

Ecological Gifts Program

Donor Profile



Conservation Easement Agreement Donation on the Oak Ridges Moraine

Barb Heidenreich spent her life exploring and protecting southern Ontario's natural heritage. Barb's connection to the land began in 1899 when her great-grandfather, Byron Edmund Walker, purchased a large tract of land on the shore of Lake Simcoe and placed it into a family trust. Eight generations have explored and protected the shoreline, savannah, forest and wildlife found on this land; the conservation ethic that has guided Barb's choices throughout her life began here. Her enduring dedication to nature culminated in the permanent protection of 121 hectares of land through the federal government's Ecological Gifts Program.

With help from the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, a charitable organization that protects and stewards land on the moraine, Barb established conservation easement agreements on three properties. These conservation easements allowed Barb to set limits on land use and development, while continuing to own and access the land.



Each donation of land or a partial interest in land must be certified as ecologically sensitive according to specific national and provincial criteria before it can be included under the Ecological Gifts Program.

Ecologically sensitive lands are areas or sites that currently, or could, at some point in the future, contribute significantly to the conservation of Canada's biodiversity and environmental heritage. Where ecologically sensitive land is a significant part of a larger parcel of land, the entire property donated usually qualifies as an Ecological Gift.

Protection from Development Pressure:

One property, called Innisfree Farm, is located in Simcoe Region, while the other two adjacent properties, collectively referred to as Fernhill Farm, are located in the Township of Otonabee-South Monaghan. Both areas are under intense development pressures, which makes permanent protection all the more important.

The establishment of a conservation easement agreement with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust on Innisfree Farm ensures permanent protection of an old growth forest, a stand of canker-resistant butternut, and a glacial lute important for groundwater recharge.



Though the property recently changed ownership, the new owner and all future owners are bound by the terms of the conservation easement agreement registered on the property's title, and must work with the recipient, the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust, to uphold its spirit and conditions. The land trust has considerable experience with landowner outreach and relations, as more than half of the properties they protect have conservation easements on their titles.

Barb also worked with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust to establish a conservation easement agreement on Fernhill Farm near Rice Lake, which contains a mix of cultural heritage and geological features, agricultural fields, woodlands and wetlands.

Barb is a big supporter of the Ecological Gifts Program.

“The tax benefits offered by this program were a huge help in enabling me to protect the land I love for current and future generations of people and wildlife. I feel a great sense of relief and satisfaction knowing I've done all that I can for the land that has given me so much health and happiness.”



Reflecting on her two experiences as a donor with the Ecological Gifts Program, Barb believes it is an excellent conservation tool for all types of landowners.

“There is so much flexibility to develop agreements that complement your values and meet your needs. I would encourage all conservation-minded landowners to investigate the program.”

**Do you own land that contains natural habitat, such as a forest, prairie, wetland or shoreline?
Would you like to see it protected for future generations?**

Through the Government of Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, landowners can donate their land, or a partial interest such as a conservation easement agreement, to an eligible recipient organization that will care for it forever, such as a land trust, conservation organization, or government. In addition to the peace of mind that the land will be forever protected, donors can receive significant income tax benefits including elimination of any tax on the capital gain.

For more information, visit the Ecological Gifts Program website at:
www.canada.ca/ecological-gifts

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