



The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

Holiday Edition 2018

Keeping a Great Lake great since 1998!

Lake Huron Holiday Gifts

Spread some holiday cheer this season and support Lake Huron conservation!



Plastic pollution is a growing threat to water quality and wildlife in the Great Lakes. This year, the Coastal Centre has been hard at work researching plastic pollution in Lake Huron and advocating for sustainable alternatives for single-use plastics.

Reusable glass straws are a safe alternative to plastic straws and are available at our Goderich office or online through our friends at [Strawesome](#). The reusable straw kits, which includes a glass straw, cleaning brush and carrying case, are a great

option for stocking stuffers this holiday season!

You can also find other beautiful Lake Huron gifts at our office, including bumper magnets, and grocery totes! Proceeds from the sale of these items go towards our coastal conservation projects.



Shop Now

Real or Fake

The Great Christmas Tree Debate



As the holiday season approaches, we begin to decorate our homes in preparation for the festivities. For those of us celebrating Christmas, the Christmas tree becomes a focal point in our living spaces, complete with our favorite ornaments and lights. Whether you prefer the real Christmas tree scent, or the cleanliness of an artificial tree, both have their environmental advantages and disadvantages. Let's take a look at some of them!

Real trees are typically harvested from a tree farm and transported to reach you. Christmas tree farms are carbon sinks, meaning they soak up carbon dioxide emitted by cars, planes, and our homes, and in turn produce oxygen. The best option when buying a real Christmas tree is to try to find a responsible tree farm as close as possible to you. These farms can reduce forest exploitation and generate income for your local community.

Did you know that more than 500 farmers produce upwards of one million Christmas trees each year in Ontario? The most popular Christmas tree species are spruce, pine and fir. Fun Fact: spruce trees tend to lose their needles first while pine and fir shed them slower.

Artificial trees are a convenient, low-maintenance option for the holidays, however, it's important to note the environmental impact and carbon footprint of producing, packaging, and transporting a plastic tree across the world. Most of the artificial trees on the market are made of PVC and steel and are shipped to North America. Eventually these trees are sent to a landfill. Some claim the environmental impact of an artificial tree is lower than that of a real tree if you use the artificial tree for five or more years.

To minimize the impact of using a Christmas Tree make sure that it doesn't go to waste after just a few weeks of being used. In some places, Christmas trees have been recycled into mulch for city parks, habitat for fish and wildlife, or even materials for crafts!

To celebrate the holidays in a truly eco-conscious fashion, we must also look beyond just the Christmas tree. Happy decorating!

Is the Coast Clear?

Coast Watchers Program Presented at Latonnell Conservation Symposium

Coastal Technologist, Tineasha Brenot, presented on the Coast Watchers program at the 25th annual Latornell Conservation Symposium, highlighting the program's huge increase in participation and interest across the shoreline and the successes and challenges it presented.



The 3-day conference attracted representation from conservation based organizations from all over the country. This year's theme was 'Land to Great Lake - Relationship Status: It's Complicated', focusing on topics such as water governance and policy, low-impact developments and shoreline management.

The Coastal Centre's Coastal Stewardship Coordinator, Daniela Klicper, also attended the conference as a 2018 Grant Recipient.

Have a Green Holiday

Staying Eco-Friendly this Christmas

Take a moment this holiday season to consider some options that can help reduce your environmental impact. Christmas gifts and family dinners can create a lot of waste, and decorations like Christmas lights can use a lot of energy.



Here are a few ways that you can have a more sustainable holiday:

Use reusable utensils and dishes.

Disposable dishes and cutlery can have a big impact in landfills at the end of the holidays. Filling the sink with soapy water ahead of time or emptying the dishwasher can help make cleanup faster after dinner. Or you can put your friends and family to work, to make the cleanup more fun! If you do choose disposable, make sure you choose biodegradable or compostable options instead of plastic or styrofoam.



Make DIY gifts.

Homemade gifts are a meaningful way to give a gift without a huge amount of waste. Homemade bath and body products, baked goods, hot chocolate or soup kits, themed gift baskets, up-cycled scarves, and bird and bat houses are only some ideas of what you can make as a DIY gift.

Bring your own bags.

Reusable shopping bags aren't just for grocery shopping. Remember to bring them with you when you are hunting for that perfect Christmas gift!

Travelling? Consider carpooling or taking public transit.

Not only is travelling together a good way to catch up, it's an affordable way to be environmentally friendly by reducing your carbon footprint.

Give experiential gifts.

A memory lasts a lifetime. Concert tickets, a weekend getaway, cooking glasses, guitar lessons, a seasonal Provincial Parks pass, or membership to a museum can create new experiences and give a unique opportunity to give a meaningful gift.

Recycle your gift wrap.

Keep as much gift wrap as possible! Even better, use newspaper, old maps, old calendars, or get creative with all sorts of recycled and eco-friendly gift wrapping solutions. Scarves, tea towels, a tablecloth, reusable fabric, jars, tins, baskets, and flower pots can all be used as a more sustainable and interesting way to wrap your gifts.

Have a candlelit dinner.

Consider turning off the lights for the night and light some candles. It will make you feel extra festive and conserve energy.

Consider what's on your plate.

Look for more local options to fill up your holiday feasts. Avoid prepared dishes with all the extra packaging and processed fillers, and make some tasty, homemade options. Add a few extra vegetarian options to the table to diversify the meal and to reduce the need to serve meat options. You may be surprised how quickly they get gobbled up!



Give generously.

Whether it's volunteering your time or giving financial support, environmental charities like the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation rely on continued support from people like you!

For more eco-friendly tips, follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and watch for our "12 Days of Green Christmas" posts.



'Coastal Works' - By Tom Cull

A Poem to Commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

The poem 'Coastal Works' was commissioned by the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation, created by Tom Cull and sponsored by the London Arts Council. Tom recited the poem at the 'Is the Coast Clear?' Gala Event held at Oakwood Inn on the evening of May 10, 2018.

*Wade out, up to your waist—
stand where land and lake churn;
let the waves push, pull, jostle you.*

*Feel the sand—pulled by the current
from under your feet, whipped by the wind
through your hair. You are here
in the middle of a great hydraulics:
bluff, dune, beach, waves,
wind, sand bar, lake,
ceaselessly moving, changing,
exchanging, building up, eroding away.*

*Face north, east, south, west—
on the horizon, the salted lake freighters
dodge the dipping sun, back on shore
the dunes burn gold at day's end.
In this place of flux, we face oppositions:
Piping Plovers and cigarette butts
six-pack rings and Blanding's Turtles
Phragmites and Pitcher's Thistle
Tundra Swans and ATVs.*

*We share the urgent sadness of seeing
Slurpee straws roll in the surf,
plastic bags ragged by the wind caught
in the branches of Sane Dune Willows.
But we also rejoice at the sight of Green Milkweed,
Blue-Flag beaches, Bald Eagles
dissecting the sky overhead.*

*Time to come ashore? Hold for a moment,
let that current sucking at your calves have its way,
let the undertow take you out and under,
further, deeper, down to the lake bottom
past the few remaining giant lake sturgeon,
mumbling barbeled lamentations to miners
miles below, scraping road salt from cathedral caverns.
Here on the lake's floor find
nine thousand years old bones of Caribou
hunted by peoples who came before.
So many peoples here before us, still with us,
we learn what they knew—what they know.
The lake is more than science—it is sacred.
We belong to it.*

*It's time, come ashore
Your friends have gathered;
you see them scouring the shoreline
armed with garbage bags and gloves,
a laughing communion of believers,
every bit of garbage collected,
every inch of shoreline protected—
an act of love, hope, imagination.*

You teach your friends, your family what you know
and what you don't. You watch your child, your grandchildren
step joyously into that water for the first time and know you are
doing something that runs deep, deeper, into the blue of Huron.

About the Poet:

Tom Cull is the current Poet Laureate for the City of London, Ontario. Tom teaches creative writing at Western University and runs Thames River Rally, a grassroots environmental group that organizes monthly cleanups of the Thames River. Tom's first full-length collection of poems, *Bad Animals*, was published by Insomniac Press in 2018.

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!

