



## **The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation**

*Keeping a Great Lake 'Great' Since 1998!*

### **New Staff!**

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We are thrilled to welcome Daniela Klicper and Hannah Wiebe to our Coastal Centre family today! Daniela is our new Coastal Stewardship Coordinator, taking over the role while Hannah C is on parental leave, and Hannah W is our new Coastal Stewardship Assistant. We are looking forward to a fantastic summer working with them!

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## **COMPLETE OUR GREEN PEOPLE SURVEY FOR A CHANCE TO WIN a \$50 MEC GIFT CARD !**

Through our generous funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation we are working to create a healthy coastline with vibrant communities on Lake Huron. In order to learn and share our learning with communities, the foundation has requested that we ask our communities what they value about Lake Huron and their connection with nature.

We'd like to welcome you to fill out the Green People Survey- it will take about 5 minutes to complete. You will be entered for a chance to win a \$50 gift card for Mountain Equipment Co-op!

TAKE THE SURVEY

## Sustainability Spotlight: An Interview with Cait's Café

Caitlin & Spencer Vail, owners of Cait's Café in Goderich, decided earlier this year to take action against plastic pollution in their business. One major step they took was making the switch from plastic single-use straws to more environmentally-friendly biodegradable paper straws. Here's what Cait had to say about their journey to becoming local leaders as an environmentally responsible business.



***What made you decide to switch from plastic straws to paper?***

"Since opening the business in August 2016, it was always in the plan to be environmentally responsible, however, the first year or so was just us trying to keep our head above water. After a trip out West in January 2018, I saw cafes and restaurants taking serious initiative in cutting out their plastic straws and packaging, and it reignited that spark in me to take action in our own business. It's clear that plastic is taking its toll on our oceans and lakes, so it was a no-brainer to try to do just a small part in combatting the issue. If we all do a small part, then we can make a huge impact. "

***How have your customers been responding to the change?***

"Our customers are happy to see we have paper straws. The paper straw does cost about 14x more than the plastic, so while they are included in the purchase of any of our iced drinks, we do charge \$0.10 if they want a straw with our canned beverages. At first, people were a bit surprised by the price, but once they saw they were paper straws, they understood. A lot of people actually refuse to buy a straw, so that's nice to see as well. I think if people were given a choice every time, a lot of people would opt to go straw-less. More often than not, we are given a lot of encouragement and support in our decision to switch from plastic to paper."

***What are some other things you are doing that local businesses can do to be more environmentally sustainable?***

"We focus on buying from local businesses and farmers, which I think is a more sustainable way to run a business. We encourage people to bring their own mugs in and offer a discounted price on drip coffee for those people. Spencer and I use reusable mugs, and hope we are setting a good example for patrons and our employees. We have stopped selling bottled water, and have a tap at the front with

filtered water for people to use who they need. Moreover, I have begun to phase out any plastic bottles for juices and pop we offer. We are down to just our orange juice being in a plastic bottle. They are little steps, but we continue to be conscious of our waste and how we can be more environmentally responsible. At the end of the day, we can only do so much as a business, and we highly depend on people to be environmentally aware and to take initiative."

*If you want to follow Cait and Spencer's journey in running a 'sustainable' coastal business, you can find them at [www.caitscafe.ca](http://www.caitscafe.ca), on [Facebook](#), or check them out next time you are in Goderich on "The Square".*

## Straws Suck!



Approximately **500 million plastic straws** are used daily in the United States and thrown out after one use. These 500 million straws could fill over **127 school buses** each day. In 2017, plastic straws were one of the top 10 items found during beach cleanups, with **17,654 straws picked up by volunteers on Canadian shorelines**. The Ocean Conservancy reported that worldwide over 400,000 straws were picked up in beach cleanups last year alone. A plastic straw can take over **200 years to decompose**, and unfortunately plastic does not fully biodegrade, and instead slowly breaks down into tiny pieces called 'micro-plastics'. Disposable items, like straws, contribute to the massive amount of plastic pollution in the Great Lakes. Lake Huron receives approximately 600 metric tons of plastic pollution annually, and one study found that there were 1.7 million pieces of micro-plastics per square mile in Lake Erie; **a higher density than some parts of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch**. Plastic continues to be found in the stomachs of birds and wildlife, which is detrimental to their health and often leads to fatalities.

The Coastal Centre is working to combat the issue of plastic pollution with the Microplastic Awareness Project, and we are thrilled to announce a new partnership with Michigan-based glass straw manufacturer [Strawesome](http://www.strawesome.com). Strawesome is a family business working towards awareness and action to eliminate the need for single-use plastic drinking straws. They have designed a Lake Huron themed glass straw for the Coastal Centre! The straw was inspired by the **endangered Piping Plover shorebird**, which relies on healthy beach and dune ecosystems to survive. 33% of the sale of each straw is **donated to the Coastal Centre** to support our work, which includes holding shoreline cleanups and monitoring the lake for microplastics, along with restoring beaches and coastal wetlands, protecting Species at Risk, and educating youth about Great Lakes conservation.

Erinn Lawrie, Executive Director says “Refusing single-use straws in restaurants and switching to a reusable straw is one small change people can make in their daily lives to make a large collective impact. It is encouraging to see so many local businesses working towards this as well by only serving drinks with straws upon request, or switching to more eco-friendly paper straws.”

**The Piping Plover straws are handmade in the USA, have a lifetime guarantee, are dishwasher safe, and are available for purchase at the LHCCC office in Goderich, or online at [www.strawesome.com](http://www.strawesome.com)**

Purchase Straws Here!

**As a non-profit, charitable organization, The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation supports environmental efforts along the Canadian coast of Lake Huron. Thank you for supporting our Coastal Centre!**

**We rely on donations from people like you to keep doing the amazing work we do along the shores of Lake Huron. Your contributions help engage communities, educate individuals, and create change for a brighter environmental future on our Great Lake!**

**DONATE TODAY!**



