



Time for Nature



Hands-on learning

The Thousand Islands Biosphere Youth Program

It all started with “six guys sitting around a kitchen table,” said environmental educator John MacLeod. It was the early 1960s, and the farm was for sale. It was a beautiful property, with forests, fields and wetlands, and the very best view of the Thousand Islands. It would be a shame not to preserve the place for everybody to enjoy.

Then one man put ten dollars on the table. Another followed suit, and then another. And the Landon Bay Centre was born.



The Landon Bay Centre has the best view of the Thousand Islands.
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What \$10 can do – and what it can't

Fund raising continued, and the property was preserved as an outdoor education and cultural centre. Today the Landon Bay Centre hosts thousands of visitors every year.

But despite its popularity, the Centre is still a charity run by volunteers. The Barbara Heck Foundation maintains the site as a 90 ha ecological reserve. But finding extra funding was always a concern.

The Centre's education programs badly needed supplies. There simply weren't enough nature study kits or teaching tools to go around.



The Barbara Heck Foundation maintains the site as a 90 ha ecological reserve.
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Finding nets and magnifying lenses

At the same time, the region needed more environmental education services for kids. The Landon Bay Centre is a key component of the Thousand Islands-Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. So biosphere organizers came up with a plan. Why not host a new Youth Program at the Centre?



Parks Canada and other partners knew they'd found the ideal match! The organizers put together a proposal, and donors met the need.

When the children arrived, eager to go for a swim, enjoy the outdoors and learn about nature – the equipment was waiting. Nets, magnifying glasses, sample containers – even new audio-visual equipment was ready to use.

Funding came from a raft of partners: Parks and People, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, and others. Local municipalities and the district health unit provided important backing. And both Parks Canada staff and local naturalists contributed their expertise.



Visitors learn about the environment as they explore the forest via the trails at Landon Bay.
© Landon Bay Centre.

Children love the hands-on learning. In lessons on “Shady Characters,” they learn about trees, how to identify the different species, their importance and role in the environment, all in a fun atmosphere as they explore the forest via the trails at Landon Bay. They happily retreat to the little “study areas” (forts!) with their instructor.

Out of the house and into nature

The children had a great time, and parents were strong supporters. “I think your program is fantastic,” said one parent. “The children love it. It is important in this day to get them out of the house and learning about the great outdoors”.

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