



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Please Note:** The variously named Big, Boyd or Chiminis Island and surrounding outer islands are referred to as “Island” or “the Island” throughout this FAQ.

**Q1: Now that Kawartha Land Trust (KLT) owns the Island, I am hearing that it is ‘off limits’ and that the public is no longer permitted to go to the Island. Is this true?**

**A1:** The Island is open for public use. Historically, permission was given to use the Island to *some* fishing guides and indigenous people during the period of Boyd family ownership (1873-1990). There were early settler users and use by indigenous peoples for thousands of years prior to the Boyd ownership. Since 1990, however, the Island has been privately owned and anyone using the Island was trespassing.

As the new owner of the Island, and in keeping with the wishes of the donors, Mike and Terry Wilson, Kawartha Land Trust has opened the Island for public use. We ask that you please tread lightly, and follow guidelines that will ensure overall long-term protection of the Island.

**Q2: I understand that the donors of the Island kept some of it. Is this true?**

**A2:** To date, the vast majority of the Island has been donated to the Kawartha Land Trust, with two small parcels and one small outer island being retained by the donors, Mike and Terry Wilson. The Wilsons also have given Kawartha Land Trust the right of first refusal on the lots they retained in the event that they choose to put them up for sale outside of their immediate family.

A letter to the editor from donor Mike Wilson has appeared in the *Kawartha This Week*, *Peterborough Examiner* and *The Kawartha Promoter*. It is also available on KLT’s website. It outlines the donation and the donor’s intentions.

**Q3: I was under the impression that the \$1 million dollars raised during the campaign was going to be used to maintain the Island. Now I am hearing that the money was used to buy the Island. What happened to the money raised during the campaign?**

**A3:** KLT did not buy the Island. The Island was generously donated to KLT by Mike and Terry Wilson. The Wilsons also donated an additional \$100,000 to the fundraising campaign and donated a further \$50,000 to support costs of the property transfer. The \$1 million raised during the campaign has been used to create a dedicated stewardship fund. It is KLT’s intention to preserve this fund by investing in conservative assets to cover the ongoing costs of ownership over the long term. KLT’s Audit and Finance Committee has hired a fund manager to manage the funds in keeping with these objectives and Canada Revenue Agency regulations governing the donation.





**Q4: Now that KLT has acquired the Island, what do you intend to do with it?**

**A4:** Now that the Island is safe from development, we are committed to finding the balance between public uses and protecting and preserving the Island for generations to come. The Kawartha Land Trust is developing a Stewardship Plan that will allow the public to continue to enjoy the Island while maintaining the Island's natural and cultural features.

There are many fascinating natural and cultural features about the Island, stories about the history of use by early settlers to the area and, in the case of First Nation Communities, for more than three thousand years. Significant archaeological resources have already been discovered and some documented, as have rare and significant natural features. More plans are in the works to research and inventory the full extent of these features. The Island is designated as an ANSI or "Area of Natural and Scientific Interest" by the Province of Ontario.

**Q5: Does the community have a voice in what plans are put in place for the Island?**

**A5:** A Management Team of 15 local volunteers has been established to provide advice to KLT on the Property Management Plan and activities for the Island. The Management Advisory team has a diverse local membership almost all of whom were involved in the campaign to enable the donation of the property. Volunteers include full-time and seasonal residents, cottagers, boaters, major donors, business leaders and experts in conservation and land stewardship.

The Management Advisory Team has been actively reaching out to the community and will continue to seek input on how best to encourage use and enjoyment of this gift. Open house discussions and surveys are just two of the many ways that public input is being sought.

**Q6: It seems like a number of decisions were made in advance of public input being sought.**

**A6:** From 1990 to 2016, users of the Island were doing so as trespassers. The liability a landowner assumes for trespassers is limited.

However, now that KLT owns most of the Island and is allowing public use for permitted activities, KLT has a duty of care to ensure careful and responsible uses. These activities must be in keeping with the donor's wishes, Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program requirements and the limitations of KLT's insurance policy. At the outset of spring, KLT volunteers and staff were obligated to move quickly to ensure that use of the Island was in keeping with these externally determined parameters. Ultimately it is KLT's wish that activities on the Island ensure a high standard of care and long-term protection for the Island as a first principle. Existing structures and docks on the Island were unsafe and did not meet building standards and insurance expectations. As a courtesy, all known former users of structures were contacted in person in advance of those structures being removed by KLT volunteers and staff.

Going forward, interpretative and trail signage will be developed to celebrate the history and the natural and cultural features of the Island. We encourage you to let us know what additional educational





features you'd like to see on the Island, what stories and features should be represented by such signs or any other ideas you may have.

**Q7: Why have camping and fires been banned on the Island?**

**A7:** As promised during the campaign, the issues surrounding camping and fires were reviewed. After careful consideration of all the factors and in an effort to manage the Island responsibly including limiting the opportunity for a lawsuit that could deplete the fund and KLT's capacity to manage the Island in the long term, the camping and fire ban of the previous owners is being upheld.

- Factors include:
  - The donor's conditions and expectations;
  - The rules of the Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts program, under which the land was donated (Regulations state that KLT *"cannot undertake or tolerate any action that results in or could result in a diminution of the ecological character or protection of the ecological gift"*);
  - Fires on the Island are the responsibility of the Township of Trent Lakes Fire Department. Although the Fire Department has boats, the closest boat is kept in Buckhorn. A fire would be well underway by the time firefighting equipment could reach the Island. Access is difficult and the sheer size of the Island would make successful attempts to contain a fire highly unlikely. With no homes or life at risk, should fire erupt the Island would likely be allowed to burn;
  - The charitable model of a land trust involves limited resources and paid staff. It relies heavily on volunteers and focuses primarily on activities that do not require extensive management such as those associated with running an Island campground. The Nature Conservancy of Canada, for instance, has a 'no fires, no camping' policy on all properties it owns in Canada. Even if the above two bullets were not a factor, the standard of care required for the infrastructure of permitted camping far exceeds the resources available in the fund dedicated to managing the Island. The fund was set up to enable the donation of the Island by covering the basic expenses and costs of stewardship in the short term while putting first and foremost overall protection of the Island in the long term.

**Q8: Why couldn't things just stay the way they were. The Island was really at no risk of being developed.**

**A8:** Although some previous attempts to develop the Island were unsuccessful, Mattamy Homes had approval for a 95 home development. Mike and Terry Wilson also obtained approval for development. In August 2015, Mike and Terry Wilson received approval for ten large 12-acre estate lots in addition to a 1,000 acre +/- interior "open space" lot. This would have given them permission to build 10 dwellings on the Island. It was only a matter of time before the Island would have been lost to development.





The Boyd family had offered the Island to Parks Canada, Ontario Parks and the local municipality a number of times in the 1970s and 1980s, however, none of these levels of Government were willing to take on the risk of managing an island at that time. The Island was ultimately sold by the family out of fear of the risk of a lawsuit.

The story of the Island to date represents an incredible journey with many players. Many development scenarios were defeated by active community opposition and ultimately the lands fell into the hands of Mike and Terry Wilson and, due to their generosity and community action, we now have the good fortune to have the vast majority of the Island protected. We believe that this is the best possible scenario that could have emerged from this journey to date.

**Q9: What kind of activities will KLT permit on the Island?**

**A9:** KLT generally allows low-impact recreational activities on its properties and works within the terms of the gift. The Island is available for public use for activities that are compatible with protecting and preserving the Island in its natural state. **Permitted activities include the following:**

- *Fishing*
- *Swimming*
- *Picnics*
- *Hiking, walking, cross-country skiing and related recreation*
- *Use of recreation facilities such as trails*
- *Research and educational programs*

**Q10: Will you charge a fee to use the Island?**

**A10:** Current KLT policy is to allow free use of all protected properties that are open to the public.

**Q11: What activities will KLT not permit on the Island?**

**A11:** Based on the wishes of the donor, the restrictions of the Environment Canada Ecological Gifts Program through which the Island was donated; and liability risk and insurance limitations, activities that are not compatible with exercising a high duty of care towards protecting the Island cannot be permitted.

**Activities which are not permitted include:**

- *Overnight camping*
- *Hunting*
- *Fires*
- *Alcohol*
- *Vehicle use*
- *Harm to wildlife, vegetation or other features*





**Q12: Will boats still be able to moor alongside [tie to] the Island? Will there be docks made available?**

**A12:** KLT has no position on boats mooring offshore as they are doing so in a Federal Waterway. We may, however, discourage mooring or tying to shore in sensitive areas. An inventory of natural features of the Island is being done and this will inform the discussion of potential mooring restrictions. KLT will study this further to understand more fully the impact on the natural features of the Island. KLT is actively seeking public input as to whether or not docks should be made available to allow easier access to the Island. Please let us know your feedback.

**Q13: I've seen lots of garbage left on the Island or in shallow water. What is KLT going to do about that?**

**A13:** There is no doubt that the garbage problem is impacting the natural environment of the Island. We already have received a very supportive message from several of the local businesses and cottage associations and have completed several volunteer-led clean ups of the Island in 2016. This issue will require ongoing attention and we are committed to continuous improvement. Kawartha Land Trust is in need of volunteers to help with ongoing Stewardship activities, please let us know if you can help.

It should be noted that Happy Days and Egan Marine Houseboat rentals have been very supportive, both during the campaign to secure the Island and through the Island's ownership transition. Houseboat operators are assisting us by educating their renters on the appropriate uses of the Island. Renters are supplied with the Island brochure during their orientation before heading out on the water.

**Q14: Have you involved local First Nations in this project?**

**A14:** Curve Lake First Nation has been an important supporter of this project. KLT spoke to Curve Lake First Nation Council on three occasions in 2015 and to their Chief, staff and elders in 2016. A representative of Curve Lake First Nation sits on the Management Advisory Team. Curve Lake First Nation made a generous gift to the campaign to save the Island.

There is evidence of indigenous use of the Island dating back 3,000 years.

**Q15: KLT is not allowing hunting on the Island but it does on other properties. Why can't I hunt on the Island? There are duck blinds around the Island...what will happen to them?**

**A15:** KLT cannot permit hunting on the Island as it excludes broader public use. Each KLT property is unique and permissible uses are considered on a case-by-case basis. Hunting is allowed on one KLT property as it was a condition of that particular property's donation that the donors would retain the right of hunting for a ten-year period. This circumstance does not apply to Big (Boyd/Chiminis) Island. KLT cannot permit hunting, duck or other, on the Island for safety and liability reasons. The KLT insurer does not insure for liability associated with hunting on this property. Existing and any new duck blinds placed and located on the Island will be removed. Hunting is not compatible either with the KLT duty of care for the Island and its wildlife or for the safety of members of the public using the Island.





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**Q16: I understand that snowmobiling and ATV use are no longer permitted on the Island. Why?**

**A16:** Public vehicle use on the Island was not permitted by previous owners and KLT will continue with this measure in order to limit harm to vegetation and the many unique ecological features on the Island. The Island is home to many ecologically sensitive areas and our duty of care dictates that only low-impact activities that are compatible with the protecting of these areas are permitted.

**Q17: Now that efforts have been made to clean up the Island and make it safe, what next?**

**A17:** The Management Advisory Team will continue to seek input from the local community on how best to encourage use and enjoyment of this gift. Our duty of care will be the first principle.

KLT remains committed to managing the Island to protect the natural and cultural features while allowing compatible public use. Our *duty of care* is to find the balance between public use and enjoyment of the Island and preservation and protection of the Island's wildlife, vegetation and significant features for generations to come. We will move forward slowly and with care, the long-term protection of the Island being our primary goal.

