



Small hands making a big impact at the Great Goderich Shoreline Clean-up

2022

When I look at Lake Huron beaches I see carefree summer vacations, show-stopping sunsets, and a place where memories are made. But I also see an enormous responsibility. As Great Lakes communities, we are the caretakers of 20% of the world's freshwater. The decisions we make and the positive actions we take impact the millions of people who live in, and rely on, the Great Lakes watershed.

Plastic pollution, water quality concerns, invasive species, and climate change are emerging as some of the most pressing environmental issues of our time, and we have been putting your donations to work taking action on these issues.

We are striving to bring community-based nature programming to as many people as possible by providing hands-on educational opportunities through our Coastal Conservation Youth Corps, shoreline clean-ups, Green Ribbon Champion beach-dune stewardship program, and Coast Watchers community science program. Because of your tremendous support, every day we are succeeding in our mission of providing people and communities with the knowledge, tools, and inspiration to protect the Great Lakes environment.

It has been inspiring and heartwarming to see individuals and families coming together again this year to care for our shoreline communities, and we look forward to another fantastic year ahead working with you to protect Lake Huron.

~ Erinn Lawrie, Executive Director



SHORELINE CLEANUPS MAKE A COMEBACK



Lake Huron Coastal Centre (LHCC) held three clean-ups in 2022 including the annual Great Goderich Shoreline Clean-up event, where 132 volunteers collected over 200 lbs. of garbage. This was an impressive feat since most of the items were small, making them even more dangerous to wildlife and more difficult to remove from the shoreline. The top littered items for all clean-ups this year included: cigarette butts (5,115), plastic pieces (1,344), and paper (667). Sadly, this is a common story. The most recent data states that cigarette butts are the most littered item in Canada with over 140,000 plastic (and toxin-filled) filters found on shorelines across the country. That doubles the number of small plastic pieces reported in Canada, which are the second most found item.

Shoreline clean-ups are essential when we consider that the equivalent of 40 dump trucks of

plastic pollution enters the Great Lakes every year. Volunteers and donors like you are helping improve the health of Lake Huron as well as the lives of wildlife (and humans!) that depend on it. We would like to thank everyone who helped make these clean-ups a success in 2022. It was incredible to see so many young people and families participate. This is what we can achieve when we work together!

We are not stopping here! With generous funding from donors and the Great Lakes Local Action Fund, we will be able to hold many more shoreline clean-up events and conduct more microplastic research from Sarnia to Collingwood in 2023. These fun, family-friendly events bring our community together to fight plastic pollution through education and volunteerism. Keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities on our social media accounts and website this year.



Please give generously so this important work can continue!

THANKS FOR WATCHING OVER LAKE HURON



Coast Watchers is LHCC's longest running program. Volunteers have collected 17 years of data related to plastic pollution, algae blooms, species-at-risk, human activity, and our changing climate to better understand the current health of Lake Huron.

This season we launched our brand new mobile application, which allowed 220 amazing community scientists to submit over 2,500 reports stretching across the Canadian Lake Huron shoreline from Sarnia to Georgian Bay. We also welcomed our first Michigan-based Coast Watchers, who are reporting from the Alpena

region. Over 19,000 unique data points were collected and relayed to interested environmental groups and organizations. Being informed on environmental issues is



“There is a big side benefit to Coast Watchers which is simply being outside in nature. I always have a sense of well-being when I’m the sole human amongst the dunes reporting on what I see... The more I’m out there, the more I get to feel at one with nature. I can’t say enough about having a chance to really witness and feel how dynamic this beach is every single day... My commitment to watching, observing, and measuring environmental conditions as a Coast Watcher has only heightened all aspects that brought me more in tune with this dynamic beach.”

~ Sandy Fair, Coast Watchers Volunteer

more important now than ever. Climate change and plastic pollution are urgent issues, making it crucial to have long-term data available to guide decision-making at a local and even national level.

Many volunteers utilize this program as an opportunity to learn new skills and enjoy nature while helping to protect their cherished beaches, which can be done with friends and family, or solo. Coast Watchers is growing and improving every season thanks to incredible volunteers and donors like you! We are excited to make even more strides next season with your support. To help us improve our Coast Watchers mobile app please donate this holiday season!

The pictures below were submitted by our incredible Coast Watchers. Keep an eye out for announcements on our website and social media (@coastalcentre) to find out how to become a Coast Watcher in 2023!



YOUTH MADE A SPLASH THIS YEAR



With your support, 48 youth chose to volunteer with the Coastal Conservation Youth Corps (CCYC) to learn about many facets of Lake Huron's health including ecology, water quality, and shoreline resilience. While engaging in hands-on monitoring and restoration projects they logged over 1,200 volunteer hours in Saugeen Shores and Goderich this season. Your donations supported the hiring of a program assistant this year, which greatly enhanced the scope of program activities and allowed for larger group sizes. In fact, a CCYC participant from 2021, Cameron Hogg, was the successful candidate and elevated the experience for this year's participants with his solid leadership and enthusiasm.

“It really opened my eyes to how large the impact of small actions can be.”





Programming opportunities were also expanded with the ability to hire busing for transportation to new restoration sites and allowed for a partnership with the Invasive Phragmites Control Centre (IPCC) in Baie du Doré. A new water quality monitoring and educational tool was also incorporated with the addition of a Water Rangers test kit.



“I felt that I was making an impact.”

Launched in 2020, base funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation supported the program design and implementation. Now at the end of this three-year grant, the future of this valuable program will rely on the generosity of our donor community. These experiences may help youth to define their education and career choices while the skills, leadership, and teamwork are highly transferable. With your help, our youth may step into the future to visualize and ultimately seek innovative pathways to realize a healthy and resilient Lake Huron.

“CCYC teaches people about the environment and lets youth make change happen!”



“I’m so much more knowledgeable about nature, geography and the environment thanks to CCYC!”

SANDY BEACHES NEED DUNES

Lake Huron is known for its beautiful sandy beaches. Healthy and intact sandy beaches support a wide variety of terrestrial and aquatic insects and wildlife, like the at-risk Monarch Butterfly and Piping Plover. Communities along the shoreline are incredibly fortunate to experience one of North America's rarest and most fragile ecosystems every single day. Green Ribbon Champion gives shoreline residents the knowledge and power to protect and preserve Monarch Butterfly and Piping Plover habitats so that future generations can experience Lake Huron's diverse beauty for years to come.

This year, more than 225 volunteers, including Green Ribbon Champion (GRC) shoreline residents and neighbours, high school students and teachers, municipal staff members, and

volunteers from the community helped restore more than 50 shoreline properties in Saugeen Shores, Kincardine, Huron-Kinloss, Grand Bend, and Ipperwash. In total, you helped us remove more than 1,500 lbs of invasive plants, plant more than 7,500 native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees, and install more than 1,000 feet of sand fencing and nearly 100 educational signs. It was the most successful GRC season yet, and it would not have been possible without your support!



"I became a Green Ribbon Champion participant in 2022. As a result, I now understand my responsibility in maintaining beach dune health. The program developed my awareness and educated me on many levels regarding the importance of conservation and protection of the shoreline. I intend to continue learning more about the importance of beach preservation and restoration so that I can become a more effective steward of our community shoreline. I am proud and excited to be a Green Ribbon Champion!"





Boiler Beach is located in the Township of Huron-Kinloss and is named after the *Erie Belle* tug, a twice-rebuilt, Great Lakes steamship that exploded off the eastern shore of Lake Huron during a schooner rescue mission in 1883. During low water level periods, the remains of the exploded boiler can be seen on the beach.

This year, the LHCC partnered with the Township of Huron-Kinloss and the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority to begin restoring degraded areas of the shoreline to reduce the impacts of blowing sand and snow, reduce erosion, and protect local water quality. With support from ICLEI, more than

“I have become much more aware of the larger environmental importance of the dunes. Not only is the Green Ribbon [Champion] Program providing me with initial help of assessments, planting, fencing and signage, they are giving me the knowledge and support I need to go forward as a steward of the land.”

~ Green Ribbon Champion participant

100 volunteers planted nearly 1,000 native shrubs and trees and removed 25 garbage bags (187 lbs) of invasive plants along Boiler Beach Road. The Township is working with local residents to develop a *Friends of Boiler Beach* stewardship group to help monitor and maintain the work that was completed this year. If you are interested in joining, please contact us at coastalcentre@lakehuron.ca.

5,340m of shoreline restored

50 beach-dune properties assessed

225 dedicated volunteers

7,500 native plants planted

700kg of invasive plants removed

1,000ft of sand fencing installed

100 interpretive signs installed



WE NEED YOUR HELP

Did you know that Lake Huron Coastal Centre is a registered charitable organization and 97% of our work is funded through donations and grants? Your gift today will help ensure we pass on a positive environmental legacy to future generations!

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THANK YOU

We are so grateful for the support of corporate partners, local businesses, and community organizations. Your generous contributions make coastal conservation possible!

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