

## A Short History of the Rainy Lake Conservancy

In the summer of 1996 a group of Rainy Lake cottagers met to discuss the possibility of forming an organization to preserve the natural beauty and ecological values of Rainy Lake. Thought turned to action; in 1999 the Rainy Lake Conservancy (RLC) became a nonprofit Canadian organization, and in 2001 the Conservancy received charitable status from Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Since 1996, RLC has made notable contributions to conservation on Rainy Lake and in the area:

- 1997: attended meetings of the Ontario Government's Boreal West Round Table and submitted a proposal to designate crown land islands and selected mainland shorelines as Conservation Reserves.
- 1998: crown land on the islands of Rainy Lake designated by the Ontario Government as Conservation Reserves (officially regulated in the summer of 2006)
- 2000-2002: worked in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to spearhead the first comprehensive biological inventory of the Canadian side of Rainy Lake; project supported by a
  - \$21,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation
  - 2002: promoted conservation through summer-long exhibit at the Fort Frances Museum, presentation at International Joint Commission meeting in Fort Frances, and display at local Farmers Market
  - 2002: presented land protection/ conservation easements workshop to RLC members and other interested cottagers
  - 2002-2003: worked with other land trusts and the Ontario government to effect the regulation of Bill 119 which will encourage more land protection of U.S. properties in Ontario
  - 2002-2006: participated in water quality testing through the Lake Partners Program, Great Ontario Dip-In, Rainy River Community College/Minnesota Pollution Control Agency programs
  - 2005-2007: membership on Board of Directors of the Rainy Lake Fisheries Charity Trust, local organization formed to conduct fisheries research on the lake
  - 2004-2006: worked with Voyageurs National Park to help locate loon nesting sites on Rainy Lake
  - 2004-2006: lead applicant for \$48,900 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant to support establishment of the Nature Conservancy of Canada field office in Fort Frances, construction of phase one of the Rainy River Valley Field Naturalists Cranberry Peatlands Interpretive Trail, and land protection in the area through conservation easements and property acquisition
  - 2006: members participated in the Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association Dock Talk program to promote good lakeshore stewardship
  - 2007: continued to work with the Minnesota Land Trust and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to support conservation easement programs on Rainy Lake
  - 2007: received the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Great Grants Award in

the Environment category along with our partners in the Northwestern Ontario Conservation Partnership

➤ 2007: upon the occasion of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Ontario Trillium 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.

➤ 2007-current: worked with other interested organizations and individuals to research and provide input regarding the proposed dams on the Namakan River

➤ 2008: assisted with a conservation easement on Ernest Oberholtzer's Review Islands

➤ 2009: Board and officers participated in a formal assessment of the Rainy Lake Conservancy's organization conducted by the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. The Conservancy received high marks when held up to the light of the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices.

➤ 2009: Rainy Lake Conservancy celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary