



REVIEW

SPRING-SUMMER 2025

2023-24 Annual Report Inside!

Sunflowers at Springbank Farm
Taken by Devon Crowell

Land Acknowledgement

The *rare* Charitable Research Reserve stewards over 1,450 acres of land, but we are not the first to do so. Most of the land currently in our care is located within the Haldimand Tract, which spans six miles on either side of the Grand River and is the territory of the Onkwehon:we Peoples of the Six Nations of the Grand River. It is also territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit Anishinaabe First Nation. In addition, we steward land at the border of the Upper Canada Treaty No. 3 and Treaty 19 from 1818 which is also territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit Anishinaabe First Nation. We honour and respect the sovereignty of these First Nations and their ancestors. The lands we steward are home to many other First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have moved to the area from across Turtle Island.

As a settler-founded and -led organization, we make this land acknowledgement in admission of the cultural and historical harm inflicted by settlers on Indigenous Peoples that has led to generational trauma and systemic injustices that persist to this day, including the dispossession of land. We acknowledge that the lands we live on, work on and derive benefit from were taken away from the original stewards, and it is our goal to restore that connection and to work towards building ethical, reciprocal relationships with the local First Nations of the lands where *rare* is situated.

We commit to learning about and acting on our responsibilities as settlers of these lands and unlearning our cultural and historical biases that contributed to making these systemic injustices possible in what we now call Canada. ■□

Who We Are, What We Do and Why We Do It

The *rare* Charitable Research Reserve is a community-based urban land trust and environmental research and education institute which stewards more than 1,450 acres of land across nine properties in Waterloo Region and Wellington County.

By working with people throughout our community, including local Indigenous Peoples, *rare's* staff, advisors and volunteers we seek to protect environmentally sensitive lands and landscapes for the health and benefit of the local environment, wildlife and current and future generations. Using diverse ways of knowing, we seek to educate the community in the importance our natural areas have in building climate resilience and fostering the health of the environment and all who live within it.

We believe in honouring place, in conserving biodiversity, in embracing Indigenous knowledge and in committing to relationships and Indigenous resurgence. We believe in strengthening science, in building diverse, equitable and inclusive communities and in training the next generation to steward these lands for the benefit of all. We seek to offer the community—including Indigenous Peoples, the international community and future generations—not only a diverse network of connected natural areas, but a model of conservation that demonstrates the link between ecological integrity and economic stability, which is critical for the enhancement and quality of life of the planet. ■□

Background Photo: Arbour entrance to Springbank Farm, photo by Devon Crowell.

Message from the Board Chair

As I write, the Slit Barn is abuzz with the annual Plant Sale. Like many of you, I'm admiring my chosen seedlings and already thinking ahead to the abundance they will produce in my garden.

I'm also pondering all the ideas that came up this week during the Board's annual retreat to discuss the next 5-year Strategy & Planning report that, this year, coincides with a major Master Planning effort. The atmosphere was full of



possibility and the Board is grateful that so many of you are responding to requests for input—and that *rare* staff are so skilled and motivated to think ahead with such inspiration.

We need strategy; we need plans. But while our goals chart hopeful directions, the deeper integrity of our work will be shaped by how we listen, how we adapt and how we remain accountable to the land and to our many communities. As with all our work, we know some forms of progress will not be measurable and some moments of failure will be fertile.

As we look to the future and what we hope to accomplish in the next phase of *rare's* development, we begin with the question:

"How do we want to live?" The answer lies in the land—being on it, respecting it and engaging with it and each other, in spaces that offer room for collaboration and collision, through programs as well as spontaneous encounters and activations. Watch for changes, big and small, at the Reserve as *rare's* Conservation Campus takes shape.

There is a lot to be done, but with your continued input and support, we are looking forward to the challenges. In the meantime, I hope our paths will cross at *rare*—perhaps at the Long Dash Festival that begins on July 26!

With gratitude,

Joy ■■

Message from the Executive Director

Dear friends and supporters,

As spring unfurls and the first little flowers are showing their colourful faces in a landscape that is slowly waking up after what felt like a long winter, I can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude for everything blooming at *rare*. Each day, our work deepens through new partnerships, new stewards of the land and the quiet, steady care that makes this place so unique. Together, we are growing a stronger, more connected future.

This past year has been filled with inspiring moments. From the energy of *rare* youth attending the Ontario Nature Youth Summit for Mother Earth, to the generosity of community members who rolled up their sleeves to tackle invasive species (roots and all!), to the vibrant buzz at our Springbank Farm Hub as volunteers and staff cultivated thousands of pounds of fresh, local produce



for the Cambridge Food Bank—*rare* is alive with action, purpose and heart.

Most excitingly, we welcomed our largest land gift to date with the permanent protection of Schneider's Woods and we are looking forward to kicking off summer by hosting researchers and educators who will explore the complexities of land-based learning and conservation through new lenses. The stories featured in this newsletter are just a small window into the breadth of *rare's* work—and the communities that make it possible.

Of course, none of this happens in isolation. Every planting, every turtle sighting, every shared meal or muddy boot print tells the story of people coming together in relationship with land and with each other. I've often said that *rare* is more than a nature reserve—it's a living laboratory and most importantly, an invitation. A place to learn, to restore, to wonder and to belong.

This summer marks a turning point as we prepare to launch our 2025 - 2030 Strategy and Plans—a bold, joyful vision for the

future of *rare*. Rooted in our principles of Stewardship & Place, Braiding & Belonging, Learning & Inquiring and Abundance, the plan lays out how we'll grow over the next five years: through deepened partnerships, expanded education and training opportunities, a reimagined *rare* Conservation Campus and a renewed focus on welcoming people of all backgrounds to find their place in this work.

In a time when climate change, habitat loss and disconnection from nature challenge us all, *rare* offers something powerful: a unique method of conservation and the belief that a different way is not only possible, but already happening—through you.

Thank you for being part of this journey. I hope this season brings you into closer relationship with the land, with your community and with the beautiful work that we're creating together.

Warmest wishes and have a lovely summer, Stephanie ■■

Unforgettable Days in Nature: Youth Summit for Mother Earth Connects Ontario's Young Conservationists Through Nature, Culture and Adventure!

By Natalie Quinn
rEYN Member

In the summer of 2024, a summit was organized by the Youth Circle for Mother Earth Project to bring together like-minded youth with an interest in nature and conservation. From September 13 to 15, youth leaders from across Ontario came together at Tawingo Outdoor Centre on the traditional territories of the Ojibway, the Chippewa, the Algonquin and the Odawa. I was one of the two people chosen to attend from the *rare* Environmental Youth Network (rEYN) and wow, what a weekend to remember!

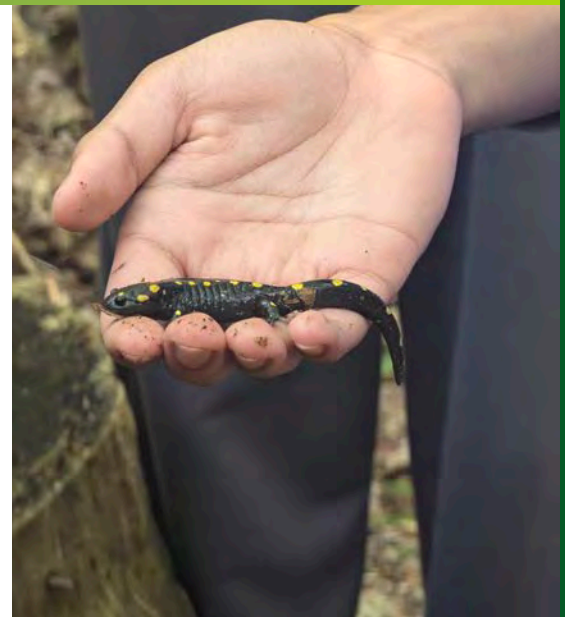
The Summit offered a wide variety of educational and hands-on workshops for the attendees to choose from. I chose to participate in *The Amazing World of Herptiles* workshop in which I learned to identify local reptiles and amphibians, the *Birding* workshop

where I discovered my interest in birds, the *Traditional Beading* workshop where I learnt a brand new skill and *Wildlife Bingo* which took me on an exciting and playful adventure through the woods.

We were also given a glimpse into Indigenous culture. An Elder walked us through a few traditional dances, and volunteers demonstrated various ceremonies, such as smudging. The summit featured many Indigenous Peoples as leaders, which was a new experience for me as I had never directly engaged with Indigenous community members before.

It felt empowering to meet people my age with a passion for everything wild that rivaled my own. I've made many meaningful connections and met some great people along the way.

The Summit's team challenges were undoubtedly one of the highlights of my time there. The Summit set up a variety of tasks like making flags, chants and



interpretive dances to represent our teams, which we presented to the staff and camp leaders. They watched all the teams and decided who won based on the presentations, sportsmanship and teamwork. In the end, my team rose to the challenge and won!

Overall, this experience is a great opportunity for youth to get together, learn and have fun. I had a fantastic time, and enjoyed nature, great company and delicious food. I look forward to attending the Summit again, or potentially help to organize it alongside the Ontario Nature Youth Council this year.

Are you a youth aged 14 to 18 and interested in joining rEYN to participate in similar activities like Natalie? Contact Senior Educator, Istafa Sufi at istafa.sufi@raresites.org to secure your spot. 🇩🇪

Photos: (Left) Natalie Quinn and Will Poissant at the Youth Summit for Mother Nature at the Tawingo Outdoor Centre in Huntsville, ON. Photo by Istafa Sufi. (Above) Yellow salamander found during reptile workshop at Youth Summit for Mother Nature. Photo by Istafa Sufi.





Nature-based Day Camp

FOR KIDS
AGES 6 - 12



Summer ECO Camp

\$250
for the week

AM/PM Care
Available



REGISTER HERE



Hiking
Gardening
Animals
Games
& More!



Springbank Heroes 2024

By Taryn Jarvis
Garden and Facilities Coordinator at *rare*

The 2024 gardening season at *rare's* Springbank Farm Hub was not only productive, but also brought together an incredible team. Emily Emptage returned as Food Access Steward (thanks to funding from Gore Mutual Insurance and United Way Waterloo Region Communities), Matt Pottruff joined as a co-op student from the University of Waterloo (funded by Derek and Kay Coleman/Ages Foundation) and Canada Summer Jobs supported Evan Krulicki, a horticulture student from the University of Guelph.

Beyond seasonal staff, volunteers also played a vital role. We welcomed a fluctuating group of 18 community members for our Wednesday morning sessions, as well as 14 different corporate teams to the gardens. In total, volunteers contributed 1,164

hours to planting, weeding—and more weeding—mulching, watering and harvesting. Corporate volunteer days allow businesses to give back while the employees interact outside of their usual daily routine and may learn new skills.

Together, we grew 2,450 pounds (1,111 kg) of organic produce in *rare's* Food Bank Garden, Education Garden and Community Garden, which was distributed to the Cambridge Food Bank and other local food programs helping to provide some relief to food insecurity in our region. The seasonal staff engaged volunteers in organic farming and answered many gardening questions. They also helped build connections with community members who shared personal stories about their families and cultures. Their efforts made our Springbank Farm Hub a welcoming space, strengthening ties between people and the land.

Thanks to this collective effort, *rare's* Springbank Farm Hub continues to thrive as a place where people connect, learn and ensure access to fresh, local food for all. We look forward to welcoming our seasonal interns for the 2025 growing season to continue to make Springbank Farm a successful community hub.

Community members are again invited to attend Wednesday morning volunteer sessions this summer, starting May 21. More details can be found at raresites.org/volunteer.

Corporate volunteer days at *rare* benefit both the corporate participants as well as the success of *rare's* local food projects. To book a volunteer day, contact Gifts Manager, Christine Thompspon at christine.thompson@raresites.org ■

My Personal Experience Working in *rare's* Gardens

By Emily Emptage
2024 Food Access Steward at *rare*

My experience as the Food Access Steward in the summers of 2023 and 2024 was overwhelmingly positive and I feel that I made a difference in my community. Over the summer I helped thousands of pounds of organic produce grow and be disbursed into our community through the food bank gardens and the community gardeners. I introduced volunteers to organic agriculture practices and listened to their plans to plant a garden or incorporate sustainable practices into their existing garden. I watched as children dug potatoes out of the ground with delight and carefully tucked seeds into their backpacks to bring home to their families. One group of students from Toronto had never seen food grown before and left with a new appreciation of where their food comes from. I developed relationships with community gardeners who were eager to



chat about their tomatoes, the weather or just needed a quiet listener to tell their personal stories. I helped maintain and improve the gardens by doing lawn maintenance and helping build a produce washing station and root vegetable tumbler free to use for community gardeners. This ensured that the gardens were a well-kept welcoming place for volunteers, visitors and community gardeners alike. In conclusion, the Food Access Steward role at *rare* plays a key role in connecting community members to the land and to each other and ensuring that there is organic local produce for all to enjoy. ■

Photos: (Centre) Emily Emptage proudly displaying an eggplant grown in *rare's* gardens at Springbank Farm. Photo by Taryn Jarvis

Volunteers Get to the Root of Invasives!

By Rosalind Snyder
Conservation Technician at *rare*

Each year, a large part of *rare's* conservation work is removing invasive species to protect native plants and animals. Invasive species can harm local ecosystems by taking over space, sunlight and nutrients. By removing them, we help restore balance and support biodiversity.

Some invasive plants are easier to remove than others. Garlic mustard and Himalayan balsam can often simply be pulled out by hand. Others, like buckthorn, need tools like shovels and extractors to get the job done. Phragmites have long underground roots that must be carefully dug out, and yellow flag iris grows in muddy streambeds, making them tricky to remove.

No matter the species, the key to successful removal is to get to the root.

And that is just what our staff and team of dedicated volunteers did throughout 2024. Our enthusiastic staff team, Sydney Miller, Gabby Salvadore (both funded by Canada Summer Jobs) and Matt Pottruff (University of Waterloo co-op funded by Derek and Kay Coleman/Ages Foundation) led an equally enthusiastic group of volunteers in invasive species removal across different habitats found at *rare*. Rain or shine, dry soil to mud, *rare* staff and volunteers were hard at work pulling, digging, spading and bagging invasive species to remove them from various *rare* ecosystems, roots and all!

We're so grateful to the many volunteers who joined us last season to help with this work. Special thanks go to Rob

Unruh, Chris Dilly and Laurie Meyer for their ongoing support and to Ron MacKinnon and Ted Strikwerda, who participated nearly every week for their first season.

Together, community members, school groups and corporate teams shared 406 hours to invasive species removal. At the root of this effort is people—volunteers and staff—working together to protect the land and help nature thrive.

Volunteers or youth groups are encouraged to join us almost every Thursday from May to November for our invasives species removal volunteer sessions. More details can be found at <https://www.raresites.org/about/volunteer>.

Corporate groups are asked to contact Gifts Manager, Christine Thompson at christine.thompson@raresites.org to coordinate team volunteer days.

We hope to see you out this summer! ■

Photo: (Bottom) Volunteers working at in the gardens. Photo by Sydney Daniels Photography.



Holding Space for the Future: Conserve your Land with *rare*

By Tom Woodcock
Planning Ecologist at *rare*

Many landowners who love their property worry about what will happen to it in the future. In southern Ontario, where development is booming, natural spaces are constantly under threat. Government rules can change and they do not always offer lasting protection for forests, wetlands or farmlands. But there is a way to make sure special places stay protected forever—by donating land or a conservation easement to a land trust like *rare*.

There are different ways to make this happen and the process can be relatively simple if no severances are needed. Plus, there can be financial benefits. Through the Ecological Gifts Program (EGP),

donors get tax relief equal to the full market value of their land or easement, beyond what a regular charitable donation would offer. Since being certified in 2014, *rare*

has received five land donations through this program.

The most straightforward option is a Fee Simple donation, where you give full ownership of the land to *rare*. If you want to keep using the land, you can set up a Life Interest Agreement, which allows you and your family to continue to enjoy it, while still ensuring its protection. The recent land donation from the Schneider family is an example, whereby the original public use of the property remains the same—cross-country skiing in the winter and hiking from May to October. Another option is a Conservation Easement, which limits certain activities (like development or logging) even if the land is sold. In a changing world, protecting land forever cannot rely on

"I wanted to mention how thankful I am that the Schneider family is offering this wonderful location as a donation to *rare*. Over the past 30 years, I have very fond memories of cross country skiing and being amazed at the beauty of this location. I hope that my sons will also have a chance to make their own memories here."

- Dan van Leeuwen

government rules and regulations—it takes committed landowners and organizations working together.

To learn more or talk about your own property, contact Planning Ecologist, Tom Woodcock, at *rare* tom.woodcock@rarsites.org or visit www.Canada.ca and search Ecological Gifts Program ■

Photos: (Above) Family enjoying cross-country skiing in Schneider's Woods. Photo by Tanya Dyck Steinmann (Left) Sun Setting from a winter day at Schneider's Woods. Photo by Dietmar Wennemer (Opposite Left) visitors enjoying some cross-country skiing on the Schneider Trail. Photo by Tanya Dyck Steinmann (Opposite Right) Selfie while skiing! Photo by Tanya Dyck Steinmann



Schneider's Woods Joins *rare*: A Landmark Conservation Gift

By Christine Thompson
Gifts Manager at *rare*
and James Bow

On October 31, 2024, something amazing happened—the 235-acres Schneider's Woods officially became part of the lands protected by *rare*. These beautiful woods, located in Wilmot Township, have been a favourite spot for birdwatchers and trail walkers from spring to fall and a peaceful place for cross-country skiers in the winter for generations.

This gift of land is the largest that has been received by *rare* since the organization was founded in 2001, which increased the total amount of land under *rare's* stewardship to over 1,450 acres!

"These lands have been a regional treasure for more than 40 years," says Stephanie Sobek-Swant, Executive Director. "Thanks to the generosity of the Schneider family, they've been a haven for both wildlife and people looking to connect with nature. They help keep our air and water clean and are key to keeping our region healthy. Now,

the Schneider family has made sure this special place will be here for generations to come."

Getting to this point took a lot of work. For over five years, many people worked through the legal steps to make the land donation possible. It all started with the vision of Fred and Jane Schneider and their children, who wanted the land to stay protected while open to the public. Their dedication—and the help of our team and supporters—made this dream a reality.

The community played a huge role, too. More than 400 people spoke up to support the project and encouraged Wilmot Township Council to move forward. In March 2024, Council voted unanimously to approve the land severance that allowed the transfer to happen. Truly, it took a village—the Schneider family, Wilmot Township, the City of Waterloo, our supporters and people from across the community—to make it all happen.

We've already been working to further protect the natural beauty of Schneider's Woods. That includes building a long boardwalk over a wetland (thanks to support from the Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation), so walkers and skiers can enjoy the trail without harming sensitive areas. "This is the best way to keep nature safe," says Tom Woodcock, *rare's* Planning Ecologist. "It takes a lot of effort to care for these lands—trails need maintenance, invasive species need control and native plants and animals need support. We're lucky to have local volunteers helping us look after the trails."

There's one more piece to complete the puzzle: roadside parking improvements. Right now, parking is very limited. We've worked with the Township on



a plan to improve 20 roadside parking spaces, outside of the property along Carmel-Koch Rd—and we've committed to raising \$70,000 to make it happen.

Thanks again to the Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation, Chris and Shirley Gosselin, Neil Burnett and Bill Mungall who have made gifts, we've already raised over 65% of our goal. But we need to reach the full amount by the end of August so that construction can start before next ski season.

With your support, we can get there—and make Schneider's Woods even more welcoming and safe for everyone.

If you wish to support these roadside parking improvements, contact Gifts Manager, Christine Thompson at christine.thompson@raresites.org, call 519-650-9336 x118 or visit raresites.org/donate. 



"I recently went to Schneider's Bush for the first time to cross country ski. Since then, I've returned a few more times.

I was so grateful to have such a beautiful place to ski within the trees and listen to the birds. It's a recharging experience and I'm grateful the land is protected and cared for by *rare*."

- Dawn Griffin

Beyond the Trail: The Complex Terrain of Land-Based Education

By Stephanie Sobek-Swant
Executive Director at *rare*

As part of a MITACS research fellowship, *rare* has supported work overseen by researcher Dr. Sharon Stein, Professor of Climate Complexity and Coloniality in the Department of Educational Studies at University of British Columbia. As part of this partnership, Steve Evans, a PhD student working with Sharon, will visit *rare* in early June to host a workshop focussed on “The complexities and possibilities of land-based learning: toward an unsettling of education, conservation and colonial imaginings of land and place.”

Steve is a public education teacher with the Sea to Sky School District and instructor with Capilano University at Lil'wat Nation's Ts'zil Learning Centre. He lives in Lil'wat Territory, is a member of the Métis Nation and is of mixed white settler and Métis ancestry. Steve is a BC certified teacher and also holds a Bachelor of Kinesiology in Outdoor Education and History, Bachelor of Education in Social Science and Environmental Education and an Master's of Science in Human and Environmental Geography. With a 20-year background in public education, guiding and place/land-based learning, Steve has extensive and varied experience working with both urban and rural youth, communities and First Nations throughout BC. His career has included teaching sea kayaking, paddling, rock climbing and mountaineering with organizations such as Outward Bound, Educo Adventure School and Strathcona Park Lodge.

These and other engagements have led to extensive work with underserved youth and communities in Stát'yemc, Tsilhqot'in, Secwépemc and Ktunaxa Territories. He formerly taught in the TREK outdoor/sustainability education program (Vancouver School Board), Metro Vancouver Watershed Sustainability Department and in a global



education program in Guatemala and the Andean region of South America. Steve used to co-teach in an Indigenous focused ‘alternative’ education program and more recently has worked as a teacher of social studies, social justice, Indigenous studies and English.

We are very excited to host Steve at *rare* and to learn from his vast experience working in the context of land-based education and its complexities. Steve has provided a short synopsis of his workshop:

In settler colonial states such as the country currently referred to as Canada,

education, recreation and conservation have often functioned as powerful tools to depoliticize place and construct a legitimizing veneer over Indigenous land. Place-based/land-based education hold paradoxical positions as both forms of social reproduction and methods of interrupting colonial futures. This workshop is intended as a learning space for educators and other professional practitioners that are grappling with the complexities of operating at the nexus of land, education, research and coloniality.

Using both theoretical and experiential methods of learning, we will move through activities that assist us in developing the stamina to ‘show up,’ hold space and engage in the complexities of imagining a relational path. As a non-prescriptive co-learning experience, this workshop will draw on Indigenous, feminist and decolonial thinkers and is modeled on educational frameworks from critical literacy, depth education and social cartography. The intent of this workshop is not to offer quick fixes, but to leave with an expanded understanding of the structures that reproduce colonial imaginings of land and place, along with generative methods of interrupting coloniality in your respective contexts.

If you're a teacher or education practitioner and interested in attending the workshop at *rare* on June 4, please connect with Senior Educator, Istafa Sufi at istafa.sufi@raresites.org. ■

Photos: (Above) Photo of Steve Evans enjoying time out on the water.



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

ECO Camp - Pond Dipping
Taken by Michelle MacMillan

96
volunteers

helped at
Springbank Farm Hub

4,000+
dedicated
donors

Certified
Living Wage
Employer since 2021



\$2.06M
in funds raised

110
Bedrock
(monthly)
donors

2,421 lbs
of organic produce
donated to the
Cambridge
Food Bank!

1,164 hours
of volunteer work
at Springbank Farm Hub

126
volunteers

spent 1,859 hours helping
plant trees,
pull invasive species &
rescue turtles!

13
invasive species
targeted

16 km
trails of
maintained

81
ECO programs
operated with

2,032
students!

390+
trees and
shrubs
planted!

1,882
baby turtles
rescued &
released!

200+
additional species
identified

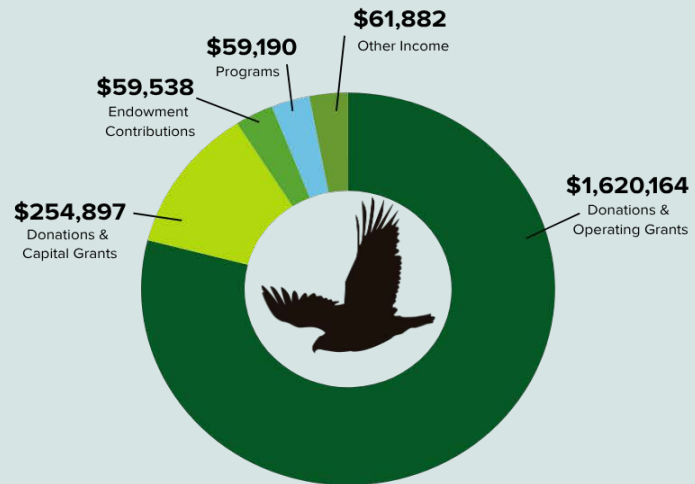
26
ongoing research
projects

Millpond Vista
Photo taken by Tom Woodcock.

For the fiscal year ending August 31, 2024

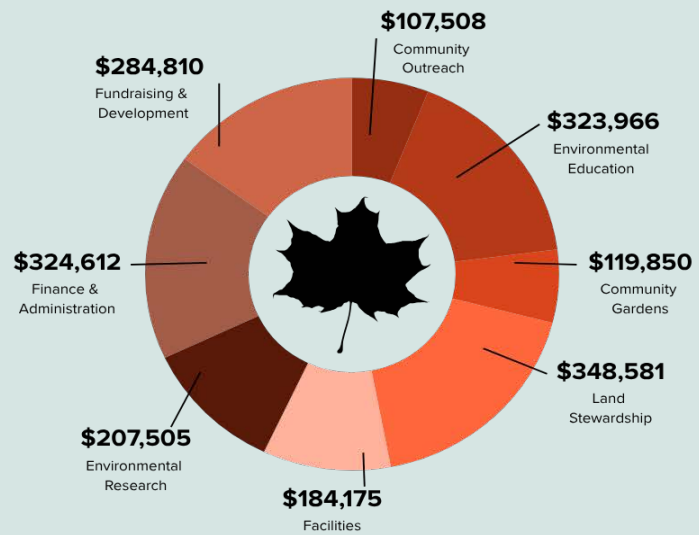
REVENUE

\$2,055,671



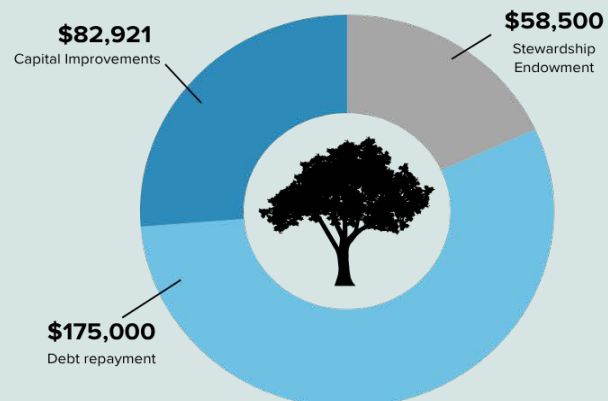
EXPENSES

\$1,901,007



INVESTMENTS

\$318,445



Condensed Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets

For the Fiscal Year ending August 31, 2024

REVENUE/SUPPORT & ADDITIONS TO NET ASSETS

	Operating	Designated	Endowment	2024	2023
Donations & Grants	1,620,164	254,897	59,538	1,934,599	2,213,680
Land Contributions					160,000
Programs	59,190		59,190	59,190	77,500
Other Income	41,679	2,387	61,882	61,882	36,656
Total Revenue & Additions	1,721,033	257,284	77,354	2,055,671	2,633,656

EXPENSES & REDUCTIONS TO NET ASSETS

PROGRAM SERVICES

Community Outreach	97,494	10,014		107,508	117,523
Environmental Education	298,104	25,862		323,966	349,827
Community Gardens	112,147	7,703		119,850	127,554
Land Stewardship	322,719	25,862		348,581	374,442
Community Properties	176,471	7,703		184,175	191,878
Environmental Research	192,648	14,857		207,505	222,361
Total Program Services	1,99,584	92,001	0	1,291,585	1,383,586

SUPPORTING SERVICES

Finance & Administration	300,401	24,211		324,612	299,801
Fundraising & Development	257,958	26,852		284,810	251,821
Total Supporting Services	558,359	51,063	0	609,422	551,622
Total Expenses & Reductions	1,757,943	143,064		1,901,007	1,810,951

Change in Net Assets

Before Investment Earnings	-36,910	114,220	77,354	154,664	822,705
Investment Income, net	30,482		247,015	277,497	165,886
Interfund transfers	-9,607	9,607	0	0	0
Net assets beginning of year	563,975	8,738,786	2,838,316	12,141,077	11,152,486
Net assets end of year	547,940	8,862,613	3,162,685	12,573,238	12,141,077

COMPOSED OF:

Land	8,485,616		8,485,616	8,611,840	
Buildings	2,732,078		2,732,078	2,750,944	
Other Assets	144,595		144,595	125,408	
Endowment Fund		3,162,685	3,162,658	2,838,316	
Outstanding Debts	-2,725,150		-2,725,150	-3,075,600	
Externally Restricted for Capital Projects	255,474		255,474	153,552	
Unrestricted	547,940		547,940	563,975	
TOTAL	547,940	8,862,613	3,162,685	12,573,238	12,141,077



By the Numbers

More than
4,000 donors...

Supporting over
1,450 acres of
natural lands

That are home to more
than **5,400 species**
including
67 species at-risk

Protecting
24 habitats...

Over **16 km of trails**
free and open for our
community's
enjoyment

Nearly **26,000 children**
engaged in the
Every Child Outdoors
ECO Program

More than **190**
art and research
projects conducted on
rare sites

48,372 lbs of
fresh, organic produce
donated to the
Foodbank

raresites.org

Thank you, 2023–2024 supporters of *rare*!

We are grateful to the following individuals, foundations, government agencies, organizations and businesses that helped *rare* work towards its vision of a sustainable region this past fiscal year (September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024). We want to ensure our recognition reflects everyone appropriately. If there is an error in how your name appears, please contact us at rare@rarsites.org. Note: entries marked with * denotes deceased. In-kind donors are in bold.

\$200,000+

Estate of Peter Bergen
Musagetes Fund at WRCF

\$50,000-\$199,999

Lyle S. Hallman Foundation
Region of Waterloo
Savvas Chamberlain Family
Foundation
Stonefields International
Inc. & The Stonefields
Foundation
Toyota Motor
Manufacturing Canada

\$20,000-\$49,999

Estates of Scott & Sue
Beemer
Derek & Kathleen Coleman
Ages Foundation
ECO Canada
Gore Mutual Insurance
Company
Government of Ontario
Walter Judges Fund at WRCF
Musagetes Fund at Guelph
Community Foundation
John & Joyce Pollock
Family Fund at WRCF
Hennie & Mike Stork
Stork Family Fund at
WRCF
TD Friends of the
Environment Foundation
University of Waterloo -
Global Citizen Internship
David Westfall

\$5,000-\$19,999

145 Columbia (Waterloo)
Corp

Keith & Sheila Ainsworth
Paul Born & Marlene Epp
Amy Burke & Larry Lamb*
Cachet Developments
Dianne Ensing & Norman
Bodkin
Ken & Rachel* Flood
Government of Canada
Hugh & Lorna Guthrie Fund
at Guelph Community
Foundation &
Lorna & Hugh Guthrie
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"Although I now live in the
US, I was born and grew up in
KW and am eager to support the
maintenance of wilderness in the
Grand River valley."

— Jed Lippert

Searching for bugs and butterflies at ECO Camp.
Photo by John Ciancio.

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“As humans, we need to realize that it is important to love nature and our environment [...] my parents loved nature and taught our family how beautiful and special it is. My father portrayed this with his artwork his entire life. It is most important to continue teaching children and future generations to understand, respect, admire and promote what still exists in our environment”
— Hildegard Battista

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“The Foundation has always appreciated *rare*’s commitment to the environment. They are a trusted partner who communicates clearly on the projects we have worked on together”

— Maria Harper, Executive Director,
The Savvas Chamberlain Family
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Ontario Archaeological Society
Ontario Land Trust Alliance
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Ontario Nature
Ontario Nonprofit Network
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Leaving a Natural Legacy

By Christine Thompson
Major Gifts Manager at *rare*

A proverb from the 19th century states, “Blessed are those who plant trees under whose shade they will never sit.” This has been the core philosophy of *rare* and its supporters, who have given many resources to protect natural lands across Waterloo Region and Wellington County. We protect the habitats, the foliage, the plants and animals, not just for ourselves, but for our children and our community. At *rare*, we conduct research and run education programs to communicate the importance of these lands, now and for the future, to ensure that these lands will remain protected.

It can be awkward to discuss one’s passing, but it is important to establish your goals and desires for when the moment comes. It’s far better to be prepared early than not to be prepared at all. If you want to ensure that your contributions to nature live on as a legacy for future generations, *rare* has several options.

Naming *rare* as a beneficiary

In addition to remembering your family members and friends in your

will, you can also name *rare* as a direct beneficiary of specific assets. A portion of your estate or the residue of your estate can be given to *rare* in your name or in tribute to a family member. Not only does this help build and sustain *rare* for future generations, it can also result in significant tax benefits for your estate.

Another way to leave a legacy is to donate a new or existing life insurance policy to *rare*. This will allow you to make a substantial future contribution with a relatively low monthly or yearly payment. Another option could be to name *rare* as a beneficiary on an existing policy.

This also applies to donors enrolled in an RRSP or a TSFA or who have already converted their RRSP to a RIFF. You can designate *rare* as a beneficiary for all or a portion of any retirement funds remaining at death.

Planting Trees in Memory

In addition to bequests, people can follow the proverb to the letter, planting a tree on another person’s behalf to build a natural legacy. There are few better ways to commemorate a friend or a loved one who has passed than by planting a tree in their honour. These living memorials symbolize growth and renewal and, at many sites, offer a place for quiet contemplation.

In January 2022, *rare* launched the Forest of Memories initiative, in partnership with Lisaard and Innisfree Hospice. The Forest of Memories allows people to have a tree planted in memory of friends and loved ones while connecting two old-growth forests on *rare* lands. It’s important to note that while the donations cover the cost of individual trees, the trees themselves are not the memorial. Instead, it is the forest that these trees build together. A sign beside the Grand Allée trail near the forest lands lists all those honoured in this way.

Learn More

Including *rare* in your estate plans makes a lasting statement about you and your values. By protecting the health of the environment and our community, we are giving a gift to future generations, ensuring public access to natural spaces and a healthier, more sustainable world.

The information provided above is a generalization and each person’s estate may have different needs. We strongly recommend that you consult your advisor(s) about what works best for you in planning for your legacy. You can also learn more by contacting Christine who would be happy to have a confidential discussion on how you would like to be remembered. ■

“When considering how to leave a legacy, I choose *rare* because I feel so very fortunate to have a world-class research, education and conservation facility in my community. I believe that a connection with nature is critical to human well-being, and that the preservation of lands and species works to protect the human race. The work being done at *rare* is so very important, both to current and future generations!”

—Diane Williamson

2023-2024 Forest of Memories Honourees

Jean Barbara	Darlene Chorekdjian	Thirza Hall	Wouter Kuyper	George Schaller
Applewaithe	Donald Ciuciura	May Isaac	Larry Lamb (2)	Vassili Spyropoulos
Brenda Atcheson	Karin Cremasco	George Jackson (2)	Patrick Murphy	Dr. Wim van Pelt
Dorothy Beattie	Lucas Fernandes	Max James	Wendell Noteboom	Emilie Vieregge
Anne Bechtloff	John Ferreira	Hans Judy Jolly	Walter P. Power	Timothy Walker
Darcie Lee Beggs	Silvina Galvao	Brendan Kelly	Malcolm Roberts (2)	Rae Allemang-Watson
Blackie	Jacob Greenbaum	Lorraine Kirchin	Bernadette Rosenstadt	Michael Winn
Arthur J. Campbell	Toni Greenbaum	Rose Kurt	Sylvia Sawatzky	Brenda Zimmerman



Leadership

Board of Directors

Joy Roberts, PhD, Chair of the Board; Musagetes Foundation Board Chair
David Agro, Architect, Conservationist
Keith Ainsworth, Electrical Engineer; retired CEO, COM DEV International
Madhur Anand, Professor, University of Guelph; Executive Director, Guelph Institute of Environmental Research
Karen Hacker, LL.B., ICD.D.
Brian McGee, Chartered Accountant; Partner, Zeifmans & Company LLP
Claire Mussar, B.A. Customer Service and Hospitality Specialist, Social Media Manager, Environment Enthusiast

Governance Advisor

David R. Beatty, C.M., OBE, MA, CFA

International Ambassadors

David Agro (see previous)
Ljubodrag Andric, Photographer
Michael Barnstijn, OC, retired Partner, RIM; Philanthropist; Founder, Musagetes Foundation
Kehkashan Basu, Founder, Green Hope Foundation
David Buckland, Founder, Cape Farewell cape-farewell.com; Director of Art from a Changing Arctic
Ed Burtynsky, OC; Photographer; Subject of award-winning documentary, *Manufactured Landscapes*
Geneviève Caron, Award-winning Photographer
Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Executive Director, David Suzuki Foundation
Louise MacCallum, OC, retired Software Engineer; Philanthropist; Founder, Musagetes Foundation
Gerry Remers, Former President & COO, Christie Digital Canada & former co-chair Communitech
Jane Urquhart, OC; Author
Frances Westley, Chair of Social Innovation Generation, University of Waterloo

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)

Justin Gaudon, Policy Advisor, Forest Management at Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Stephen Murphy, Professor & Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies, Environment & Resource Studies, University of Waterloo
Don Russell, Qalipu Mi'kmaq/Acadian French Artist
Christopher Watts, Department of Anthropology, University of Waterloo
Bill Wilson, retired Teacher; Naturalis
Brett Woodman, Terrestrial & Wetland Biologist, Natural Resource Solutions Inc.
Tony Zammit, Aquatic & Terrestrial Ecologist, Grand River Conservation Authority

Education Advisory Committee (EDAC)

Morrigan Everatt, Graduate Student, Toronto Metropolitan University
Lynda McCarthy, Professor, Toronto Metropolitan University
Dan Schneider, Outdoor Educator & Naturalist, Grand River Conservation Authority, retired
Matthew Suhadolc, U-Turn Diversion Teacher, Waterloo Region District School Board

Eastern Comma Committee

Shawn Van Sluys, Executive Director, Musagetes
Karen Houle, Poet & Philosopher, University of Guelph
Elwood Jimmy, Musagetes Program Coordinator

Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

Stephen Murphy (see previous)
Rick Haldenby, Professor, Architecture, University of Waterloo
David Lieberman, Associate Professor, John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape & Design, University of Toronto
John Straube, Associate Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering, University of Waterloo

Community Cabinet

Keith Ainsworth (see previous)
Sheila Ainsworth, Chair, Lisaard House
John K. Bell, FCPA, FCA; Chairman, The Onbelay Group
Greg Buzbuzian, Owner, Knar Jewellery
Rob Connell, Partner, KPMG
John English, CM; FRSC; Director, Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, Trinity College/Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto
Valerie Hall, retired President, Stonefields Management
Adrian Hammoud, Owner, Salon Butterfly
Jackie Hatherly-Martin, FCPA FCA, SHAD Canada
Thiam Lim, former *rare* Board Member
Keith Martin, CPA CA, HM Advisors
Douglas McMullen, FCPA, FCA; retired, Sr. V.P. CIBC
David Mitten, retired; Executive Director, Siding & Window Dealers Association of Canada
Dean Peroff, LLP, Partner, Peroff Professional Group
Simon Poladian, Owner, Eagle Towing Equipment
Joy Roberts, (see previous)
Paul Ross, retired Partner, KPMG
Irene Schmidt-Adeney, Writer, Ayr News
Hugh Thompson, CEO, Thompson Centre for Art & Design

Volunteer & Consulting Advisors

John Baljkas, Graphic design consultant, MFA, RGD Affiliate Member, Professor, Conestoga College
Ken Dance, President, Dance Environmental Inc.
Valerie Hall (see previous)
Rita Ross, Fundraising consultant

raresites Land Securement Team

Graham Buck, Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry
Kevin Butt, Nature Guelph
Chris Gosselin, retired Manager of Environmental Planning, Region of Waterloo
Lauren Jones, Six Nations of the Grand River
Greg C. Michalenko, Grand River Environmental Network
Bill Mungall, retired
Roger Suffling, Waterloo Region Nature
Tony Zammitt (see previous)

Emeritus

Gerald Achtymichuk, Family Physician, retired
Paul Koch, Marketing & Management Consultant; Civic entrepreneur, Ottawa
Peter Krause, President, Krause Corporate Solutions
Larry Lamb, Vegetation Specialist, Emeritus Adjunct Lecturer, Fellow at Renison College, Manager of Ecology Lab, Faculty of Env., University of Waterloo
Doug Larson, Professor Emeritus, College of Biological Sciences, University of Guelph
Colleen Mercer Clarke, Coastal Ecologist, Landscape Architect, University of Waterloo
Alan Morgan, Professor Emeritus, Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of Waterloo
Angela Tsementzis, Architect; B.E.S. B.Arch, OAA, LEED AP







rare Staff

Stephanie Sobek-Swant, Executive Director
Nancy Campbell, Bookkeeper
Erin Clark, Communications & Community Engagement Officer
Laura Eckhardt, Manager, Finance & Administration
Amanda Humphreys, Events & Development Coordinator
Taryn Jarvis, Gardens & Facilities Coordinator
Michael McTavish, Conservation Scientist
Kim Robichaud, Administrative Coordinator
Rosalind Snyder, Conservation Technician
Istafa Sufi, TMMC Senior Educator
Christine Thompson, Gifts Manager
Maisy Winn, Administrative Assistant
Tom Woodcock, Planning Ecologist

Contact Us

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Support our natural spaces; donate to rare
at raresites.org/donate

Upcoming Events at **rare**

May
21

Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Conversations for Conservation:

Gardening as Climate Action with Lorraine Johnson

50/50
DRAW

Ticket Sales run from June to August

Lady Gaga Concert tickets & 50/50!

Get your tickets to win BIG and support **rare**

Jun
19

Thursday 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Willibald x rare Comedy Event

Featuring Tri-City Improv.

Jun
26

Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.

Yoga in the Garden

Jul
26-27

Saturday to Sunday

The Long Dash Festival

Sept
21

Sunday, 9 a.m.

rare Trail Party

Visit **raresites.org/events** for more details!



Review, Spring-Summer 2025

