

# RAINY LAKE CONSERVANCY

Preserving the Rainy Lake Watershed



## Winter 2017 Newsletter

### President's Message



I am welcoming in winter 2017 here in Philadelphia with thoughts of Rainy Lake. The Board was hard at work last fall on a Strategic Plan for 2017-2020, so we are now ready to implement it. The key program areas are: **Land Conservation** with a focus on developing a package of information for potential easement donors, a transparent review and approval process, and building a Conservation Reserve Fund so RLC is ready to support

future protection transactions; **Science & Policy** with a focus on partnering with other watershed and environmental organizations that share similar program concerns for the health of Rainy Lake, supporting research that furthers RLC's mission and networking with government officials regionally and locally; and **Education & Outreach** with a focus on developing regular newsletters, keeping the website current and enlarging our database of members and friends.

The Conservancy depends on all of our members to volunteer and help us meet our mission, so I hope that you will consider joining one of the Committees we have that mirror the Strategic Plan program areas – does not mean meetings, but would mean lending your ideas to our areas of focus – Land Conservation Committee, Science and Policy Committee and Education & Outreach Committee. Please let me know if you or anyone in your family would like to take a stint on a committee, [walleye531@verizon.net](mailto:walleye531@verizon.net).

I also especially want to thank all of you who gave year-end donations in support of the Rainy Lake Conservancy directly or through contributions to the Minnesota Land Trust's Rainy Lake Fund. Our small organization needs both monetary and volunteer support to continue to support our mission to protect the health, culture and ecology of Rainy Lake, so all is very much appreciated.

*Carolyn Wallis*

## Rainy Lake Conservancy Annual General Meeting a success



Chris Hemstad

The highlight of RLC's August 2016 AGM was a fascinating and informative presentation by Chris B. Hemstad, local teacher, geologist and author of several publications including "*A Story Written in the Rocks, the geology of Voyagers National Park*". Attendance at the meeting

was up this year as more people from the local community came out to the meeting. It was encouraging to hear positive comments from attendees about the work the conservancy is doing. Following the meeting, a number of our members expressed interest in a geology field trip next spring or summer. Chris has agreed to lead the outing. A date for the event will be posted in the Spring Newsletter and on the RLC website.

## Meet RLC's new Board Member:



**Dave Siebert** has been coming to Rainy Lake since he was barely old enough to paddle a canoe! He is one of the Echo Island clan and has made environmental science his lifelong career and passion. Dave is Director of the Bureau of Environmental

Analysis and Sustainability for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources - he truly walks the walk. Dave has enjoyed many summers as a camper and counselor at Camp Koochiching and now his daughter Olivia is a regular at Ogiche Daa Kwe, the companion girl's camp. We are excited that Dave has joined the Board and look forward to his contributions.

## **Environmental Research:**

### **The Cultural Heritage Tree Project Update:**

RLC continues to be a member of the Rainy River District Stewardship's Tree Project that is conducting inventories of trees in Fort Frances and labeling selected trees in specific areas of the town. Initially High School students took part in the project but, because of conflict with other priorities this year, they have not been available to participate. Last summer and this coming summer Stewardship Rangers will complete some of the work on the project. RLC is providing a portion of the modest funds needed to purchase the labels for the trees. Other committee members have donated their time and GPS expertise to create maps and inventories, and to place the labels on the trees. The Committee is currently reviewing the applicability of the New York software:

<https://www.geospatialworld.net/new-york-city-street-tree-map-show-location-of-each-and-every-tree/>.

This software allows the ecological benefits of each tree to be expressed as a monetary value. It illustrates energy conservation, storm water intercepting, pollution sequestering and carbon dioxide removal. RLC is supporting this effort, as part of our mission to work with local communities to preserve and protect the ecological values of our area. What better way to do this than through education!

## **Land Conservation:**

RLC is very excited to have successfully protected two more islands through Conservation Easements in 2016 – bringing our total easements to over 420 acres (6 properties) plus one 3-acre fee donation. Thanks to Kurt Lysne and his family who donated an easement to American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts for their 50-acre Copenhagen Island that looks out over the famed Rainy Lake mermaid in the South Arm. The decision to donate an easement typically involves many generations of a family participating in the conversation and weighing the benefits of conserving their property for future generations. We thank the Lysnes for this easement donation over a significant island in the South Arm.

Anne Newhart and Sally Martineau and their families also donated a Conservation Easement to American Friends on their 10.2-acre Wilderness Islands, also in the South Arm. Their parents, Goley and Helen Newhart came to Rainy Lake from Minneapolis in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the same time as Kurt's father – all were among the early summer residents of the South Arm. Sally stated that it was a relief to know that their precious islands would be free

of interference with their natural state and of inappropriate development in perpetuity.



## Networking News

### **RLC represented at International Land Conservation Network (ILCN) Conference:**



On October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2016, RLC was invited by American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts (AFCLT) to join with groups and individuals from around the world to discuss cross-border conservation issues. The group met in Minneapolis to share the lessons they've learned and their future plans for working across international borders to achieve common goals. Presenters from the European Union, United States, Mexico, Canada, Chile, the United Kingdom, Australia and other countries told fascinating stories about their challenges and successes in cross-border conservation projects. As part of the American Friends of Canadian Land Trust's seminar, Phyllis Callaghan shared the Rainy Lake story, which includes more than a century of successful cross-border conservation initiatives in our own watershed. RLC, a relatively new contributor to this history, can be proud of its pioneering efforts to facilitate Conservation Easements and land donations between the U.S. and Canada. The

results of RLC's and AFCLT's efforts will continue to serve as a model for other land trusts and perhaps even for other countries as they establish their own cross-border programs. In return, our organizations benefit greatly by learning what other countries are doing to work across borders to conserve rare species and special places around the world.

### **Stewardship and Monitoring:**



*Haymarsh Bay Island*

A special thank you to Thatcher and Joanne Peterson, Carolyn Wallis and daughter Liza and sister Helen Hayhurst, Burgess Eberhardt, and Dale and Phyllis Callaghan for monitoring the Conservation Easements on Echo Island, French Island, the Bleak Bay Property, the Channel Lot and Haymarsh Bay Island, which was donated to American Friends of Canadian Land Trusts in 2015. As part of RLC's stewardship agreements with AFCLT, our volunteers check conditions on the properties once a year and, if possible, visit with the donors. Written reports are then sent to the owners, to RLC, and to American Friends. Annual monitoring is a way of checking that the terms of the Conservation Easement Agreements are being followed and also a way of maintaining communication with the donors who have conserved their beautiful lakeshore properties for the benefit of all.

If you would like to volunteer an hour or two of your time once a year to monitor one of our two new easements, please contact Carolyn Wallis.

### **Tribute to Stephanie White:**

We lost a special member of the Rainy Lake Conservancy family this year. Stephanie White (wife of Sam White, mother to Carolyn Wallis

and Helen Hayhurst and grandmother to Dave, Pete and Carolyn Siebert and Liza and Anne Wallis) passed away in Columbus, North Carolina, just shy of 99 years old! The Rainy Lake summers clearly built in some longevity and passion to live. She was last able to get to Echo Island in 2015 – she will be remembered for her ardent support of RLC.

**Reminder: Become a member of RLC, renew your membership or make a donation online at our website:**

[www.rainylakeconservancy.org](http://www.rainylakeconservancy.org). Annual membership is \$40 Can. per family or \$30 for a single membership. Donations above and beyond membership dues are very welcome! Your dues and donations support RLC's mission to preserve the ecology, culture and historic values of the Rainy Lake Watershed. If your membership has lapsed, please consider renewing and encourage your friends and family members to join RLC.

**Donations to RLC are tax deductible for Canadians: (please make your cheque payable to the Rainy Lake Conservancy, Box 223, Fort Frances, ON P9A 3M6). US members can make a tax-deductible donation to support the work of the Rainy Lake Conservancy (much appreciated) by mailing a cheque to the Minnesota Land Trust @ 2356 University Ave. N., Suite 240 St. Paul, MN 55114 with a notation that it should be directed to the "Rainy Lake Fund".**

***The Mission of the Rainy Lake Conservancy is to work with property owners, governments, and the local communities to preserve and protect the natural beauty, historic features, ecological and recreational values for present and future generations within but not restricted to Rainy Lake.***

***A pdf of this Newsletter can be viewed and downloaded at the RLC website, click on "Newsletters", Winter 2017.***

*Newsletter Committee Members: Carolyn Wallis, Ruth Miller, Phyllis Callaghan, Margaret Ann Hudson.*