



Impact Report

Curiosity, connection, care

2025-2026



Thank you to our donor community

The Ontario Heritage Trust

Heritage does not survive on its own. It survives because people choose to protect it, study it, share it and pass it on. Every day, the Ontario Heritage Trust (the Trust) works to:

- safeguard Ontario's provincially significant places and stories
- expand our understanding of the past through research and conservation
- share that knowledge with communities across the province
- and inspire the next generation of heritage leaders

Donors make this work possible. Together, we are ensuring that Ontario's heritage remains available – not only to be remembered, but to be explored, understood and enhanced for future generations.

Ontario's heritage survives because someone is looking after the places, stories, knowledge and expertise that future generations will need.

Protecting Ontario's heritage

From historical homes and theatres to rare natural landscapes, the Trust protects places that tell the story of who we are and where we have come from. Through conservation projects, restoration work and research initiatives, we ensure that these irreplaceable places and vital stories continue to inspire.

Here is how the Trust delivered in 2025-26 on its mission, with donor support making that work possible.

Our mission

The Trust stewards and protects Ontario's diverse heritage, fostering public engagement and appreciation while promoting a sense of belonging for all Ontarians by creating lasting connections between the stories of the past and the people of today.

Our vision

A future in which Ontario's heritage is valued, vibrant and inspiring. The Trust is committed to preserving our cultural and natural heritage and ensuring its continued relevance for future generations. We are working toward an Ontario where heritage is not only preserved and valued, but is celebrated, enjoyed and used as a source of inspiration. The Trust will be a beacon in an Ontario where heritage is preserved, protected and promoted in ways that are sources of pride for all Ontarians.





Maximizing your contributions

We invest your donation directly into programs and services that protect our heritage.

How our work is funded

We rely on individuals, corporations, foundations and government to help us care for Ontario's heritage. When you support the Ontario Heritage Trust, you join a community of people committed to ensuring that Ontario's heritage is not lost. Together, we protect irreplaceable places, uncover new knowledge, share important stories and understand where we came from.

Making an impact together

Across Ontario, the places that shape who we are – and who we are becoming – need care, curiosity and commitment. In 2025, guided by a bold new strategic plan, the Ontario Heritage Trust reinforced its core purpose: protecting and activating heritage places so people across the province can see themselves better in Ontario's story. From historical sites and museums to community-driven programs like Doors Open Ontario and the Provincial Plaque Program, the Trust is ensuring that heritage supports local economies, fosters belonging and strengthens pride in places large and small. Whether in a rural town, a northern community, or a growing urban centre, the Trust's work connects people to place in ways that matter today and for generations to come.

This impact is only possible because of generous donor support. Your contributions help us:

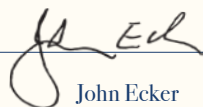
- steward provincially significant sites
- unlock new uses for historical places
- balance conservation with needed change
- support vibrant communities while protecting what is irreplaceable

Donations make it possible to:

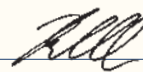
- invest in Ontario-based expertise and suppliers
- care for an extraordinary portfolio of heritage properties and collections
- expand access through digital and in-person experiences
- respond to local opportunities with provincewide impact

Every gift helps turn heritage into an extraordinary resource and ensures Ontario's diverse stories are shared, protected and celebrated across the province.

Sincerely,



John Ecker
Chair, Ontario Heritage Trust



Helen Chimirri-Russell
Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Heritage Trust



Stewardship

The Ontario Heritage Trust is dedicated to conserving heritage sites across the province. With your support, we continue to steward and care for Ontario's natural and cultural heritage responsibly, ensuring that these landmarks remain vibrant and relevant to communities across the province. Your donations help us to create an Ontario where the places, landscapes, traditions and stories that embody our heritage are reflected, valued and conserved for future generations.

Curiosity

Conserving heritage

Your donations have made it possible for us to address key emerging needs, ensuring that Ontario's heritage is conserved. We invest in and actively steward lands, cultural landscapes and cultural resources for the purpose of preserving, protecting and promoting their educational, economic and environmental values. We thank you for your ongoing support.





Barnum House site restoration

Barnum House in Grafton is an iconic Upper Canadian home built around 1819. It is one of Ontario's finest examples of neoclassical architecture. The house was designated a National Historic Site in 1959 and, in 1982, its ownership was transferred to the Trust.

The Trust has completed some significant restoration work at this site, thanks to a recent donation from the Dalglish Family Foundation. Preservation activities included exterior painting and restoring wooden fencing, as well as conserving the original wood trim and window openings. We are grateful to the Dalglish Family Foundation for their support.

"The Dalglish Family is delighted to support the Ontario Heritage Trust in its important restoration work with Barnum House. The funds were donated by Peter Dalglish's many friends and loving family to honour his legacy. Peter believed in treasuring our historic buildings, personally restoring the Grafton Village Inn and Methodist Meeting House in the Village of Grafton. Barnum House is the greatest architectural treasure in Alnwick/ Haldimand Township." Camilla Dalglish.

Fulford Place drawing room restoration project

Fulford Place in Brockville is an Edwardian mansion constructed between 1899 and 1901. The luxurious 35-room mansion was once the home to Senator George T. Fulford and his family. The Fulford family donated Fulford Place and its collection to the Ontario Heritage Trust in 1991. The site is now open seasonally to the public or by appointment.

In 2022, the Trust – with support from the Friends of Fulford Place – began the drawing room restoration project.

This project included the restoration of the plaster ceiling and decorative cornice in the alcove as well as the reproduction of silk damask wall panels. Artisans used molds to re-create the damaged plaster details and repair the carved woodwork niches. Restoration work in the drawing room was completed in 2022-23; the silk damask wall panel restoration is set to be completed by 2026. The original pattern for the damask wall panels will be reproduced and woven with custom-dyed silk and installed to replace the existing deteriorated panels.

The Friends of Fulford Place is a dedicated group of volunteers who play a vital role in supporting Fulford Place. Thanks to their fundraising efforts and your generous donations, this work ensures that the historical integrity of the drawing room is conserved for generations to come.



Increasing access to heritage

Accessible seating upgrades at the Elgin & Winter Garden Theatres

Toronto's Elgin & Winter Garden Theatres were constructed in 1913. Since its acquisition by the Trust in 1981, it has welcomed many patrons, and we continually strive to enhance the experience of our audience. Today, the Elgin & Winter Garden Theatres are the world's last operating stacked theatres.

Last year, we were able to purchase special bariatric seats for both theatres that match the colour and style of the regular seating. Bariatric seating promotes accessibility by comfortably offering more space than a standard-size chair to accommodate every body type. This allows patrons of diverse sizes to be able to sit comfortably and enjoy the show.

We are grateful to the Cultural Spaces Fund, Department of Canadian Heritage, for a grant to help us fund these seating upgrades.

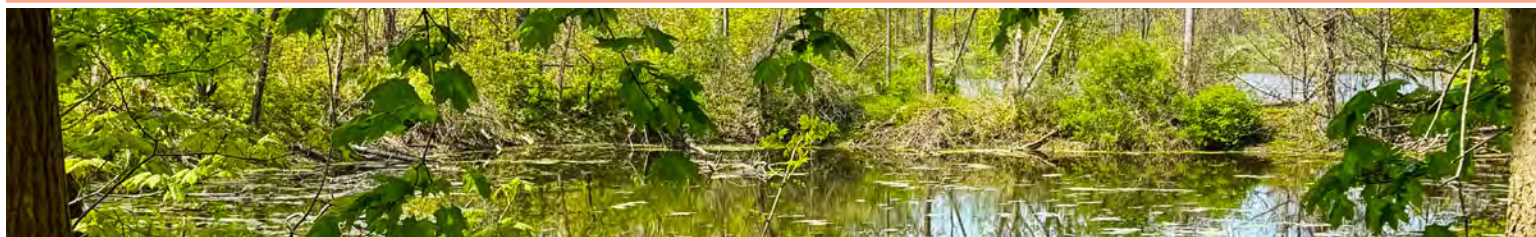




Protecting natural heritage

Throughout the year, the Trust conducts site visits to ensure that the natural heritage locations are cared for and conserved for the people of Ontario. This work requires numerous stakeholders and partners, and represents municipal and regional governments, conservation and trail organizations, Indigenous partners and regulatory agencies.

Effective conservation at this scale requires collaboration. Therefore, we rely on our strong network of partners. Together, we can ensure that each site reflects both its natural significance and its value to local communities. Your donations help to restore ecosystems, improve trail infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience and strengthen partnerships that advance conservation outcomes.



Ellis Property slope stabilization

The Ellis Property in Lincoln is a 23-hectare (58-acre) property that contains a variety of escarpment cliff features, two large ponds, diverse Carolinian species, Lake Ontario plain forest and several archaeological sites. The Ellis Property was generously donated to the Ontario Heritage Trust by Art Ellis in 1984.

The Trust has completed important slope stabilization work and trail improvements by partnering with the Town of Lincoln, the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority and Bruce Trail Conservancy, with additional funding from the Greenbelt Foundation.

These improvements provide safer access to the Ellis Trail and will help to reduce erosion on the slope and improve the visitor experience.



Cheltenham Badlands invasive species removal

The Cheltenham Badlands site in Caledon is a geological treasure formed over 450 million years ago. This 36-hectare (91-acre) site is one of Ontario's most striking natural landmarks, attracting visitors from across the globe. The property was acquired by the Trust in 2002.

Last year, over 100 volunteers from the Caledon Bruce Trail Club rolled up their sleeves to help remove invasive buckthorn from the property and resurface the trail with gravel to conserve the site and provide a more accessible experience.

Your contributions have supported the continued maintenance and expansion of the Cheltenham Badlands visitor experience.

"Donations are critical to enhancing the visitor experience at the Cheltenham Badlands. Alongside grants, partnerships and sponsorships, your support helps us protect the fragile landscape to ensure that more people can meaningfully connect with this unique natural heritage site. Continued investment ensures that the Badlands can be experienced and appreciated for generations to come." Kevin De Mille, Natural Heritage Co-ordinator, Ontario Heritage Trust.



Devil's Monument viewing platform upgrades

The Devil's Monument (located along the Bruce Peninsula) is the only complete flowerpot on land along the east side of the Bruce Peninsula. It has long been a draw for locals and tourists alike. The Trust took ownership of the property in 1998 with an agreement with the Bruce Trail Conservancy. Through collaboration with the Bruce Trail Conservancy, we have improved visitor infrastructure.

Thanks to your generosity, new parking areas and viewing platforms have been installed, improving the visitor experience while conserving the ecological integrity of this unique site.



Connection

Inspiring through programming

Your support also helps us deliver a variety of educational and community programming, designed to foster a deeper understanding of Ontario's history, culture and heritage. Through guided tours, workshops, events and community partnerships, these programs bring heritage to life and allow people of all ages to connect with stories and places that shape our province.

Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History

The Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History in Dresden recognizes the accomplishments of abolitionist Josiah Henson through interpretive videos, interactive exhibits, numerous artifacts and tours that reflect the Black experience in Canada. The two-hectare (five-acre) site was acquired by the Trust in 2005. The site consists of the Josiah Henson Interpretive Centre, with its Underground Railroad Freedom Gallery and North Star Theatre, plus three historical buildings – including the Josiah Henson house – two cemeteries, a sawmill and numerous artifacts that have been preserved as a legacy to these early pioneers.

Emancipation Day

The Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History has renewed the spirit of emancipation and continues to celebrate Emancipation Day every year. This annual one-day community event is a celebration of hope and freedom commemorating the end of slavery in Canada on August 1, 1834.

2025's program theme – Pressed, Poured, Plated and Played – celebrated how Black culture is shared and experienced across generations through crafts, drinks, food and music.

Our event is free for the public to attend. We thank the RBC for their continued support of our annual Emancipation Day event at this site.

Emancipation Day
is supported by



Doors Open Ontario

Since 2002, the Trust has administered this provincewide program and collaborated with community organizers to welcome hundreds of thousands of people into the spaces that make our communities truly unique. Each year, Doors Open Ontario provides new opportunities and new things to learn and share throughout the province that help us better understand our past.

This program succeeds each year because of the hard work of volunteers, community organizers and staff, who are so passionate and dedicated to sharing knowledge and history.

We thank our sponsor TD Ready Commitment.

Presenting sponsor



Photo: Doors Open Simcoe County



Provincial Plaque Program

The Provincial Plaque Program shares the stories of people, places and events that have helped shape the province. It is the Trust's oldest and perhaps best-known activity, with nearly 1,300 familiar blue and gold plaques in communities across Ontario. The plaques enliven Ontario's history, sharing stories of the people, places and events that have helped to shape the province.

In 2025-26, the Trust unveiled four new provincial plaques: including the Guelph British Methodist Episcopal (BME) Church (Guelph), the Hungarian '56ers (Toronto), the River Canard Bridge (River Canard) and Glendon College (Toronto).

Over time, our understanding of Ontario's heritage has broadened – through new research, the evolution of terminology, and the sharing and valuing of new perspectives. The Trust is examining how stories are told in an honest, authentic and inclusive way.



Inspiring future stewards — Building future heritage leaders

Heritage conservation depends on people, and the Trust is helping to develop and support them. Heritage conservation only succeeds if future generations have the knowledge, skills and commitment to continue the work. Your support helps develop the next generation of historians, conservators, planners, researchers and community leaders who will support Ontario's heritage in the future.

The Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards

The Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards and the Thomas Symons Award are administered annually by the Ontario Heritage Trust to recognize outstanding contributions made by groups or individuals to heritage conservation in Ontario.

We are thankful to Canada Life for their continued support and for jointly funding individual recipients with the Young Heritage Leaders scholarship of \$3,500 toward their post-secondary education each year.

We congratulate all winners of the 2025 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards.



Photo: Trent University.



Student engagement at Trent University: Indaanikesidoonaa indaadibaajimowinan: Expanding the Stories We Tell

In March 2026, the Ontario Heritage Trust, in partnership with Trent University with support from Canada Life, hosted the Indaanikesidoonaa indaadibaajimowinan: Expanding the Stories We Tell, held at the Wenjack Theatre in Peterborough.

This undergraduate student research gathering began during the fall 2024 semester and was an opportunity to spark new conversations and highlight the many diverse stories, people and events that contribute to Ontario's shared past using the Ontario Heritage Trust's provincial plaques as a catalyst. During the semester, Trust staff supported the assignment with feedback on student submissions and a guest lecture about provincial commemoration.

Through hands-on experiences, students gained a deeper understanding of the province's diverse cultural and natural heritage, while developing the knowledge and curiosity needed to carry this legacy forward.

This event displayed students' reimagined plaques and promoted thoughtful conversations about the commemoration of Indigenous stories, lands and cultures across the province. Many of these plaques are now showcased online to continue conversations about deepening our collective understanding of the complexities and possibilities of commemorating Indigenous histories in Ontario.



canada *life*

Youth Diversity Symposium

The Trust, through a partnership with the Lambton Kent District School Board and Dresden's Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History, presents an annual one-day youth diversity symposium.

This event brings students together across the region, providing an opportunity for students to gather and celebrate heritage and identity through engaging workshops and powerful performances. In 2025, 120 secondary student leaders were selected by educators to attend.

This inspiring event was made possible with support from Canada Life.

"The 2025 theme, The Mosaic of Us, gave our students the chance to connect, create and celebrate their differences. Events like this help young people see the value in respecting each other and building stronger, inclusive friendships and communities." Steven Cook, Site Manager, Josiah Henson Museum of African-Canadian History.

The Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors lead by example, actively participating in giving and working closely with staff to expand donor outreach, build partnerships and strengthen our fundraising strategy. Their commitment ensures that every contribution is used effectively to preserve heritage sites, support educational programs and engage new generations in our shared history. Through your support and the Board's guidance, we advanced major restoration projects, increased community engagement and created new opportunities for public involvement. Together, donors and leaders are making a lasting difference for Ontario's heritage, ensuring that these stories and spaces endure for generations to come.

Ontario Heritage Trust Board of Directors 2025-26:

John Ecker, (Chair), Heather A. Nicol, Patricia (Tricia) Hellingman, Lawrence Ostola, Jennifer McGill, Richard (Rick) Hall, Dr. Osman Hamid, Zygmunt (Zyg) Janecki, Robin McGinnis, Mandy Nwobu, Stephen Pellegrini, (Vice-Chair), Frederick Robbins, Rudy Santos, Demetrios (Jimmy) Vlachos

The Ontario Heritage Trust Board of Directors comprises accomplished members committed to volunteerism and dedicated to supporting the work of the Trust. Members of the Trust's Board of Directors are appointed by the Government of Ontario. For more information, please visit this website: www.ontario.ca/page/public-appointments.

Thank you to our 2025-26 donor community

The Ontario Heritage Trust thanks everyone who has given their time, energy and gifts this year.

Leader **\$2,500 and above**

Brockville and Area Community Foundation, Brockville
Canada Life, Toronto
C.E.P. Trust, Montreal
Dalglish Family Foundation, Toronto
Jackman Foundation, Toronto
RBC Foundation, Toronto
TD Bank Foundation, Toronto
Toronto Foundation, Toronto

Visionary **\$500-\$2,499**

John E. Ecker, Whitby
Entertainment Partners, North Vancouver
Patricia Hellingman, Hamilton
Ian Lupton, Toronto
Gail Packwood, Etobicoke
Young Canada Works, Toronto

Champion \$20-\$499

Dan Atkinson, Belleville

Jean M. Augustine, Etobicoke

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Helen Chimirri-Russell, Waterloo

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Lyne Gougeon, Toronto

Miles Griffin, Houston

Osman Hamid, Scarborough

Joyce Hisey, Toronto

Gerald Hunt, Toronto

Zygmunt Janecki, Kitchener

Karen Kaplan, Toronto

Natalia Kasnitskaia, Toronto

Tammie Lines, West Des Moines, Iowa

Katherine Low, Toronto

Judy Lunney, Toronto

Sean Mathieson, Toronto

Donald B. McKay, Owen Sound

Mark McNevan, Toronto

Richard Moorhouse, Toronto

Andrew and Carrie Morgan, Toronto

Jill Offenbeck, Toronto

Lawrence Ostola, Carleton Place

Steve Pellegrini, King

Kasandra Peters, Newmarket

Tony Phillip, Niagara Falls

Larry W. Richards, Toronto

Tyler Richards, Dresden

Holly and Charles Ridjab, Burlington

Marion Roes, St. Jacobs

Angela Rose, Schomberg

Donald Scott, Mississauga

Paul Scrivener, Toronto

Michael Street, Toronto

Lilya Sultanova, Toronto

Paul Terry, Toronto

Demetrios Vlachos, Toronto

**We would like to thank all those who wish to remain anonymous.*

Care

The work continues

These are just a few of the examples of the Trust's work, which we could not have done without your continued support – either as a donor, volunteer or advocate.

As perspective and understanding of heritage continues to evolve, the Trust is growing alongside it. We are expanding our work to safeguard Ontario's past while shaping a more inclusive future through activating heritage sites, sharing cultural stories, and building connections between people and places, enriching the historical narrative with greater authenticity and diversity.

We encourage you to continue to champion Ontario's heritage by supporting and investing in the places, landscapes, traditions and stories that bring our shared history to life.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwetch. Nia:wen. Marsi.

Social media:
linktr.ee/onheritage



Website:
heritagetrust.on.ca



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