

The Preserver, February 2017

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Looking forward, looking back...

John Geale

I suppose only those who have spent significant time in Australia will recognize the title of this message as that of a well-known song by Aussie legend Slim Dusty (yes, that was really his stage name - the beloved country singer was given a state funeral when he died in September, 2003). But it is something that we all ought to do sometimes, and I'd like to look back to 2016 and forward to 2017 with respect to NLT.

Last year saw several important events and landmarks:

- our first project involving a team of students from Fleming College;
- a major species-at-risk study at four of our Nature Reserves, supported by a \$7000 grant from the Rotary Club of Cobourg;
- as President, I have made seven presentations to local service clubs and municipal councils, raising public understanding of NLT and land trusts in general;
- our own prescribed burn on the former agricultural field at the Pelton Nature Reserve;
- a revised Wallace Birdathon format raised a record \$2278;
- the completed acquisition of the 35 acre Jack van Nostrand Nature Reserve;
- our first surveys for bats - more on this on page 4;
- our largest ever, and most successful, gala dinner.

What to look for in 2017:

- we have open files on six(!) more potential acquisitions; while none may actually be completed this year, there is plenty of interest out there in NLT;
- with one more property to cover, we hope the Birdathon will be even more successful;
- another record-breaking gala dinner - more on this on page 2;
- a thorough biological inventory at the Jack van Nostrand Nature Reserve, which will eventually result in a useful management plan;
- a second Fleming College project - more on this on page 2;
- a second prescribed burn at the Pelton NR on the other two quadrants of the old field;
- and, of course, we'll be carrying out all the usual stewardship activities: invasives control, native plantings, trail and fence maintenance, tending to nest boxes, plantation thinning, and sign installation.



Checking out Jack van Nostrand NR in winter

All of this would be impossible without our members' continued support. Thank you all for this, and if you have friends who could be encouraged to join NLT, please give them a gentle nudge in our direction!

DATES WORTH SAVING

Thursday, February 16 - in collaboration with the Lone Pine Land Trust, our second speaker of this season's series will be Erica Nol, professor of biology at Trent University. She will address the question: "**Can Humans Co-exist with Songbirds in Southern Ontario?**" Please join us at the Cobourg Public Library at 7:00 pm for refreshments; Erica will begin at 7:30. These events are all free and open to the public, so do feel free bring a friend or two. Let's hope the answer to her question is "YES".



Erica Nol

Thursday, March 23 - the last speaker of this season's series. James Conolly, anthropology professor, will inform us about some interesting aspects of human settlement in Northumberland County. Same time and location as February 16.

Wednesday, June 14 - this is likely the date of our evening AGM, although it has not yet been confirmed. We suggest you tentatively set it aside now, and we will confirm asap.

Wednesday, October 25 - the 2017 Annual Gala Dinner. We are delighted to announce that our speaker will be David Phillips, Senior Climatologist at Environment Canada. With last summer's severe drought, this year's warm, dull January, other extreme weather events, and climate change to draw upon, he will have ample material for an interesting evening. In anticipation of a large crowd, we are moving to the Best Western in Cobourg. You may wish to put the date on your calendar now, and you can already reserve your ticket by speaking to any Board member; online purchase will be available shortly.

CREDIT FOR PRODUCT (C4P) - another project with Fleming College



This year's team from Fleming's School of Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences consists of Kieran Sharkey, Jennifer Nieuwland and Daniel Featherstone (left to right in photo).

Their project is to research what cavity-nesting bird species that could occur in the habitats on our Pelton Nature Reserve might make use of a nest box of suitable dimensions, and then to build and install boxes for six different species. At this point they are well into their research and have begun looking into acquiring building materials for boxes of appropriate sizes. They will be working closely with our Pelton Steward, Tom Jackman, and are planning to make a presentation to the Board of Directors at our April 12 meeting. We look forward to welcoming some additions to the nest box users on this property.

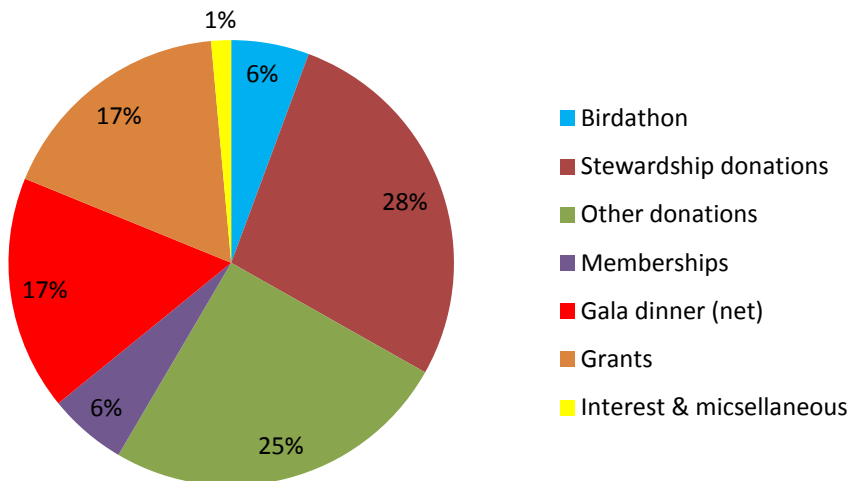
NEW APPOINTMENT

We are pleased that Tom Jackman (pictured to right), our Pelton Steward, will be our representative on the Board of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists. Tom will keep both organizations up to date on issues and activities of mutual interest. We feel it is important to maintain a close link with our "parent" organization, and we thank Tom for providing this service.



THE 2016 FINANCIAL YEAR

Funds we received:

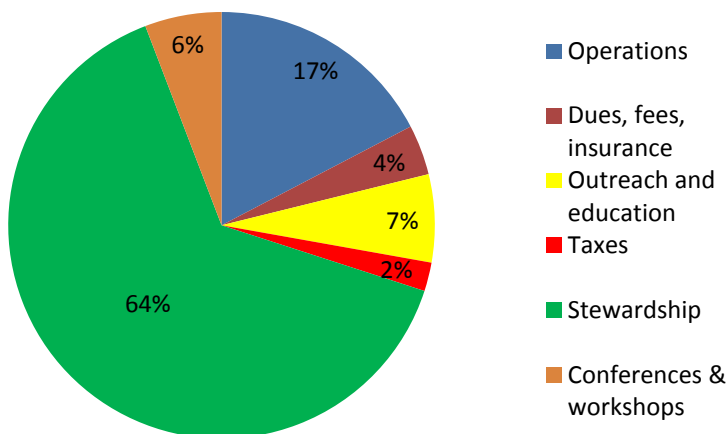


Total income: \$40,256

Notes:

1. We received some unexpected donations last year, including over \$1000 in memory of Pat Lawson, a long-time supporter.
2. Many donations were specifically directed towards stewardship.
3. Most of the grant money was accounted for by the \$7000 we received from the Cobourg Rotary Club.

Our expenses:



Total expenses: \$26,811

Notes:

1. Once again, you can see that the lion's share of our expenses goes towards stewardship activity.
2. Our tax situation is very favourable - owners and the local school board pay some, taxes are reduced on two (soon to be three) Nature Reserves because they fall under the Conservation Lands Tax Incentive Program, and taxes on the one remaining property are very low.

The excess of income over expenses allows us to augment two plans:

1. Over time, we need to build up our Stewardship reserve fund so that we can carry out appropriate activity without continually having to raise funds just for this purpose. Among Land Trusts, it is common to set aside about 20% of the value of each property in a stewardship endowment fund.
2. It has been recommended that we establish a significant legal defense fund. If we ever had any serious legal issue to deal with, it could be very expensive. We have established such a fund, and hope to add to it regularly. So far, we have been fortunate not to have any such issues, but it is wise to be prepared.

BAT SURVEY RESULTS

Toby Thorne, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance's (OLTA's) bat specialist, has provided us with the results of last summer's bat surveys.

The table below shows the combined counts from the three visits for each site. The numbers reflect the number of call sequences recorded, rather than the number of bats, i.e. 10 sequences could be 10 bats recorded once, or one bat recorded 10 times, or somewhere in



Hoary Bat

between. It's not perfect, but works out as a reasonable measure of activity. Perhaps in the future, scientists will be able to distinguish individual bats from their voices, but with current technology just identifying species is often very difficult. In fact, Big Brown and Silver-haired Bats have a fair degree of overlap in their calls, hence the large number that couldn't be distinguished and had to be simply recorded as "Big Brown or Silver-haired".

	Big Brown or Silver-haired	Big Brown	Eastern Red	Hoary	Silver-haired
McEwen NR	122	21	8	25	1
Pelton NR	73	35	0	0	0

Although no at-risk species were recorded on either of these sites, Toby reports that these are good numbers of bats. In fact, of all the sites that OLTA surveyed, McEwen had the second highest activity. It also had the greatest number of Hoary Bat observations and an above average number of Eastern Red Bats. Although not officially 'at risk', these species are nonetheless facing threats, so it's great to be recording them.

Chris Ketola, a new member of the Stewardship Team, has agreed to repeat these surveys this year, so we will have a good comparison. If you would like to accompany Chris on one or more surveys (probably in June or July), please contact him at chrisketola@hotmail.com or phone John Geale at 905-342-3851.

MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM - 2017 MEMBERSHIPS ARE NOW DUE

You may now submit your membership and make donations using your credit card: please go to nltrust.ca and click on the "Pay Membership" button; this will allow you to use PayPal or CanadaHelps. Otherwise:

Please fill out the form below. Make cheques payable to "Northumberland Land Trust", and mail them along with this form to: Northumberland Land Trust, P. O. Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5A4

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other: _____

Last name _____ First name(s) _____

Address _____

Number and Street

City/town

Postal code

Telephone _____ e-mail _____

Individual: \$25 Family: \$40 Supporting: \$50 Corporate: \$100

Donation: \$100 \$250 Other _____ I wish to remain anonymous