



ERNEST C. OBERHOLTZER FOUNDATION

Above: Stewards of the Wilderness

Below: Individual Project Week members enjoying a moment of connection



"The main purpose of this Trust is to help bridge the gap, both economic and cultural, between aboriginal Indians of the continent and the ... white inhabitants of the present day –and, it is hoped, to their mutual advantage."

*–Ober's 1962 will
establishing the foundation*

ANNUAL 2023 PROGRESS



OUR BOARD

BACK ROW

David Harrington, Ward Merrill, George Glazier (Chair), Jerry Williams, Bill Forsyth, Keir Johnson (Treasurer), Nance Kunkel (Secretary), Teghan Grulkowski

FRONT ROW

Dave Rolloff (Vice Chair), Erika Bailey-Johnson, Peggy (Miskwaanakwadook) Smith, Dennis (Pebaamibines) Jones, Eric Rundell

NOT PICTURED

Rebecca Otto (Executive Director)

The Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation
is a 501(c)3 nonprofit private operating foundation incorporated in 1964
(651) 867-4649 • eober.org • info@eober.org • TIN 41-6042619

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REBECCA OTTO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Progress and Change



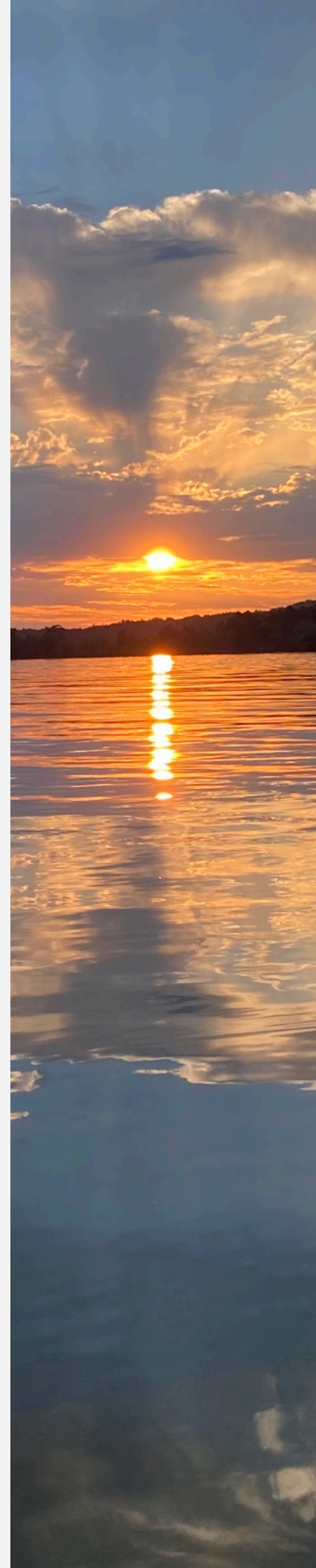
What a wonderful year it has been for the Oberholtzer Foundation! We started with a normal spring—meaning we had average water levels on the lake—thank goodness! This allowed us to remove approximately 3,500 books from the old Library that we had stored in Big House during the flood. In a major project, we carefully transported them to the soon-to-be-open Mallard Island Annex Library, which we are establishing at the Backus Community Center in International Falls. This will allow us to better protect them and better serve the community by sharing parts of our collection. We also intend to provide educational programming and hold events there, along with having a separate storage and work space next door. It's such a wonderful development!

On top of this work, we cleared out several boatloads of old abandoned junk, we replaced beds, bedding, and curtains, we rebuilt the Pump House floor and foundation, reroofed the Caboose, and made many other building repairs, and we completed the rewiring of Mallard Island, this year doing the buildings on the west half of the island.

Despite all this work and recovery, we had a full summer of programming on Mallard, which did not seem possible at the end of 2022. We know that we would not be where we are today without our donors and volunteers. Thank you for being there for us. You make all the difference.

This January I announced that I am making way for a new Executive Director to be hired by the end of March. I have made some wonderful friendships over my years with the foundation, and it has been my pleasure and honor to serve in this role. Ober is an important historical figure due to his successful efforts to save our wild places from big industry. I could relate to his quiet but effective advocacy to save a place that changed his life—and mine—for the better. We all need to immerse ourselves in unspoiled places to restore our souls and gain health, perspective, and inspiration. Thank you for allowing me to share part of the journey with you.

Rebecca Otto





SOME ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2023

Reroofed and resided the Caboose	Board Development and Strategic Planning Meetings	Rebuilt Front House Int Chimney	New mattresses, curtains, blankets and quilts in the cabins
Completed Conditions Assessment Report of historic stonework	Updated our Vegetation Management Plan	West half of Mallard Island & buildings rewired to state code	Completed our Collections Storage Plan
Replaced more cedar bark siding on the Big House	Window glass replacement and reglazing		
Consolidated storage of collections at new space at the Backus	Removed and rebuilt the west deck on the Big House	Refuse removal from Mallard and Cabins	Rebuilt Pump House foundation & floor; Removed old coke burner from Cedarbark; repaired & reinstalled wood stoves in cabins
Installed new shelving in Front House, repainted walls	Moved approx. 3500 books from the old Library to the new Mallard Island Annex Library space at the Backus Community Center. Staged for shelving.		



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



GEORGE GLAZIER BOARD CHAIR

A year of progress

Greetings!

The Ober Foundation Board of Directors is growing and embarking on lots of important governance work. Last year, we adopted new bylaws and approved key policies including; Eligibility, Powers and Duties of Board Members, Board Member and Officer Elections/Retirement, Conflict of Interest, Expense and Reimbursement, and a Privacy Policy.

This year, we will begin to draft a new strategic plan. Once we have an updated strategic plan in place, annually we will work to have the right mix of planning, preparing, executing and assessing processes in place to make real progress in achieving our goals.

On the board development front, we elected five new board members in 2022. They are aligned in key committee positions to support foundation operations and the strategic planning. The new members are Jerry Williams, Erika Bailey-Johnson, David Harrington, Teghan Grulkowski, and Eric Rundell who all underwent onboarding to orient them to the foundation. Their skills and experience support youth outreach, local community connections, facilities management, nonprofit governance, cultural teachings and practices, and programming on Mallard.

The Oberholtzer Foundation continues to improve with every season. We would not be able to do all of this without the attention of a full-time executive director to manage volunteers, staff, supporters, programming weeks and budget, including maintaining contact with our friends who so generously provide the means to maintain and foster Ober's legacy and north woods island home.

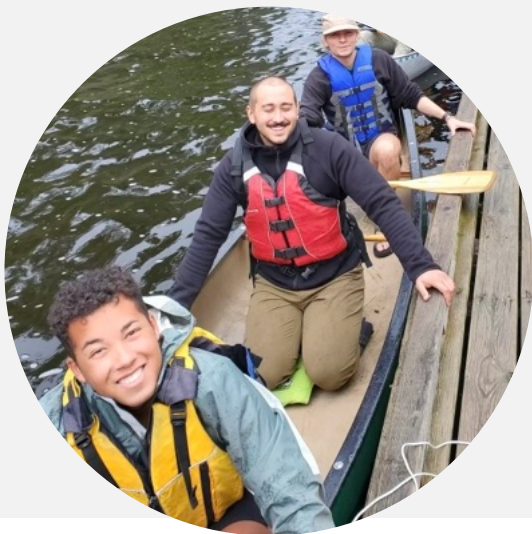
We are truly grateful for the financial support, volunteer hours, and all of the ways our supporters engage with us. Thank you!

Sincerely,

George Glazier

Photo of flying squirrel taken on Mallard Island by Kelly Rundell

OUR PROGRAMMING



PRESERVING, HOSTING, EDUCATING

We preserve Ober's historic island home, including the ecology of the four islands and the many hand-built structures, as well as Ober's collection of books, maps, and other archives.

We host individual visitors in this unique, living museum.

We educate visitors and others about Ober's three main *areas of interest*.

OBER'S VALUES GUIDE OUR WORK:

THE NATURAL WORLD



PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Ober was part of an early group of leaders working to preserve the environment through the Wilderness Society. Today, we are exploring ways to offer educational opportunities to better understand and engage with the natural environment. We want to build relationships with others working in this space. We are working to develop the environmental leaders of tomorrow through our youth programming.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



EDUCATION & CULTURAL TEACHINGS/ PRACTICES

Ober established his trust "to help bridge the gap, both economic and cultural," between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Today, we offer cultural teachings and practices to share the "genius and traditions" of Indigenous environmental stewardship coupled with Ober's legacy during program weeks. We compensate visiting elders who share their time with us. There is much exciting work ahead!

THE ARTS



HOSTING THOSE DOING CREATIVE WORK

Ober frequently hosted writers, artists and intellectuals on Mallard, and we continue this with program weeks. While on Mallard, guests can read from the 8,000+ books, wander the islands, participate in lively discussions, and explore the themes that drew Ober to spend his life in the Rainy Lake Watershed and champion the environment and Indigenous peoples.

OUR IMPACT:



The exchange with Elder Pebaam and the tour of the lake by boat were exceptionally meaningful. The opportunity to cook and eat meals together and to swim were rejuvenating, as was the opportunity to rest and spend time in ceremony together as women.

Relationships were forged and strengthened. Discussions took place around water advocacy and artistic practice. The island and the experience were truly magical and transformative.

I was unsure what to expect and a little nervous being on an island for a week. I had such a powerful experience & felt blessed to be invited. I used my time to work on my dissertation proposal, which was approved, so I am now a Doctoral Candidate.

Since Mallard, I've been able to connect better with myself internally, and I've changed the way I use food and water to be more sustainable

It was a life-changing experience. The work I was able to do there including finishing a manuscript on wilderness...

As I re-read the Birchbark House with my students, I notice things that I didn't understand before going to Mallard.

Eating together, and having the space and time for random conversations, and the ceremonies in the drum room were very impactful.

My thinking about land preservation, stewardship, and conservation deepened and has been strengthened and positively influenced by those with whom I shared this week. Listening to how others strive to live, the ways in which they honor the earth and care for their spaces, was inspirational.



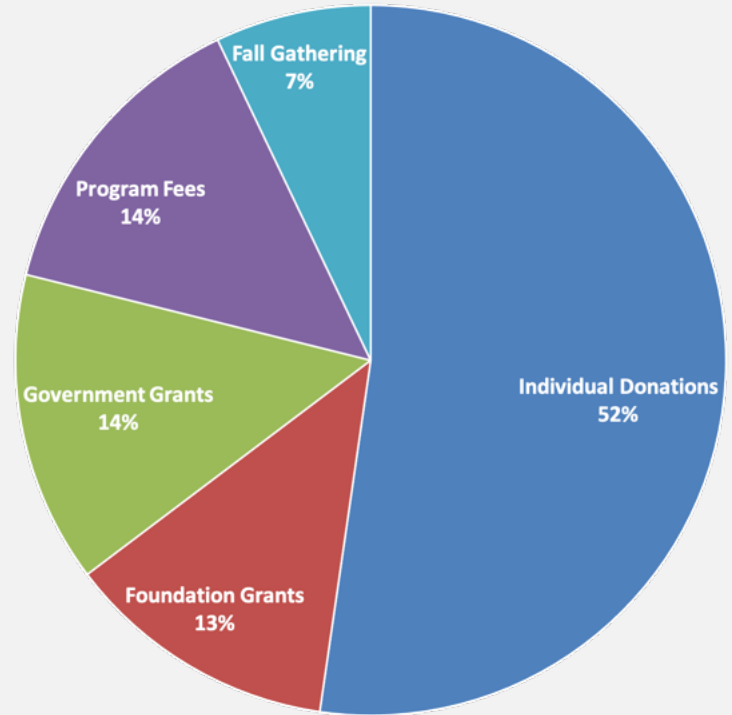
COMMUNITY.

ERNEST C. OBERHOLTZER FOUNDATION

FINANCIALS

FUND BALANCES

Donor Endowment Fund	338,413
Frances E Andrews Building Fund	
Corpus	137,104
Accumulated Earnings	73,210
Culture and Education Fund	15,706
Board Designated Funds	
Emergency Fund	85,000
Endowment Fund	213,301
Undesignated Invested Funds	697,089



INCOME

Individual Donations	73,742	52%
Foundation Grants	17,500	13%
Government Grants	19,997	14%
Program Fees	19,400	14%
Fall Gathering	10,000	7%
Other Revenues	378	0%
TOTAL INCOME	141,017	100%

EXPENSES

Admin & Program Support	79,898	45%
Fundraising	4,505	3%
Programs		
Culture and Education	8,448	
Mallard Island Experience	40,852	
Preservation	41,609	
Total Programs	90,909	52%
TOTAL EXPENSES	175,312	100%

Net Variance from Activities	\$ (34,295)
Net Change to Funds	\$ 184,212

The Foundation uses volunteer labor for a major portion of its activities. These figures do not include the value of those thousands of hours donated.

Your sustaining monthly gift at eober.org/donate will help support our flood recovery and work to further Ober's vision!

ESSENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

Little happens at the Foundation without the help of our dedicated and growing family of volunteers who share their time and talent. They provide thousands of hours of labor each year, helping us to further the vision and mission of the Oberholtzer Foundation, and we are so grateful.

Opening & Closing Mallard

Mairi Doerr
Teghan Grulkowski
Steve Grulkowski
Grant Kahlstorf
Jake Otto
Shawn Otto
Eric & Lucy Rundell
Kelly Rundell
Pam & Darrell Rundell
Chris & Cathy Schneeman
Elaine & Steve Thrune
Rick and Bill Thrune
Erica & Nick Zubich

Mairi Doerr
Craig Fernholtz
Bill Forsyth & Karla McCray
Alli & Nick Hansen
Rose and Summer Hansen
David Harrington
Rochelle Jansen
Prudence Johnson
Doug Kelley
Brian Klawiter
Amy Nakamura
Jake Otto
Shawn Otto
Richard Paper
Alyssa Ralidak
Michael & Anne Reid

Sherry Rovig & Barbara Crow
Eric & Lucy Rundell
Matt Rundell
Matt Schneeman
Ken Simon
Annelise Stuht
Bill Thrune
Steve Thrune
Wyman Weinbeck
Janice Whitney
Jerry Williams



Building Repairs

John Besse & Ellen Saul

Communications

Nance Kunkel
Shawn Otto
Elaine Thrune
Beth Waterhouse

Forestry Week

Nance Kunkel
Laura Pawlaczyk
Dave Rolloff
Bill Thrune
Gerry Thrune
Elaine & Steve Thrune

Aaron Mosley
Beth Waterhouse

Annex Library

John Glazier
Jean E Kelly
Shannon Monahan
David Monahan
Shawn Otto

Gardening Week

Angela Anderson
Tom & Barb Balcom
Jon Erickson
Vickie Heggen
Carol Inderieden
Prudence Johnson
Nance Kunkel
Mary Alice Smith
Peggy Smith

Fall Gathering

Eddie Blaha
Steve Bjorgstrom
Mairi Doerr
Teghan Grulkowski
Jean E Kelly
Jake Otto
Shawn Otto
Sonia Otto
Laura Pawlaczyk
Tanya Piatz-Sandberg
Randy Sabien
Marj Savage
Elaine & Steve Thrune
Beth Waterhouse
Jerry Williams
Douglas Wood

Collections Week

Sue Carver
Kristen Eide
Connie Ghinazzi
Nancy Haarmeyer
Laura Kerr
Tom McCann



GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

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Ramona Advani
Angela Anderson
Shirley Anderson
Rolf Anderson
Erika Bailey-Johnson
Tom & Barb Balcom
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William Beckstrand
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Emmanuel Benites
John Besse
Eddie Blaha
Gary Boelhower
Gerard Breen
Amy Brenengen
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Robert H Monahan
Evan Mulholland



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Richard Niemi
Dean & Jeri Nordaune
Bruce O'Brien
Bob O'Hara
Laurie Oberholtzer
Meg Ojala
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Gordon & Betty Olson
Eric Olson
Shawn Otto
Nancy & Joe Paddock
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Tom Paper
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Tanya Platz-Sandberg
Wayne Potratz
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Nancy Rognerud
Dave Rolloff
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Anthony Rongstad
Jennie Ross
Carolyn Ruff
Edith Rylander
Catherine Sandell
Marjorie Savage
Darrell Schmidt
Ed & Sandy Schneider
Rojean Schneider
John Schuerman



GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

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Paul & Sue Schurke
Alton & Linda Shannon
Joyce & James Sidman
David Siebert
George & Ruth Simmons
Rose Simpson
Linda and Gary Skime
Doug Skrief
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Peggy Smith
Ruth Solie
Kathilyn Soloman
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Rud Wasson
Beth Waterhouse
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Elizabeth Weir
Carol Wendt
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Janice Whitney
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Michael Williams
Jerry Williams
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Terry Wilton
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Carol Zapfel
Darren & Talis Zeman

Gifts in Memory of

Amelia Di Lucia Carretti
Jerry Cox
Fred Dalldorf
Marge & Bob Gerlach
Rosalie A. Hall
Byrne Johnson
Clifford E. Knapp
Nelly Harding Gerber
Thomas D. Gipe
Tim Heinle
Bob Hilke
Charlie A. Kelly
Lydia Kulesov
Reverend William Law
Billie Magee
Don Maronde
Linda Merrill
Gene Ritchie Monahan
Janet Pearson
Steve Ruff
Dr. Wallace A. Simpson
Swede Sundberg



Gifts in Honor of

Jean Replinger
Robin Monahan
Beth Waterhouse
2023 Oberholzer Award Winners
The Rundell family
Becky Lucas
George Glazier
John Schifsky

Keir Johnson
Nance Kunkel
Ward Merrill
Jerry Williams

Quilt Donors

Connie Ghinazzi
Nance Kunkel
Laura Pawlacyk
Janice Whitney

Foundation Gifts

Anon. Family Foundation
Dancing Winds Sustainable Living Fund
Longview Foundation
Lenfestey Family Foundation
Charles B & Margaret L. Sweatt Family
Fund of the Mpls Foundation
Quetico Superior Foundation
Winter Wheat Foundation

Fall Gathering Silent Auction Donors

Laurie Allman
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John Gorka
Cary Griffith
Kathryn Hoffman
Carol Inderieden
Jean E. Kelly
Bob Marquardt
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Lynn Naeckel
Rebecca & Shawn Otto
Faye Passow
Eric and Lucy Rundell
Ellen Saul & John Besse
Margaret Mary Sulentic Dowell
Danielle Sosin
Diane Tessari
Beth Waterhouse

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Keir Johnson
Prudence Johnson
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Nance Kunkel
Jake Otto
Shawn Otto
Michael Reid
Eric Rundell
Bill Thrune
Elaine & Steve Thrune

Fall Gathering Host Committee

Bill Forsyth
George Glazier





ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Oscar Gilbertson lived on Mallard Island for some time and helped Ober with various chores. From the Oberholtzer Foundation collection.

OUR MISSION

The Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation fosters and maintains Ober's legacy and north woods island home as a source of inspiration, renewal, and connection to Indigenous Peoples, kindred spirits, and the natural world.

Gi-bezhig-oomin

LEARN MORE AT [EOBER.ORG](https://ober.org)



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