

Jason Roth & Cheryl Steadman-Roth: Appreciating the Collective Power of the Nature Trust

By Andrew Robinson (Nature Trust Volunteer Writer)



Jason Roth recalls portaging his canoe from the Bi-Hi through the woods to paddle on Bayers Lake, before picnicking in the beautiful woodlands; Cheryl Steadman-Roth recalls the old swimming hole near her childhood Spryfield home. Both locations have disappeared, swamped under a sea of concrete and development.

“I have a dream that we reach a point where people who grew up here and went away can return someday and say to their kids, ‘these are the woods I played in as a boy’, or ‘let’s go back to the old swimming hole, it hasn’t changed a bit,’” said Jason. “So many of our childhood haunts are now just memories, and that really saddens me. **The Nature Trust gives us the collective ability to put the brakes on the loss of wilderness, the loss of childhood memories, and enable us to preserve something for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.** Who doesn’t want their children to have a better life than they had?”

Jason and Cheryl have been active supporters of the Nature Trust for many years. In 2019 they decided they wanted to do still more, and so they elected to become **Guardians of the Land**.

Barbara Haley, Philanthropy Director, explained the Guardians of the Land program. “Our Guardians recognize the need for ongoing (pledged over 3 to 5 years) significant support to enable us to plan for the future and to guarantee the sustainability of the conservation work we do,” she said, “and they see the importance of keeping their support unrestricted, allowing the Nature Trust to address the areas of greatest need.”

Jason is a New Englander by birth, and a naturalised Canadian today. He first discovered the Province in 1973 as a post graduate student, and he made his home here permanently in 1978. Cheryl is a native Haligonian from the Spryfield area. The couple have been married for 32 years and today they split their time between Hubley, NS and New Hampshire. “Not the normal choice for snow birding,” Jason laughs, “But we fell in love with the White Mountains about 9 years ago and we bought ourselves a condo that we use for the winters. We can enjoy mountain hiking and cross-country skiing, and the place pays for itself with summer rentals. And for 9 months of the year, Nova Scotia is home and always will be.”

“I’m fortunate that I had a good career, worked hard, invested wisely and spent responsibly, so that now Cheryl and I can look to our legacy and support the causes we feel deeply about,” said Jason. “We are pulled to the very essence of the Nature Trust. In a world where the individual might feel powerless and despairing about the state of things, he or she **can join forces with the Nature Trust to deliver actions with far-reaching and measurable impacts.**”

Jason and Cheryl also recently donated stocks to the Nature Trust. This is a lesser-known way of supporting that provides very beneficial tax breaks. By directly gifting stocks or mutual funds to the Nature Trust, the donor avoids paying capital gains tax on the appreciated value of the donated stocks, while receiving a charitable tax deduction for the full fair market value at the time of the donation.

“It really is a win-win,” said Jason. “**Donating stocks means you can enhance what you might be able to donate while also reducing your personal tax burden,** and helped us minimize claw-backs from other income like OAS payments.”

Jason and Cheryl are very much aware of their fortunate place in the world, and they feel a strong satisfaction in doing what they can to help others, individually or collectively.

“I think we all come to a realization of what we have, and what we can afford to give,” Jason said. “**There is a personal satisfaction to be had from giving and collaborating for the greater good. And the Nature Trust lets us see the tangible result of our actions.**”