



Essex Region
Conservation Foundation
enriching the place for life

2023 Gratitude Report

THANK YOU.

Message from the President and Executive Director

2023 was an incredible year for conservation successes in the Essex Region. The Windsor-Essex Community Foundation Community Entrance to the Cypher Systems Group Greenway was opened to rave reviews, allowing equestrian access to this multi-use trail.

Partners in Sustainability again continued their incredible support of Inspiring Future Conservationists and Eco-Stewards, and tree planting and environmental restoration continued in partnership with Caldwell First Nation thanks to a generous donation from Jamieson Wellness. A leadership donation from the Collavino family will allow the implementation of public access features at the Collavino Conservation Area, which the family donated in 2022 to ensure its long-term protection..

Over the summer, our Golf Tournament achieved its highest fundraising successes to date, thanks to the incredible generosity of players, sponsors and donors. And we were delighted to re-instate the Super Santa Walk/Run/Wheel for the first time since 2019, with another record-breaking amount of funds raised for local conservation.

Restoration began on the John R. Park Homestead in fall, and dozens of generous donors participated in the world's largest day of generosity with an incredible donation from the Toldo Foundation, and dozens raised more than \$44,000 toward this restoration effort.

As always, none of these conservation achievements would be possible without the dedication and generosity of so many supporters. In total, over 2023, donors contributed \$672,173 to conservation efforts. Thank you! We could not be more appreciative, and look forward to continuing to work together, with you, in striving for future of sustainability in our region.

Yours in conservation,



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Claire Wales
President



A handwritten signature in black ink.

Tim Byrne
Executive Director

The Foundation's Strategic Plan directs its fundraising priorities. Pillars include Greening our Region and Taking Climate Action, Connecting our Region by Trails, Inspiring Future Generations through Outdoor Education, and Preserving our Heritage. The following is an overview of what donor generosity allowed to be accomplished in 2023 in each of these priority areas.



Greening Our Region & Taking Climate Action

Caldwell First Nation Restoration Project continues thanks to support from Jamieson Wellness

The second community planting for the 40 acres restoration project at the Caldwell First Nation took place in 2023, thanks to significant support from Jamieson Wellness. In May, members from the Nation and employees from Jamieson Wellness were joined by students from Leamington District Secondary School and other volunteers to plant 300 trees, wetland plants and prairie seed on this former agricultural land as the second phase of this three-year project. Additionally, 7300 trees were machine planted by the Nation with assistance from ERCA. In total, nearly 35 acres of the property has been restored, and the final phase is expected to take place in fall, 2024.

Caldwell First Nation is a strong, sovereign First Nation fighting assimilation and respecting other nations the Creator has placed in their path. The People of the Lake, they are working to build a foundation with other nations that embraces trust, harmony and honour.

In 2020, the Nation was granted Reserve Status in Leamington, following a 230 year quest to regain their ancestral grounds. The traditional lands of the Caldwell Nation stretch from the Detroit River all the way to Long Point on the north shore of Lake Erie, including Point Pelee National Park.

As leaders in health and wellness for nearly 100 years, Jamieson Wellness believes it is their responsibility to actively support the well-being of its employees, consumers, partners and communities. As a result of this generous donation, over the next three years 40 acres of forest and wetland habitat will be restored to mitigate flooding, take climate action, and help provide much needed habitat in the region.



ADM Cares Greens the Greenway

Three hundred trees were added to the Chrysler Canada Greenway in Harrow to provide shade and improve habitat, thanks to a generous gift from ADM's corporate social investment program, ADM Cares. Employees, friends and volunteers from ADM, a global leader in agricultural origination and nutrition, braved the chilly temperatures to plant these new hardwood trees on Saturday, November 4.

The Chrysler Canada Greenway is a 50 kilometre trail that connects Tecumseh, LaSalle, Harrow, Kingsville and Leamington. It is the backbone of the region's Greenway trail system, and is used extensively by thousands of residents and visitors annually for recreation, physical and mental well-being, and as a safe, off-road active transportation route.

As one of the world's largest nutrition companies, ADM is a leader in both human and animal nutrition, unlocking the power of nature and transforming crops into ingredients and solutions for foods, beverages and supplements for people all around the world. ADM's breadth, depth, insights, facilities and logistical expertise provides unparalleled capabilities to meet needs for food, beverages, health and wellness and more. From the seed of the idea to the outcome of the solution, ADM enriches the quality of life the world over.

ADM Cares helps sustain and strengthen communities where ADM colleagues work, live and operate by directing funding, volunteerism, and industry knowledge to initiatives and organizations that drive meaningful social, economic and environmental progress worldwide with a focus on three main pillars that align with ADM's purpose: advancing health & well-being; supporting sustainability and increasing food security.



"We are thrilled to partner with the Essex Region Conservation Foundation to not only volunteer to help beautify the Chrysler Canada Greenway, but to create impactful, lasting and measurable change in this community where ADM has a strong footprint. At ADM, we are dedicated to contributing to a wide variety of programs and nonprofit organizations that are doing important work throughout this community, making an impact from a local economic standpoint and providing successful outcomes. This a wonderful example, that through these collective efforts, we are supporting initiatives that drive environmental progress."

Andrew Kozak, Account Manager, ADM Agri-Industries Windsor



Collavino Family Contributes to Facilities Development

Following their generous donation of 150 acres of ecologically sensitive lands to the Essex Region Conservation Authority in 2022, the Collavino Family donated \$100,000 to the Essex Region Conservation Foundation to help transform this property into a publicly accessible conservation area. Plans include a parking area to permit public enjoyment of this beautiful wetland. A mowed pathway around the dyked area will provide a 2.2 kilometre walking path, and educational signage will be installed.



Connecting Our Region by Trails

WindsorEssex Community Foundation Community Entrance

The Town of Essex has a new access point to the Cypher Systems Group Greenway, thanks to the opening of the WindsorEssex Community Foundation Community Entrance, a legacy gift to the community celebrating WindsorEssex Community Foundation's 40 years of inspiring philanthropy.

Located on County Road 15 in Essex, this newly created community entrance provides parking and trail access for walkers, joggers and cyclists. As well, the WindsorEssex Community Foundation Community Entrance can accommodate horse trailers, opening up this section of the multi-use trail for equestrian users. The new entrance also features a resting area and bike repair station.

The Cypher Systems Group Greenway opened in 2017 and stretches nearly 26 kilometres from the urban centre of Essex to Amherstburg. It intersects with the Chrysler Canada Greenway in nearby McGregor. With the addition of the Rotary (1918) Centennial Hub in 2017, the Greenway Trail system now connects all municipalities in the Windsor-Essex region with safe, off-road trails.

As part of the celebration, students from Essex District Secondary School joined guests in planting 40 trees along the Greenway trail in recognition of the WindsorEssex Community Foundation's 40th anniversary.



"As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, we are focusing on what we do best: collaborating with our community partners to create projects that will invest in lasting change, reflect who we are as the people of Windsor and Essex County, value our sense of place and culture, and honour both our local history and our future as it unfolds. Windsor & Essex County boasts some of the most beautiful natural environments and green spaces, and we are proud to now be a part of the Greenway trail system, providing a much-needed access point for people to get out and experience this amazing resource in our community for years to come!"

Lisa Kolody, Executive Director





Inspiring Future Generations through Conservation Education

Partners in Sustainability

Community leaders continued to support conservation education programs through the Partners in Sustainability – Inspiring Future Conservationists and Eco-Stewards program.

A compelling body of evidence clearly shows that introducing kids to nature has numerous health benefits, including increased physical activity, healthier body weight, better concentration, reduced symptoms of ADHD and anxiety, and improved energy. More than 350,000 students across Windsor and Essex County have participated in ERCA's outdoor education programs since 1974.

Curriculum-based experiential learning opportunities are provided at four conservation areas across the Essex Region and in outdoor school yards on topics including watershed management, Great Lakes protection, ecosystem health, flooding and erosion, natural resources and sustainability, and natural and cultural heritage.

The Hearn Family immediately stepped in as the program's Gold Sponsor, and completed the third of their five year commitment. John & Shannon Omstead and Family, long-time sponsors of conservation education programs, are the program's Silver Sponsors. Enbridge Gas Ltd, Hastings LaSalle Property Inc., Manz Contracting, the Margaret & David Reid Nature Fund, ROCK Developments, the Rosati Group, the Scott Family Foundation and Timberland Homes have invested in the children of this region as Bronze Sponsors of these important programs. ADM Cares and an anonymous donor also made a one-time donation in support of this important program.

On behalf of the thousands of children who benefit annually from outdoor education programs, the Essex Region Conservation Foundation is incredibly grateful to all of the remarkably generous sponsors for this investment.



Partners in Sustainability



HEARN
Family



Silver John & Shannon Omstead and Family



Bronze



HASTINGS LaSALLE
Property Inc.



Margaret & David Reid
Nature Fund




SCOTT FAMILY FOUNDATION



TIMBERLAND
HOMES



Annual Support





Preserving Our Heritage

Toldo Foundation Leadership Gift

The efforts to restore the John R. Park Homestead received a giant boost when the Toldo Foundation donated \$100,000 toward the effort. Built in 1842, the John R. Park Homestead Conservation Area is the only living agricultural museum west of London. It is a popular destination for student field trips, tourists, and cyclists. It has been recognized with Best of Windsor-Essex Awards for the past three years, and was awarded the Russell K. Cooper Award as the best living history museum in Ontario.

A comprehensive architectural review identified nearly \$1.5 million dollars in structural repair work, foundation works, roof repairs, window and door replacements, waterproofing and more needs to be undertaken to ensure the sustainability of the precious original buildings of John and Amelia Park. These nearly 200-year-old buildings require extensive restoration work to ensure that they will be maintained for generations to come.

While the connection to Lake Erie is one of the most extraordinary experiences at the Homestead, it also exposes the historic buildings to its wicked storms, leading to deterioration of these precious pieces of our shared history.

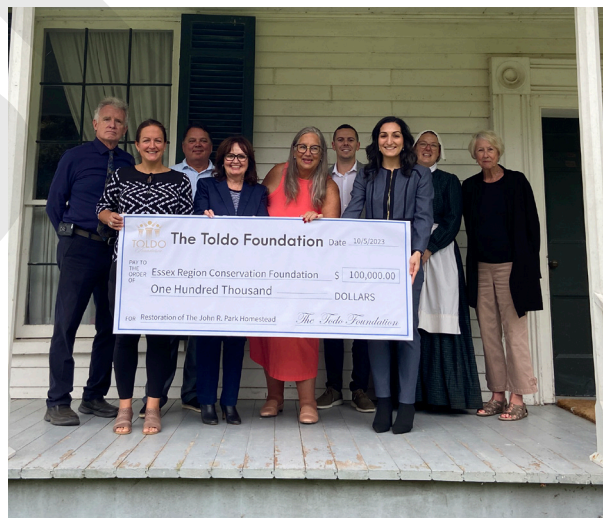
The significance of this leadership donation from the Toldo Foundation's cannot be overstated. The historic home is the most precious artifact in the Homestead's collection and is the cornerstone of the education programs that engage thousands of students each year. This generous gift from the Toldo Foundation will allow ERCA to move forward with implementing the critical structural work needed to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Founded in 1996 by Anthony P. Toldo, the Toldo Foundation is dedicated to community giving and the support of causes that improve the well-being of our regional community. In 2021, the Toldo Foundation generously created The Toldo Foundation Outdoor Classroom and Wildlife Viewing Area at the Homestead's new Conservation Centre.



"The John R. Park Homestead is a unique site which, aligned with the Toldo Foundation values, greatly enriches our community through heritage preservation, education, tourism and more. The Toldo Foundation is proud to support the Essex Region Conservation Foundation in protecting the Homestead so it may continue to serve and improve the community for generations to come."

Alex Toldo, Trustee



Restoration begins at the John R. Park Homestead

The John R. Park Homestead has been welcoming visitors as a museum and conservation area since 1978. This unique 19 acre property on the shore of Lake Erie is used extensively to provide experiential, curriculum-connected outdoor education programs for students; it attracts tourists to our area and it preserves and interprets the history of our region for nearly 20,000 visitors annually.

But, these nearly 200 year-old buildings require extensive restoration work to ensure that they will be maintained for decades to come. Built on the shores of Lake Erie and vulnerable to its wicked storms and relentless weather events, the historic home and eleven outbuildings require skillful repair and detailed repainting in a manner consistent with their historical significance. The buildings require renewal and restoration in a number of areas, including significant foundation work, structural repairs, replacement and repair of windows and doors and more.

In 2022, a comprehensive architectural review was undertaken to detail all of the work required to ensure the Homestead can be protected and preserved, and **nearly \$1.5 million of work is required.**

Thanks to many generous donors, grants, and reserve funds, by late 2023, nearly \$750,000 had been raised to allow the restoration to begin. In November, construction crews began addressing the most pressing structural issue – the roof. Restoration work continued throughout the winter, and this remains the Essex Region Conservation Foundation's top fundraising priority, to ensure the restoration can be completed in its entirety.



Giving Tuesday

On November 28, dozens of donors participated #GivingTuesday- the world's largest day of generosity, and raised funds to Help the Homestead! Thanks to an anonymous donor and the Foundation's President Claire Wales, gifts up to \$20,000 were matched, allowing donors to double their impact.

In total, a **record \$44,470** was raised by generous donors to support the urgent repairs to the John R. Park Homestead. Thank you to all for your support!

Thank you!

\$44,470

www.givingtuesday.ca





Building & Maintaining A Responsible, Sustainable & Ethical Foundation

Transition to the updated Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporation Act

On October 18, 2021, changes to the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, S.O. 2010 c. 15 were enacted to modernize the legislative framework for the not-for-profit sector. The legislative changes required substantial revisions to the Foundation's administrative by-laws and a fulsome review of the Foundation's Letters Patent to ensure compliance.

Significant work was undertaken in 2023 to ensure that the Essex Region Conservation Foundation continues to meet the highest standards for operational excellence. Required Bylaw revisions, Article Amendments and updates to the Articles of Incorporation will continue in 2024 to meet the October deadline.



Thank You – Event Sponsors, Participants **and** Donors!

W.E.Hike for Conservation!

The inaugural WEHike event was held on **Saturday, June 3, 2023**, which is recognized as International Trails Day. The new event directly aligns with the Foundation's goals of connecting people to conservation, and was a successful introductory means of attracting new audiences and introducing them to the work of the Foundation. In its first year, W.E.Hike for Conservation raised \$5,500!

Essex Region Conservation Foundation Golf Tournament

The Essex Region Conservation Foundation Fundraising Golf **T**ournament continued to achieve remarkable success in 2023! Over 150 golfers teed off for conservation, and thanks to the incredible support of many generous sponsors, more than \$43,000 was raised to support local conservation.

Essex Region Bike Tour

A big thank you to the many cyclists and sponsors who supported the Essex Region Bike Tour. With five routes to welcome every age and ability, more than \$23,000 was raised to help create a new Community Entrance to the Cypher Systems Group Greenway in Amherstburg.

Super Santa Walk/Run/Wheel

After a 3 year hiatus, the Super Santa Run returned in 2023 and attracted over 430 Santas! Thanks to the participants and generous sponsors, nearly \$18,000 was raised. A big 'thank you to ERCA Board Member Councillor Molly Allaire, who made extraordinary contributions to helping plan and implement this event.

Save the Dates

WEHike –

Saturday, June 1

**Essex Region Conservation
Foundation Golf Tournament –**
Thursday, July 18

Essex Region Bike Tour –
Saturday, September 28

Super Santa Run –
Saturday, November 18





Celebrating Conservation Champions

At its Annual General Meeting in March 2023, the Essex Region Conservation Foundation honoured award recipients who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to supporting conservation efforts and sustainability in the Windsor-Essex-Pelee Island region.

Clifford Hatch Conservation Foundation Award – The Toldo Foundation



The Toldo Foundation's contributions to the Windsor-Essex community are too numerous to fully outline. The Toldo Foundation is named after Anthony P. Toldo, who supported many local causes during his lifetime.

The Toldo Foundation has made innumerable contributions to healthcare in our community through support of the Windsor-Essex Hospice, the Windsor-Essex Cancer Centre Foundation, and the Windsor Regional Hospital, just to name a few. They have also significantly supported higher education at both St. Clair College and the University of Windsor, most recently, with their support of the Toldo Lancer Centre. The Toldo Foundation has been longstanding supporters of the arts in our region, with contributions to the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, the Windsor International Film Festival and many other cultural organizations. These are just some of the many ways in which the Toldo Foundation is making a difference in our community.

In 2020, when the Essex Region Conservation Foundation was raising funds to create the new Conservation Centre at the John R. Park Homestead, we invited the Toldo Foundation to consider creating the Toldo Foundation Outdoor Classroom and Wildlife Viewing Area to provide a covered outdoor education area with undisturbed views of Lake Erie and the Homestead grounds. The Toldo Foundation generously recognized the impact they could make in creating an innovative and environmentally-conscious learning space.

And since the opening of this new education centre, learners and guests of all ages have increasingly appreciated the Toldo Foundation Outdoor Classroom and Wildlife Viewing Area – in particular in providing this outdoor, accessible space for connecting with nature.

Celebrating Conservation Champions

Conservation Foundation Award for Outstanding Corporate Contributions – The Rosati Group

The Essex Region Conservation Foundation Award for Outstanding Corporate Contribution was awarded to the Rosati Group.

Founded in 1969 by Vince and Olivia Rosati, the Rosati Group encompasses several construction-related companies serving Southwestern Ontario. Over the years, the Rosati Group has supported numerous charitable groups to make a big difference in the Windsor-Essex community.

Some of these include Transition to Betterness, Windsor Lifeline Outreach, Italian-Canadian Handicapable Association, Windsor Goodfellows, St. Vincent De Paul, the Windsor-Essex Therapeutic Riding Association, W.E. Care For Kids, Habitat for Humanity, the Windsor Girls' Home, the Spina Bifida Foundation, LaSalle Stompers Soccer Association, and the LaSalle Minor Hockey Association.



The Rosati Group has also been a long-time supporter of conservation efforts. In 2004, it innovatively pledged a generous donation for each lot sold within its LaSalle development area, resulting in a donation of **\$20,000** in 2013, in honour of ERCA's 40th Anniversary. This contribution helped to protect natural areas, increase habitat and develop trails in our community, ultimately making it a healthier place for our residents, and a more desirable place in which to live and invest.

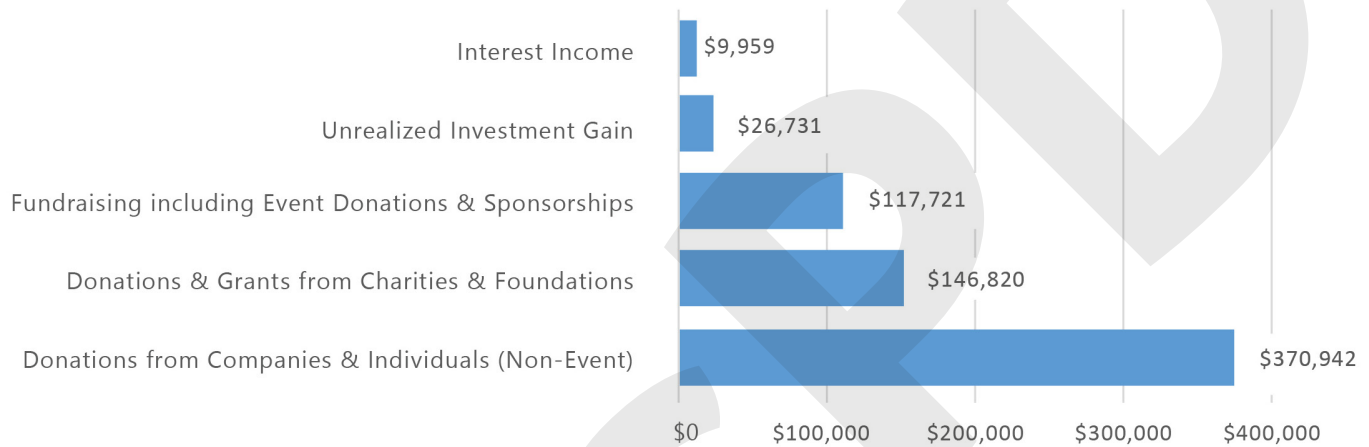
Over the last number of years, the Rosati Group has supported the Foundation's fundraising events with sponsorships of and participation in our fundraising Golf Tournament and Essex Region Bike Tour, raising significant funds for important conservation work.

When the Partners In Sustainability – Inspiring Future Conservationists and Eco-stewards was launched in 2021, the Rosati Group immediately committed to a 5 Year Bronze sponsorship, and donated \$25,000 to ensure young people could continue to be connected to nature through conservation education.

2023 Financial Highlights

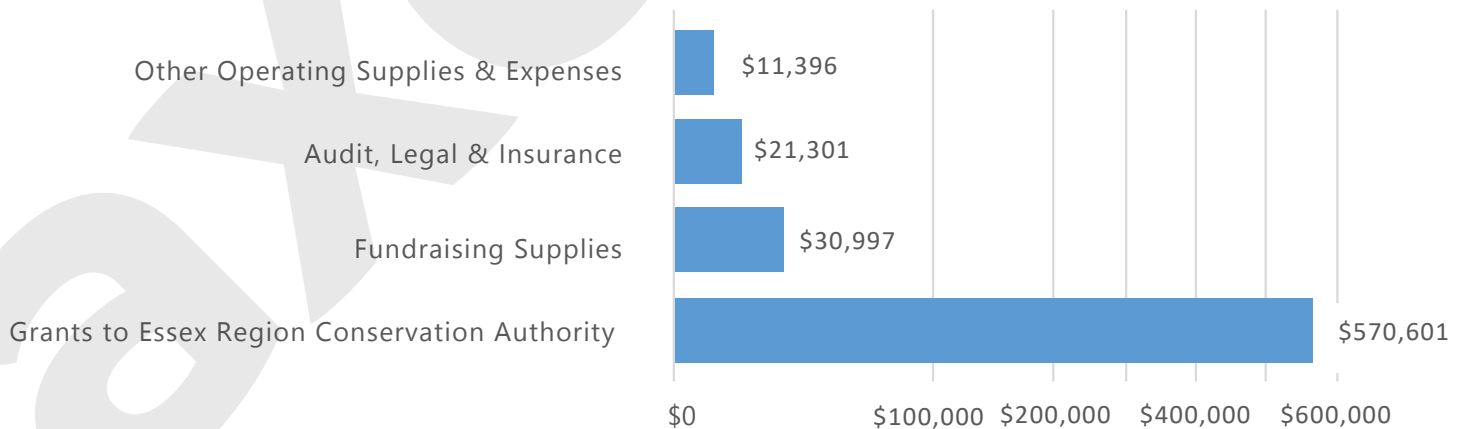
2023 Revenues by Source- \$672,173

2023 Budgeted Revenues -\$581,900



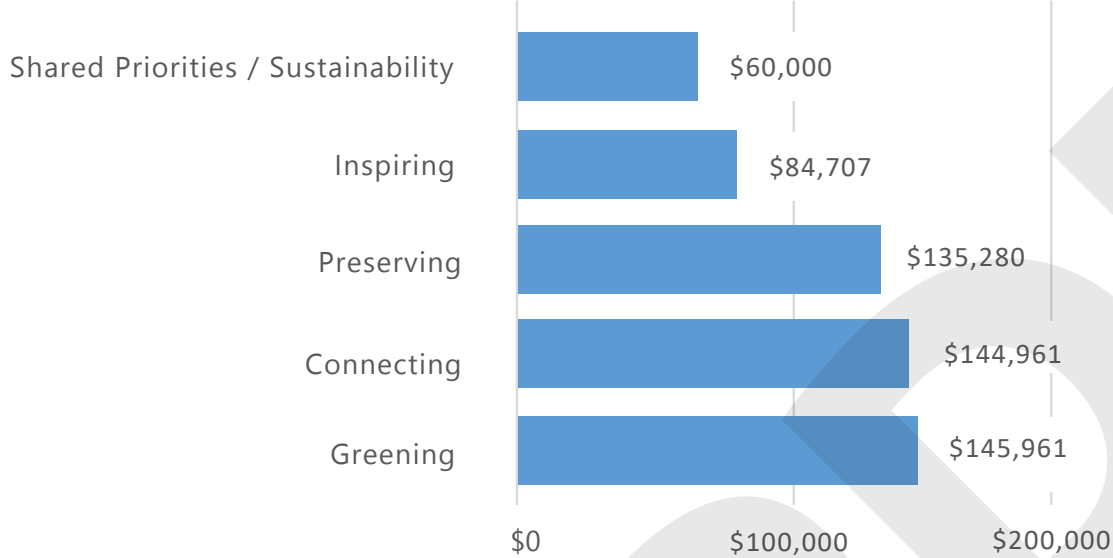
2023 Grants, Operating Expenses & Operating Expenses - \$634,296

2023 Budgeted Grants & Operating Expenses - \$590,270



2023 Grants by Priority - \$570,601

2023 Budgeted Grants - \$531,520



Thank You

With gratitude to the many donors making a difference in enriching and sustaining the Place for Life in 2023.

10 Tech Industrial
Mark Abraham
David Adams
James Addison
ADM Agri-Industries
AIM Harrow Wind Farm LP
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Lindsay Nhan
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Mark Oliver
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Matthew Peirone
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Luna Tomasini
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Pelee Island - TWEPI
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essexregionconservation.ca/conservation-foundation



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