



The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

February 2019

Keeping a Great Lake great since 1998!



Join us at the 2019 Coastal Speaker Series!

The Coastal Centre is hosting a free Coastal Speaker Series in February! This series of events is being held along the coastline. They are meant to be a fun, family-friendly opportunity to network, share, and learn more about Lake Huron's beautiful coast.

February 7th, 2019 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Huron County Museum, Goderich. Speakers include:

Lake Love and a Blue Mind

Clare Day - Yoga Den Goderich

Forestry on Ontario's West Coast

Dave Pullen, Huron County

From the Lake to the Soil

Jacqui Empson Laporte, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs

Shoreline Processes & Climate Change

Sarah Fleischhauer, Maitland Valley Conservation Authority

Coastal Conservation on Lake Huron

February 13th, 2019 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Historic Town Hall, Southampton

February 21st, 2019 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Public Library, Sarnia

All of the details are available at <https://www.lakehuron.ca/upcomingevents>

Call for Volunteers!

Coast Watchers Citizen Science Program



Volunteers are needed for the 2019 Coast Watchers Citizen Science Monitoring Program.

Do you love and care for the Great Lakes? Do you find yourself strolling along the lakeshore noticing changes from day to day? The Coastal Centre is looking for enthusiastic volunteers to monitor

the Lake Huron and Georgian Bay shorelines for the 2019 summer season. The Coast Watchers Volunteer Monitoring Program has been an ongoing initiative at the Coastal Centre for over a decade!

As a Coast Watcher you will:

- Walk along your favourite section of beach collecting information once per week in the summer
- Receive monitoring equipment and training from staff at the Coastal Centre
- Complete simple data sheets and submit a monthly report
- Contribute to the collection of scientific information to a long-term monitoring program
- Have the opportunity to learn more about your shoreline through an optional webinar series
- Help to protect our Great Lakes!

Training and equipment will be provided in April 2019. Weekly monitoring occurs between May 1 and October 30.

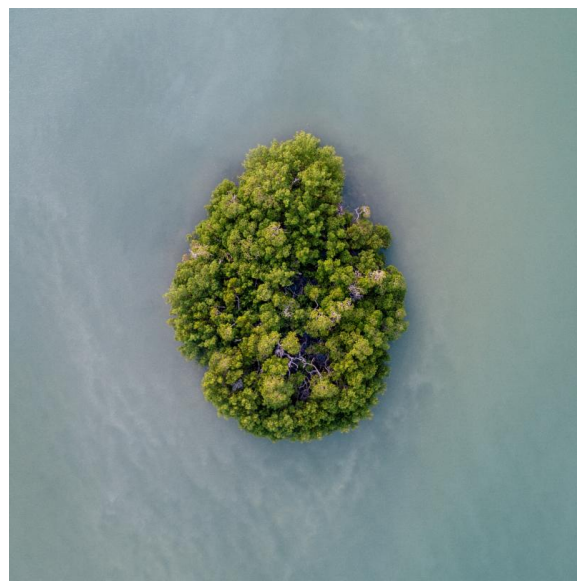
How do I get started?

Interested in becoming a Coast Watcher or hearing more about the program? Contact the Coastal Centre at coastwatchers@lakehuron.ca or 226-421-3029

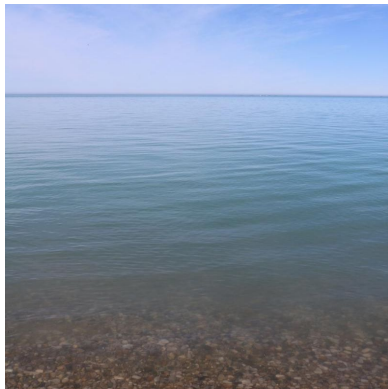
What do Alvars, Islands and the Nearshore have in common? They all rock!

Understanding our coastal ecosystems

New year means new research! Through the Coastal Action Plan, our Coastal Stewardship Coordinator will be researching priority areas for conservation and protection of three distinct ecosystems along the Sarnia-Tobermory coastline. Ontario's West Coast has a range of unique ecosystems, and this year we want to highlight Alvars, Islands and the Nearshore.



Let's start by taking a look at Islands. The Islands of Lake Huron are relatively young. Many were part of, or connected to, the mainland following the last period of glaciation when water levels were lower. In most regions of Lake Huron, Islands are still slowly emerging as the land continues to rebound from glaciations.



Lake Huron's Islands support many rare ecological communities including coastal fens, alvars, bedrock and cobble lakeshore. Collectively, Lake Huron Islands are known to be important sites for nesting water birds, for species and community's endemic to or largely limited to the Great Lakes. They also play a role as "stopover sites" for migratory land birds and spawning areas for fish. The Chantry Island Bird Sanctuary near Southampton is a perfect example.

Many islands harbor plant and animal communities that are different from the mainland due to their isolation and unique disturbance regimes. Some of the key Islands identified so far are: Chantry Island, the Fishing Islands, and the many islands on the Lake Huron side of the Bruce Peninsula.

The Nearshore ecosystem is best described as the submerged lands and water of Lake Huron ranging from 0 to 30 meters in depth. It is therefore found along the entire coastline from Sarnia- Tobermory. It's a dynamic ecosystem- varying seasonally and annually because of changing water levels. Did you know it is the most productive portion of Lake Huron and supports a higher species richness and diversity than open water ecosystems?

Most of us have enjoyed the nearshore in some way, shape or form, whether it's swimming with your family, paddle boarding, fishing, or boating and sailing. It's an area where humans interact with and affect the natural environment the most which makes conservation and restoration strategies important in maintaining these areas.

Alvars (a Swedish word) are naturally open ecosystems found on shallow

soils over relatively flat, glaciated limestone bedrock. Alvares are characterized by a mosaic of distinctive plants adapted to extreme environment conditions.

Why are Alvares so important? They're home to a vast variety of rare vegetation and species, distinct ecological character. The Bruce



Peninsula region of Ontario is internationally recognized for its rarity, distinct ecological character, and because To see these plants in all their glory it's best to visit in the spring, but remember to stay on the boardwalk or trail! For those rare flower enthusiasts, you will can find endemic flora, which include Dwarf Lake Iris, Lakeside Daisy, Houghton's Goldenrod, Hill's Thistle and more! There are 70+ Alvar sites on the Bruce Peninsula, most of which occur in the northern part of the region.



Open bedrock areas are often encrusted with an array of rare lichens and mosses while grasses, sedge and wild flowers take root in the few areas with soil. Some of the most damaging threats to this rare ecosystem includes the presence and abundance of invasive species, livestock grazing,

logging, development (such as roads and buildings), along with quarrying. Changes in our climate are also directly and indirectly affecting these ecosystems.

Our coastal communities depend on a healthy environment to preserve our livelihoods, and way of life. It's imperative that we continue to recognize their beauty and importance to our well-being and the wildlife.



The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation supports environmental efforts along the Canadian coastline of Lake Huron. We foster communication and partnerships between environmental agencies and organizations, working towards a sustainable and resilient coast. We provide education, resources, and information on lake-wide issues and our programs reflect the inter-connectivity between land and water.

DONATE TODAY!

