



Directors' Report  
Annual General Meeting  
March 12, 2011

Friends of Redtail Society is now four years old. Actually our official 'birthday' is March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007. We are gathered today for our fourth Annual General meeting, and your Board of Directors is thrilled to report to you that our initial goal has been achieved. The Society has saved 313 acres of forestland from destruction. This is truly a cause for celebration and we thank all of you for coming to celebrate with us today.

My report to you today is to tell you how this success came about and to outline all the efforts that were made throughout 2010 on behalf of the Friends of Redtail Society.

One of the first things that was notable about 2010 was that Friends of Redtail Society had succeeded in firmly establishing its identity and presence in away that extended beyond its original sphere of influence. In the beginning most of our supporters would have had a personal connection to individual Directors or society members, or most significantly a connection to Redtail Nature Awareness, our inspiration and namesake. Throughout 2010 it became more evident to us that many more people had heard about our efforts and were engaging with us on many different levels. In our first three years we had worked to develop our website, our print materials, our You Tube video, our public statements and public appearances, and especially our many creative fundraising activities organized both by the society and numerous individuals. I think we can say that these efforts of the past three years were now bearing fruit.

On the financial front in 2010, we raised in a single year almost twice as much as we had raised in the previous three years. We drew close enough to our goal that we were able to secure bridge financing to complete the purchase on time. Details of our financial status will be forthcoming in the Treasurers Report.

The Board of Directors accomplished several things in 2010, which significantly contributed to the fundraising success. First, we achieved our Charitable Status with Revenue Canada, effective in February 2010. This status resulted in noticeably more and larger donations, it also meant we no longer had to channel donations through the Sierra Club. While we very much appreciated our partnership with the Sierra Club we were very pleased when we no longer had to lose 10% of those donations. Second, we had three successful grant applications. We were thrilled to receive these three grants, not only for the significant financial boost they gave us but also for the votes of confidence in our Society. Our own Pictou County Municipal Council and Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection each contributed ten thousand dollars, in support of our efforts to create a community gathering place for trail building and for nature-based recreation and education. Nova Scotia Habitat Conservation Fund contributed fifty thousand dollars to recognize our goal of preventing the destruction of this significant forest habitat and to support our goals of promoting a non-human centered approach to the natural world.

We weren't always successful in our efforts. Many of our grant applications to various groups and foundations were turned down. However, in most cases the difficulty seemed to be that we were seeking funds for land purchase rather than for carrying out some particular activity. Now that we can access the land we intend to resubmit proposals to many of these potential funders to support future activities. On another front, we were very disappointed with our provincial government, specifically the Department of Natural Resources. We lobbied vigorously through our MLA for help in various forms – direct financial assistance from DNR, an interest free loan, and avoidance of HST liability. All to no avail. We learned that the structures that have been created and are administered by various government departments have no place for the type of grass-root efforts we are engaged in, not withstanding their claims that they want to encourage citizens to actively pursue community solutions to community problems.

Another area where we came up against government bureaucracy was in our pursuit of our Charitable Status, in this case Revenue Canada reviewed our incorporation documents and by-laws and decided that if we wanted the benefit of Charitable Status we had to say things their way. The original objects of Friends of Redtail Society were:

- a) To protect and conserve forest land for the purpose of education and the exploration and practice of a new land ethic, which supports biodiversity and sensitive sustainable land use, and
- b) To promote community engagement in the health and wellbeing of its bioregion.

The current objects of the Friends of Redtail Society as found in the Memorandum of Association and which can be viewed on our website are as follows:

- a) To organize and participate in environmental projects designed to preserve and protect forest land;
- b) To educate and increase the public's understanding of the environment and its importance by offering courses, seminars, conferences and meetings and by collecting and disseminating information on that topic; and
- c) To conduct research relating to the environment and to disseminate the results of such research.

These words are exactly as dictated to us by Revenue Canada who also required a change in one of our By-laws to ensure that in the event of dissolution of the Society any property would be disposed of to a qualified Donee as defined by the *Income Tax Act*. Since none of these changes were contrary to or would prevent us from carrying out our original objects, they were passed by a Special General Meeting held in February 2010.

We had started 2010 with 9 Directors, but two stepped down in March. Fortunately both of these individuals, Nova Poirier, one of our incorporating directors, and Charlie Kennedy, who joined us in 2008, remained actively involved. Both of them spearheaded very successful fundraising events, and Nova also contributed significantly with her drumming and circle activities at last year's Annual General meeting. We extend a very big Thank you to Nova and Charlie. Still with last year's Annual meeting heartfelt thanks go out to Trudy Watts, who used her talents to get us to focus and kept us on track, and to Jim Drescher, our very capable and inspiring guest speaker.

Earlier in this report I mentioned our success in fundraising in 2010. There was so much activity in this regard our Fundraising Committee Chair Nancy Hanlon will be making a separate report in this meeting. I would just like mention several initiatives that had significant implications over and above their fundraising aspects. These were Ben Miller's, Tandem Bicycle Cross Canada Tour in the summer, and in the fall the presentations in Halifax and New Glasgow by renowned

author Diana Beresford-Kroeger. Both of these endeavors brought our cause and our message to a much wider audience, significantly increasing our visibility and credibility. Our thanks to Ben and Diana. Details of these events are still available on our website, as is the research paper prepared by Diana after her tour of the forestland we have acquired. There were many excellent fundraisers throughout the year. Each in its own way played an indispensable part in our success. A big thank you is extended to all, those whose ideas created the events and all those who supported them.

Through these last four years we had the unwavering and generous support of one individual who has not been publicly acknowledged. That individual is our solicitor Ian MacLean. Ian has been there for us since the very beginning, and with his Associates and staff has seen us through very challenging times. Thank you Ian, and everyone at MacLean and MacDonald.

I can conclude my annual report by stating that it was our hope that at this year's Annual Meeting we would be plotting our future, having accomplished our goal of securing the land. Well, with the help of so many we have secured the land. We can now look to the future. In 2011 we need our members to step up and help us raise the final dollars to repay the balance of our loans, approximately \$35,000. We also need our members to step up to participate actively in our first project on the land, the creation of the walking trail, Craig's Way, which Billy MacDonald will speak to later in the morning. And in 2011 and beyond, we also need our members to contribute to developing our vision, our policies and our projects so that we can fulfill the stated objects of Friends of Redtail Society.