



Meghan Davis is an inspiring volunteer who shares her experience of working towards a healthier Lake Huron shoreline starting with her own property. She was a participant of our Green Ribbon Champion program where she undertook dune restoration to enhance shoreline health through invasive removal, native planting and sand fence installation.

Meghan is what we envisioned as a ‘champion’ when we created our Green Ribbon Champion program. Someone who takes the tools and knowledge we provide and not only applies it to their property but also shares that knowledge with their community. She is a shining example of what can be accomplished when we focus on simply improving our own actions and homes for the greater good of our lake.

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## Championing Change: Meghan Davis’ Dune Restoration Journey

Only 2-3% of Lake Huron’s 6,000-plus kilometre shoreline is sand beaches and dunes, and they’re worth a lot—\$3,000 a linear metre, to be exact, for the good work they do protecting our shoreline, filtering our water and preventing sand drift. Healthy dunes are home to endangered plant and animal species. They keep communities safe from flooding. And they’re beautiful in their own, wild way.

I’m fortunate enough to live on a little piece of shoreline paradise in Southampton and was intrigued to learn about the Lake Huron Coastal Centre’s resources on dune restoration starting in 2021. At the time I started my dune restoration, I was leading a project to help my primary healthcare colleagues practice high quality, low carbon care. I had started to understand

the link between human and environmental health and my responsibility to take action.

LHCC gave me two things: the information I needed to create a healthy dune and a challenge to make enough changes to earn the title of Green Ribbon Champion. Staff came out to my cottage for a consultation, letting me know my shoreline was a good candidate for restoration, offering tips and techniques to increase success and leaving me with a plan and a beautiful native lupin whose deep blue flowers now greet me every spring.



Since that visit, I've made many changes, none of which were expensive.

I flexed my muscles- ripping out invasive species including ridding myself of a stubborn patch of goutweed. I planted native marram grass given to me by a generous neighbour. Wild rye, milkweed and beach pea plants have arrived for free on the wind and waves gently taking root in the space left by the invasives. But perhaps the source of the most rewarding change of all is the sand fencing I reuse each winter, which has enabled the dune to extend towards the lake by four feet and in depth by two feet—beautiful, soft sand held firmly in place by native plant roots.

You'll find your own motivation for this work. Maybe it's securing Lake Huron's sand for your grandchildren and their grandchildren, too. Perhaps you'd like to increase your property value, protect your shoreline from increasingly violent storms and minimize your sand clean-up every spring. Or maybe, like me, you want to experience the simple joy of watching hummingbirds and monarch butterflies while sitting on a swing.

I've already come up with my next project. Inspired by forest ecologist Akira Miyawaki, I'm going to plant a microforest on the back dune like this one in Kingston.

If you don't have any shoreline of your own, you can still make choices that protect our dunes. Walking, riding bikes and laying out your beach towel on dunes damages these sensitive ecosystems, causing erosion, potentially introducing invasive species and wrecking the homes of some special critters, like the piping plover, prickly pear and hognose snake.

Every morning I walk the paths of my small but ecologically rich property with a cup of tea, travelling from the dune and forest to the pollinator patches and abundantly flowering roadside allowance, noticing what the new day has brought. I'm grateful for the help of LHCC and am encouraged by the curiosity of my neighbours and friends. I've realized all it takes to protect the Lake Huron shoreline is a change of heart and some help.

*-Written by Meghan Davis*

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## Support Coastal Conservation Projects

**Green Ribbon Champion is currently on hold pending funding.**

Your donation allows us to connect with inspirational champions like Meghan, providing resources and support to protect Lake Huron.

As a small charity, we rely on donations to help fund our programs that provide communities with free and unique opportunities to connect with nature for the betterment of Lake Huron. This includes our beach clean-up events, youth education and beach dune restoration. Donate below to help these programs continue!



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work

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*The Lake Huron Coastal Centre is a registered charity founded in 1998 with the goals of protecting and restoring Lake Huron's coastal environment. We are the voice for Lake Huron.*

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