Thank you, dear donor, for making Ontario a better place to live.

Your support enables us to carry out a breathtaking range of programs and services that will positively impact our diverse communities now and for generations to come.

From conserving our precious natural spaces and keeping our cultural heritage alive to engaging Ontarians of every age and background through our public education initiatives, and so much more, your donation goes a long way to safeguarding Ontario’s heritage in all its forms.

Indeed, as you enjoy these highlights of our recent accomplishments, you may find yourself surprised at the scope and impact of the Ontario Heritage Trust’s work across the province.

As we tackle the formidable challenges ahead, from climate change to rapid development, let’s take this moment to reflect on the progress we made last year in protecting the places, landscapes and traditions that keep our communities healthy and diverse.

You are critical partners in the work we do. I hope you enjoy our 2016-17 Impact Report.

Sincerely,

Beth Hanna
Chief Executive Officer
Our mandate

To identify, protect, renew and promote Ontario’s rich and diverse built, cultural and natural heritage that has influenced and continues to shape our society for the benefit of present and future generation.

How our work is funded

We rely on partnerships with individuals, corporations, foundations, and government to care for Ontario’s heritage.

Maximizing your contributions

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

Our vision

The Ontario Heritage Trust is the province’s heritage agency and provides services as:

• The heritage trustee and steward for the people of Ontario;
• A centre of excellence for the delivery of services to communities and government;
• A strong advocate and advisor for heritage;
• A centre of heritage information and education; and
• The promoter of Ontario’s built, cultural and natural heritage

How our work is funded

66% Self-Generated Income*
34% Core Government Funding

44% Caring for Ontario’s Cultural and Natural Heritage
22% Educating and Connecting Ontarians with Heritage
26% Adaptively Reusing Heritage Venues
8% Administration

* Includes revenue generated through the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, leases, public museum admission and program fees, donations, sponsorships and grants.
Testimonials from individuals and organizations the Trust helped in 2016

Winnie Truong

2016 Doris McCarthy Artist-in-Residence Program Beneficiary

“My artist residency was meditative, productive, and propelled me into a whole new way of thinking and making.”

Justin Nicholls

2016 Young Heritage Leaders Scholarship Recipient

“Preservation of history really matters to Justin, and I can see that being recognized with the award and this scholarship has fueled his ambition on a personal level.”
- Deanna Nicholls, Justin’s Mother

Bruce Trail Conservancy

2016 Community Partner

“The Ontario Heritage Trust was instrumental in supporting the Cheltenham Badlands project in 2016. The Trust brought together partner groups and addressed community concerns, helping to ensure a safe and sustainable future for this iconic piece of Ontario’s heritage.”
—Beth Gilhespy, Bruce Trail Conservancy CEO
Conserving our natural spaces

Ontario’s natural heritage is exceptionally diverse, and with our partners, the Trust is focused on conserving this irreplaceable legacy. The Trust intends to protect it for generations to come!

Preserving our wetlands

In November, we took on the responsibility of preserving and protecting over 20 hectares (50 acres) of provincially significant wetland, a donation from a private estate.

Located 50 kilometres southwest of Ottawa, the newly named Wilfred and Jean Neilson Wildlife Sanctuary is the only significant representation of riverine marsh, swamp and upland forest on a clay plain in Ontario, providing habitat for three identified at-risk species: the Jefferson salamander (endangered), Blanding’s turtle (threatened), and snapping turtle (special concern).

Expanding public access to Ontario’s nature trails

The Ontario Heritage Trust owns or secures many sections of the Bruce Trail.

In January we acquired right-of-way easements near Lion’s Head, a community located a few kilometres southeast of Bruce Peninsula National Park. Two private property owners generously agreed to donate trail easements over their respective properties to secure a permanent hiking corridor for the Bruce Trail. These actions
provide pedestrian access to a site already in the Trust’s care, the Westover property, stewarded by our community partner, the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

These new easements will support thousands of day trippers and hikers each year, to promote healthy recreational activities and enable further appreciation of Ontario’s natural beauty. They make a welcome addition to the more than 160 kilometres of public recreational trails on lands the Trust now cares for.

**Saving the Cheltenham Badlands**

Due to public safety, conservation, and stewardship issues brought on by rising numbers of visitors, the Trust took protective action and temporarily closed off the Cheltenham Badlands (pictured) to the public in 2015.

Throughout 2016 we hosted a series of public consultation meetings to provide a forum for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to express their thoughts, give valuable insight, and inform the Trust’s decision-making for the multi-year Cheltenham Badlands Master Planning project. Improvements to the site include the revitalization of the trail system, an accessible parking area, an accessible boardwalk, a roadside walkway, and educational signage.

Our public consultations were highly successful, engaging over 800 participants. The feedback from communities, including that of eight Trust community partners, has played a critical role in outlining the final configuration for the Badlands’ trails and infrastructure, and we are on target to reopen this remarkable formation to the public in early 2018, restoring it as one of Southern Ontario’s most iconic environmental tourist attractions.

We gratefully acknowledge the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for their generous support of our work with the Cheltenham Badlands.
Protecting our cultural heritage

The Trust undertakes the restoration and conservation of heritage buildings in our care, ensuring they remain an important part of the lives of Ontarians.

Restoring a legendary venue for the performing arts

We completed a multi-year series of restoration projects at the Trust’s Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre in the spring of 2016.

During one major project, a recarpeting uncovered the original tile and terrazzo flooring in the Yonge Street Lobby bar dating back to the early days of the theatre. Rather than covering it up again, we restored the tiling and flooring to their former glory (pictured) for the delight of visitors to this elegant National Historic Site.

As well, the Grand Staircase and Yonge Street Lobby had their distinctive wall panelling replaced, with breathtaking results (pictured) that further beautify the world’s last operating double-decker theatre.

Bringing Ontario’s past back to life

Conservation is an ongoing commitment, requiring the care and expertise of craftspeople with dozens of specialty skills.

The Trust completed additional restoration projects on multiple heritage sites across the province throughout 2016. For example, we made extensive repairs to the barn and carriage shed at Toronto’s Ashbridge Estate, fully restored the exterior of the Hudson’s Company Staff House at Moose Factory, replaced the siding at the Niagara Apothecary, and carefully restored and conserved the Ontario Heritage Centre’s original wood windows and sills.

We gratefully acknowledge the National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places and the Province of Ontario for their generous support of our heritage restoration work.
The newly restored original tiling and terrazzo flooring at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre.
Young ‘archaeologists-in-training’ begin to unearth Ontario’s past during our summer camp at the Spadina Museum.
Community connections in 2016

754,021 participants in Trust sites and programs

465 Heritage assets and resources protected

We work in 85% of Ontario’s municipalities
Engaging Ontarians and celebrating diversity

Our supporters help provide engaging and memorable experiences for all Ontarians that forge connections to and nurture appreciation for Ontario’s cultural and natural heritage.

Empowering children and youth

We gave children and youth exceptional opportunities to learn to excavate, analyze, and record artifacts while working alongside professionals as part of an archaeological dig during our annual archaeological summer day camp held in July at the historic Spadina Museum.

Nineteen children and youth ages 10 to 14 (pictured on p.10 and 13) benefited from this two-week, all-day adventure that we’ve co-run with our programming partners, the City of Toronto, for 15 years. Participants uncovered artifacts dating as far back as the 1800s while enjoying stimulating field trips and educational games.

At the Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Awards, held during Heritage Week each February, we celebrate and encourage young people who take action to protect heritage in their communities with Young Heritage Leaders Awards. In 2016 we recognized a group of elementary school students from St. Catharines (pictured) who successfully campaigned to mark the site where Harriet Tubman guided freedom-
seekers into Canada with commemorative panels, receiving plenty of well-deserved media attention.

We awarded two youth scholarships, to Justin Nicholls (pictured on page four), also of St. Catharines, for spearheading a successful initiative to recognize the final cold war air raid siren remaining in his community with a plaque, and to Marica Pinnock of Oakville for helping hundreds of students learn about their cultural identity and the importance of diversity.

We gratefully acknowledge Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life for their generous ongoing support of our Young Heritage Leaders Program.
Ashbridge Estate, in the heart of Toronto’s Leslieville neighbourhood, was the social hub of a thriving, 600-acre farm founded in 1796. Food grown by the Ashbridge family nourished tens of thousands of residents in the surrounding communities. As suburbs expanded, lands were sold off, leaving only a small urban estate. Now, after a century, farming has returned to this splendid heritage site, thanks to a strategic partnership.

Building Roots, our community partner, establishes and grows community and commercial food infrastructure into new housing developments and revitalizations. Together, we welcomed several local community groups, representing a true diversity of Ontarians, to Ashbridge Estate in 2016, yielding a bumper crop of vibrant community garden projects.

A Syrian farmer and refugee from the Arab Community Centre joined Building Roots’ core group of volunteers to begin work on the Estate’s expanding urban mini-farm in the early spring. Seeking an opportunity to connect with others who shared his passion, he happily shared his gardening techniques with other volunteers throughout the spring and summer.

That autumn, the Black Farmers Collective of Toronto (pictured), who grow affordable, organic food and promote food justice to their community, planted the first fall crop, garlic, on the grounds. The Collective brings their harvest to farmer’s markets in neighbourhoods like Moss Park, offering them at affordable prices while providing the group with revenue to support their initiatives.

We continue to revive living cultural roots while benefiting a diversity of community groups at Ashbridge Estate in 2017.
Beloved artist Doris McCarthy requested that her Fool’s Paradise, a serene heritage site along the Scarborough Bluffs, become a retreat for artists, musicians, and writers when she left it in our care through a charitable remainder trust. We’ve realized her vision by operating a robust artist residency program, providing Canada’s creative professionals with an inspirational studio and living space where they can grow and achieve their goals.

Selected through an expert advisory panel, five artists benefited from the 2016 Doris McCarthy Artist-in-Residence Program: A poet; a painter, collage artist, and digital animator; a mixed media artist; a children’s author; and a visual artist. These highly creative professionals also acted as mentors to aspiring artists. They offered constructive criticism on technique and method, career counselling, and other professional insight tailored to the needs and interests of the mentees, ensuring that Canada’s diverse community of artists are supported, inspired, and connected.

We gratefully acknowledge the RBC Foundation for their generous support of the Doris McCarthy Artist-in-Residence Program.
Enriching our sense of place

We established seven provincial plaques in five different Ontario communities in 2016. Three of these plaques honour the immortal Flying Frenchmen, an Ontarian trio of players for the Montreal Canadiens who hailed from Cornwall, Belleville, and Renfrew.

Standing prominently at entrances to major community recreation centres that attract over 1,300,000 visitors each year, the plaques illuminate the critical role Franco-Ontarians played in building the National Hockey League, *inspiring generations of active children and youth to pursue their dreams of sports excellence.*

As of the end of 2016, we’ve created 1,277 plaques that share the stories of communities across the province, enrich our sense of place, and recognize the diversity of Ontario’s history.
Nearly half a million visitors from around the world accepted our invitation to visit over one thousand heritage sites during Doors Open Ontario 2016, infusing more than five million dollars into the local economies of 145 participating communities across the province.

This popular summer tourist draw has proven a boon to hundreds of towns, counties, and cities, attracting over seven million visitors since it launched in 2002. One of our community partners applauded “the personal stories, the connections, and the great spirit that was fostered between visitors and volunteers” during the event. Another partner was excited to tell us that their “community is thirsty for this type of engagement.”

Thanks to our enthusiastic donors we’re able to encourage public involvement, foster civic pride, boost public knowledge and interest in history, raise awareness of local heritage resources, and promote conservation while creating opportunities for community jobs, tourism development, and new partnerships by operating successful programs like Doors Open Ontario.

We gratefully acknowledge Celebrate Ontario for their generous support of Doors Open Ontario.
Highlighting Canada’s black heritage

On August 1st we observed Emancipation Day, the anniversary of the end of slavery in Canada and the British Empire, at Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site in Dresden. Through this annual public event we brought over 500 community members together to celebrate hope and freedom through music, dramatic re-enactment, and passionate educational interpretation.

In May, for the second consecutive year, we provided elementary school educators from communities across Southwestern Ontario with a full-day workshop on Black history, also at Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site. Teachers representing 35 Ontario schools learned powerful lessons about the achievements of Black Canadians and their struggle for equality. Afterwards, participants took back what they learned to share with their peers and incorporate into their course curricula, enriching the education of thousands of students for years to come.

We gratefully acknowledge RBC Royal Bank, Southwestern Ontario for their generous support of Emancipation Day at Uncle Tom’s Cabin Historic Site.
Strengthening Indigenous community partnerships

Supported by our donors and partners, the Trust works with Indigenous communities to protect their sacred lands and culturally significant places, celebrate community heroes, and commemorate important events.

Protecting Sacred and Culturally Significant Places

The Trust permanently protects and stewards several sites with special meaning to Indigenous peoples, including burial places, traditional use sites, and lands of sacred or spiritual value, in close partnership with their respective communities. Together, we carry out monitoring and archaeological investigations, as well as natural heritage preservation and educational activities.

During 2016, in partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation, we restored the exterior of the Hudson’s Bay Company Staff House (pictured), a National Historic Site in Moose Factory. This is a site of great importance to the Moose Cree: It’s where they first encountered English merchants in the late 17th century and began their long, sometimes dissonant and tragic relationship with the settlers, traders, and missionaries. Today, the Moose Cree operate this vital piece of Ontario’s northern heritage as a seasonal attraction and a centre for staff housing.

We gratefully acknowledge Parks Canada’s National Cost-Sharing Program for Heritage Places and the Province of Ontario for their generous support of our capital restoration work.
Preserving and promoting Indigenous heritage

In June we marked 400 years of interaction between Europeans and Indigenous peoples in what is now Ontario by holding a commemorative public event in Penetanguishene, in partnership with the Office of Francophone Affairs and the Town of Penetanguishene.

Algonquin, Anishinaabe, Huron-Wendat, and Métis representatives (pictured) participated in the all-day intercommunity experience, which featured an official ceremony, plaque unveiling, youth educational programming, and Indigenous cuisine. We engaged historians and knowledge keepers from several First Nations in developing the plaque’s commemorative text, written in English, French, and the languages of the Mohawk, Wendat, Anishinaabe and Montagnais-Innu people.

In February, in partnership with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, we awarded the Métis Nation of Ontario with the Lieutenant Governor’s Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership.

Throughout 2016 we undertook outreach work to a number of leaders and knowledge keepers, including within the Anishinaabe, Cree, Huron-Wendat, and Métis communities, recording aspects of Indigenous intangible cultural heritage for current and future generations and publishing highlights of this work online and in Heritage Matters magazine.
Your support makes a difference.

Thank You

Merci

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