

Tenth Anniversary Edition

Rainy Lake Conservancy 1999-2009

Preserving the Rainy Lake Watershed

**Before the Beginning
1996-1998**

IN THE BEGINNING ... Well, actually the story begins before the beginning. In 1996 a group of Rainy Lake cottagers began meeting to discuss the possibility of forming an organization to preserve the natural beauty and ecological values of Rainy Lake. When Goose Island, a pristine 300-acre island on Rainy Lake, came up for development, nearby homeowners became concerned and combined their efforts to protect this piece of unique wilderness.

In 1997 founding members of the Rainy Lake Conservancy submitted a proposal to the Ontario government's Boreal West Round Table to designate Rainy Lake crown land islands as conservation reserves. The proposal was accepted. These islands which the public continues to enjoy cannot be mined, logged or sold.

A Short History of RLC, October 2008



Goose Island, Rainy Lake (P Callaghan) ↑ ↓ Islands on Rainy Lake (M Lysne)



MISSION STATEMENT

To work with property owners, governments and local communities to preserve and protect the natural beauty, historic features, and ecological and recreational values for present and future generations, particularly within but not restricted to Rainy Lake.

Conservancy, as required by the Conservancy's newly adopted by-laws, took place July 4, 1999. The founding members of the Conservancy were elected as an interim board of directors, and five officers were installed as the first executive committee.

The executive committee consisted of Sam White, president; Bill Olson, treasurer; Phyllis Callaghan, first vice president; Peter West, second vice president, and Mary Lysne, secretary. Dale Callaghan, Norma Eberhardt, Claudia Horne, Kris Lysne, Maureen Olson and Betty Anne West served as directors on the first board.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, July 1999

The Beginning 1999

INCORPORATION ...

The Rainy Lake Conservancy received official recognition by the Ontario Government as a registered non-profit corporation. The newly formed corporation adopted a Mission Statement, clarifying its purpose and goals.

The first annual meeting of the Rainy Lake Conservancy, as required by the Conservancy's newly adopted by-laws, took place July 4, 1999. The founding



First Little Steps 2000

LEARNING TO WALK ...

Once the founding members had their Mission Statement in place, they established a committee structure that continues today to be the path by which Conservancy goals are achieved. The infant Conservancy opened itself up to memberships, adding in one year 122 members to the original list of 11 founding members.

Start-up funds from founders and new members gave the Conservancy the means to begin the business of preserving Rainy Lake by partnering with the MNR and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to sponsor a multi-year biodiversity inventory on Rainy Lake. During the first year, biologists discovered 15 species of rare plants and one rare insect, a tiger beetle.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, January 2000



Ready to Run 2001

CHARITABLE STATUS ...

On March 7, 2001, the Rainy Lake Conservancy received charitable status recognition from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. This meant that the Conservancy could issue tax receipts to Canadian donors.

In order to continue the biodiversity fieldwork, RLC applied for funding to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and received a grant of \$21,000. These funds were used to conduct biological inventory work on Rainy Lake, to share the results of the studies with the public, and to promote conservation strategies in the local communities. The study was the first comprehensive biological inventory of the Canadian side of Rainy Lake.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, June 2001

The Nature Conservancy of Canada transferred the care of Goose Island to Ontario Parks to be managed as a Provincial Nature Reserve. Under the terms of the nature reserve classification, most of the island became available for the public to enjoy for many years to come.

Background History on Goose Island, July 2008

Education and Research 2002

WATER

MONITORING ...

RLC participated for the first time in an ongoing program by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, the Great Ontario Dip-In, to measure the clarity of the province's 250,000 lakes.

The Conservancy promoted conservation through a summer-long exhibit at the Fort Frances Museum, a presentation at the International Joint commission meeting in Fort Frances, and a display at the Fort Frances Farmer's Market.

Far left: Little prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia fragilis*), rare in Ontario
Left: Prairie onion (*Allium stellatum*), rare in Ontario
Below: Tiger beetle (*Cicindela denikei*), rare in Ontario
Right: Great Ontario Dip-In water clarity testing with Secchi disk
Photos by M Lysne, Northern Bioscience and Bugguide.com



MAKING PROGRESS ...

When the Conservancy was founded, no one knew how complicated it would be for Americans to donate conservation easements on their Canadian property. Major steps had to be taken on many levels. Using a grant from the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, the Conservancy hired Ian Attridge, a land trust lawyer, to help facilitate the regulation of Bill 119, the Red Tape Reduction Act. With the regulation of Bill 119 in July, cross-border easements were made possible.

For the first time, Conservancy members tended a booth at the Fort Frances Home and Leisure Show. Lots of old time photos and plenty of conservation literature along with great camaraderie made our booth one of the busiest at the show.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, Fall 2003

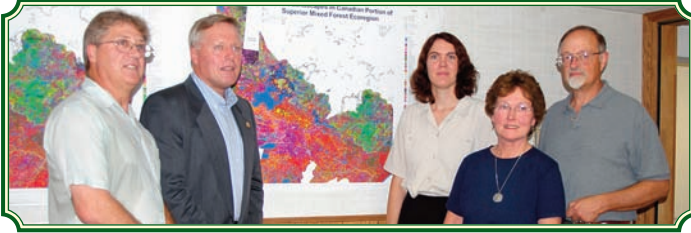
The Conservancy's own publications made their way into people's hands. Our in-house brochure went into its second printing, and our popular *Century of Wilderness Conservation* was distributed to thousands of local mailboxes.

Paving the Way 2003

Partnerships 2004

TRILLIUM GRANT ...
The Rainy Lake Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and the Rainy River Valley Field Naturalists (RRVFN) formed a partnership called the Northwestern Ontario Conservation Partnership.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, Spring 2005



Fort Frances NCC Grand Opening: Glen Treftlin (Trillium), Howard Hampton (MPP), Ilka Milne (NCC), Phyllis Callaghan (RLC), Bill Morgenstern (RRVFN)

The new partnership received a generous grant of \$48,900 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to help preserve the natural heritage of our area. The funds were used to support the NCC's new office in Fort Frances, the field naturalists' bog walk in Alberton Twp and to develop a conservation strategy and action plan for the region, including a draft conservation plan for Rainy Lake. As lead applicant, RLC was responsible for the management of the grant.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, Fall 2004

Collaboration 2005

WATER WORKS ...
By 2005 RLC volunteers were working with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, the Rainy River Community College, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Voyageurs National Park, the North Star chapter of Certified Hazardous Materials Managers, and the Voyageurs National Park Association on programs involving water quality and satellite monitoring. In addition, Conservancy volunteers helped NCC's two Volunteer for Nature interns and a local First Nations class pull Purple loosestrife from a muddy bay on Gross Island.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletters, Spring and Fall 2005



Basic water sampling tools ↑
Purple loosestrife (JD Byrd) →

Recording water samples (M Lysne)



BOGS, DOCKS, LOONS ...

One of the major goals of the 2004 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant was achieved with the opening of the Cranberry Peatlands Interpretive Trail. This trail gives the public a chance to walk safely into a bog and understand and appreciate the value of wetlands.



Dragonfly hunting in the bog ↑
Constructing loon nesting platforms ↓



Making a Difference 2006

Docktalk coordinator, Kelli Saunders provided information and onsite visits to shoreline property owners to aid in their efforts to be good stewards of the lake.

In August the docks at Red Pine Island were abuzz with activity as participants sawed, glued, fitted pipe together and assembled loon nesting platforms.

Rainy Lake Conservancy Newsletter, Fall 2006

A Great Honour 2007

SPECIAL RECOGNITION ...
The Rainy Lake Conservancy received the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Great Grants Award in the Environment category along with our partners in the Northwestern Ontario Conservation Partnership. A few months later, upon the occasion of its 25th anniversary, the Ontario Trillium



P. Callaghan (center) accepting Trillium's award

Foundation selected for special recognition their top 25 great not-for-profit grants from the foundation's 25 years of grants. We were honoured to be among the chosen 25.

A Short History of the Rainy Lake Conservancy, October 2008

When two invasive species (Spiny waterflea and Rusty crayfish) entered Rainy Lake, the Conservancy distributed literature from the MNR to help identify them and slow their spread. In keeping with RLC's focus on a healthy watershed, the Conservancy made a donation to the Rainy Lake Charity Fisheries Trust and accepted a position on its board of directors.





Lake Sturgeon

SEEKING UNDERSTANDING ...

As part of a provincial-wide program to increase hydro power, a 10 megawatt facility was proposed for the Namakan River at High Falls and Hay Rapids. The Namakan is a unique river, one of the few undammed rivers of its size in Ontario. It is home to a large population of Lake sturgeon. After careful fact-finding, the Conservancy has now taken a position that the environmental costs of damming a wild, historic river far outweigh potential benefits.

Conservancy members continued to work with the Minnesota Land Trust and Nature Conservancy of Canada to support and develop conservation programs on Rainy Lake. The Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation's board of directors approved a conservation easement on the Review Islands, funded in part by Rainy Lake Conservancy member donations.

Rainy Lake Conservancy newsletter, Spring 2007, Spring 2008

Board of Directors Executive Officers 1999-2009

These 36 hard-working people have served one or more terms as board members and/or officers.

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Paul Anderson</i> | <i>Paul Larsen</i> |
| <i>Dale Callaghan</i> | <i>Alan Lowe</i> |
| <i>Phyllis Callaghan</i> | <i>Kristefor R. Lysne</i> |
| <i>Stephen Challis</i> | <i>Mary E. Lysne</i> |
| <i>Lisa Colb</i> | <i>Gordon Martin</i> |
| <i>Donald Dickson</i> | <i>Ed McLeod</i> |
| <i>Burgess Eberhardt</i> | <i>Lois Nebergall</i> |
| <i>Norma Jean Eberhardt</i> | <i>Anne Newhart</i> |
| <i>Mary Ellis</i> | <i>Maureen M. Olson</i> |
| <i>Robert Hammar</i> | <i>William C. Olson</i> |
| <i>Patricia Hogan</i> | <i>Kate Peterson</i> |
| <i>Claudia Horne</i> | <i>Donna Romyne</i> |
| <i>Margaret Ann Hudson</i> | <i>Wallace Simpson</i> |
| <i>Elizabeth Hyatt</i> | <i>Virginia Sweatt</i> |
| <i>Marc Jackson</i> | <i>Ann Watson</i> |
| <i>Allan Juers</i> | <i>Betty Anne West</i> |
| <i>Mary Juers</i> | <i>Peter L. West</i> |
| <i>Kay Larsen</i> | <i>Samuel W. White</i> |

Notes from the President



INTO THE FUTURE ...

It has been now 10 years since a handful of persons, awakening from the dream that the beauty and integrity of this place on earth called Rainy Lake might always remain intact, were called to come to the aid of the Lake. Since there is strength in numbers and power in organization, the Rainy Lake Conservancy organization was born, and from that emerged an ever growing community of both Canadian and American summer folk and year-round persons.

To celebrate the tenth anniversary is to celebrate the devotion and commitment of all of those persons who, by their gifts of the time, talent and money needed to bring to fruition our accomplishments, sought to reciprocate for the gift: the connection to nature and the source of nurture Rainy Lake has been for them.

Going forward into the future of the watershed, my hope is that economic benefit through sustainable practice in the nearby communities will be going hand in hand with deep commitments to the preservation of the beauty and ecological integrity of these waters and lands. Those alive 100 years from now will look back and be as grateful as we have been.

Anne Newhart, President



High Falls on the Namakan River

(Pat Crimans)

This special Tenth Anniversary Edition newsletter is published by the Rainy Lake Conservancy; Mary Lysne, editor, with assistance from Anne Newhart, Phyllis Callaghan and Conservancy archives.