

## Millions raised by Bruce Trail Conservancy donors for Niagara Escarpment

The Bruce Trail Conservancy celebrated recently the more than \$2.9 million dollars raised this past year for Niagara Escarpment land preservation and conservation.

More than 175 Conservancy donors, volunteers and staff came together at the Conservancy's annual Donor Recognition Event in Burlington to honour the work begun decades ago to preserve land on the Niagara Escarpment along the route of the Bruce Trail. The Conservancy's dedicated donors gathered to celebrate the personal gifts that set this year apart. In addition to the many cash donations made in 2013, the Conservancy received donations of land worth more than \$638,000, representing 144 acres of irreplaceable Niagara Escarpment landscape. These donors have entrusted their land to the Conservancy, thereby ensuring it remains forever natural and accessible via the Bruce Trail. Gifts of land are of critical importance to the mission of the Bruce Trail Conservancy and speak volumes of the trust these landowners have in this charity.

Through its 50th Anniversary Milestones Project, the Conservancy will raise funds to secure and steward 5,000 acres of Niagara Escarpment land containing the Bruce Trail, between 2012 and 2017. This past year, the 50th Anniversary Theme was "Sharing the Trail," and the achievements of the year reflect the dedication of Conservancy's members, volunteers, donors and landowners to sharing the beauties of the Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment.

Speaking at the event, Executive Director Beth Gilhespy put the donors' impact into perspective.

"Because of you, 10 new nature reserves were created this year, securing 562 acres of irreplaceable Escarpment landscape and adding more permanence to our long history of sharing," she commented. "Our organization is buoyed by the strong commitment of you, our donors, especially at a time when funding from government agencies has all but disappeared."

The Bruce Trail Conservancy is a charitable organization committed to establishing a conservation corridor containing a public footpath along the Niagara Escarpment, in order to protect its natural ecosystems and to promote environmentally responsible public access to this UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.