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**OLTA PRAISES PARTNERS IN MUSKOKA CONSERVATION GIFT  
Chief's Island Easement brings Ecological Gifts Program to 800 gift mark**

MACTIER, Ont. - August 16, 2010 - The Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) is praising the efforts of Muskoka Heritage Trust and Elizabeth Mason for helping to conserve an important old growth forest in the Muskoka Lakes region. Through Environment Canada's Ecological Gifts Program, Elizabeth Mason has turned over 23 acres on Chief's Island to the Muskoka Heritage Trust as a nature reserve. Muskoka Heritage Trust is one of a network of land trusts that work through the OLTA to protect significant natural landscapes for future generations.

"We extend our congratulations to Muskoka Heritage Trust and Elizabeth Mason for this landmark agreement, and commend their efforts to conserve part of Chief's Island for generations to follow," said Ian Macnab, the OLTA Executive Director. "Across Ontario, land trusts are playing a vital role in creating these kinds of natural legacies."

"Elizabeth has always loved and respected this land. Her important donation represents a significant step in preserving much of Chief's Island as a natural forest," said George Snider, Director of the Muskoka Heritage Trust.

Ecological gifts are valuable tools in conserving threatened habitats and supporting biodiversity. Gifts range from wetlands, forests and grasslands, to shores, farmland and heritage sites. Land trusts play a vital role in protecting Canada's ecologically sensitive areas, and are often the recipients of donations made through the Ecological Gifts Program. The Ontario Land Trust Alliance is a program partner.

The Muskoka Heritage Trust is a federally incorporated charitable trust established for the purpose of preserving Muskoka's heritage assets, including significant natural lands and built heritage artifacts and architecture, by means of acquisition or conservation easements.

The Ontario Land Trust Alliance represents a network of land trusts across Ontario. Land trusts are community based, non-profit organizations primarily focused on protecting significant natural landscapes for future generations. They also provide protection to important agricultural lands and cultural heritage features. Across the Province of Ontario, landowners and land trusts are working together to conserve sensitive landscapes in perpetuity. To learn more, visit [www.olta.ca](http://www.olta.ca).

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