



**American Friends of  
Canadian Conservation**

# Among Friends

THE NEWSLETTER OF CROSS-BORDER CONSERVATION

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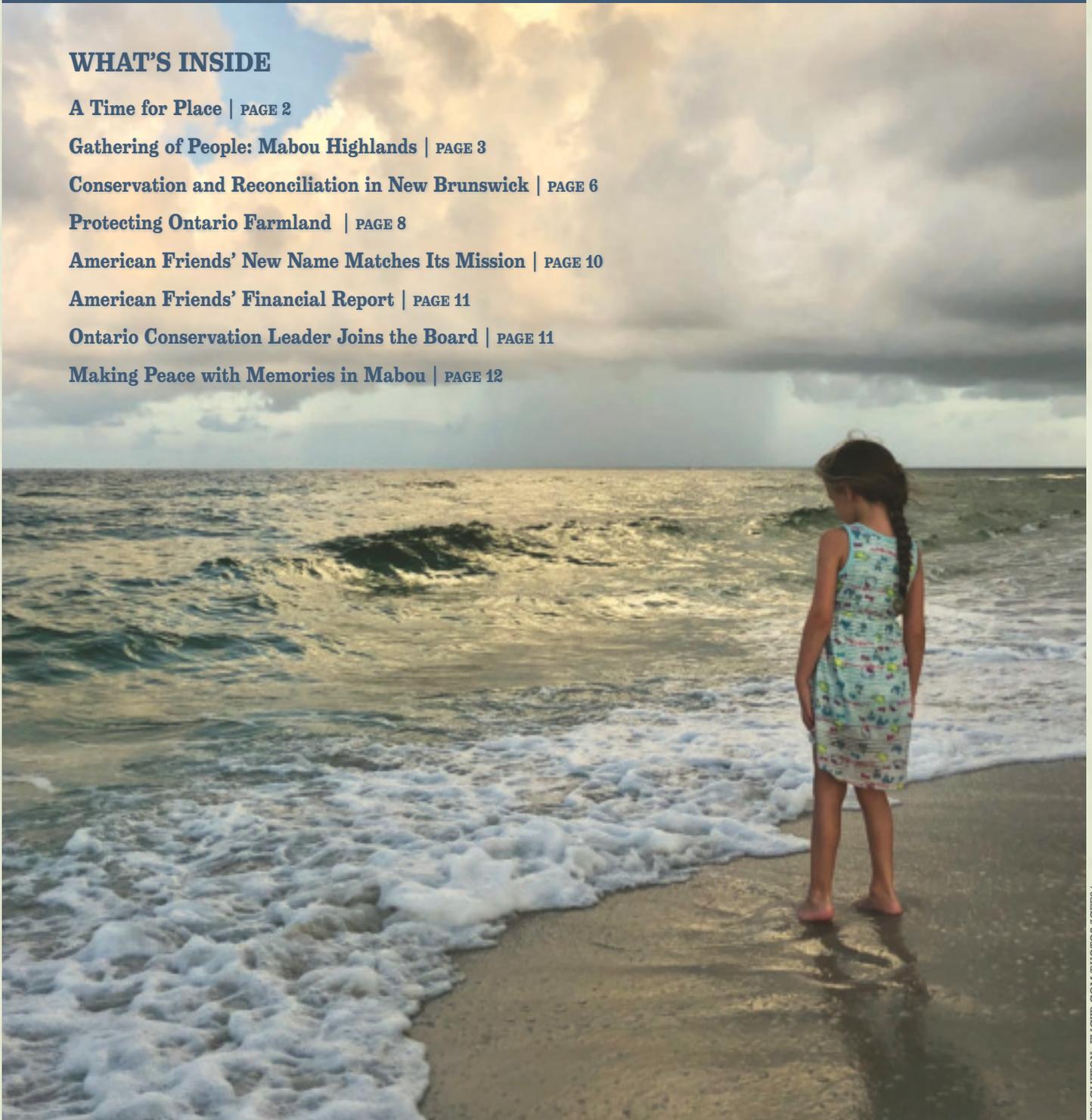
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## American Friends of Canadian Conservation

American Friends of Canadian Conservation (American Friends) is a US charity that partners with Canadian conservation organizations to preserve Canada's natural areas, scenic landscapes, sensitive watersheds, recreation resources, important habitat for fish, birds and wildlife, and the places that hold generations of family memories.

[conservecanada.org](http://conservecanada.org)

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## A Time for Place

AFTER THE TRAUMA of being an ambulance driver in World War I, Henry Beston sought solace and healing on the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. For two years he imbibed the peaceful medicine of Atlantic whitecaps, deserted dunes and birdsong in Nauset Marsh. In his book, *The Outermost House*, he wrote "Nature is part of our humanity, and without some awareness of that divine mystery, man ceases to be man."

Going to Nauset Beach when I was young, I was entranced by Beston's tiny, weathered house, perched on the eastern edge of the continent, far from any town. As an adolescent, I read *The Outermost House* and daydreamed about immersing



THE OUTERMOST HOUSE BEFORE A 1978 STORM SWEEP IT AWAY

DON WILDING, DWCAPECOD.COM

myself in the solitude and sounds of Beston's cabin. Nature seemed like the remedy for my teenaged spiritual aches and pains.

Scientists, artists and spiritual pilgrims have all lauded nature's value for creativity, mental and emotional health. Perhaps that explains the bonds between people and place. Ultimately, those bonds are what make American Friends' conservation successes possible. We need nature.

This issue of *Among Friends* focuses on the pull and power of place.

We share an Indigenous perspective on the interconnectedness of land and people, and describe the New Brunswick initiative to restore those connections through conservation which also benefits a myriad of species and the local economy.

Another story acknowledges Americans and Canadians who came together to conserve the nature, history, and trails of a beloved section of Nova Scotia's coast that is now the 5600-acre Mabou Highlands protected area. On the back cover you will find a second perspective on Mabou's pull.

Recognizing that the bond to place can also manifest itself through stewardship of working lands, we are pleased to report on cross-border efforts to retain Ontario's farms.

Henry Beston wrote, "Hold your hands out over the earth as over a flame. To all who love her, who open to her the doors of their veins, she gives of her strength, sustaining them with her own measureless tremor of dark life. Touch the earth, love the earth, honour the earth, her plains, her valleys, her hills, and her seas; rest your spirit in her solitary places. For the gifts of life are the earth's and they are given to all, and they are the songs of birds at daybreak, Orion and the Bear, and dawn seen over ocean from the beach."

We hope you find some measure of comfort reading these stories in this dystopian time, when so many of us are cut off from the places and traditions that sustain us. Even when we cannot physically travel, take a mental trip with us. And let's work together to protect those Canadian plains, valleys, hills and seas.

SANDRA TASSEL, PROGRAM COORDINATOR

# Gathering of People | Mabou Highlands



NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST

LOOKING OUT FROM THE MABOU HIGHLANDS, CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA OVER THE NORTHUMBERLAND STRAIT

FIDDLES AND BAGPIPES CALL PEOPLE from around the world to the town of Mabou, on Cape Breton Island, at the northern end of Nova Scotia. They are the sounds of the Ceilidh tradition, celebrating the Celtic culture brought by 19th-century immigrants. The Gaelic word translates to “Gathering of People.”

In 2019, a Gathering of People celebrated the protection of 2000 acres on the wild coast of the Mabou Highlands and a new tradition of conservation, led by 20th-century settlers from the United States, and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust.

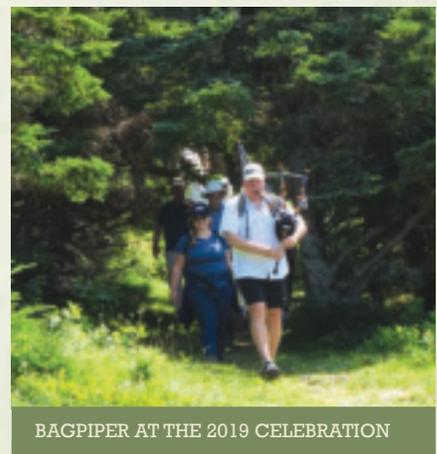
In the 1940s Americans began coming to the area, drawn by its natural, cultural, and historic character. Carmelita Hinton, the founder of the Putney School in Vermont, extolled the beauty of the bluffs overlooking Northumberland Strait.

David Rumsey first visited Mabou in the summer of 1964, to help his college roommate, Jonathan Hall, build a cabin. Jonathan’s connection to Cape Breton was through Jim St. Clair, a Bostonian whose mother grew up on a farm nearby. They met when Jim was teaching at Jonathan’s high school in Connecticut. That trip produced a solid building and a passion for place that has been the background music of David’s life ever since.

Jim St. Clair threw open the door to his Cape Breton geographic home and welcomed David to explore it with him. “Jim taught me about the area by showing me the old census data and mapping cellar holes together. That gave me a real sense of the history of the place. It is haunting. At one time twelve families lived out there. The McKinnons, McArthurs, MacDonalds.”

The Scottish settlers had moved inland by the time the Americans found the Mabou area. Over time, the Treats, Walworths, Learnards,

and Kinzers along with David and Jonathan, and Carmelita’s children formed a new seasonal community. Jean Rosner, one of Carmelita’s daughters, inherited her mother’s passion for the Highlands. She recruited David, by then a



BAGPIPER AT THE 2019 CELEBRATION

NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST

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# Gathering of People CONTINUED

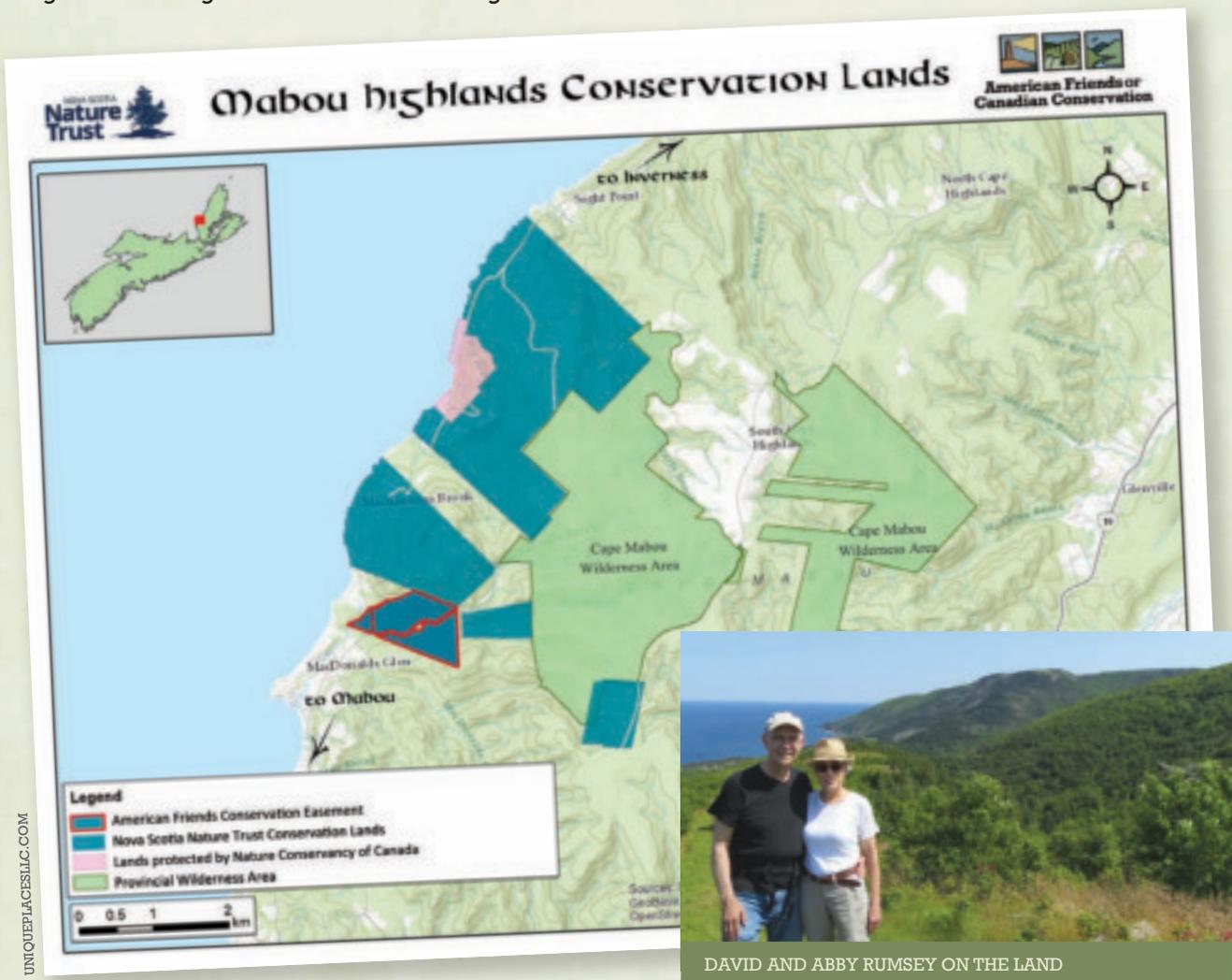
successful California real estate developer, to help protect them.

“Jean was a strong, forward-looking, dedicated conservationist” says David. “She educated me about a vision for the Mabou area. She really got me thinking long-term.”

But they were a Ceilidh of Americans, passionate about preserving a rural part of Canada that needed economic opportunities. With the vision to lure more people to this enchanting landscape, another American, Ian Sherman, who had moved to Cape Breton in the 1970s, designed a trail system, based on old cart roads. Today, visitors seeking solitude, ocean views and the sound of the wind can hike 25 kilometers of paths, known as the Cape Mabou Highlands Hiking Trails which roam through the

collapsing stone foundations of abandoned homesteads in the rugged headlands, dotted with signposts featuring Gaelic names.

The Nova Scotia Nature Trust made it possible for hikers to revel in the wildness of the area - permanently. The organization was still young in 1999 when Bonnie Sutherland, the Executive Director, met with David and Jean. He remembers it was a rainy day in the Highlands, a “great conversation” and the “beginning of a long project.” During the decades that followed, the Treats and Walworths made pioneering conservation easement gifts to the Nature Trust, Jean passed away, and her vision of protecting the Mabou Highlands advanced in “fits and starts.”





NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST

NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST STAFF REJOICE AND GIVE THANKS TO THE RUMSEYS

American Friends of Canadian Conservation also was launched and matured alongside the effort to protect Mabou Highlands. Shortly after American Friends was recognized by the Canadian government as a prescribed donee, Bob and LeeAnne Kinzer donated a conservation easement to permanently protect their 215 acres, in a transaction facilitated by the Nature Trust.

But some of the largest parcels remained unprotected. About two years ago, David decided to work in service of the big vision. He approached the Nature Trust with a proposal. "I said I would put up half the money and I volunteered to put the deals together. Because I had 'skin in the game' I was able to work with the American landowners who controlled 1000 acres that were absolutely key." David and his wife Abby pledged to make a \$600,000 tax-deductible donation to American Friends to support the Mabou Highlands Initiative. Grants from the Canadian federal government and a provincial granting organization matched the Rumseys' underwriting. Suddenly, the people, the resources and the deals were all in harmony.

Last summer, when Canadians and Americans gathered to sing the praises of the now-protected Highlands, Bonnie Sutherland said, "We are celebrating the protection of an incredible natural legacy for future generations, realizing the long-

held vision of protecting the spectacular Mabou Highlands, in perpetuity. This achievement was possible thanks to the determination and passion of landowners and community leaders like David and Jean, and the unique cross-border collaboration of American Friends and the Nature Trust." She added that in addition to funding from government, foundation partners, and many individuals and families, success also relied on supportive community members, and the volunteers who ensure the coastal wilderness and trails are lovingly cared for.

Since the celebration, the Province of Nova Scotia set aside 3600 acres of adjacent provincially owned land as the Cape Mabou Wilderness Area, adjoining the properties protected by the Nature Trust and the many friends of the region. The cheering of celebration is music to David's ears, and hopefully reaches Jean and Carmelita.



NOVA SCOTIA NATURE TRUST

IN MABOU'S PROTECTED FORESTS

# Protecting Place with Its People

DARKNESS IS INCREASINGLY RARE in North America but remains abundant in the St. Croix River watershed of Maine and New Brunswick. Nighttime satellite images show it as an inky corridor connected to a broad swath of protected landscapes in northern New England.

This obsidian expanse of intact forest, wetlands, rivers and streams, located within an eight-hour drive of 11 million people in Canada and the US, is a notable transborder conservation and Indigenous reconciliation opportunity.

The St. Croix River is the easternmost boundary between the US and Canada, but the plants, animals, air, water, and people demonstrate it is a continuous and relatively pristine region. The native people with the longest connection to this place are leading an effort to protect it for the future, with support from the Nature Trust of New Brunswick, the province of New Brunswick, American Friends of Canadian Conservation and funders from both countries.

The Wabanaki (People of the Dawn) thrived here for thousands of years, until Europeans arrived with their diseases, weaponry and concepts of wealth and land ownership. The Wabanaki confederacy's territories extended as far north as Newfoundland and south to what is now Massachusetts.

The Peskotomuhkati of New Brunswick are one of the Wabanaki peoples. They describe their former existence as follows: *The Peskotomuhkati way of life was a seasonal, cyclical round, in which the people left light footprints on the land. They would be in specific places at specific times of the year: upstream on the lakes in mid-December when the tommycod were spawning; inland after that to hunt caribou and tap maple; down to the Bay in the spring to dig clams and fish behind the weirs; out to the islands to take*

*seal and porpoise; upstream to the salmon falls in the springtime, fishing and gathering as they went, adjusting the cycle in response to various influences.*

The St. Croix was designated as the dividing line between the US and Canada in the 1783 Treaty of Paris. The

boundary cleaved an aboriginal nation in two, isolating the Passamaquoddy in Maine and the Peskotomuhkati in New Brunswick Canada. To this

day, families have members in reserves and towns on both sides of the river, which they refer to as the Skutik.

Donald Soctomah is the tribal historic preservation officer for the Passamaquoddy and Peskotomuhkati. After losing their land and being essentially confined to "reserves", the people could not access the sites central to their native religion and seasonal life cycle. "We are one with the earth. We have to be in a specific place," said Donald. The places on the New Brunswick side of the St. Croix River that provided physical and spiritual sustenance through the seasons are the focus of a multi-year bi-national conservation collaboration led by the Peskotomuhkati. The Canadian government provided close to \$900K USD to support the effort.

Losing access to traditional sites has led to loss of cultural knowledge, according to Donald. Generations of relationship with the land gave the Passamaquoddy and Peskotomuhkati knowledge of the "unique micro-climates and landforms" where medicinal plants grow, hunting is best and where their culture can be renewed. Donald says that access to traditional sites in New Brunswick is important to his people from both sides of the river.

Creating the Skutik Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) will conserve those sites and allow the Peskotomuhkati to co-manage them. IPCAs are a new category of permanently protected lands established in the Convention on Biological



BRUCE RICHARDSON



J.P. MAYES



FUJIKR.COM

NEW BRUNSWICK ON ONE SIDE, MAINE ON THE OTHER — SPEDNIC LAKE AND THE WHOLE ST. CROIX WATERSHED IS SHARED BY OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

Diversity as a legal mechanism to honor aboriginal peoples' land rights and traditional knowledge.

Donald dreams of the Skutik IPCA benefitting past, present and future generations. Access to sources of food and medicine, ceremonial sites, and materials to support a revival of crafts and language can have a potent effect on current members and their families. He envisions it as a “place we can call our own. Where we can bury our dead, repatriated from museums.”

The IPCA is significant for conservation because it connects to two large provincial natural areas and mirrors the extensive protected acreage on the Maine side of the river. The core of the IPCA will be the historic Chiputneticook Lodge, and surrounding 2300 acres, that the Peskotomuhkati recently acquired from an Ohio family.

The St. Croix's floodplains and uplands have long been recognized as critically important for preserving regional biodiversity. Recently, The Nature Conservancy (US) ranked it as an important natural corridor for climate adaptation within its Resilient and Connected Network, for Eastern North America.

The IPCA will incorporate nearly 6200 acres owned by the Province, which would be given protected status, plus key private lands that connect the tracts. The Nature Trust and American Friends will

acquire those properties, ideally through donations. In combination, approximately 6700 acres will be conserved, connecting 77,000 acres of existing protected lands in the watershed.

We have identified 25 high-priority properties within the IPCA boundaries that are owned by US taxpayers, with a total estimated market value of approximately \$1.8 M USD. American Friends will work with willing landowners from the US, and is raising funding from US sources to underwrite the transactions. The target properties all feature sites that can make Donald's dreams a reality, while helping keep the St. Croix/Skutik watershed as the black jewel of the northeast Atlantic coast.



GATHERING SPRUCE ROOT FOR BUILDING TRADITIONAL CANOES

DONALD SOCTOMAH

# The Ontario Farmland Trust (OFT) protects farmland with help from Friends in the U.S.

OFT RECENTLY COMPLETED ITS 16TH CONSERVATION EASEMENT, with a grant from American Friends to defray the substantial costs of protecting the 210-acre organic, multigenerational family farm in Prince Edward County, Ontario. A charitable gift from the Woodcock Foundation in the US made the grant possible.

The OFT is a Canadian registered charity, established in 2005. Krista Long, OFT's Program Manager said, "We're looking at the full farm ecosystem. Our goal is to protect both the agricultural land and the habitat. We want to build strong provincial protection for farmland, especially close to areas in the greenbelt," referring to the area covered by Ontario's 2017 Greenbelt Plan.

The farmer who donated the easement explained, "We are concerned about the rapidly expanding urbanization that is eating up much of Ontario's farmland. Our farm has produced food for six generations, as well as provided habitat for many species of birds and animals. We want it to remain

this way for future generations, and the Ontario Farmland Trust helped us ensure that will happen."

The newly conserved farm has a forested area and natural features important for species at risk. The owners grow various grains, sell to a local market, and their certified bird-friendly haying practices protect grassland species such as Bobolink and Meadowlark.

Completing an easement transaction involves significant costs. Kathryn Enders, the Executive Director of the OFT says the organization must raise as much as \$50,000 CAD for appraisals, surveys, ecological assessments, and long-term annual monitoring.

"I met Sandy Tassel of American Friends at an Ontario Land Trust Alliance meeting. So, when the Woodcock Foundation wanted to help OFT complete



BOBOLINKS DEPEND ON FARMLAND

ROB PORTER



KLAUS LANG

OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS, ONTARIO HAS LOST 2 MILLION ACRES OF FARMLAND

this easement, I contacted Sandy. The Foundation can only contribute to US charities, like American Friends. Sandy advised OFT to become a qualified grantee, which we did. It was easy, quick, and straightforward. Now that I've gone through it, I'm not surprised that other land trusts have done the same thing," Kathryn said.

As soon as OFT was approved by American Friends, The Woodcock Foundation made a gift to American Friends, with a request that the money be used to support protection of this organic farm.

Jeremy Guth, a trustee with the foundation, is a dual citizen, living in Toronto with a summer place in Prince Edward County; which has become a popular tourist destination with enormous development pressure. He likes the thinking on this small-scale family farm, and values what this farm does on a cultural, economic, and local food system level.

Jeremy and his fellow trustees also see this easement as part of a larger conservation picture that encompasses the US and Canada.

"As a foundation we have funded trans-border projects, such as the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative in the west and Two Countries One Forest/Staying Connected Initiative along the Appalachian corridor. The trustees believe collaborations between public and private conservation entities from Canada and the United States are essential for maintaining connectivity across large bi-national landscapes. And we believe in keeping people in the landscape, rather than creating a park or a wilderness area with little human/nature interaction. Well-managed agricultural land, like this Ontario family farm with a conservation easement in place, allows



LEO MCDONALD

for farming, wildlife habitat and important natural corridors."

According to Jeremy, American Friends' process was seamless and professional. He suggested there may be opportunities down the road to contribute to American Friends again so the Woodcock Foundation can help other Canadian land trusts complete easements on priority properties.

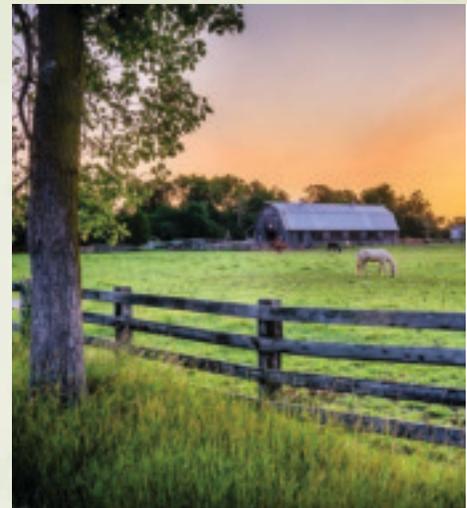
Kathryn of the Ontario Farmland Trust said, "There are more farmers who want to work with us than we can raise the money for. People find out about OFT and conservation easements by word of mouth, at farmer's markets, from outreach to family friends and neighbours, and the easement celebration event that takes place on newly protected farm."

According to the 2016 Census of Agriculture, 175 acres of farmland are lost every day in Ontario. Two million acres have been converted to other uses over the past 30 years. Many farmers are worried about what the future holds, so they feel that registering an easement is a way to leave a legacy for the future.

As the recent pandemic has reminded us, we need farmland to grow our own food. Easements that retain prime agricultural lands are insurance for the future and a benefit for farmers. Thanks to the Ontario Farmland Trust, the foundations that support its work, and American Friends of Canadian Conservation, farmland and wildlife can be protected.

#### SHEILA HARRINGTON

Sheila is a Director of the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy and is the former Executive Director, Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia.



FARMLAND IS PART OF ONTARIO'S CHARACTER

NEIL CORNWALL

## American Friends' New Name Matches Its Mission



[HTTPS://TOBYSNELGROVEPHOTOGRAPHY.SMUGMUG.COM/](https://tobysnelgrovephotography.smugmug.com/)

ST. JOHN POINT, BRITISH COLUMBIA WAS AMERICAN FRIENDS' FIRST PROJECT WITH A GOVERNMENT AGENCY. THE PROPERTY IS NOW A PUBLICLY-ACCESSIBLE NATURAL AREA OWNED BY THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT.

CANADIAN AND AMERICAN CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS created the US charity named American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts in 2006 to partner with land trusts to protect important natural areas owned by US taxpayers. And it worked! Since completing our first land donation in 2011, American Friends and its partners in five provinces have permanently conserved approximately 3,000 acres comprising 26 high-priority properties. These land and easement gifts from over 40 individual US taxpayers have an appraised value of close to \$17M USD. In addition, in just the past seven years, Friends has made grants totaling over \$4M USD to its Canadian partner organizations.

Over the years, Canadian government agencies, educational institutions, and a variety of conservation advocacy organizations have also advanced their missions through partnerships with American Friends. To welcome this expanded universe of collaborations, last year we changed our name to American Friends of Canadian Conservation to reflect the full spectrum of current and potential partnerships.

American Friends' completed land and conservation easement transactions have been

collaborations with Canadian land trusts of all sizes and levels of experience. We are pleased to have provided land trusts with mentoring, experience, and financial support that helped protect dozens more ecologically significant tracts. Educating all parties involved in cross-border conservation will continue to be a high priority for American Friends. We have seen that providing technical assistance to our partners and sharing our unique knowledge about bi-national tax incentives increases Canada's common wealth of conserved lands.

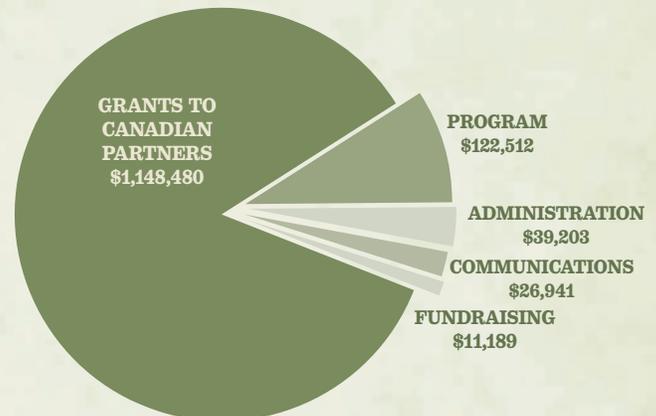
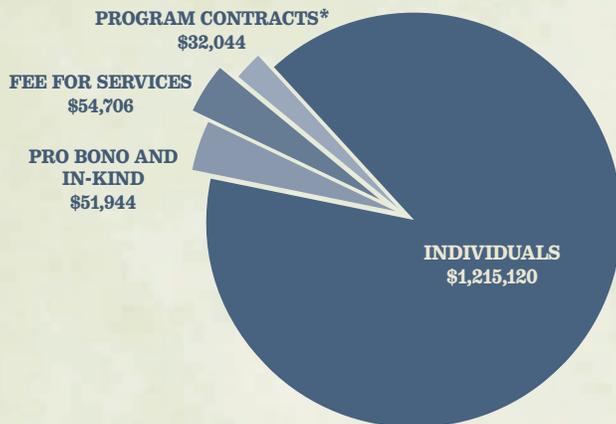
This wider array of partners means that American Friends can better achieve its dual objectives of protecting ecologically significant lands in Canada that are owned by US taxpayers and bringing additional financial support for Canadian conservation. We look forward to continuing to support our current partners and expanding American Friends' collaborations and relationships to achieve our mission of protecting Canada's natural heritage, together.

JOHN PEIRCE  
President of the Board  
Gabriola Island, British Columbia

# American Friends Financial Report – FISCAL YEAR 2019/20

**REVENUE \$1,353,814**

**EXPENSES \$1,348,325**



## REVENUE SUMMARY

Individuals	\$ 1,215,120
Pro bono and In-kind	51,944
Fee for Services	54,706
Program Contracts	32,044
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,353,814</b>

## EXPENSES SUMMARY

Grants to Canadian Partners	\$ 1,148,480
Program	122,512
Administration	39,203
Communications	26,941
Fundraising	11,189
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,348,325</b>

\*American Friends is especially grateful for the financial support of Ducks Unlimited Canada.

## Ontario Conservation Leader Joins the Board

ROBERT ORLAND, American Friends' newest board member, has been operating Orland Conservation, a successful Ontario consulting company, since 2003. Because his primary goal is to preserve as much land as possible with minimal barriers, he has helped numerous conservation organizations conserve priority lands.

Orland Conservation provides strategic and securement planning for land trusts and conservation authorities — local watershed management agencies, mandated to ensure the conservation, restoration and responsible management of Ontario's water, land and natural habitats. Robert explained, "In their Securement Plans, we identify how to work with landowners, describing resources and potential partners to help landowners in their jurisdiction. This includes the potential for utilizing US tax incentives and partnering with American Friends."

Robert also helps land trusts with overall strategic planning. He is surprised by how many people,

including board members of some organizations, still don't know the benefits of American Friends' services. In the strategic planning process, he identifies tools and resources to help conserve land. For some board members, an "ah ha" moment comes as they see solutions for certain landowners they may be working with. When landowners are Americans, the solution could be a partnership with American Friends.

Robert looks forward to bringing his knowledge of the geographical and political arena he works in, with his experience and skills—landowner outreach and land securement—to American Friends' work.





MABOU, NOVA SCOTIA, 1977, BY ROBERT FRANK

© ANDREA FRANK FOUNDATION

## Making Peace with Memories in Mabou

IN THE LATE 1960S renowned photographer Robert Frank and his second wife, well-known artist June Leaf, bought a run-down cottage in Mabou, Nova Scotia to find peace: from New York City; the fame and criticism associated with Frank's seminal book *The Americans*; and his unceasing work. In the documentary *Leaving Home, Coming Home — a portrait of Robert Frank*, he recalls thinking, "I sure don't want to die here. I have to get another place to go."

The sights, sounds and experiences of Mabou proved to be the perfect emotional salve for the couple. The moody ocean, curve of beach, pale headlands, sweeping meadow, restless sky, old fenceposts and

powerline became features of Frank's later works. In this austere but beautiful place, Frank faced the grief of losing both of his children. Daughter Andrea was killed in a plane crash in 1974. In the film about him, Frank explained "...this was the place to do something about her memory because she lived here with us. So it was natural to help me get over that tragedy." Mabou and photography also provided solace for both of them when Frank's son, Pablo, committed suicide.

In a 2014 interview Frank said "...it's a happy thing that happened to me to be able to be here." On September 9, 2019 he died at the local hospital in Inverness Nova Scotia.

## Give today in honor of your favorite Canadian landscape

**Please send your contribution to:**  
American Friends of Canadian Conservation  
336 36th Street #717  
Bellingham, WA 98225

Donate online using your credit card at  
[www.conservecanada.org](http://www.conservecanada.org)

**For more information or to donate stocks, bonds, other securities or real estate please contact:**

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