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July 14, 2021

Re: Jeffrey-Cowan Forest Preserve on Stony Lake

Kawartha Land Trust is a non-government organization and registered charity dedicated to conserving the natural environment and enhancing the quality of life in the Kawarthas. KLT achieves this by accepting gifts of ecologically significant lands and/or conservation easements on lands, along with monetary donations to maintain and care for the properties in their natural state.

Our mission is caring for lands entrusted to us and helping others protect the land they love in the Kawarthas. It is a trust we do not take lightly and is at the core of what we do.

One of the properties we have been fortunate to acquire recently was the Jeffrey-Cowan Forest Preserve at Boschink Narrows on Stony Lake. It makes up the eastern extent of the Stony Lake Trails Network and encompasses one of the longest stretches of undeveloped shoreline on the lake. It contains an important forest of pine and oak, and is an iconic Stony property. It is one of several KLT protected properties on the lake including the recently acquired Christie Bentham Wetland.

The Jeffrey-Cowan Forest Preserve was willed to KLT by Norman Cowan, who had nurtured the land and created magnificent walking trails so that people could enjoy the natural heritage and significant wildlife habitat forever.

The integrity of the Jeffery-Cowan Forest Preserve is now being challenged by seven abutting cottage owners who allege unproven and unsubstantiated rights of way through it. They have initiated litigation against KLT in an attempt to obtain a right to drive motor vehicles to their water access cottages over a portion of the land along a driveway formerly used by Mr. Cowan for his own purposes. This use would degrade the natural heritage of the forest preserve and directly challenge the intent of Mr. Cowan.

Litigation is a costly and lengthy process. Outcomes are not certain. However, KLT has retained highly experienced counsel, Michael Watson of Gowling WLG. With him we have carefully considered the strength of our legal position and our mandate. We have not seen any evidence to substantiate the cottagers' claims. We are determined to protect the lands that have been entrusted to us and will vigorously defend them.

We have spent a significant amount to date defending this lawsuit and have undertaken a fundraising effort in the hope of partnering with Stony Lake and the broader community to protect the late Mr. Cowan's vision and legacy. This will be a unique endeavour for KLT, but our principles demand it. To learn how you can help today please visit www.kawarthalandtrust.org/cowan-property-on-stony-lake

Sincerely,
2021 KLT Board of Directors