula. When they explained they wanted land that was rocky and private, the real estate agent showed them what he considered “100 acres of useless bush” near Dyer’s Bay. They instantly fell in love with it.

The 94 acre (38 hectares) property had everything: a section of lake, marshy bits, forest, and 200 m of cliffs and rocky Georgian Bay shoreline. John hauled in wood for a tent platform, which Sue said was the only flat thing around. He and his daughter did compass lines to confirm their property lines, and found it was built on a neighbour’s land. They moved it and were later able to confirm boundaries with GPS. In 1980, they built a small cabin with a wood stove, and

became members of the BTC in 1994. Their retirement in 1998 was the beginning of a “wonderful spell in their lives” according to Sue.

Sue built her own private trails to scenic spots, which made things easier for Chris Walker and his trail team when they inadvertently put the Bruce Trail across the Lillies’ property – on top of hers! John and Sue, who became great friends with Chris, fondly call this the Chris Walker Trespass. In 2001, Sue came across a couple – the Roberts – cutting through a bush on her property. After a nice chat, the Roberts arranged for Sue and John to meet Chris Walker and Ross McLean which resulted in a handshake agreement to officially put the Bruce Trail on their land.

It was the beginning of a beautiful relationship with the members of the Peninsula Bruce Trail Club and the Lillies’ strong participation in work done along the Peninsula section. In their experience, hikers are fastidious about taking garbage away and very grateful to be able to pass over private land. Sue even got told once to “stay on the trail” by a hiker who didn’t know she was the landowner.

After a recent move to Colorado, the Lillies found they weren’t able to visit their beloved property very often. They decided now was the time to donate it to the Bruce Trail Conservancy as a legacy for all to enjoy. Their daughters understood their wishes and have backed them all the way. So has the *American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts*, an organization that helps US citizens donate land to Canadian land trusts and receive a US tax receipt during the process.

John and Sue thank Antoin Diamond, the BTC Director of Land Securement, as well as Chris and Ross for their support and help in making this happen. John



Sue and John Lillie

says: “We are lucky to have had the property and were glad to share it with others as it made us feel good.” They emphasize that they always felt their role was as “stewards of the land, not owners”. The Lillie Property will be an outstanding addition to the Bruce Trail Corridor and a lasting testament to their love of the land.

Thank You to All Our Donors

The Bruce Trail Conservancy greatly appreciates each and every gift we receive. We know you have choices about who you are able to support. We sincerely value your patronage and would like to acknowledge the following recent donations:

Anonymous	\$ 205,000.00
Mountain Equipment Co-op	\$ 50,000.00
S.C. Johnson & Son Ltd.	\$ 25,000.00
Patrick McNally	\$ 25,000.00
Estate of Edward Murray Cleland	\$ 13,932.54
Estate of Lorraine Douglas	\$ 12,052.42
Tony Paine	\$ 10,062.91
TAKLA Foundation	\$ 10,000.00
Korax Inc.	\$ 10,000.00
Newalta Corporation	\$ 10,000.00
Beaver Valley BTC	\$ 8,334.00
Volkmar Leistner & Family	\$ 5,500.00
Robert & Anita Ewen	\$ 5,000.00
Griggs Family Foundation	\$ 5,000.00
John Thode	\$ 5,000.00

Land Acquisition

The Bruce Trail Conservancy's First Cross-Border Donation Secured

Americans own substantial land in some of Canada's most significant natural areas. Many are keen to have their treasured family lands protected in Canada forever. Until recently, however, Americans hoping to donate properties they own in Canada for conservation were impeded by tax and other barriers created by both US and Canadian laws.

For instance, a US citizen could make a land donation to a Canadian land trust and receive a capital gains exemption but lose the US tax deduction; or the landowner could donate to a US land trust and receive the tax deduction but they would have to pay the applicable capital gains. Either way the donor lost.

The *Nova Scotia Nature Trust* took this to heart and founded the *American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts* (AF). AF is a US charity that has set up tax structures on both sides of the border to make it possible for Americans to conserve the land they own in Canada, a practice now known as cross-border conservation. Thanks to AF and a special US family, the BTC has secured its first cross-border donation, the Lillie Property.

Lillie Family Property – Peninsula DONATION

The BTC is eternally grateful to John and Sue Lillie who donated their slice of paradise on the Bruce Peninsula for conservation. This property is located about 1.5 km south of Dyer's Bay and is bisected by Britain Lake Road. It consists of 94 acres and contains 1,144 m of Main Trail and 220 m of Side Trail. This is another prized piece of the jigsaw puzzle, filling the once unsecured space adjacent to two BTC-managed properties: Dyer's Bay property to the northeast and Minhinnick to the south. To the northwest lies a Ministry of Natural Resources managed nature reserve.

The Lillie Family Property is a showcase of ecological communities including deciduous forest (Fresh Sugar Maple-White Ash), cliff (Bulblet Fern – Herb Robert Open Calcareous Cliff), talus (White Cedar Calcareous Treed Talus Type), and cattail marsh. Spectacular views over Georgian Bay and access to the stony shoreline can both be had from the ridge.

This particular land gift is unique in that it is a cross-border donation. The Lillies are US citizens and in order to give them the same tax advantage that Canadians enjoy when donating land, the BTC partnered with AF.

AF's role is now to assign the property to an appropriate recognized conservation group in Canada. The BTC has been named by John and Sue as their preferred organization. The dedication to preserving Canadian land shown by the people who run AF is inspirational. The BTC extends gratitude to them for their vision, hard work and patience as we navigated through this new cross-border conservation process.

John and Sue Lillie and their family have been ardent supporters of the Peninsula Club and the BTC almost since the day they purchased this land in 1972. They have shared their cherished property with Bruce Trail hikers for more than 30 years and now turn the property over to the BTC for continued care. The BTC and Bruce Trail Clubs thank the Lillies from the bottom of their hearts for this extraordinary donation. It will continue to be enjoyed, loved and cared for for generations to come. *(Read more about the Lillies' story on page 13)*



The Lillie Property at Dyer's Bay

Photo: Beth Kimmeling