

A Gift in Your Will

A Gift in **Your** Will Saves **Nature** in **Ontario**





She loved puzzles, cards, walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, sewing and reading. Her most beloved activity was gardening--she had a real passion for orchids. And she enjoyed fine Scotch whisky. Vida sounds like my kind of lady.

I never met Vida Bain, but I feel like I know her. It's been my pleasure and my honour to work with her husband, Colin, to use the gift Vida left to Ontario Nature in her Will in ways that would delight her. Because of Vida, we have been able to fund vital stewardship work on our Nature Reserves and also employ several interns and staff just starting their careers in conservation--energetic and dedicated young scientists who may not otherwise have had this opportunity.



For me, a highlight was taking a group of members on an orchid hike in June on our Petrel Point Nature Reserve--a place close to Vida's heart where we invested some of her legacy gift. We saw white bog orchids, grass pink orchid, yellow lady's slippers, showy lady slippers and more. During the hike, we took a moment to honour Vida, letting the group know that her kindness and generosity had made this work

possible. It was a beautiful moment on a beautiful day--a memory I will most certainly never forget.

I'm inspired every single day by your stories and memories, and I love hearing what matters to you and your dreams for nature in Ontario. I'm proud to help caring members and their families take action to protect nature forever. You are welcome to contact me anytime for a confidential discussion about how you can protect nature forever with a gift in your Will. Thank you!



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In recent edition of Walrus magazine, Lewis Rifkind from the Yukon Conservation Society wrote: "You live in suburbia but consider yourself Canadian because of these vast, unspoiled wildernesses. The idea that they exist becomes very important."

As urban dwellers in Kingston, we love exploring our own nearby natural areas. We also volunteer at a centre that rehabilitates injured and orphaned native Ontario wildlife. In the process of caring for these animals, we have moments of experiencing an unexplainable kinship with them. In these moments, we feel touched by an ancient wordless wisdom. Caring for animals, and nature in general, connect us to something sacred, much larger than our human sphere.

We regret that so many plant and animal species have gone extinct globally within our own short lifetimes. We hope that the generations that follow us will continue to have access to wild places and spaces—and importantly -- that they will treasure and respect them.

One of Ontario Nature's great successes is the Nature Guardians program, engaging teenagers and young adults with nature. We are proud to support our youth and ignite their passion in caring for our natural environment.

Remembering Ontario Nature in our Will means that we have contributed to the protection of nature in perpetuity. There is a peace in knowing that we have done what we could so that people's relationship with the land will not disappear as society becomes increasingly more urban.

- Susan and Sheila



The forest calms me down. In the forest, the air is sweet, sounds of nature are good, and the silence is magical.

We took one look at this property near the Lake Erie Shoreline and we knew it was for us. We love the Carolinian Life Zone. The only things we don't like are the ticks. Our dream is to restore the natural features of the forest and wetlands here. We've created several wildlife ponds. Every year Stan plants more native trees and removes non-native plants. We keep a yearly log book of flora and fauna, and happily report that native plants like sassafras and tulip trees are thriving again.

I feel very strongly that the next generation should understand how important woodland and wetland conservation is for both wildlife and our own well-being. We are fortunate to have been blessed with an enjoyment of nature our whole lives, and we want children to always have the same opportunities to explore and love nature.

- Anita, with her husband Stan



I had a fascinating father. He was driven, self-taught, curious and interested in everything to do with nature. He took every opportunity to share everything he knew, unobtrusively and naturally. I remember taking turns with our family 'feeder watch'. And I have strong memories of our family camping trips—mom and dad slept under canvas until their 80s. I also remember feeling that Dad's love of nature wasn't very cool—one day I even pulled a blanket over my head in the back seat of the car when Dad was pointing out a rare bird out the window.

And all these years later my husband cringes when I do the very same thing! Once we were stopped by a cop for distracted driving and all I could say was, "I'm sorry officer, we were bird watching!" But truthfully our whole family loves nature, thanks to Dad. My daughter's first science project was about backyard birds. Dad was thrilled.

We talked openly about Dad's charitable giving plans as part of his Will. We knew that he remembered Ontario Nature—and a few others—in his Will. These charities spoke to his hope for the world. And his decision to protect nature with a gift in his Will means as much to us as it did to him. We're proud of him, and it's a wonderful way to remember him, knowing he'd be so pleased that his gift continues to inspire kids and Ontarians of all ages to experience the joy and wonder of nature.

— Nancy Bodsworth
Hannah, talking about her late father, Fred



Our son Graeme was born March 12, 1974. Even as a baby, he always loved to be outdoors. He made happy sounds when he looked up at the sunlight filtering through the leaves of the trees above his stroller. At just 4 months old, he became a true camper—he slept soundly every night, oblivious to the tremendous storms raging over our tent.

As he grew, his love for nature grew as fast as his legs could carry him. He became more curious and more adventurous. Our family bought a little trailer, the perfect size for a small boy. He called his upper bunk his nest and he gathered all his belongings up there with him, just like a forest creature.

Graeme explored lakes, rivers, sand dunes, wetlands, caves and mighty cliffs to observe wildlife. His favourite adventures were in our canoe, very early in the morning. It was wonderful to see the beauty of nature through the eyes of our child. One of his elementary school friends told us much later that he would happily point out to his friends the neat things he found and identified in the little stream that went through their school yard.

He was an avid reader. He read and reread all the Gerald Durrell stories about his life as a naturalist and traveller. I think Graeme would have liked to follow in his footsteps. He wanted to study Environmental Studies in university.

At the beginning of grade 13, Graeme was diagnosed with a very rare bone cancer. He died April 23, 1993, just after his 19th birthday.

Because of his love of nature, we knew that a Graeme Whistance-Smith Nature Reserve would be the perfect way for him to be remembered. If he were alive today, he would be pleased to know that a small part of our beautiful province is protected in his name forever. He would love exploring this little safe haven for plant and animal species that enchanted him. We are forever grateful to the dedicated people—past, present and future—at Ontario Nature who made it possible for our wish to come true.

— Suzanne Carlson, Graeme's mom



My beautiful son, Graeme





YOUR PROMISE FOR NATURE, OUR PROMISES TO YOU

Thank you for your enduring confidence in our work. As a member of our *For Nature Forever Circle*, we would love to connect you to our work to protect nature in your backyard, our boreal forest and beyond in ways that are meaningful and inspiring to you. Here are just a few ways we are proud to stay connected with you:

- You'll be invited to special, exclusive conservation events hosted at nearby nature reserves or communities
- You can read stories about gifts in action, meet our staff and fellow members in our quarterly award-winning ON Nature magazine
- We'll send you letters and updates on your support in action for nature in Ontario

Our member care staff at Ontario Nature would be delighted to hear from you about how we can stay connected with you. We love speaking with you! You can contact Kirsten Dahl at 416-444-8419, extension 235, or kirstend@ontarionature.org anytime, and you can also speak to any of our helpful and caring team by calling 1-800-440-2366.

And we also have additional materials we can share with you, including a practical and step-by-step guide to legacy giving. This includes different kinds of legacy gifts and provides resources that can help you, your financial advisors and your family members.

We are also happy to speak to you anytime, in confidence, about your giving and help you customize your giving to best align with your values and your unique needs.



OUR DONOR PROMISE

1. Your Will is an intensely personal document. We respect your privacy.
2. We understand and support the notion that your loved ones come first.
3. We would like to know if you have made a gift to nature in your Will so we can make conservation plans, and also so we can recognize your generosity. Whether you choose to tell us or not is entirely your decision.
4. We encourage you to contact us to learn more about our areas of work that interest you most, and how you can ensure your gift is directed to that area in the most effective way possible.
5. We will provide you and your loved ones with special opportunities to learn about our work to conserve nature in Ontario.
6. We are proud of our effectiveness and efficiency. We will apply both to your gift.
7. We deeply appreciate the confidence and trust you have in Ontario Nature.
8. We will respond immediately to your questions or concerns. You can contact Caroline Schultz, Kirsten Dahl, or anyone on our member care team, at any time.



Our Legacy Vision

At Ontario Nature, we envision a future where nature inspires and sustains us for generations to come. One hundred years from now, it is our hope that nature's beauty will still be intact for children to explore and love.

Ours is a future where birdsong fills large swathes of protected forest. Meadows are alive with the hum of native bees and colourful flashes of butterflies. Our nature reserve network has grown, providing critical habitat for rare plants and animals. Healthy wetlands provide a vital refuge for reptiles and amphibians. Once threatened species like woodland caribou have survived and now thrive, their habitats protected. People make time for sunset paddles, hikes with friends and family, and to explore wild places. Children are connected with nature from infancy. And Ontarians better understand that, as humans, we are part of nature and that cherishing and living in harmony with wild species and wild spaces is the key to our future.

Since 1931, we have been governed by a volunteer Board of Directors that provides the organization with leadership, oversight and support. Made up of Ontario Nature members like you – naturalists and nature lovers from across the province – our board acts with accountability and integrity to ensure a strong future for Ontario Nature.

Thank you for your inspired and enduring support of Ontario Nature. We hope you see yourself reflected in these stories and see your values reflected in our vision. You are encouraged to contact us anytime for a conversation about your hopes and dreams for nature.

Caroline Schultz, Executive Director



Saves Nature in Ontario