



**2023-2024**

# **IMPACT REPORT**

**RESILIENT LANDS, RESILIENT PEOPLES**





**OLTA** is a registered charity whose **mission** is to empower a vibrant and enduring land trust community in Ontario.

**Our vision** is a landscape rich with connected and protected spaces, supported by a thriving conservation community.

Our strategic priorities are to:

- **promote** land trust organizational excellence
- increase the **influence** and visibility of community land conservation
- promote leadership to **advance** equity, diversity, and inclusion in all land trust practices, and
- **grow** our organizational capacity to continue to serve the land trust community



*rare Charitable Research Reserve lands and waters conserved with the support of Greenlands Conservation Partnership*



*Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust lands and waters conserved with the support of Greenlands Conservation Partnership*

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Through all its work, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) acknowledges and is grateful to all the original stewards of the land. For many thousands of years, Indigenous Peoples inhabited, cared for and used these lands and waters by applying original instructions, Indigenous knowledge systems and laws, and they continue to do so. OLTA also acknowledges those Indigenous Peoples, and other peoples who currently live, work, play and learn on the lands around us. We are grateful to work in this community, and we remain dedicated to the continuous journey of reconciliation with all Indigenous peoples.

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Front cover photos: OLTA staff - 1, our Conserving Species At Risk team monitoring for grassland birds, summer 2024; 2, Escarpment Biosphere Conservancy property, summer 2024





**Ian Attridge**  
**Chair**



**Alison Howson**  
**Executive Director**

# IN GRATITUDE AND COMMUNITY

This year, OLTA has continued to strengthen our operations and nurture a thriving land trust community, both here in Ontario and beyond, with our national Alliance of

Canadian Land Trusts and partners. We have delivered new programming, increased our collaborative efforts and promoted land trust organizational excellence. We continue to focus on actions to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, while also making progress to reduce barriers and build meaningful reconciliation in the land trust community and our wider communities.

Ontario Land Trust Alliance continued to deepen relationships of mutual collaboration with Indigenous communities, leaders, and elders. We worked to build understanding and opportunities so that land trusts can be vehicles not only for preserving biodiversity and enhancing climate resilience, but also for building real reconciliation and equity in Ontario and reducing barriers to Indigenous led conservation efforts.

Capacity building has continued to be a key focus of our work this year. From workshops to webinars, from working groups to one-on-one support, we continued to help land trust staff and boards build skills, create networks of support, and align their work with the Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices.

This year, through the highly impactful Greenlands Conservation Partnership and Nature Smart Climate Solutions Program, with our provincial and federal partners, we advanced our pace in conserving sensitive habitats and species, connecting people with nature and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Local and regional land trusts now protect an incredible 59,000 hectares of lands in Ontario.

We are hugely grateful for all the donors, funders and sponsors who make our work possible. We are also thankful to our members and all of you, for the inspiration, and many connections and engagement of this dedicated community - these touch points keep us focused and driving towards our shared goals.

We are excited to continue to work together in the coming year, towards our renewed strategic priorities, co-creating healthier and more just communities.





# PROMOTING LAND TRUST ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

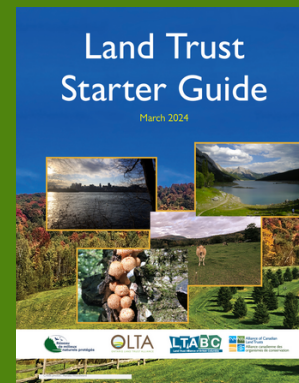
The Government of Ontario's **Greenlands Conservation Partnership** helps conservation leaders like OLTA to **conserve ecologically important natural areas** and provide more **access to nature for more people**. Since 2020, OLTA has supported securement of 60 new properties, and protection of over 5,000 hectares, in partnership with land trusts, donors and supporters, supporting habitat for over 100 species at risk, and providing access to less sensitive areas for Ontarians to get into nature.

**60**  
projects since 2020,  
**17**  
in 2023-2024

**5,083**  
hectares secured  
since 2020  
**1,676**  
hectares secured  
in 2023-2024

**450+** participants enhanced their understanding and capacity through training sessions **on conservation easement agreements, geographic information systems, governance and operations, internal controls, monitoring greenhouse gas reductions, and more.**

We provided direct technical support to land trusts for activities relating to **conservation planning, securement, monitoring and stewardship.**



We collaborated to develop and share resources, like the updated starter kit.

## Gathering 2023

“The focus on the most pressing aspects of land trust communities was needed and appreciated -- diversity and Indigenous relations.”



Dr. Jacqueline L. Scott inspired us with her keynote presentation, **“Land Trusts: Building a Bridge Between Conservation and Social Justice”**.

“The conference was really well organized and I enjoyed the range of topics and speakers.”





## OLTA's Nature Smart Climate Solutions

**Program** reduces greenhouse gas emissions by **securing or restoring carbon-rich ecosystems**.

By protecting habitat that is at risk of conversion, this program **keeps carbon in the ground** while also providing benefits to biodiversity. In the first two years of the program, we have worked with **12 land trust partners** to secure or restore **over 1,800 hectares** of carbon-rich forests, wetlands, and grasslands. This program is supported by Environment and Climate Change Canada, and matched by many donors and other supporters.

**36**  
projects  
in partnership with  
**12**  
land trusts

**1,827**  
hectares of land  
secured or  
restored

Collecting soil  
samples to assess  
carbon storage  
potential



Through our **Capacity Building** program, 25 land trusts received training on **Assessing Your Organization** through our workshops and direct workbook support this year, helping land trusts strengthen their policies and procedures.

“ —

In addition to improving my awareness of the Canadian Land Trust Standards & Practices, this has been an excellent exercise in reviewing our own policies!

-- Mississippi Madawaska  
Land Trust

The **Conserving Species At Risk** (CSAR) program helped increase knowledge of bat, bird, turtle and snake populations, and improved habitat for Species At Risk on **46** land trust properties.

Setting up a  
monitor to record  
bats and birds,  
Northumberland  
Land Trust

Bobolink



**8** land trusts benefited from funding from our Species At Risk Action Fund (SARAF) to improve and restore habitat.

**Long Point Basin Land Trust** used SARAF to support an ongoing dune and oak savannah restoration.



# INCREASING VISIBILITY OF COMMUNITY LAND CONSERVATION

This year we continued to strengthen relationships with provincial and federal elected officials and staff, to advocate for greater supports for land trusts in Ontario and Canada, in collaboration with key partners. We highlighted the many ways that land trusts contribute to provincial and national priorities, including biodiversity and climate action.

We also worked with the Alliance of Canadian Land Trusts, provincial alliances and other partners to develop new, bold initiatives to scale our impact.



OLTA at the landmark joint announcement of federal investment to support expansion of protected areas in the province.



OLTA staff led or partnered in community events like this one connecting new Toronto hikers with nature and land trusts.



We advocated for funding for nature conservation at **Nature On the Hill**.

**6000+**  
reached through  
newsletter and  
social media  
channels

We increased engagement across all media this year, with action alerts, 20+ media stories, including news articles and media releases with land trusts and other partners.

We are excited to share that a large public engagement campaign is in development, in collaboration with land trusts and other partners, to build public awareness of the critical role private land conservation plays in building the world we want and depend upon.



# ADVANCING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN THE LAND TRUST COMMUNITY

OLTA is committed to making change to ensure that equity-seeking groups are seen and represented in all elements of our work and community. This year we finalized and shared diversity, equity, inclusion and justice policies and public commitments, which keep us accountable as we make progress.

Our board and staff continued to change our policies and practices, based on learnings through regular meetings, guided webinars, community sharing and sharing individual actions.

We continued to make space to advance Indigenous-led conservation efforts in Ontario, and Canada, by working to build trust, advocating for change and providing spaces for Indigenous voices to lead and be heard.



We offered resources and knowledge sharing to Indigenous-led land trusts when invited, and provided Indigenous-led learning opportunities to settler-led land trusts.



With our community partners, we coordinated six well-attended events through **Engaging New Canadians and Diverse Communities with Nature** in 2023-2024.

## Our Partners:



In 2023-2024 we created a working group in collaboration with BIPOC and LGBTQ2S+ community members, to help us identify areas of opportunity for creating meaningful change. We have adopted accountable space guidelines and are creating resource groups to provide more supportive spaces within our community.



# GROWING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT THE LAND TRUST COMMUNITY

We continue to build our people power, to better support you, with a growing diverse team of volunteers and staff. Our team now encompasses new development and granting professionals this year, and next year will include new land securement, data management and Indigenous engagement team members, to help strengthen our capacity and continue to improve our services to the land trust community.

4 staff      12 staff  
2020      2024



**Our Board of Governors, 2023-2024**

**Our staff, 2023-2024**



Our monthly in-person meetings are an opportunity to connect and collaborate more deeply.

OLTA staff continued to build our capacity through trainings like the Reptile and Amphibian Monitoring course, as well as Engagement Organizing 101, software training, and more.



**Staff and Board Retreat 2024**





# OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

**1650**

properties  
protected

**51**

member land  
trusts and  
associates

**75,676**

hectares  
protected  
(187,000 acres)

OLTA supported 38 securements this year, including 366 hectares now stewarded by Thunder Bay Field Naturalists, secured with support from the Greenlands Conservation Partnership.



OLTA helps all land trusts advocate for better policies and processes, and more funds to secure, monitor and steward critical farmland and green spaces, like these lands owned by Muskoka Conservancy.



**454,100+**

people engaged  
through events, social  
media and newsletters,  
workshops, and  
**over 1 million**  
as trail users

habitats  
protected for  
over

**100**

species at risk



Gattinger's  
Agalinis



# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Revenue	2023-2024	2022-2023
Government grants	\$8,667,690	\$6,226,138
Private grants	\$82,859	\$86,203
Other grants	0	\$5,168
Memberships	\$66,286	\$60,616
Special events	\$4,864	0
Annual conference/summit	\$69,784	\$87,159
Donations	\$7,796	\$11,391
Project fees, workshops, and other revenue	\$45,701	\$38,635
Total revenue	\$8,944,980	\$6,515,310
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
Operations, communications, member services	\$229,299	\$83,069
Grant and project disbursements	\$8,160,571	\$5,671,505
Education, training, capacity building	\$567,032	\$637,388
Annual conference/summit	\$54,430	\$76,588
Total expenses	\$9,011,332	\$6,468,520

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	2023-2024	2022-2023
<b>Current assets</b>	<b>\$1,991,906</b>	<b>\$1,479,916</b>
(cash, accounts receivable, pre-paid expenses)		
<b>Current liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,600,301</b>	<b>\$1,021,959</b>
(accounts payable and accrued liabilities, deferred revenue)		
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>\$391,605</b>	<b>\$457,957</b>

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 GATHERING SPONSORS AND AUCTION DONORS!





# THANK YOU!

It is through your generous support that we are able to empower a vibrant and enduring conservation community



## OUR DONORS

- Annette Demers
- Beth Gilhespy
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- In Honour of Kubes Family
- In Honour of Isaiah, Nikki, Maya, Owen, Ruth, Nathan
- In memory of Betty Learmouth
- Alison Howson
- Chris Baines
- George Boddington
- Lori Mark
- Sandra Tassel
- Stephanie Sobek-Swant
- Art Gallery of Ontario
- Hockey Hall of Fame
- Muskoka Brewery
- Patagonia
- The Haunted Walk
- Urban Nature Store
- Wellington Brewery

## OUR SUPPORTERS

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