



**ESCARPMENT  
CORRIDOR ALLIANCE**  
South Georgian Bay's Regional Land Trust

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Photo Courtesy of Brian Hunt

# Message from the Executive Director

**2025 will be remembered as the year the ECA's work was literally put on the map.**

Days after we became a conservation land trust, including becoming one of four Niagara Escarpment Commission Approved Conservation Organizations, we closed on the ECA's first nature preserve: Sandy's Summit near Metcalfe Rock in Kolapore. As a land trust, the ECA can now protect land by title, ensuring sensitive habitats are preserved and degraded habitats are restored.

In 2025, the ECA played a key role in the conservation of the former Talisman Mountain Resort, welcoming the Bruce Trail Conservancy to take on long-term preservation and restoration. This reflects the power of collaborative community conservation and positions us for continued momentum in 2026. The 2025 Nature Corridor Summit was a standout, full of powerful knowledge sharing, ideas, and inspiration. We also began building meaningful relationships with the Chippewa Tri-Council Nations and Saugeen Ojibway Nation. Early, but important steps that are helping share a more thoughtful, responsible approach to conservation work in a good way. On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors, our sincere gratitude goes out to our generous and loyal donors who have made all of these achievements possible.

Happy Trails,



Jarvis Strong, Executive Director



# Message From the President and Chair, Board of Directors

**The ECA began with a simple but ambitious goal: to build a strong voice for conservation across the Southern Georgian Bay region.**

From there, we have worked to establish a credible scientific foundation and to grow a broad base of community support. With the protection of Sandy's Summit, we have now taken an important next step from advocacy to stewardship. A recent land ceremony led by Indigenous Elders and First Nations partners, marked a powerful and humbling moment that grounded the Escarpment Corridor Alliance's stewardship work in shared responsibility and deeper purpose. Having helped to found the ECA just four years ago, it is remarkable to see how far we have come. This milestone reflects the commitment of many, our staff, Board, partners, and, most importantly, our donors who have supported this work every step of the way.

As a conservation land trust, we are now positioned to build something enduring. The opportunity ahead is to protect and connect landscapes in a way that creates a lasting legacy. Looking ahead to 2026 and beyond, our focus is clear: to deepen relationships, expand partnerships, and continue growing a community of people committed to this shared purpose. Through thoughtful collaboration and sustained effort, we believe we can make a meaningful and lasting difference in protecting this extraordinary region.

With Gratitude,



Bruce Harbinson  
President, Board of Directors



Stephen Griggs  
Chair, Board of Directors



# 2025: FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

2025 marked a pivotal year for the ECA, as we expanded from advocacy into action, becoming South Georgian Bay's regional land trust. Key milestones included becoming an NEC Approved Conservation Organization and registration in Canada's Ecological Gift Program. At the same time, the ECA strengthened its foundation by expanding its team, advancing conservation efforts, and growing community and donor support.

## CONSERVATION

- Became South Georgian Bay's regional conservation land trust
- Permanently protected 24 acres of Niagara Escarpment (Sandy's Summit)
- Protected critical habitat for 5 Species at Risk
- Protected 2 Provincial Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest
- Began habitat restoration and wildlife monitoring efforts
- Improved habitat connectivity and resilience for 8 Species at Risk
- Actively promoted Ontario's Protected Area Expansion to protect thousands of acres of crown land in SGB region
- Was a leading ally in conservation to the Bruce Trail Conservancy's acquisition of the former Talisman Mountain Resort lands, helping to secure and permanently protect 134 acres in the Beaver Valley

**24**  
Acres of land protected

**8,671**  
Acres of land protected with ECA support

## COLLABORATION

- 50+ partners engaged across the region
- Hosted 11 events with 650+ people in attendance
- 300+ participants attended our annual Nature Corridor Summit
- Established active relationships with 5+ First Nations and Indigenous partners

**650+**  
Attended ECA events

## CAPACITY

- Secured \$444,870 in grants
- Secured \$1,776,500 in financial and in-kind donations
- Expanded our staff team by 2 adding a Conservation Director and Operations & Administration Manager
- Launched Evergreen Circle for Legacy Giving Intentions

**+100%**  
Increased Staff Capacity

# CONSERVATION



Permanently protected **24** acres of the Niagara Escarpment



Protected critical habitat for **5** Species at Risk



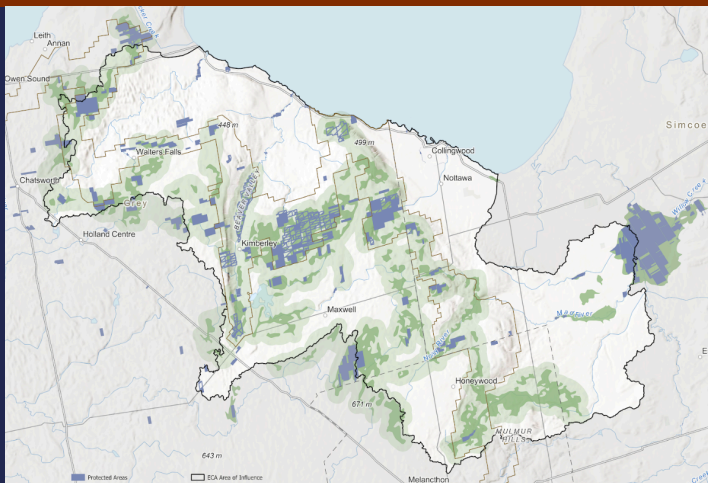
Protected **2** Provincial Areas of Natural Land and Scientific Interest



**8** Species at Risk benefited from improved habitat connectivity



In 2025, the ECA made meaningful strides in advancing conservation, combining science, collaboration, and community to evaluate, identify, and preserve ecologically sensitive land. We expanded our regional science efforts including an evaluation of the Kimberley Wetlands and the drafting of a Species at Risk Action Plan. Together, these efforts are strengthening habitat connectivity, supporting the recovery of at-risk species, and guiding future conservation priorities across the ECA's Area of Influence.



# PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, the ECA continued to grow a strong and connected conservation community. We engaged with partners and allies across the region, recognizing that lasting impact is built through collaboration and shared purpose. Hundreds of participants attended ECA events, our second annual Nature Corridor Summit brought together over 300 attendees, and the ECA remained active in the community through local gatherings, events, and initiatives, expanding our reach and deepening relationships.



The ECA made strong progress in building its Indigenous engagement foundation, completing an Indigenous Relationship Plan, Treaty and Traditional Rights research, and ongoing outreach and communications. The ECA also deepened Indigenous relationships through collaboration and trust, including a successful Indigenous Leadership in Conservation panel at the Summit.



Established relationships with:

- Chippewas of Rama First Nation
- Saugeen Ojibway Nation and Environment Office
- Six Nations of the Grand River
- Huron-Wendat Nation
- Chippewas of Nawash



## Board of Directors

Bruce Harbinson, President  
 Stephen Griggs, Chair  
 Tom Eisenhauer, Treasurer  
 Dale Biddell  
 Ted Crysler  
 Jane Pyper  
 Mike Robbins  
 Martin Rydlo  
 David Scoon  
 Gillian White  
 Ian Whitton

## Staff

Amy Billingham  
 Operations Manager  
 Kaci Boyes  
 Social Media Coordinator  
 Laura Page-Hamelin  
 Communications Manager  
 Jarvis Strong  
 Executive Director  
 Carolyn Thickett  
 Conservation Director



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

As a newly established land trust, 2026 will focus on both growth and improvements as we expand our conservation work to include long-term land stewardship, habitat restoration, and Species at Risk monitoring at Sandy's Summit Nature Preserve. With plans to preserve additional lands, enhance trails for community connection, strengthen and build partnerships, and increase fundraising capacity, we are building the foundation needed to leave a legacy.

## CONSERVATION

- Protecting 5 new properties and/or conservation easements
- Initiate invasive species control and restore native cover at Sandy's Summit
- Identify provincially significant wetlands to enhance preservation



## COLLABORATION

- Build the Partners in Conservation Program by guiding stewardship projects on private land
- Enhance trail systems on newly secured properties to strengthen community connection
- Host inaugural Annual Community Update event
- Launch a new initiative supporting farmers and sustainable agriculture
- Build a deeper understanding of the historical and present day relationships Indigenous communities hold with the lands held and stewarded by the ECA
- Create an Indigenous Advisory Circle and other opportunities for Indigenous worldviews to shape decision making by the ECA
- Strengthen relationships with various outdoor recreation user groups including anglers and hunters



## CAPACITY

- Raise a minimum of \$1.5 million in 2026 to achieve conservation goals enabling the ECA to preserve more land
- Grow our Bedrock Donor Group: multi-year pledges offering reliable support that strengthen our foundation and provide flexibility required to act swiftly
- Stewardship Endowment Fund: dedicated capital for long-term care of our Nature Preserves, including restoration, legal protection, monitoring, and property taxes
- Add professional fundraising capacity to our staff team



# 2025 FINANCIALS

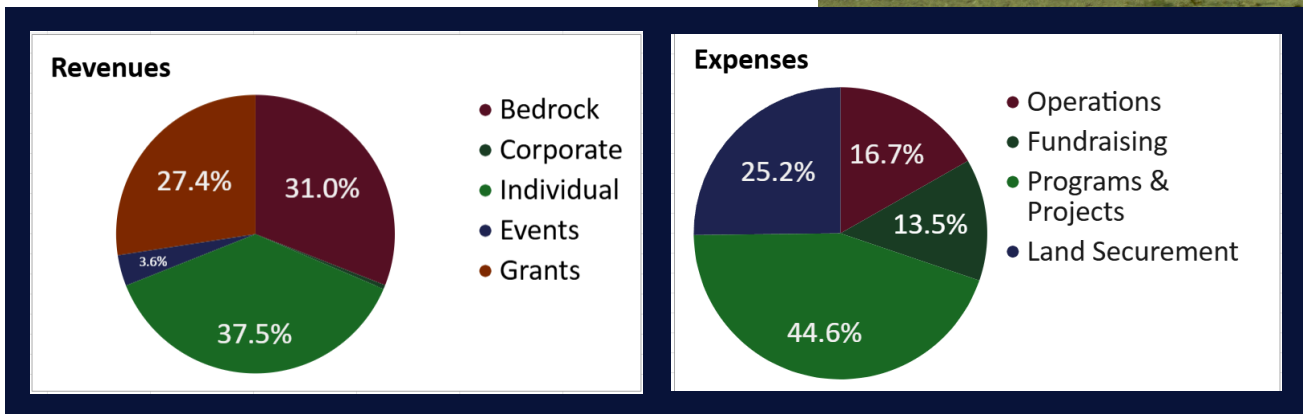
2025 was an incredible year for the ECA, made possible by the generosity and commitment of our community. Our Bedrock Donors contributed 31% of our total revenue, providing steady, foundational support for our work. Individual donations accounted for 37.5%, while grants from foundations, organizations, and municipalities represented 27.4% of our funding.

We are deeply grateful to every donor and partner who believes in this work. Your support ensures we can preserve and steward this landscape for generations to come.

<b>Cash Donations:</b>	<b>\$1,169,915</b>
Mission & Program Expenses:	\$434,288
Operations & Fundraising:	\$259,421
Total Expenses:	\$693,709
Cash Surplus:	\$476,206
Unrestricted:	\$245,411
Restricted:	\$160,828
Land donations:	\$625,000
<b>Excess over Expenses:</b>	<b>\$1,100,205</b>



Photo By: Andrew Interisano @theotterbiography



In 2025, 44.6% of our revenues were invested directly into projects and programs that advance our conservation mission, 16.7% supported essential operations, and 13.5% was allocated to fundraising and marketing to ensure long-term sustainability and growth. 25.2% was invested into our first land acquisition. Overall, 70% of funds raised went directly to mission activities.



# DONORS & SUPPORTERS

**Thank you to our incredible donors and supporters!**

## **Bedrock Donor Group**

*\$10,000+ multi-year gifts that sustain the core expenses behind ECA's work.*

Dale Biddell  
Butterfield Family Foundation  
Tom & Nancy Eisenhauer

The Harris-Taylor Family Foundation  
The Langar Foundation  
The Norman and Marian Robertson  
Charitable Foundation

Liz Rykert & John Sewell  
Maris Uffelmann  
WC Kitchen Family Foundation

## **Land Donors**

Clayton & Ian Scott

## **Evergreen Circle for Legacy Giving**

Bruce Harbinson  
Liz Rykert  
Jarvis Strong  
Carolyn Thickett

## **Foundations & Corporate**

Chisholm Thomson Family Foundation  
Community Futures South Georgian Bay  
Craigleith Cares Foundation  
The Dickhout Family Foundation  
Echo Foundation  
Grey Northern Powerline Inc.  
Greenbelt Foundation  
Longview Asset Management Ltd.  
Loretta Rogers Foundation  
McCarthy Hansen & Company LLP  
Nature Canada  
Niagara Escarpment Foundation  
Ontario Conservation Accelerator  
Paul Chapman RBC Wealth Management  
Peggy Staite-Wong Community Foundation  
Power Corporation of Canada  
RBC Foundation  
The Ross Mitchell Family Foundation  
ServiceBuilt Corporation  
South Georgian Bay Innovation Fund

## **Donors who gave \$1,000+**

Douglas Barrett  
Rod Barrett  
Jeannie Baxter  
Joslyn Biggins  
Jeff Black  
Peter Blaiklock  
Jody Bowle-Evans  
Andy & Beth Burgess  
John Chippindale  
Kerry Connelly  
Ted Crysler  
Gordon Currie  
David & Ann Doritty  
Joanne & Ian Duff  
Andrew & Gayle Duncanson  
Janet Ellis  
Paul Gregory  
Ian & Judy Griffin  
Stephen & Cathy Griggs  
Bruce Harbinson & Gill Cameron  
Dorris Heffron  
Andrew Heintzman  
Kathleen Heithorn-Althoff  
David Hill  
Elizabeth & Jaime Hugessen  
Elizabeth & Garry Johnston  
Jennifer Keenan  
Edward Kernaghan

Leigh & George Knowles  
George & Pam Kinzie  
Kate Lazier & Jane Pyper  
Katy Leighton  
Rob Leverty  
Thomas & Susan Main  
Theresa McDiarmid  
Reet McGovern Shearer &  
Jeff Shearer  
Linda McNally  
David Middleton  
Anne & Robert Morash  
Andrea Most  
Henry & Diane Nelles  
Joan Nuffield  
Bo & Brian Penny  
Mike Robbins  
Lindsay Rogan & John Scott  
Bill Ross  
Martin Rydlo  
David Scoon & Ann Kerr  
Judi Sheppard  
Jarvis Strong  
Judie & Trevor Thom  
Stephanie & Jeremy Thompson  
Kevin Towers & Lianne Krakauer  
Robin Vaile  
Ian Whitton  
Sandra Wismer  
Paul Woolner & Roberta Mohler

*Only donors who provided consent  
are listed in the Annual Report.*

## **The Griffin Challenge Fund**

Launched in December 2025, Ian and Judy Griffin  
are focused on inspiring new conservation philanthropists

## **Escarpment Corridor Alliance**

[www.myescarpment.ca](http://www.myescarpment.ca) | [info@myescarpment.ca](mailto:info@myescarpment.ca) | 705-441-3346  
Registered charity #76571 8309 RR0001



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