



The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation

Keeping a Great Lake 'Great' Since 1998!

'Is the Coast Clear' 2018 Conference a Great Success!

We were thrilled to have close to **200 delegates** from **70 organizations** attend this year's conference and gala, and celebrate our 20th anniversary with us!

We had 15 incredible speakers discuss a diverse range of topics and issues across the Lake Huron shoreline. Whether you sought environmental optimism with Jen Pate, learned about turtle species at risk with Jackie Litzgus, or heard about farmers taking action to reduce phosphorus inputs into the Great Lakes with Mark Reusser, there was so much to take away from each of the sessions. We were honoured to have our two fantastic keynote speakers Dr. Drew Gronewold and Cal Kothrade join us from the United States. Drew's fascinating presentation on Thursday taught us about the history and drivers of Great Lakes water level variability, and on Friday morning Cal took us on an entertaining and informative underwater journey to Lake Huron's shipwrecks.



Mark your calendars! The next 'Is the Coast Clear?' Lake Huron Conference will be held **May 28-29, 2020**. Do you have a great idea for a presentation topic? Let us know! Contact us at coastalcentre@lakehuron.ca.

**COMPLETE OUR FEEDBACK SURVEY TO WIN
AN ONTARIO PARKS GIFT CERTIFICATE!**

Did you attend our 2018 conference and gala? Help us make our next event even better! Fill in our feedback survey for a chance to **win a \$20 Ontario Parks Gift Certificate!**

TAKE THE SURVEY



Parking at the beach or on the beach?

Most of us are familiar with gorgeous sand beaches on the shores of Lake Huron; but did you know that **only 2% of the entire Lake Huron shoreline is made of sand beach**? These areas are actually rare and sensitive to our actions, as well as some of the most heavily visited areas of the coast.

Many coastal communities rely on tourism for their economic prosperity—some of which have embraced a symbiotic relationship between habitat and healthy beach, as well as accommodating thousands of visitors per year. Over decades of beach management, many municipalities and conservation groups have made efforts to reduce our impacts to these sensitive and rare habitats to improve visitor experience and reduce inputs of garbage, fuel spills, and other human-introduced pollutants. One of these initiatives has been to stop allowing cars to park on the beach and dunes.

There are many different ways to accommodate increasing levels of tourism, keeping coastal communities economies strong, while also creating a beautiful coastal corridor, and a healthy beach environment. It is no longer a question of "tourism and



strong economy" OR "healthy beach". Experts and passionate beach managers have proven that both can occur simultaneously, within the same area, and will often benefit one another. Parking on the beach takes away valuable 'towel real-estate' during high lake levels and is less aesthetically pleasing than parking areas placed back off the dunes. Improving beach areas only takes a few seasons.

Some first steps to take include:

- Create designated parking areas off the dunes. This will encourage healthy dune growth, improve aesthetics of the beach environment and reduce potential for fuel spills, garbage left on beach, and nuisance birds.
- Creating accessible pathways allows everyone to enjoy the shoreline year-round.
- Improving dune health using fenced-off sections, sand fencing, dune grass planting, and interpretive signage to educate visitors.
- Be aware! If you are visiting a beach, choose to park off the dunes and beach zone.



*The picture in the **top right** shows a historical photo of beach parking from the 1930's, which will look familiar to many of the life-long Lake Huron visitors familiar with beaches from the 1960's and 70's in Ontario. The **middle picture** is an image from a Lake Huron beach taken in spring 2018 showing this 'traditional' and unhealthy method of using the beach as a parking lot. The picture on the **bottom right** was also taken in spring 2018 and shows a public beach area with a clear distinction between the dune and beach environment, an accessible walkway, a buffer strip, and the parking lot.*

More information on beach management and stewardship guides can be found at www.lakehuron.ca

Who's Watching Our Coast?

Every week from May to October, dedicated citizen scientists take to the shores of Lake Huron armed with a few pieces of measuring equipment, a datasheet, and a passion for our lake. The Coast Watchers program offers a unique experience for members from shoreline communities to contribute to an ongoing, 13-year data set measuring changes in coastal conditions. This year, we had over 100 new participants join the program, allowing monitoring initiatives to expand into new communities all around Lake Huron.

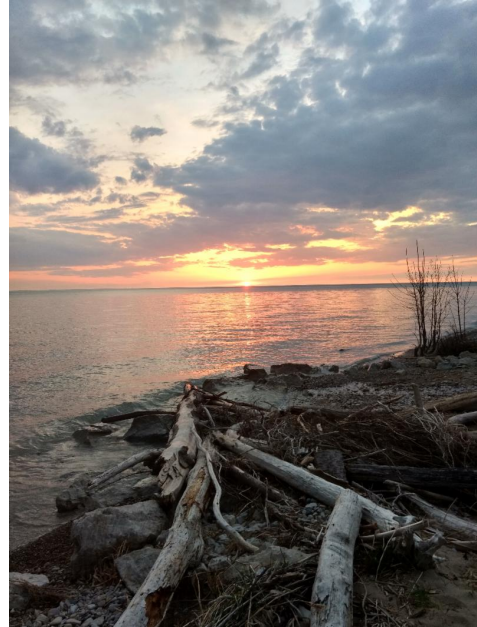
Some measurements being collected by Coast Watchers include wave height and direction, wind speed, human impacts, and algae blooms. These volunteer citizen scientists are also trained to identify species at risk that live on Lake Huron

such as Monarch butterflies, Piping Plovers and Eastern Hog-nosed snakes. As an extra element of the program this year, 50 Coast Watchers are collecting a water sample at their monitoring site to be used as part of a lake-wide monitoring program for tiny pieces of plastic called "microplastics". Microplastics are buoyant and can be found floating on the top of the water, where the sample is collected from. Samples are filtered, leaving behind some very colorful organic material, as well as the microscopic pieces of plastic that we are looking for!

We have had some incredibly passionate Coast Watchers that are sending us photos from all over the coast just to share their experiences and to help us understand the beauty and the concerns that they see. The commitment in this program is outstanding; to the shoreline and the environment. Our Coast Watchers are the eyes and ears of the coast, and we at the Coastal Centre are so proud and excited to be able to work with this diverse group of volunteers and witness their experiences. Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers, and keep up the good work!

The Coast Watchers program is generously sponsored by [Bruce Power](#).

Lake Huron Sunset Photo Taken by Coast Watcher, Rick Anderson.



Lake Huron Bags Are Here!



Stop by our office on the Square in Goderich to show your love for Lake Huron. Available for a suggested donation of \$5.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 'IS THE COAST CLEAR?' CONFERENCE SPONSORS!



Innovation at work



*Another thank you to our marvelous, hard-working Board of Directors,
who dedicated time and effort ensuring the success of the
conference!*



Back: Bob Payne, Alison Lobb, Jan Purvis, Jo-Anne Harbinson, Bruce Wenstrom, Stephanie Donaldson.

Front: Susan Ross, Hannah Cann, Erinn Lawrie, Tineasha Brenot, Jim Roberts, Patrick Donnelly.
Absent: Jen Pate, Nancy Vidler.

As a non-profit, charitable organization, The Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation supports environmental efforts along the Canadian coastline of Lake Huron. We rely on donations from people like you to keep doing the amazing work we do along the shores of Lake Huron. Your contributions help engage communities, educate individuals, and create change for a brighter environmental future on our Great Lake!

[DONATE TODAY!](#)

