

# Turtle Guardians Annual Report 2025

A program of the Land Between  
2025 Highlights and 2026 Outlook



# Letter From The COO

## Dear friends, colleagues, and partners,

At Turtle Guardians, our work is grounded in one goal: meaningful, on-the-ground recovery for turtles and other wildlife facing preventable losses. Roads remain one of the most persistent pressures on turtle populations, and our response has been to pair practical mitigation with disciplined monitoring, so that every installation, every patrol, and every rescue strengthens the evidence base for what works.



2025 was a year of growth and transition. We moved into a new centre so we can be closer to kids and communities, increase visitorship, and make conservation more visible and accessible. At the same time, we continued to build out the nuts-and-bolts work that saves turtles: ecopassage planning and installation, roadside nest protection, incubation and release, and rapid-response triage through our hotline.

Turtle Guardians is part of The Land Between charity. While our work began in Ontario's Highlands, our support now reaches across Canada and increasingly into the United States,



as people seek practical guidance and proven solutions. We are proud that our barrel-based jump-out fencing prototype has been tested in the field for over five years and is now moving toward engineering certification, so it can be more easily adopted across jurisdictions. Finally, we remain committed to research that starts with what we see on the ground. That includes the egg-implosion observations that sparked new questions about egg strength and environmental drivers, and our long-running standardized road ecology monitoring that began in 2018 and continues to inform where mitigation is most urgently needed.

Thank you for standing with us. For broader organizational context, we invite you to also read The Land Between's annual report.

With gratitude,



Leora Berman  
Founder, Turtle Guardians  
COO, The Land Between

# 2025 At a Glance

- Opened and began operating from a new Turtle Guardians centre to strengthen community access, youth engagement, and visitor experience.
- Advanced four ecopassage projects in Ontario's Highlands, including two additional installations and planned completion of the remaining 'elbows' in Spring 2026.
- Expanded provincial ecopassage planning: completed desktop screening of 1,439 potential sites, field-assessed 119 sites, and confirmed that roughly 2.5% are both high priority and feasible in the near term.
- Delivered prevention-focused recruitment support through incubation and release, alongside nest protection in partnership with road departments and local volunteers.
- Operated a high-volume turtle help hotline and dispatch line across North America, while beginning modernization planning and development of a reporting app to launch in 2026.
- Developed education programming including new curriculum resources, outreach presentations, and youth camps.

## Rapid Response and Public Support

Our dispatch line provides real-time guidance for people encountering turtles on roads and around homes. In 2025, Turtle Guardians responded to approximately 2,000 calls and text messages across Canada and the United States within a span of six weeks during critical turtle nesting and migration seasons, helping

the public triage situations safely, providing guidance and support for questions, and connecting turtles to care when needed. In 2026, we will modernize this system and launch a TurtleTrackr-style reporting app to streamline intake, improve regional routing, and strengthen data capture. Our turtle hotline remains one of the largest in North America.

## Incubation, Release, and Nest Protection

Incubation and release is a targeted, prevention-focused tool to support recruitment where nests are at high risk. Turtle Guardians is among the largest incubator programs in Ontario, with reported hatching success typically in the 95% to 97% range. In 2025 we released approximately 9,000 hatchlings, alongside in situ nest protection and nest excavation and incubation when requested during road maintenance and construction timelines.





## Road Mitigation and Ecopassage Systems

Project Safe Passage focuses on durable, affordable, and maintainable road-threat mitigation for rural and municipal roads, where most feasible projects exist and where rapid deployment matters. Our approach is data-driven: patrol and monitoring results guide where investments will reduce the most mortality, and each installed site becomes a demonstration location for transfer to other jurisdictions.

### Ecopassage Mapping and Site Prioritization

Over several years, Turtle Guardians has built a province-wide screening approach to identify where ecopassages are most likely to be feasible and effective. By 2025, our desktop screening identified 1,439 potential sites. Field assessment has been completed at 119 sites, with results suggesting only a small fraction are both feasible and urgent for near-term action (about 2.5% high priority and feasible, and roughly 5% feasible overall). This reality underscores why disciplined prioritization and partnership with road departments is essential.



### Jump-out Fencing Innovation

Turtle Guardians has been trialing a barrel-based steel jump-out fencing prototype for over five years. The design is inexpensive, stable in roadside conditions, and straightforward to maintain in modular sections. In 2026, our priority is to complete third-party engineering review and testing to validate performance and safety, and to support broader adoption by municipalities and transportation agencies. This Turtle Link system is now one of the most practical, ready systems in North America, and suits most situations including highways as the design also fits curvatures.

### Community Science, Training, and Capacity Building

Community science plays a critical role in species at risk conservation, particularly for wide-ranging species and diffuse threats such as road mortality. Peer-reviewed research consistently demonstrates that community-based monitoring expands spatial and temporal coverage beyond what professional teams alone can achieve, improves early detection of

emerging threats, and strengthens the relevance of conservation actions at local scales. When supported by standardized protocols and training, community science datasets have been shown to match professional data in reliability while providing essential long-term continuity. Equally important, participation in hands-on conservation builds ecological literacy, stewardship ethics, and lasting behaviour change, which are recognized as key drivers of successful recovery outcomes. Turtle Guardians' community science model combines rigorous training, clear standards, and professional oversight, ensuring that volunteer contributions meaningfully advance research, mitigation, and long-term conservation capacity.

Community science is central to Turtle Guardians' work and is how research, mitigation, and stewardship intersect on the ground. Since 2018, we have trained and supported more than 800 volunteers across Ontario and beyond, equipping them with the skills needed to both contribute high-quality data and take immediate action to reduce turtle mortality. Volunteers are trained in standardized road-patrol protocols, species identification, safe handling, nest monitoring, and triage decision-making, ensuring that observations are consistent, defensible, and useful for long-term analysis.

This training allows volunteers not only to support science, but also to directly intervene where appropriate by assisting turtles



across roads, protecting nests, alerting road departments, and supporting excavation and incubation efforts under permits. By pairing rigorous protocols with hands-on action, Turtle Guardians builds local capacity to respond to threats in real time while strengthening a growing network of informed, skilled conservation practitioners embedded in their own communities.

## Volunteer Training and Community Capacity



Volunteers extend conservation reach and build a shared culture of responsibility for Species at Risk. In 2025, Turtle Guardians welcomed 86 new volunteers and continued to improve training modules so that data collection, nest response, and road-safety practices remain consistent and safe.

## Research and Monitoring

Research and monitoring are the backbone of effective mitigation. Since 2018, Turtle Guardians has maintained a standardized road ecology monitoring program led by trained staff and supported by volunteers. This program has generated the longest-running and most comprehensive turtle road-mortality dataset in North America, providing a rare opportunity to assess how roads, traffic patterns, and development influence turtle populations over time. These data allow us to move beyond documenting mortality to analyzing population-level impacts, identifying persistent hotspots, and informing where mitigation will have the greatest effect.

Field experience has also driven the development of applied research questions that are now central to our work. One such focus is the investigation of egg implosions and egg strength, including potential links to calcium availability, soil conditions, contaminants, and broader environmental stressors. These observations emerged directly from the excavation and incubation work by our COO, and they highlight how long-term field programs can reveal previously undocumented vulnerabilities in turtle reproduction. By translating these observations into structured research questions, Turtle Guardians contributes practical, conservation-relevant knowledge to recovery science.





An increasingly important area of research involves overwintering ecology, particularly for Common Snapping Turtles. In recent years, Turtle Guardians has received a growing number of reports of hatchlings overwintering in atypical or high-risk locations, including roadside substrates and disturbed soils. In some cases, landowner and municipal calls have required staff to excavate overwintering nests and release hatchlings in spring to prevent mortality. Overwintering is not a known strategy for snapping turtles, and apparent increase in these events raises questions about soils, hydrology and climate influences.

As part of ongoing research, Turtle Guardians is working to identify, document, and assess overwintering sites, with particular attention to the availability and quality of suitable overwintering habitat in Ontario's highlands. This includes examining the role of wetlands, hydrology, soil composition, and land-use change in overwinter survival, as well as identifying where wetland conservation or restoration may be essential for population persistence.

These efforts are also linked to broader questions about climate change, including how shifting temperatures and moisture regimes,

may affect hatchling survival as well as temperature-dependent sex determination.

By integrating incubation data, overwintering observations, and long-term monitoring, Turtle Guardians is well positioned to detect emerging trends that have significant implications for turtle recovery.

Ongoing research is a core priority for the organization, and expanding partnerships with academic institutions and scientists is essential to this work. Turtle Guardians is actively seeking collaborative models that support reciprocal benefits for students and academia as well as community groups, and therefore, can be applied to both a broader body of knowledge and immediate conservation actions. We see models such as Ulinks and TCCBE as promising and are exploring, with academic leaders, a standardized model and policies that are aligned with both academic norms and institutional needs.

Meanwhile, the program continues to build capacity through community science, training volunteers to support data collection, direct mitigation, and rapid response in the field. These research and monitoring efforts allow Turtle Guardians to address immediate threats while also contributing to the long-term body of knowledge needed to guide recovery planning, wetland conservation, and adaptive management in a rapidly changing landscape.



Research and monitoring are central to Turtle Guardians' conservation approach. They ensure that mitigation efforts are evidence-based, responsive to emerging threats, and grounded in real-world conditions observed on the ground. Monitoring is not an add-on to our work; it is the backbone of effective recovery and threat reduction.





## Education and Youth Engagement

Connecting children to nature is foundational to long-term conservation success. A growing body of research shows that early, meaningful experiences in nature are among the strongest predictors of pro-environmental attitudes, stewardship behaviours, and career pathways in conservation and science later in life. When children are given opportunities to observe,



ask questions, and participate in real-world problem-solving, learning shifts from passive absorption to curiosity-driven inquiry, building both confidence and competence.

Turtle Guardians' education programming is grounded in inquiry-based and place-based learning. Children learn by exploring real species, real habitats, and real conservation challenges in their own communities. Turtles serve as powerful ambassadors for learning, helping children understand life cycles, habitat needs, human impacts, and solutions. By working with local landscapes rather than abstract examples, children develop a sense of place, responsibility, and connection that cannot be replicated in classroom settings alone.

Place-based learning also strengthens ecological literacy by helping young people understand how land use, roads, water, and wildlife are interconnected in their region. This approach has been shown to improve knowledge retention, critical thinking, and emotional resilience, while fostering empathy for living systems. Through hands-on activities, outdoor classrooms, camps, and curriculum-linked programs, Turtle Guardians supports youth in developing observation skills, basic field methods, and collaborative problem-solving, all while nurturing a lifelong relationship with nature.

Investing in children's nature connection is therefore not only an educational priority, but a conservation strategy. By cultivating curiosity, care, and capacity at an early age, Turtle Guardians is helping to build the next generation of caretakers, scientists, and community leaders who will carry forward the responsibility of protecting turtles and the landscapes they depend on.



Turtle Guardians uses turtles as ambassadors for ecological literacy and nature connection. In 2025, we expanded school outreach and continued developing curriculum materials across grades and subject areas, while also running youth camps that connect students to field skills, stewardship, and practical conservation action. We are also developing a Turtle Guardians book to extend learning beyond in-person programs. Turtle camps are one of the most popular offerings in the communities in which we directly operate. The curriculums are modern and yet back to



## 2026 Priorities

basics, to connect kids to nature, enable place based and inquiry based learning using turtles. Subjects include math, science, language, arts, and even mental health.



In 2026, Turtle Guardians will focus on advancing proven, on-the-ground solutions while strengthening the research, partnerships, and community capacity needed to meet growing demand across Canada and the United States.

A core priority is the completion of engineering testing and validation of the jump-out ecopassage fencing prototype, followed by finalization of updated installation specifications. This step is essential to ensure the design meets professional standards, can be confidently adopted by municipalities and transportation agencies, and can be transferred widely as a durable, cost-effective mitigation solution.

We will complete the remaining ecopassage elbow connections from 2025 installations and move forward with the next set of priority sites in Haliburton County and Kawartha Lakes. These sites are selected based on long-term monitoring data and feasibility assessments,



ensuring that resources are directed where they will have the greatest conservation impact.

Ongoing research remains a central priority. Turtle Guardians will continue to analyze its multi-year road ecology dataset to assess trends in mortality, movement, and recruitment, and to refine best management practices for practitioners and partners. At the same time, we are actively seeking to expand research partnerships with academic institutions and independent scientists. Building tested, transparent models of mutual benefit across applied conservation and academic research is a key focus as we work to strengthen both scientific outcomes and ethical collaboration.

To address increasing demand for turtle assistance across North America, we will continue to expand incubation, nest protection, and rapid-response guidance, supporting recruitment and preventing avoidable losses during road maintenance, construction, and peak nesting periods. This work is paired with investments in new technologies, including modernization of the Turtle Guardians

dispatch line and the launch of a reporting app to improve triage, data capture, and regional coordination. Equally important is building people power. In 2026, Turtle Guardians will expand community science recruitment, training, and support, and further develop a zone leader model that enables experienced volunteers to take on leadership roles within their regions. This approach allows the program to scale while maintaining consistency, accountability, and local knowledge.

Finally, we recognize that children and youth are the future of conservation. In 2026, we will advance plans for a community-focused Turtle Guardians research and discovery centre, designed to give kids hands-on opportunities to explore turtle biology, mitigation, and conservation solutions. This will complement our broadly accessible, interactive curricula and outreach programs, ensuring that learning, curiosity, and stewardship are nurtured alongside science and mitigation.

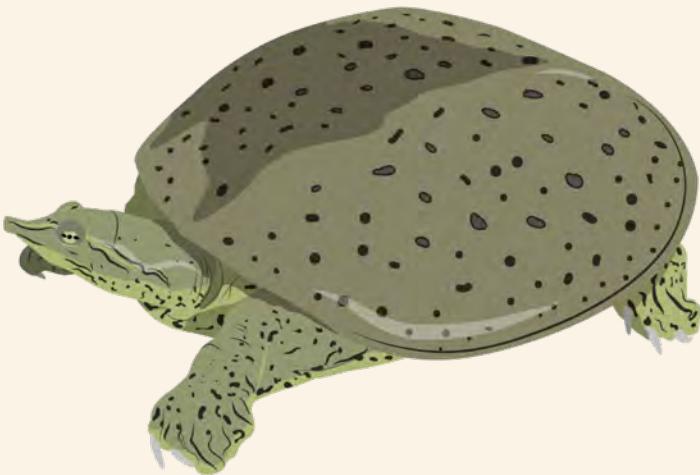


Together, these priorities position Turtle Guardians to deliver immediate conservation outcomes while building the partnerships, skills, and infrastructure needed for lasting impact at scale.

# Acknowledgements

An incredible heartfelt thank you to our funders, municipal and road-department partners, community groups, volunteers, and researchers who make this work possible.

Please see the list of our supporters and our financial statements in The Land Between charity report.



# The Land Between and Turtle Guardians

Annual Report 2024-2025



# Background

The Land Between (TLB) is a grassroots Canadian charity that emerged in the mid-2000s to address the lack of recognition and coordinated stewardship for Ontario's "land between." This unique region, where the Canadian Shield meets the St. Lawrence Lowlands, is both biologically rich and culturally significant, yet for many years it was overlooked in policy, research, and planning. TLB was founded to fill this gap by advancing a model of animated bioregionalism, treating the land not simply as a backdrop but as a living, interconnected system in which human and natural communities are deeply entwined.

From the outset, The Land Between has been Indigenous-led and community-driven, guided by Knowledge Circles that bring together Elders, local residents, scientists, and technical experts in consensus-based decision-making. This inclusive governance structure ensures that programs are rooted in both knowledge and lived experience. The organization's purpose is to connect people with their communities and landscapes, fostering conservation that embraces rather than excludes people. At its heart, TLB works from the understanding that the land is the foundation of our wealth, health, and identity, and that lasting conservation requires aligning human behaviours with the needs of the land.

In practice, this mandate has led TLB to focus on four interconnected areas: advancing large-scale ecological and social research, implementing applied

conservation in the field, providing municipalities with tools and data to inform sustainable planning, and engaging communities through education, citizen science, and cultural programming. Notable milestones include the development of the Conservation Blueprint, which mapped ecological and cultural assets across the region, and the Blue Lakes Project, which has built a database of water quality and stewardship data for more than 2,400 lakes, making it the most comprehensive resource of its kind in Ontario.

Among its many initiatives, Turtle Guardians has become a flagship program and a model for grassroots conservation. The program now mobilizes more than 800 volunteers who protect nests, monitor populations, and mitigate road mortality, while also engaging youth and families in meaningful conservation work. Turtle Guardians manages Ontario's second largest turtle incubator and contributes vital data to applied wildlife research. It reflects TLB's commitment to blending research, conservation action, and community



participation in a way that empowers people and fosters pride, belonging, and resilience.

Through this combination of governance, mandate, and program delivery, The Land Between has built a reputation as a trusted hub for science, stewardship, and community connection. Its work shows that conservation is most effective when it is

grassroots, inclusive, and grounded in both the land and the people who depend on it. By continuing to connect research, municipal planning, applied conservation, and citizen engagement, the charity is shaping behaviours and systems to support resilience, ensuring that this region's wealth, health, and identity are safeguarded for generations to come.



# Letter from the COO

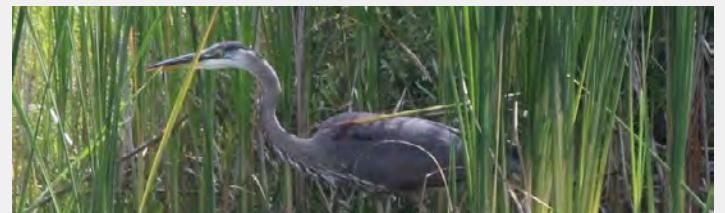
## Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Partners,

This year brought both opportunity and challenge. Our former facility grew too small for the scale of our work, yet it became increasingly clear that deeper community connection is essential to meaningful conservation. As the world grows more complicated and polarized, we continue to see that grassroots relationships and back-to-basics approaches remain our most powerful tools. Our Turtle Guardians program is proof of this: more than 800 volunteers mobilized, pioneering research underway, and the second-largest turtle incubation program in Ontario. Building on that momentum, we took the bold step of moving into a downtown space; an investment in people, in place, and in building shared stewardship from the ground up.

At the same time, we reflected deeply on the nature of partnerships. With growing competition for limited resources, we have learned that strong alliances require shared governance culture, aligned values, and equal commitment to both mandate and community.

While we are proud of the recognition earned for our grassroots partnerships, community impact, and applied wildlife research, we also face the reality that few landscape-scale organizations exist to speak for species, systems, and relationships that cannot speak for themselves. Coupled with our own growth,

demands for our services now exceed our capacity.



Despite these pressures, we have continued to deliver award-winning programming and major research initiatives: a decade-long road ecology dataset which is the longest in North America can now be used to advance recovery science for turtles; innovative mitigation design research that has received the attention of the Ministry of Transportation and conservation groups across Canada; the province's largest lake health database where we look forward to working in partnership with universities and lake associations; empirical analyses of landscape change, a fundamental research project showing thresholds of insect food availability for bats and nightjars, flood risk, habitat connectivity, and Species at Risk recovery opportunities; and inquiries into the Eastern Wolf, Western Coyote, birds, old growth forests, and broader ecosystem health. At the same time, we have cultivated deep connections with children, volunteers, and communities through celebrated education and community-science programs.

Yet managing the growth, has required more resources and time, and has perhaps also overshadowed one of our founding commitments: genuine community engagement. Our communities are

increasingly divided—between heritage and newcomer families, seasonal and permanent residents, and between differing viewpoints. Our long-standing approach of gathering people together through Indigenous-led Talking Circles has proven to be one of the few methods that consistently builds trust, opens dialogue across perspectives, and leads to new information and understanding, and often resulting in robust solutions or even consensus on complex problems. Returning to these foundations, essentially a “two-eyed seeing” approach, will strengthen both our conservation outcomes and our social fabric.

This is why the next chapter must bring us back to our roots. Through our Wiidookdadewin (Caring for ourselves/our communities) approach and honoring voices from the land, we will advance a true landscape-scale vision; and meaningful conservation strategy for The Land Between. This work is the culmination of our efforts and lessons. It will integrate our research and data, the cultural perspectives and traditional knowledge of the land, economic realities and linkages of these to the natural capital and systems, all with the lived experience of communities. It will highlight the interdependence between cultural assets, heritage practices, economies, wellbeing, and the health of this region. Through Talking Circles, interviews, and collaborative research, we will co-create a shared vision; one that reflects ecological needs, community priorities, and the deep relationships between people and place. For this strategy to be meaningful, it must honour not just the land, but the cultures, livelihoods, and stories that have shaped it. This will be a central focus of our work ahead.

Looking forward, our priorities are clear:

- **Strategic Planning** to refine our vision for both the charity and the landscape, using the act of convening as a tool for healing and capacity-building.
- **Community Engagement**, including Open Houses, Talking Circles, and shared design of our Resilient Lands (Wiidookdadewin) Strategy.
- **Strengthening Turtle Guardians**, enabling regional leadership across North America to build broad, coordinated capacity for turtle conservation.
- **Growing our Support Base**, through new “Friends of Turtle Guardians and The Land Between” donor communities that help bring people closer to the cause.

With your partnership, we will strengthen our foundation, protect this irreplaceable landscape, and ensure that its wildlife and communities thrive for generations. Together, we will help Turtle Guardians reach its full potential, for these sacred beings, the land, and for all who depend on it.



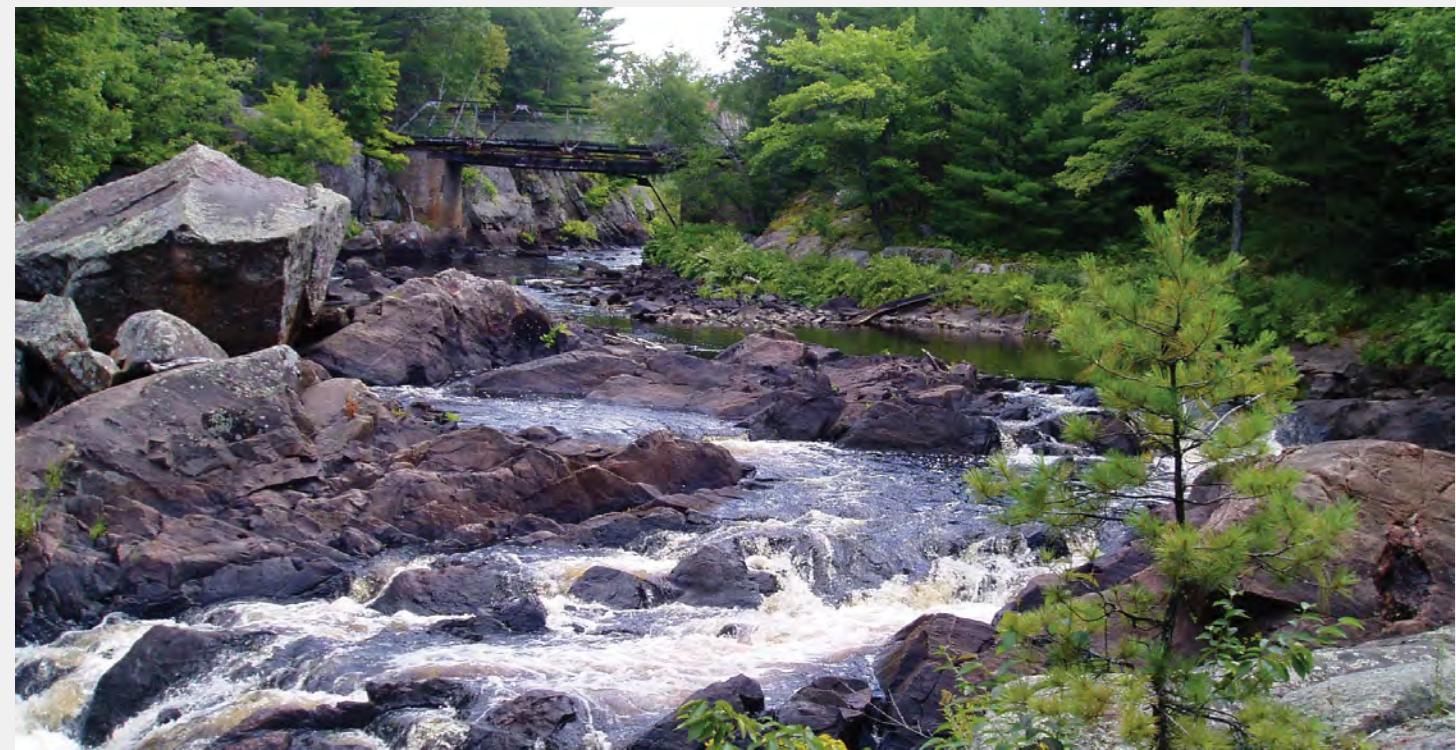
With gratitude,

**Leora Berman**  
Chief Operating Officer  
The Land Between

# Projects and Highlights

## Working Watersheds

The Land Between region is one of Canada's 15 Community-Nominated Priority Places, a biodiversity hotspot and headwaters system supporting 57 Species at Risk, 2,400 lakes, and the last intact wetlands of southern Ontario. These ecosystems provide essential services, water filtration, flood regulation, pollination, pest control, and carbon capture, that underpin community resilience locally and across the province. Yet, many municipalities lack conservation authorities, rely on outdated mapping, and have limited expertise to integrate Nature Based solutions into planning, such as flood predictions, hydrographs and roles of wetlands. These gaps have left landscapes and communities increasingly vulnerable, and as essential wetlands



and headwaters are lost, this vulnerability is increased and made evident by the recent floods, prolonged droughts, and widespread wildfires that are straining infrastructure, threatening biodiversity, and disrupting livelihoods. There is an urgent need for locally relevant data, inclusive governance, and practical tools to embed nature-based solutions into municipal decision-making.

### Project Description

The Working Watersheds project equips municipalities with the knowledge, tools, and support systems necessary to integrate nature-based solutions into land-use planning. By combining science, Indigenous Knowledge, and community voices, the program strengthens local leadership capacity and ensures ecosystem services are protected as the

foundation of climate resilience. The initiative also aligns with upcoming municipal Official Plan updates, ensuring timely adoption of sustainable policies when they are most needed.

### Project Portfolio

#### Certification-Based Training

- Interactive curricula covering watershed management, legislative levers, Duty to Consult, and nature-based solutions.
- Builds green skills, enhances capacity, and establishes new planning standards.

#### Data, Maps, and Models

- Updated wetland and flood-risk maps.
- Modelling of natural assets and ecosystem services to guide resilient planning decisions.

#### Inclusive Governance

- Indigenous-led Talking Circles for representative community feedback.
- Integration of diverse perspectives to foster trust, social cohesion, and adoption.

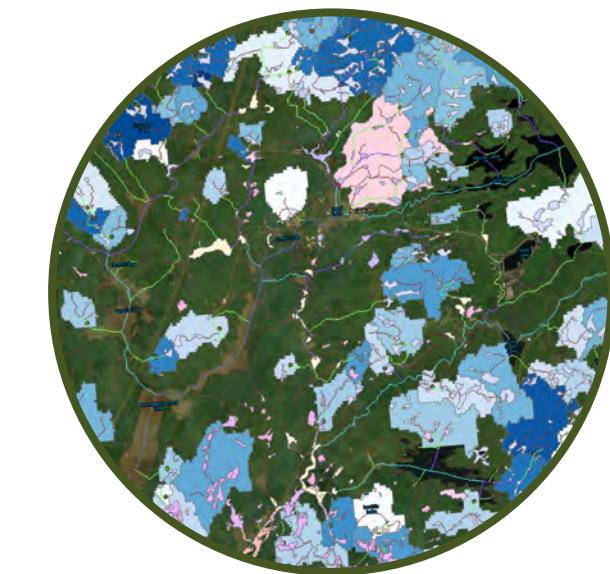
#### Behaviour-Change Approaches

- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to inspire municipal action.
- Case studies demonstrating global adaptation strategies, cost-savings, and conservation value.

#### Expert Peer Panel

- Trusted specialists offering guidance on complex planning issues.

- Reduces barriers to action and builds council confidence in Nature based solutions and related decisions.

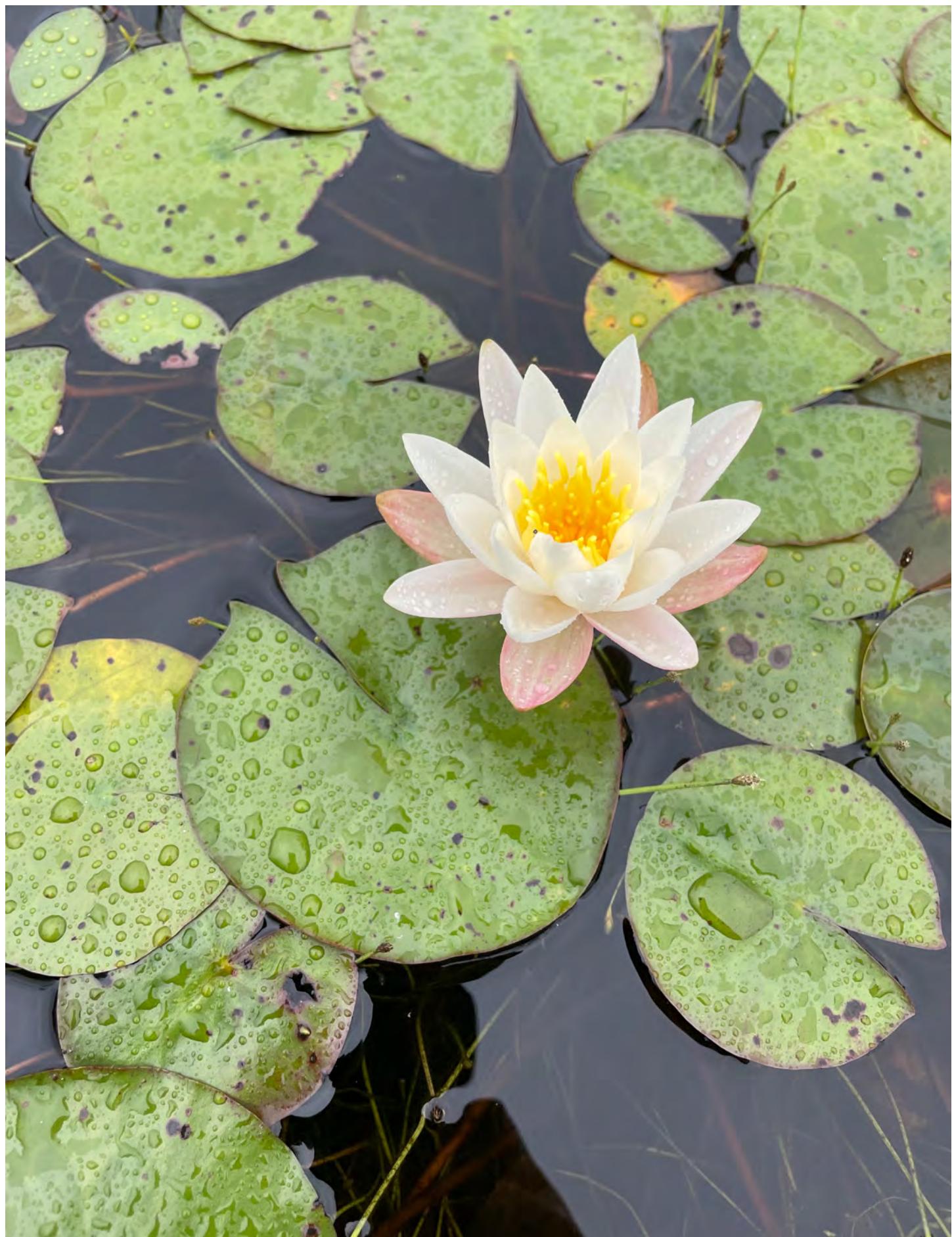


#### Highlights:

- Completed curriculums on wetland function and watersheds.
- Completed curriculums on the Planning Act.
- Peer review by Glen Cunningham and others.
- Presentation to Lanark County and partners.
- Mapping of wetland functions.
- Mapping of development patterns and habitat loss per township.
- Mapping of flood risk.

#### Needs and Next Steps:

- Funding to support coordination, outreach and marketing.
- Continue with GeoHub and mapping of features and functions.



## Blue Lakes Project

Lakes within The Land Between bioregion are under increasing pressure from development, pollution, shoreline alteration, invasive species, and human activities. Healthy lakes are vital to ecosystem integrity, water quality, and the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of lakefront communities. Whether for general leisure, angling, or as a source of potable water, healthy lakes are integral to our wellbeing. Voluntary stewardship is a powerful lever: many property owners want to protect their lakes but often lack accessible tools, guidance, or recognition. Also social behaviours and the overall “culture” of cottaging is changing coupled with a demand for short term rentals, and these increasing uses bring related issues such as noise or increasing boat speeds and more vehicles on lakes, which is also causing friction. Voices at the table are competing and crowded out. The Blue Lakes program exists to fill that gap, offering a pathway for lakefront property owners to take meaningful action in preserving the ecological health of their lakes, while fostering awareness, community engagement, a clear and strong culture and voice, and long-term protection.

### Project Description

The Blue Lakes program is twofold; there is a backend database that supports science, assessment and prioritizations to guide decisions; and at the front end, the project is a voluntary ecolabel-based stewardship initiative aimed at lakefront property owners in The Land Between (and nearby areas), enabling them to adopt conservation actions tailored to their property and lake.

Participants plan, implement, and assess stewardship actions in collaboration with program staff. Success earns recognition via a “Blue Lakes flag,” and participants can continue to set new goals in subsequent years. The program offers workshops, educational materials, monitoring tools, site visits, and facilitates celebrations and events as well as inclusive outreach to support cooperative and coordinated engagement and action in lake stewardship, as well as building a shared sense of responsibility, and therefore a consensus which strengthens a collective voice on behalf of nature.



### Project Portfolio Blue Lakes Database (Backend) Lake Health Profiles

- Stores baseline data for 2,400+ lakes in The Land Between region.
- Includes water chemistry, shoreline conditions, invasive species presence, and fish habitat and water quality values.

### Volunteer Monitoring Data

- Central repository for community-collected data (water quality, biodiversity, invasive species).
- Links monitoring results to specific lakes and stewardship sites.

### Mapping & GIS Integration

- Spatial modeling on lake health, fisheries, water quality trends, and watershed connections.

- Enables relative assessments and analysis for cumulative impacts and to compare conditions across gradients to understand impacts and also assign priorities.

#### Decision-Support Functions

- Ability to generate lake report cards summarizing ecological health and stewardship trends.
- Provides data outputs for municipalities, conservation groups, and researchers.

#### Security & Accessibility

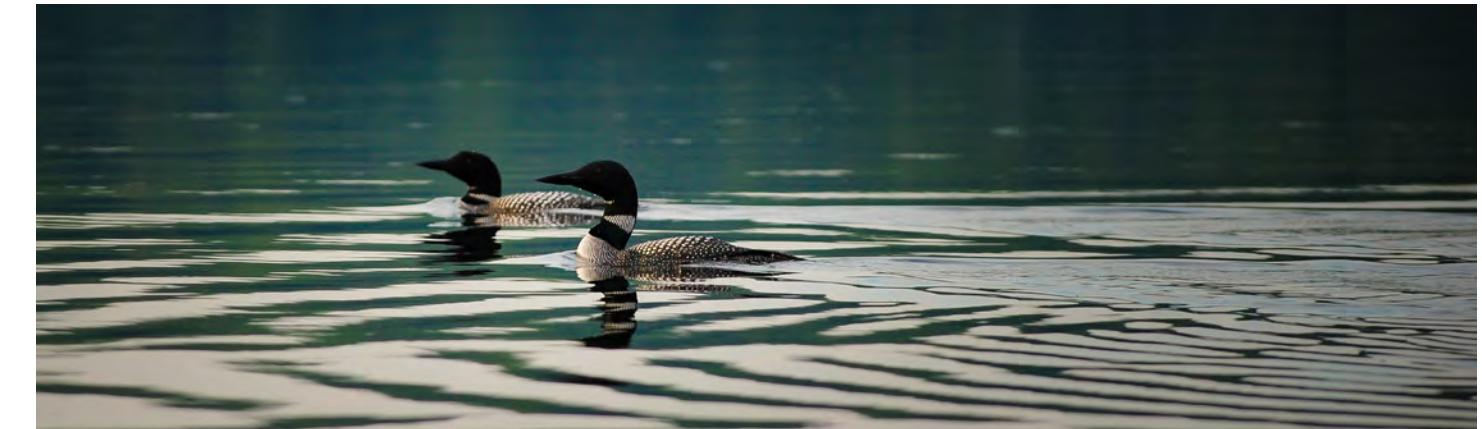
- Designed for multi-user input (staff, volunteers, municipalities).
- Tiered access levels to protect sensitive ecological or personal data.

### EcoLabel Program Features (Forward Facing Program)

#### Improvement Areas / Stewardship Actions

Participants choose from at least four of seven guiding improvement areas for their lakefront property, including:

- Habitat Conservation & Biodiversity.
- Invasive Species Management.
- Shoreland Health (naturalizing shorelines, vegetation).
- Nutrients, Sprays & Chemical Applicants (reducing pollutant inputs).
- Volunteer Monitoring & Nature Connection.
- Reconciliation, Humility & Kindness (Indigenous awareness, inclusivity).
- Social Outreach, Education & Inclusivity.



#### Process Steps

1. **Plan** — Introductory call & use of “Dream Board” tool to select which actions/areas to work on.
2. **Execute** — Carry out chosen actions with help of workshops, events, site visits, kits/tools.
3. **Assess** — After one year, participants evaluate if actions were completed, then may display a Blue Lakes flag; can pick new goals thereafter.

#### Supporting Tools & Recognition

- The Blue Lakes Passport; a collection of tools including workshops, challenges, collective actions, and events that increases engagement.

#### Educational materials & workshops

- The Blue Lakes Awareness Hub; a science corner to learn the ABC's of how lakes function and the latest research results in limnology.
- Ecolabel (“flag”) as recognition for participation & commitment to lake health.
- Volunteer monitoring programs to foster science engagement & data collection.

- Posters and flyers for participants to use in rentals, boat launches, and nurseries etc.

#### Outreach, Inclusivity, and Indigenous Engagement

- Encouraging culturally aware stewardship via themes like reconciliation, humility & kindness.
- Inclusivity in who participates, and outreach to raise awareness in the broader community.

#### Highlights:

- Soft launch.
- Piloted the program with Mazinaw Lake.
- Designed elements of the passport/ educational materials.
- Lake report cards on phosphorous.
- Testing of impacts of shore and basin development on trophic status.

#### Needs and Next Steps:

- Growth funding to launch the program more widely.
- NSERC grant with UOT for use of the database in science and for algal monitoring.

# Agwaamtoon Mshkiikii – Protecting the Medicines

## Project Rationale

The Land Between region is ecologically rich, a biodiversity hotspot, and home to many Species at Risk. Traditions, culture, human wellbeing, and local economies depend on healthy land, wildlife, clean waters, native plants, pollinators, and intact ecological networks. Yet, pressures such as habitat degradation, species loss, road mortality, invasive species, and pollution are compromising these natural medicines and the ecosystem services they provide. Under increasing climate pressures, there is a critical need for both empirical data and community knowledge to shape conservation that is locally relevant, equitable, and robust.

## Project Description

Agwaamtoon Mshkiikii (Protecting the Medicines) is a landscape scale effort funded through the Community-Nominated Priority Places program. It seeks to map, research, engage, and restore the “medicines” of the land- wildlife, plants, and habitats- that provide resilience and wellbeing for communities. The project blends research, community science,



Indigenous Knowledge, and strategy development to identify conservation priorities and safeguard ecological and cultural values.

## Strategic Tools & Outputs

- A Regional Conservation Strategy built on research, mapping, and community input.
- Nature-based solutions and models to identify and protect priority natural spaces.
- Tools for municipalities, landowners, and partners to guide restoration, road-mortality mitigation, invasive species management, and more.
- New data and insight into recovery science and efforts



## Project Portfolio and Highlights

### Species & Habitat Research

- Turtle monitoring, incubation, and release programs.  
**Highlights:** see Turtle Guardians.
- Snake research and community science initiatives.  
**Highlights:** Massassauga habitat verification with SNP.



- Pollinator, amphibian, and bird habitat research.

**Highlights:** pollinator head starting with WPC.

- Development of habitat models, blueprints, and conservation mapping.

- Habitat Health & Monitoring.

**Highlights:** habitat health check-ups, with 44 completed last year.

- Community Science & Engagement. (Volunteer programs that connect people with conservation, such as turtle guardianship and community monitoring.)

**Highlights:** “Bird Buddies,” a new program encouraging people to engage in birding and bird conservation.

- Inclusive Governance & Knowledge Gathering.

**Highlights:** Four Talking Circles held with partners, scientists, and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to inform the conservation strategy. Emphasis on aligning scientific research with Traditional Knowledge to reflect cultural medicines and community values.

## Needs and Next Steps:

- Strategy to incorporate economic considerations and cultural aspects of our communities for a balanced approach.
- Community Talking Circles and Open Houses to share insights and findings.

# Turtle Guardians

## Project Rationale

Turtles are keystone species and essential for wetland health, yet they are among the most at-risk groups of wildlife in Ontario. With eight species in the province, seven of which are Species at Risk and all eight listed federally, populations face severe pressures from road mortality, habitat loss, nest predation, and poaching. Because adult turtles are critical for population stability, even small losses have long-lasting impacts. Protecting turtles not only safeguards biodiversity but also maintains wetland functions such as water purification, carbon storage, and flood control that underpin community resilience.

## Project Description

Turtle Guardians is a flagship program that empowers communities, children, and volunteers to protect turtles through science, stewardship, and education. It combines frontline research, road mitigation innovation, turtle incubation and release, and widespread public engagement.



The program has grown into one of the largest turtle conservation initiatives in Ontario, with **over 800 volunteers**, partnerships across the province and now gaining traction in eastern North America, with strong community recognition.

## Project Portfolio

### Research & Mitigation

- Establishment of the **Turtle Guardian Research & Mitigation Program (TGRM)** to coordinate science and fieldwork.
- Design, testing, and refinement of new road ecology prototypes – including Ernie and Bert jump-out fencing systems, with engineering specifications developed for durability and safety.
- Road ecology studies identifying mortality hotspots, testing mitigation structures, and producing guidance for municipalities.



## Turtle Guardians



### Incubation & Release

- Operation of Ontario's **second-largest** turtle incubation facility.
- ~9000 eggs** protected in 2024-25, incubated, and released as hatchlings.
- Contributing to the survival of vulnerable populations across the region.

### Education & Outreach

- Turtle camps and school programs reaching **over 2,000 children** annually, fostering conservation values and hands-on learning.
- Move to a new centre; where currently tours and educational events at the **Turtle Guardians Education and Visitor Centre** in Haliburton, welcoming hundreds of families and visitors each year.
- A widely used **Turtle Guardians Hotline**, supporting communities across Ontario and beyond with turtle emergencies and conservation advice, In 2025 answering 1500 texts and calls.

### Community Science

- 800+ active volunteers** monitoring nests, patrolling roads, and collecting vital data.
- Public participation in turtle sightings contributes to provincial databases, filling critical knowledge gaps.

## Conservation Impact

- Protection of thousands of turtles annually through monitoring, rescue, and release.
- Development of scalable, tested solutions for road mortality mitigation.
- Building an international wide movement of citizens, children, and leaders protecting turtles for future generations.

## Highlights (see above)

- Third largest incubator in Ontario.
- Completed installation of ecopassage site (Yellow Rock).
- Nesting mound in eastern Ontario .
- BMP guides for nesting mounds.
- Prototypes tested and specifications outlined.
- MTO interest in models.
- Training of Road Departments.
- New billboard signs and crossing signs.
- Turtle Camp attendance and Level 1 online program.

## Needs and Next steps:

- AI support for Dispatch line and growing demand.
- More advanced volunteer responsibilities to limit demand for staffing.
- Chapters or zone leader training in new areas and across the USA.
- Tourism, membership/friends fundraising strategy and campaigns for sustainable support.



## *Ma'iingan, The Wolf... and the Coyote*

### Rationale

Eastern Wolves in Ontario exist only in small, fragmented populations and are listed as a Species at Risk. Their survival is complicated by Eastern Coyotes outnumbering wolves nearly ten to one, with harvesters raising concerns that coyotes may be acting like an invasive species; displacing wolves, altering predator-prey dynamics, and triggering trophic cascades across ecosystems. These dynamics can conflict with traditional recovery approaches for wolves, underscoring the need for deeper understanding, refined communications, and locally informed solutions. As apex predators, wolves signal forest ecosystem health, yet without addressing the growing imbalance with coyotes, conservation outcomes may be compromised.

### Description

This special project blends science, Indigenous Knowledge, and community voices to clarify wolf and coyote ecology and inform effective conservation. A limited-series podcast explores the biology, policy, and cultural significance of wolves and coyotes, while an interactive Story Map illustrates their ranges, relationships, and ecological roles. Through partnerships with harvesters and Knowledge Holders, the project is gathering essential field insights and lived experiences to guide more nuanced management approaches.



### Highlights

- **Podcast Series** – Explores conservation issues, policy debates and recovery challenges for Eastern Wolves, while addressing the complexities posed by coyotes.
- **Interactive Story Map** – Visualizes wolf and coyote distributions, hybridization, and ecological interactions in The Land Between.
- **Knowledge Gathering** – Structured interviews with harvesters and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to capture insights on wolf-coyote dynamics and community perspectives.
- **Why It Matters** – Understanding the wolf-coyote relationship is essential to conserving apex predators, preventing cascading ecological impacts, and reconciling management conflicts.

### Needs and Next Steps:

- Wetland Diary.
- Final project report and findings.

# The Anishinabek Land Trust

## Project Rationale

The Land Between holds rich ecological and cultural landscapes, many of which are tied to Anishinaabe lifeways, medicines, and teachings. Colonization and legal frameworks (like the Indian Act) have rendered many Indigenous lands under constrained governance, limiting control over caretaking, cultural practices, and ecological health. To reinvigorate both Anishinaabe culture and natural environments, there is a pressing need for land held and managed by Indigenous peoples, where Indigenous knowledge, outside of restrictive legislative systems, can be animated, so that the land itself, and her plants, animals, medicines, can thrive alongside cultural transmission to future generations.



## Project Description

The Anishinabek Land Trust is an Indigenous-led land conservation initiative presently incubated by The Land Between charity as administrator and supporter. Its goal is to secure land (with long-term leases or ownership) free from the constraints of the Indian Act, and to care for her according to Anishinaabe governance and ecological practices. Through land acquisition, caretaking, scientific study, and cultural education, the Trust seeks to uphold traditional ecological knowledge and ensure that cultural and natural values are restored, animated and enhanced.



## Project Portfolio

### Land Acquisition & Secure Holding

- Establishing governance structures rooted in Anishinaabe principles and Knowledge Holder guidance.

### Land Stewardship & Ecological Management

- Pilot project in Stoney Point First Nation to use traditional ecological knowledge and science to guide restoration and conservation decision-making.
- Conducting environmental studies to understand ecological health, species distributions, and cultural and medicinal plant populations.

### Public Education & Cultural Transmission

- Videos and recordings of Elders to teach both Anishinaabe youth and wider community about cultural land relationships, medicines, and ecology.
- Sharing knowledge through workshops, community gatherings, and interpretive education to honor both cultural and natural heritage.



## Highlights:

- Supported by Henvey Inlet First Nation, Sarah Jackson, Coordinator led a pilot project in her community of Kettle Point and Stoney Creek First Nation, where two eyed seeing was used to create a plan and raise awareness of the Land and her features. This is a pilot to be adopted in new communities.
- Sarah also drafted Medicine and SAR land acquisition protocols and priorities.

## Needs and Next Steps:

- Building governance and administrative capacity so the Trust operates as a registered charity / non-profit, guided by Anishinaabe values.
- Fundraising, partnerships, and financial planning to support long-term land care and cultural programs.

# Niizh Nimkii-Ngwaagan (Travelling Children's Museum)

## Project Rationale

Youth suicide rates among Indigenous populations and youth in remote and under served communities are alarmingly high, often driven by intergenerational trauma, cultural disconnection, social isolation, poverty, and limited access to mental health supports. These crises demand interventions that build identity, connection – to land, culture, community and hope. At the same time, children everywhere are spending increasing amounts of time on smart devices instead of embracing nature or engaging in face-to-face community. This shift has been linked to a **reduction in critical thinking and the ability to deliberate complex issues**, as well as the **simplification and intolerance of discourse and disagreement**, which is harmful to both mental health and community cohesion, but is also unhealthy for personal and social growth. Importantly, constant digital stimulation has also been shown to **diminish children's emotional regulation skills**; their ability to calm themselves, cope with frustration, and navigate conflict constructively. These combined pressures highlight the urgent need for initiatives that reconnect children with nature, culture, and one another while fostering resilience, creativity, and healthy dialogue.

A mobile, interactive museum offers a way to reach remote communities, foster belonging, promote healing, and strengthen

resilience in young people through culturally safe, hands-on educational experiences.

## Project Description

The Two Rainbows Travelling Children's Museum, Niizh Nimkii-Naabkawaagan is an innovative, mobile initiative designed to bring hope, belonging, and culturally grounded learning to children across Ontario and beyond. Operating from repurposed transport trucks, the museum will travel to remote and under served communities, offering six-week residencies that feature immersive exhibits built around identity, land, wildlife, community, and nationhood. Over a five-year launch plan, the project will deliver cultural programs, nature-based experiences, outreach, and community training, connecting children to



their heritage, environment, and each other in meaningful ways.

Children's museums are uniquely effective because they are hands-on, exploratory, and experiential. They allow children to learn by doing, to engage all their senses, and to test ideas through play. This form of active learning fosters curiosity, critical thinking, and collaboration while making knowledge tangible and memorable. Unlike traditional classroom or screen-based learning, children's museums create safe spaces for cooperative exploration, problem-solving, and discovery; skills that translate into stronger confidence, resilience, and emotional wellbeing.

The outcomes of the Two Rainbows Travelling Children's Museum focus on strengthening youth mental health and fostering a deep sense of belonging and identity. By creating spaces where children can connect with their culture, land, and community, the project also supports cultural reconciliation, local pride, and renewed relationships with nature. Importantly, it delivers low-barrier educational, healing, and creative learning opportunities to communities that often have little or no access to such resources, ensuring that children everywhere can share in experiences that build resilience, hope, and connection. By blending play, education, and storytelling, Two Rainbows helps children find identity, connection, and pride while building skills for resilience, cooperation, and emotional balance.

## Project Portfolio

### Interactive Exhibits & Themes

- Dual rainbows symbolizing hope, identity, and tolerance.

- Exhibition spaces exploring themes like "My Connection to the Natural World" and "My Connection to the Human World."
- Experiential, sensory elements (habitat biomes, touch/fur/feathers displays, ecosystem connection, story circles, cultural craft/trading posts).

## Mobility & Deployment

- The museum housed in repurposed transport trucks for mobility and flexibility.
- Each host community will host the museum for approximately six weeks annually.

## Community Engagement & Training

- Community training programs for local custodians who help run the museum when it is in their area.
- Local contributions to design—communities will help design insignia/crests for their version of the museum.

## Highlights:

- Steering committee gathered and project research completed.

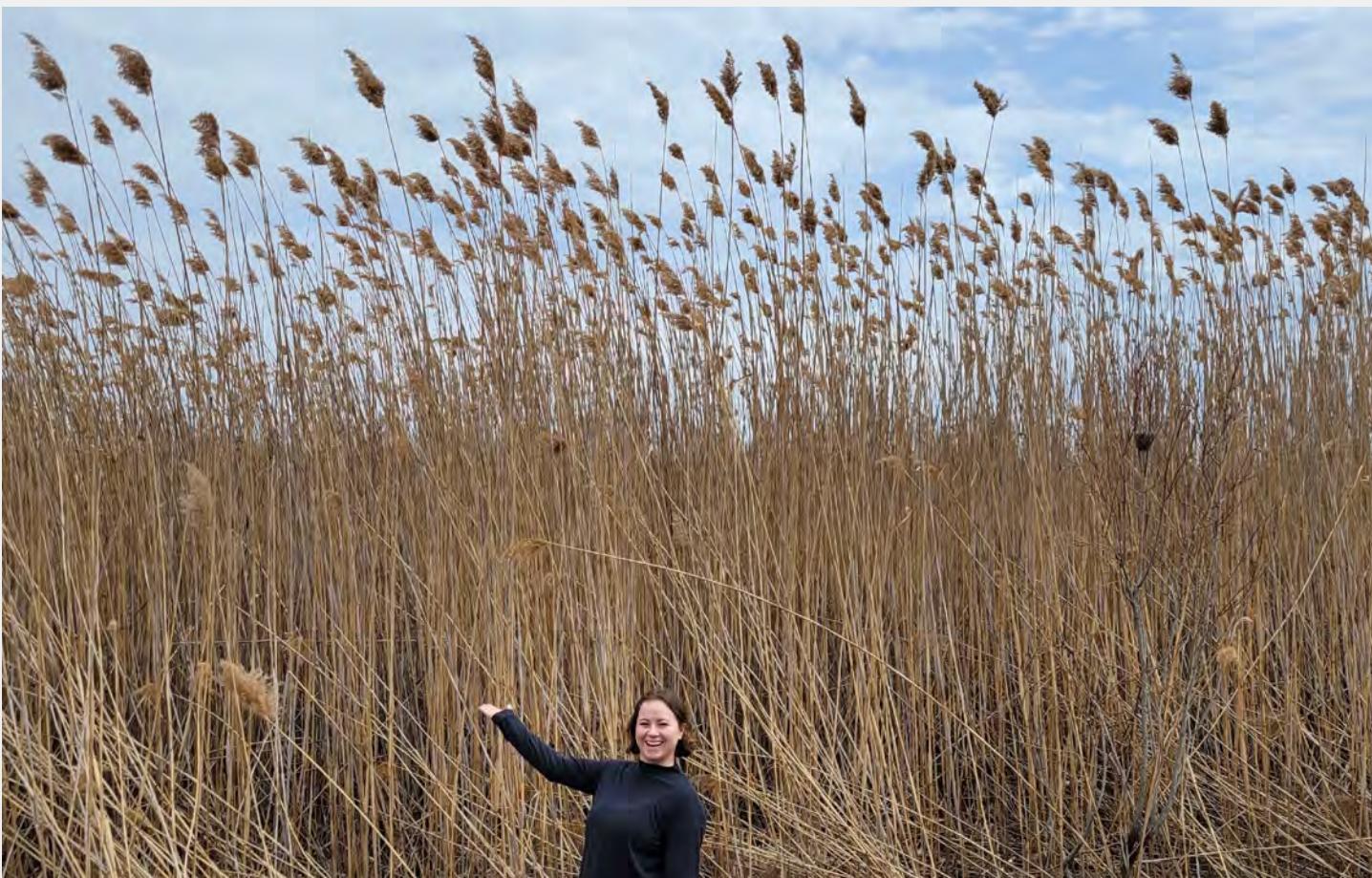
## Needs and Next Steps:

- Five-year phased plan including exhibit design, construction and testing, operational trials, and public launch.
- Partnerships lined up in logistics, cultural design, education, and museum planning.
- Funding to support start up.

# Native Gardens & Phragmites Control

## Project Rationale

Healthy shorelines and native plant communities are critical for biodiversity, water quality, and climate resilience. Yet invasive species like phragmites are spreading rapidly, choking wetlands, out-competing native plants, and reducing habitat for wildlife. At the same time, many communities are seeking practical ways to restore natural diversity and showcase the beauty and benefits of native species. By promoting native gardens and tackling invasive phragmites, The Land Between is advancing both ecological health and community engagement.



## Project Description

The Land Between's Native Gardens Program encourages property owners and communities to create pollinator-friendly, culturally meaningful, and climate-smart landscapes by planting native species. These gardens enhance biodiversity, attract pollinators, support local wildlife, and provide educational spaces that celebrate the connection between people and place.

In parallel, the Phragmites Control Program is addressing one of Ontario's most aggressive invasive plants. The Land Between has established a pilot lakeside site to test mechanical control methods, gathering vital data on effectiveness while minimizing harm to wetlands. This pilot will inform scalable approaches to protect shorelines and restore natural habitats across the region.

## Project Portfolio

### Native Gardens

- Promotion and planting of pollinator-friendly native species.
- Educational outreach to demonstrate ecological, cultural, and aesthetic benefits.
- Support for community and property-owner led garden installations.

### Phragmites Control

- Development of a pilot lakeside site testing mechanical removal methods.
- Monitoring of effectiveness, ecological impacts, and regrowth rates.
- Long-term goal of expanding successful practices to priority lakes and wetlands.

### Community Impact

- Empowering residents to take visible, hands-on conservation actions.
- Strengthening ecological literacy through gardens, workshops, and demonstration sites.
- Protecting wetlands, shorelines, and aquatic habitats from invasive plant threats.



## Highlights

- New septic bed pollinator garden pilot.
- Naturalization of 3 properties.
- Piloting mechanical controls of phragmites.
- Phrag inventories across Haliburton.

## Needs and Next Steps:

- Higher visibility of both program.
- Complement and not compete with Natural Edge and other former partners, and other local programs.
- Forge new offerings to target groups and new partnerships.

# Thank you to our partners and Council

## Thank you to our partners:

UOIT  
 Trent U  
 Community Living Central Highlands  
 Hugh Spencer Museum Planning  
 Kawartha Lakes Stewards Association  
 Scales Nature Park  
 Sacred Water Circle  
 Curve Lake Cultural Centre  
 Curve Lake First Nation  
 Haliburton County Roads  
 Kawartha Lakes Roads  
 Peterborough Roads  
 Wildlife Preservation Canada  
 RARE  
 Henvey Inlet First Nation  
 Brant for Turtles  
 Leeds and Grenville Turtles  
 Mazinaw Lake Association  
 Parks Canada  
 Blazing Star Env.  
 Kari Gunson, EcoKare Intl

Oak Ridges Moraine Groundwater Project  
 Township of Elizabeth Kitley  
 Ontario Parks  
 Ontario Fur Managers Federation  
 Canadian Wildlife Federation  
 Georgian Bay Forever  
 Ontario Headwaters Institute  
 Toronto Zoo  
 Fitzhenry Family Foundation  
 Bernard and Norton Wolfe Family Foundation  
 Marilyn Neaves Foundation  
 Ontario Species at Risk Stewardship Fund  
 Norris Labs  
 Toronto Entomological Association  
 Watersheds Canada  
 Environment Canada and Climate Change, Community Nominated Priority Places Program  
 Pollinator Partners  
 Ontario Biodiversity Council

## Thank you to our Governance Council

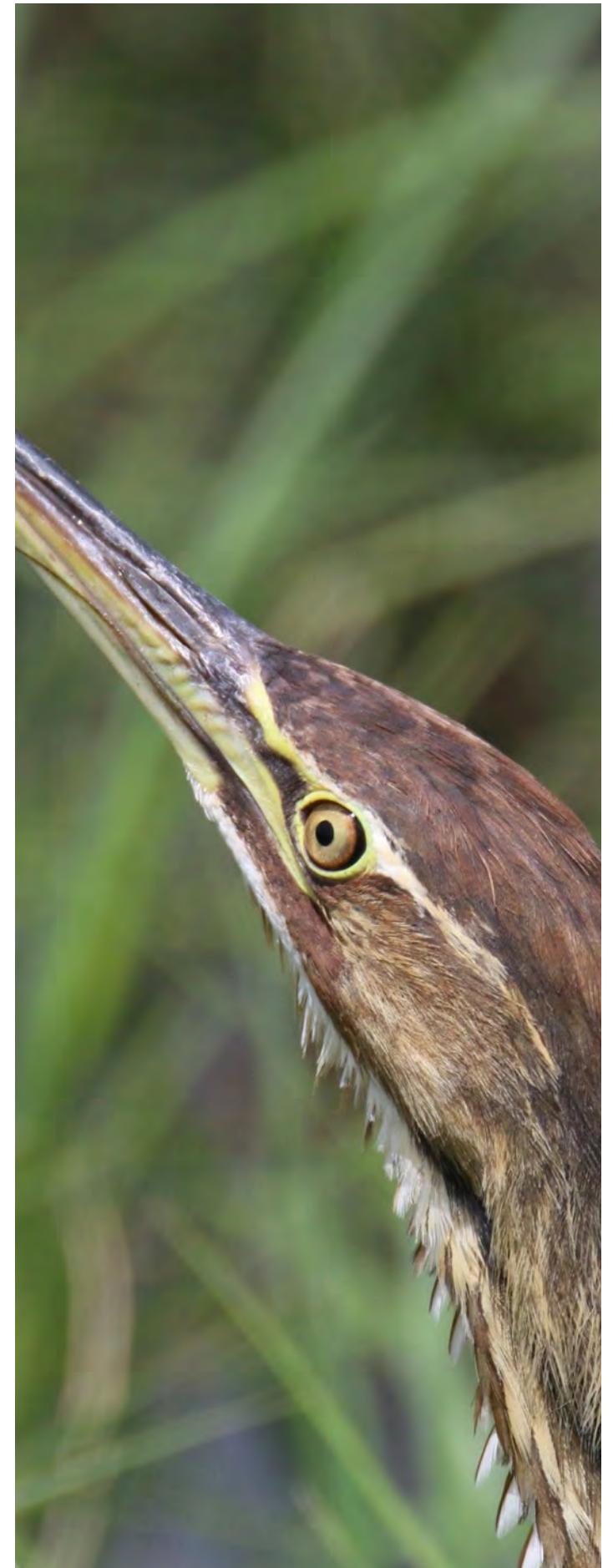
Keith Hodgson  
 Tracey Taylor  
 Laurie Hockaday  
 Guy Wagner  
 Krista Coppaway  
 Gary Williams  
 Marie Windover

## Incoming:

Guy Wagner  
 Krista Coppaway  
 Gary Williams  
 Marie Windover

## Outgoing:

Thank you to Sandy Agnew and Peter Carruthers, both who made remarkable contributions to the richness of our discussions, strategies and efforts; honorable members of the Council for 15 years.



# *Financials*

**The Land Between  
Financial Statements**  
March 31, 2025

## Independent Auditor's Report

To the members of  
The Land Between

### Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Land Between, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2025, and the statements of operations and changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the effects of the matter described in the Basis for Qualified Opinion section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at March 31, 2025, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with ASNPO.

### Basis for Qualified Opinion

In common with many not-for-profit organizations, the organization derives revenue from fundraising activities the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the organization. Therefore, we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to fundraising revenue, excess of revenues over expenses, and cash flows from operations for the years ended March 31, 2025 and 2024, current assets as at March 31, 2025 and 2024, and net assets as at April 1 and March 31 for both the 2025 and 2024 years. Our audit opinion on the financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2024 was modified accordingly because of the possible effects of this limitation in scope.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified opinion.

### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the organization's financial reporting process.

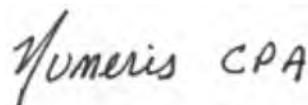
## Independent Auditor's Report, continued

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- ◆ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- ◆ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the organization's internal control.
- ◆ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- ◆ Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ◆ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



**Numeris CPA Professional Corporation**  
Chartered Professional Accountant  
Licensed Public Accountant

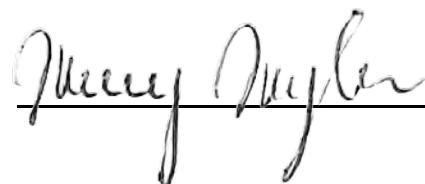
Ottawa, ON  
October 10, 2025

**The Land Between  
Statement of Financial Position  
As at March 31, 2025**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash	\$ 532,026	\$ 332,099
Accounts receivable	321,130	312,245
Inventory	5,800	15,000
Prepaid expenses	<u>5,550</u>	<u>3,150</u>
	864,506	662,494
<b>Capital assets (note 3)</b>	<u>4,000</u>	<u>4,692</u>
	<u><u>\$ 868,506</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 667,186</u></u>
<hr/>		
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 27,675	\$ 43,745
Unearned revenue (note 4)	21,777	1,767
Repayable to funder (note 5)	-	14,986
Due to related party (note 6)	<u>172,823</u>	<u>80,999</u>
	222,275	141,497
<b>Balance</b>	<u>646,231</u>	<u>525,689</u>
	<u><u>\$ 868,506</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 667,186</u></u>
<hr/>		

On behalf of the Board

 Member

 Member

**The Land Between  
Statement of Operations  
and Changes in Net Assets  
Year ended March 31, 2025**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
<b>Revenues</b>		
Grants and subsidies	\$ 794,992	\$ 543,417
Donations	78,891	52,375
Workshops and events	68,905	127,054
Merchandise	26,447	15,563
Miscellaneous income	13,491	22,768
Interest income	1,893	4,139
	<u>984,619</u>	<u>765,316</u>
<b>Cost of sales</b>	<u>10,512</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Gross profit</b>	<u>974,107</u>	<u>765,316</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Administrative		
Professional fees	21,816	15,191
HST expense	5,189	8,102
Office	4,396	17,742
Insurance	3,587	47
Outreach		
Advertising and promotion	22,300	18,421
Meeting and catering	1,985	4,808
Special Projects		
Salaries and related benefits	560,743	445,233
Contract services	162,834	111,330
Project equipment and supplies	38,774	30,324
Travel and workshops	25,158	32,676
Rent	15,450	12,600
Project office and administration	14,397	7,122
Honorariums	5,700	3,424
Advertising and promotion	3,545	11,350
Publications and printing	2,112	(583)
Amortization	1,567	1,392
	<u>84,554</u>	<u>46,137</u>
<b>Excess of revenues over expenditures</b>	<u>84,554</u>	<u>46,137</u>
<b>Balance</b>		
As previously stated	525,689	479,552
Prior period adjustment (note 7)	35,988	-
	<u>561,677</u>	<u>479,552</u>
<b>Balance, as restated</b>	<u>561,677</u>	<u>479,552</u>
<b>Balance, end of year</b>	<u>\$ 646,231</u>	<u>\$ 525,689</u>

**The Land Between**  
**Statement of Cash Flows**  
**Year ended March 31, 2025**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Excess of revenues over expenditures	\$ 84,554	\$ 46,137
Adjustments for		
Amortization	1,567	1,392
Prior period adjustment	<u>35,989</u>	<u>-</u>
	122,110	47,529
Change in non-cash working capital items		
Accounts receivable	(8,885)	(68,418)
Inventory	9,200	-
Prepaid expenses	(2,400)	(3,150)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(16,071)	(40,887)
Unearned revenue	20,010	(59,233)
Repayable to funder	(14,986)	(5,219)
Due to related party	<u>91,824</u>	<u>(92,323)</u>
	200,802	(221,701)
<b>Investing activity</b>		
Purchase of capital assets	(875)	(5,500)
<b>Financing activity</b>		
Repayment of long-term debt	<u>-</u>	<u>(40,000)</u>
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash</b>	<b>199,927</b>	<b>(267,201)</b>
<b>Cash, beginning of year</b>	<b><u>332,099</u></b>	<b><u>599,300</u></b>
<b>Cash, end of year</b>	<b><u>\$ 532,026</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 332,099</u></b>

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**The Land Between**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2025**

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## **1. Nature of operations**

The Land Between ("the Organization") was incorporated by letters patent without share capital under the provisions of the Canada Corporations Act on June 13, 2011, it began operations in May of 2012 and is a Registered Charity. The Organization has defined its mission as follows:

- a) to protect, preserve, and conserve the ecotone along the southern edge of the Canadian shield from southern Georgian Bay to the Frontenac axis north of Kingston - "the land between";
- b) to conduct research into social, economic, environmental and cultural issues that are relevant to the land between, and disseminating the results of such research to the public;
- c) to convene conferences, seminars and workshops for the benefit of the public on social, economic, environmental and cultural issues that are relevant to the land between;
- d) to convene meetings of the public for the purpose of exchanging knowledge about best practices for preserving, conserving, and restoring the land between.

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## **2. Significant accounting policies**

The organization applies the Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

### **(a) Revenue recognition**

The organization follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenditures are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable when the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Revenue from merchandise sales, workshop and event are recognized as revenue when the good or service is delivered.

Funds provided by government subsidy and grants are recognized as revenue in the year within which the conditions are met with respect to the use and terms of the funding.

### **(b) Accounts receivable**

The Organization records accounts receivable for amounts owing by a funder for approved expenditures incurred in the current year.

### **(c) Capital assets**

Capital assets are recorded at cost. The organization provides for amortization using the straight-line method at rates designed to amortize the cost of the capital assets over their estimated useful lives. The annual amortization rates are as follows:

Equipment	5 years
Vehicles	5 years

Capital assets acquired during the year but not placed into use are not amortized until they are placed into use.

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**The Land Between**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2025**

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**2. Significant accounting policies, continued**

**(c) Capital assets, continued**

The organization regularly reviews its capital assets to eliminate obsolete items. Upon retirement or disposition of capital assets, the capitalized cost and related accumulated amortization are removed from the balance sheet and any resulting gain or loss is recognized in the statement of income.

Full amortization is recorded in the year of acquisition.

**(d) Impairment of long-lived assets**

The organization tests for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of the assets may not be recoverable. Recoverability is assessed by comparing the carrying amount to the projected undiscounted future net cash flows the long-lived assets are expected to generate through their direct use and eventual disposition. When a test for impairment indicates that the carrying amount of an asset is not recoverable, an impairment loss is recognized to the extent carrying value exceeds its fair value.

**(e) Government grants**

Government grants are recorded when there is a reasonable assurance that the organization had complied with and will continue to comply with, all the necessary conditions to obtain the grants.

**(f) Deferred revenue**

Deferred revenue is the excess of money received for programs over expenditures made by the year that is available to be used in a future year.

**(g) Contributed materials and services**

Contributions of materials and services are recognized in the financial statements at fair value at the date of contribution, but only when a fair value can be reasonably estimated and when the materials and services are used in the normal course of operations, and would otherwise have been purchased.

**(h) Financial instruments**

The organization's financial instruments consist of cash, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities and long-term debt. Unless otherwise noted it is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair values of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values, unless otherwise noted.

**The Land Between**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2025**

**2. Significant accounting policies, continued**

(i) **Measurement uncertainty**

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reported period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**3. Capital assets**

	2025		2024	
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net	Net
Equipment	\$ 2,336	\$ 1,636	\$ 700	\$ 292
Vehicles	<u>5,500</u>	<u>2,200</u>	<u>3,300</u>	<u>4,400</u>
	<u><u>\$ 7,836</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 3,836</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 4,000</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 4,692</u></u>

**4. Unearned revenue**

Deferred revenue is comprised of unspent operating grants and unspent restricted donations. The availability of the grants in future periods is ultimately dependant upon various funding bodies, and as a result amounts included in deferred revenue may become repayable to the funder.

	2025		2024	
	\$ 18,818	\$ 2,300	\$ 1,767	\$ -
	659		-	-
Marilyn Neaves Trust	\$ 21,777		\$ 1,767	
Colleges and Institutions Canada				
Kawartha Credit Union				
	\$ 1,767	\$ 946,697	\$ (926,687)	\$ 21,777
Balance, beginning of year	Received	Recognized	Balance, end of year	

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**The Land Between**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
**March 31, 2025**

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**5. Repayable to funder**

The Organization is contingently liable for all or a portion of grants received should it not use the funds as set out in the terms of the respective agreements, receive additional funding from other sources or achieve specified outcomes. The amounts recorded as revenue and repayable are an estimate subject to verification and confirmation subsequent to the release of this financial statement. In the event the funder determines an amount to be repayable that is different from management's estimate, it will be recorded in the financial statement in the year it is determined.

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
NIBTF repayable (CEWS overage)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ 14,986</u>

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**6. Due to related party**

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
The Ber Company Ltd. Related through significant influence Management fees and or advances	<u>\$ 172,823</u>	<u>\$ 80,999</u>

These transactions are in the normal course of operations and are measured at the exchange amount, which is the amount of consideration established and agreed to by the related parties.

Advances from a related organization are non-interest bearing and have no set repayment terms. The organization is related by common management and significant influence.

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**7. Prior period adjustments**

During the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025 two errors were identified in the general ledger of the the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. Rather than restate the March 31, 2024 financial statements the organization has elected to record these transactions directly to surplus.

Error #1:

The fiscal year ending March 31, 2023 repayable amount owing to the NIBTF was double entered. It was correctly entered as an amount owing in fiscal 22/23. Then, when it was paid in January 2024 the amount was entered a second time. The result of this error is that grant income was understated and A/P was overstated by \$14,986 in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

Error #2:

The full Clean Nova Scotia Foundation income was not recorded in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. The result of this error is that grant income was understated and A/R was understated by \$21,003 in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.

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**8. Corporate credit card**

The organization has a corporate credit card. The card has a \$2,000 spending limit. It is secured with the personal information of the executive director and by a \$2,000 freeze on funds held in the investment account.

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**The Land Between**  
**Notes to the Financial Statements**  
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**9. Economic dependence**

The continuation of this organization is dependent upon the continuing financial support from government and other organization grants and subsidies.

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**10. Comparative amounts**

The financial statements have been reclassified, where applicable, to conform to the presentation used in the current year. The changes do not affect prior year earnings.

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Additional Notes on HR (inserted by the TLB Council)

In 2024-25 the charity hired 24 summer staff with the help of Canada Summer Jobs, and 9 fulltime contract staff under the Youth Employment Strategy

Our COO has also still NOT made the sunshine list and is below her peers in remuneration for this role, and yet has strategically grown capacity in the charity as well as leading community based coordination, research, education, and supports administration, working a consistent average of 58 hours a week.