

Ellen Gordon: Maintaining a Connection from Afar

By Andy Robinson, Nature Trust Volunteer Writer



Ellen Gordon is a Nova Scotian by birth and at heart, even though much of her life was spent elsewhere.

“I still support the Nature Trust as a monthly donor, even though I’m not living there,” she said. **“My heart will always be in Nova Scotia, and I know that my monthly donation helps sustain the valuable work the Nature Trust does. I find it very easy – the money goes out each month, and the Nature Trust knows they can rely on my support.”**

“I was born in Nova Scotia but grew up in New Brunswick; however we spent a lot of time in Nova Scotia as my grandparents lived in Milton, on the Mersey River,” said Ellen. “My dad built a cabin on Ponhook Lake and we would spend a month every summer there. That’s where I developed my love of nature. I would hear my favourite Hermit Thrush in the woods,

and that song has made me feel at home in other places too; the tidal marshes at the mouth of the LaHave River where I spent my early retirement, and today at home in Ottawa.”

Ellen spent her professional life as a teacher in the English school system in the Eastern Townships of Quebec. After taking an early retirement she came back to Nova Scotia and lived 12 years on a tidal inlet in Lower LaHave, before moving to Ottawa, where she now lives. Ellen is quite philosophical about the work of the Nature Trust and her own connection to the natural world. “I think we all get to a point in our lives when we suddenly realize how precious life is; how we’ve taken everything around us for granted. For me, that came when I realised I had to sell that family cabin that had been part of my childhood, because I couldn’t bear to see how the lake was being ruined for me by others who were relentlessly pursuing their own version of happiness - racing up and down the water on jet skis, or playing loud music on a dock. I believe we do all come to a realisation that what we grew up with is not forever, unless we take action to help make it so.”

“My parents loved to take our family on picnics by rivers and lakes wherever we were living. It was always easy to access such spots. But in Nova Scotia it has become progressively more difficult, because so much land is in private hands. Even beaches are being closed off when land is bought up by individuals. Everyone should have access to the water. **Knowing I am doing my part with monthly support gives me a sense of belonging to my heartland, even when I’m over a 1000km away in Ottawa.”**