

CAT TALES

Winter 2002 Issue

In This Issue

It's A Winter Wonderland!

Stop grumbling. Put on your tuque and mittens. Make some snow angels and have some fun! Or keep warm by the fire and enjoy four extra pages of Cat Tales.

- ▶ Speaking of fun. We've got lots of great activities on our calendar. See What's Happening on pages 6, 7 and 8.
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- ▶ We're achieving our vision. See page 8.



CRCA Wins Awards



CRCA Staff with the City of Kingston Livable City Award



CRCA Staff (left) accepts a Certificate of Appreciation from the Ontario Field Ornithologists for the Owl Woods property.

When people don't like what we do, we usually hear about it. However, we don't always hear about the many good things that we do. We're very pleased to report that our conservation efforts have been recognized by two different organizations.

City of Kingston

This past October we received two Livable City Design Awards for environmental protection and enhancement from the City of Kingston. One award was for our land assembly program on Little Cataraqui Creek and the other was for our tree planting program on our own lands.

This was the first year of the Livable City Design Awards, but certainly not the first year for either of these two programs. The land assembly program along Little Cataraqui Creek got underway shortly after the CRCA was formed in 1964. The CRCA purchased many properties in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Tree planting of those properties began in the early 1970s and continues today with our Tree Replacement Strategy. We have also carried on with forest management plans and forest management on most of our properties.

In recognizing the CRCA's contributions to the Kingston community, the jury noted that:

"Both the land assembly and tree planting programs represent important incremental processes that are having a cumulative effect. Having so much natural open space in and near the urban area will be of increasing importance in the years to come."

Ontario Field Ornithologists

The CRCA also received recognition from the Ontario Field Ornithologists for our acquisition and protection of the Owl Woods property on Amherst Island, as well as for allowing public access to view the owls. A certificate of appreciation was presented by the OFO at the Owl Woods property on November 26. Loyalist Township, the Kingston Field Naturalists and neighbouring property owners, Rod Barr and Paul and Gwen Lauret, were also recognized for their contributions to protecting owl habitat.

Thank you to the City of Kingston, the Ontario Field Ornithologists and the people who nominated the CRCA. We really appreciate the awards!



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Creature Feature

The Black Bear *Ursus americanus*

The black bear is the smallest bear in North America.

Seeing a wild black bear is a memorable event. But, the best sighting, for you and the bear, is a fleeting glimpse. Over the last 20 years, bears and humans have met face-to-face thousands of times in Ontario. The Kingston area is no exception. Three bears have been caught in Kingston this year.

Residents of most of Ontario's wild lands, bears inhabit forests of the Canadian Shield, the Bruce Peninsula and most of northern Ontario. They prefer forests with a variety of berry-producing shrubs and trees of different ages. This habitat provides food, winter den sites and refuge.

Black bears are large,

powerful animals. Male black bears are much bigger than females. Adult males weigh from 120 to 280 kilograms. In other words, a large male can weigh more than three large men! Adult female bears weigh anywhere from 45 to 182 kilograms. The largest known black bear weighed 802.5 pounds (364 kg). These large animals have been recorded running at speeds up to 50 km/h (30 mph).

Black bears are carnivores, however they act like omnivores, with only one quarter of their diet being meat. They mostly eat summer and fall berry crops such as raspberries, blueberries and mountain ash, as well as acorns and beech nuts in the fall. They supplement this with insects, fish, carrion, and the

spring-born young of moose and deer. Black bears constantly search for food to feed young and build fat for their long winter hibernation. Bears may look for other food sources more actively in the spring if the previous year's food supply was poor and they are in poor condition. They may also look for alternate food sources in late summer and fall if the current year's food supply is poor. Consequently, food or garbage around homes, cottages and campsites will become attractive to bears.

Between early July and late September bears typically double their body weight as they prepare for winter. Black bears do not hibernate during the winter. They do remain dormant, however. Most black bears enter their dens by mid-October in the north and by early November in central Ontario. However, bears will stay out of their dens longer when fall foods are abundant.

Bears invest a lot of time and energy in their young (not unlike humans). Female black bears give birth when they are about 6 to 8 years of age, and then they only reproduce every second year, at best. One to four cubs are born in late December or early January while their mothers are in their dens. Most cubs weigh .2 kilograms at birth (.5 pounds). They usually open their eyes when they are 40 days old. At this time, they typically weigh 1.8 kilograms or 4 pounds. When bears emerge from their dens in the spring, energy-rich food is scarce. They do not really start gaining weight until the berry-feeding binges of July and August. Then they fatten up in the fall when they gorge on foods such as beech nuts, acorns and other tree seeds.

Black bear mothers have strong bonds with their cubs. They will teach their young

*The Black Bear
Ursus americanus*



over the next 16-18 months following their birth. Then female cubs may continue to have access to the mother's feeding territory while the young males disperse, often traveling long distances for the next few years.

Black bears are extremely territorial. Many males will wander over an area of 38 square kilometers to find food. Females wander less, as they usually have their young with them. Males travel most widely, covering the home ranges of several females and their cubs. Immature males are wanderers that often encounter people when seeking their own new territory. Black bears are generally timid and avoid encounters with people, but they can come into conflict with people especially when natural foods are scarce. Black bears are not normally aggressive towards humans. However, on extremely rare occasions, bears can be dangerous.

Black bears are active from mid-April to late fall in most

parts of the province. They are intelligent animals with excellent long-term memories. Although they have poor eyesight, they have a great sense of smell and good hearing.

There are about 75,000 to 100,000 black bears in Ontario. As top predators, the bear's greatest threat is from humans. Black bears can live for 20 years or more but few do. They may also be killed by other bears or other wildlife such as wolves, or die at a young age from abandonment or starvation.

As recreationists we must learn to live in harmony with these animals. If you would like to learn more about bear-proofing your property, there are a number of publications and on-line materials that can help you.

CAT TALES

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Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

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CRCA Considers a Land Exchange in Kingston

An item of much interest in Kingston during this past year has been the proposed land exchange between the CRCA and Jack and Isobel Sudds. The lands under consideration are within and adjacent to the Authority's Little Cataraqui Creek Valleylands property, which includes the southern terminus of the Rideau Trail and areas of provincially significant wetland. The property is located just north of King Street West, between the Creek and the Cataraqui Golf and Country Club.

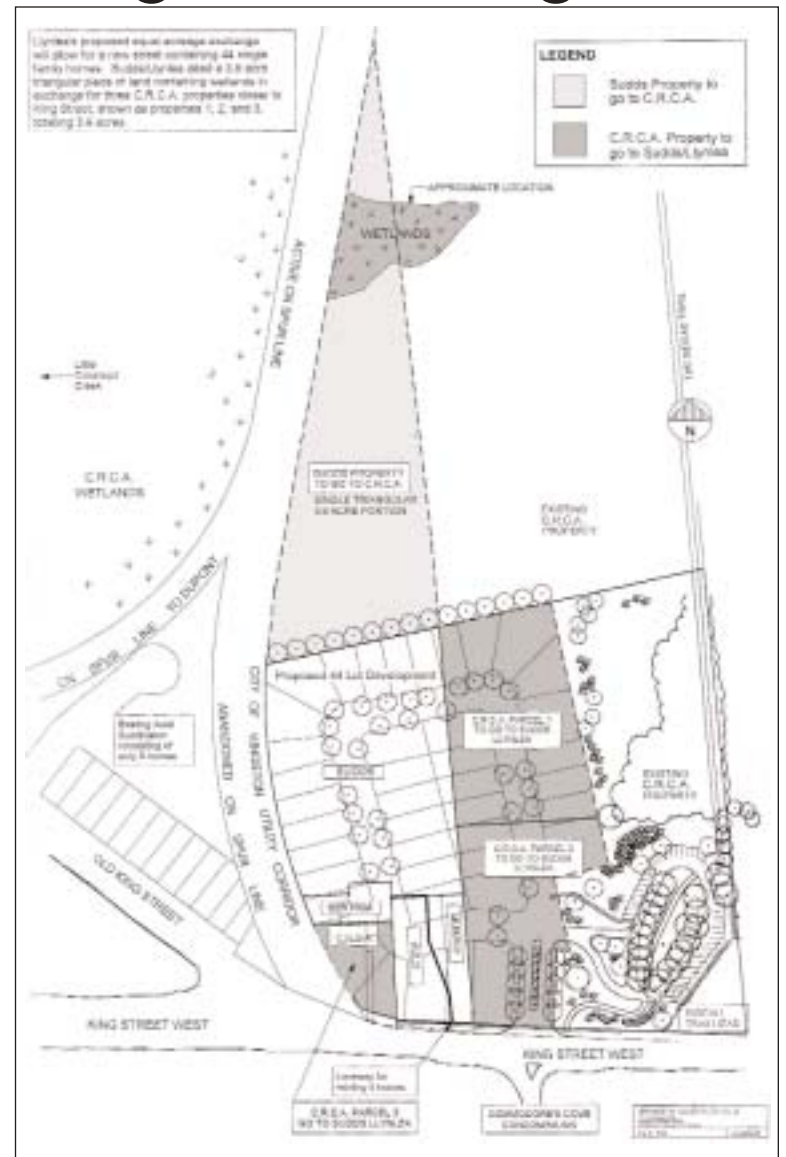
The proposed land exchange (shown on the adjacent map) would see a total of about 1.59 ha transferred to the Sudds, while an equivalent land area would be transferred to the Conservation Authority. The lands currently owned by the CRCA are upland meadows and pine plantations; the lands currently owned by the Sudds include a portion of the significant wetland. As part of the exchange, the CRCA would receive a cash payment, guided by a professional appraisal, representing the

greater value of its lands for development purposes. This payment would be used for land acquisition elsewhere in the Little Cataraqui Creek watershed. The CRCA would benefit through physical improvements to the Rideau Trail trailhead, and through the consolidation of its wetland property. The CRCA confirmed its approval in principle for the land exchange on September 26, 2001, subject to negotiating an agreement of purchase and sale at a price and on terms satisfactory to the CRCA. At press time, such an agreement had not yet been approved.

If approved, the land exchange would enable the Llynlea Corporation to create Trailhead Place, a subdivision of 44 single family homes with access from King Street West. An Environmental Impact Statement concerning the proposal (and an independent peer review of that Statement) found that the impacts of the subdivision on the adjacent wetland could be minimized by such methods as treating stormwater runoff, installing fences, and planting trees.

Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments are required to allow this development to proceed. At press time, these Amendments had been given second reading by the City of Kingston, contingent upon the resolution of the land exchange. If the development proceeds, CRCA technical staff will be involved in the review of detailed plans for the subdivision, including methods to minimize impacts on the wetland.

The CRCA has received many letters of opinion regarding the land exchange, and the associated Trailhead Place proposal. Those in favour of the idea cite anticipated improvements to the aesthetics and safety of the Rideau Trail trailhead. Those opposed argue that the current CRCA property should be maintained as public open space, and that the Sudds property should be acquired for that purpose. This ongoing debate has raised public awareness about the function of the CRCA as a property owner, and about the value of the Little Cataraqui Creek watershed.



Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network

Residents of Ontario are quickly realizing the importance of groundwater in light of the current drought, and bacterial contamination in Walkerton and other areas, both of which have been in the news. The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority is participating in the Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network (PGMN), as are most Conservation Authorities. This program is made available and funded by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. Conservation authorities will be providing the implementation of this network. The program will be run for at least six years with

the possibility of extension.

The purpose of this program is to collect information on groundwater conditions. This information will provide conservation authorities, the Provincial government, municipalities and others with sound information on which to base decisions. The implementation of the network will fill in some information gaps. For example, currently there is no groundwater data for reference as it relates to drought determination. Also, the lack of knowledge of groundwater conditions makes it difficult to determine the effects certain activities would have on

groundwater quantity and quality.

The PGMN tries to use existing wells in the monitoring network. The search for these wells has begun in the Cataraqui Region watershed. A hydrogeologist at the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority has been hired, on contract, by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, to review water well records to find matches between existing wells and the ideal locations for monitoring wells chosen by participating conservation authorities and the MOE.

At the same time, staff of the CRCA are working toward finalizing the agreement

between ourselves and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

Once the well records have been reviewed and the agreement finalized, the search for suitable wells to use in the network will move from a search that can be done in the comfort of an office chair to going out and looking at the wells to assess their suitability. These wells will be fitted with monitoring equipment and data collection will begin.

Groundwater Workshop

Are you interested in finding out more about groundwater? Plan to attend a

groundwater workshop on Saturday, January 26, 2002 in Elgin. The workshop will be geared to rural residents in Leeds County, but everyone is welcome to attend.

The following topics will be discussed:

- the nature and importance of groundwater
- findings from the Leeds groundwater study
- biosolids - toilet to field
- care of wells and septic systems

Watch for more details in your local newspaper.



Are Hikers, Cross-country Skiers and Cyclists Cheapskates?

Some might be tempted to answer yes. "These groups think the government should pay for trails!" say members of snowmobile clubs, who pay dearly through memberships, insurance, and land acquisition for their presence on trails.

Indeed, in a perfect world, the amazing benefits to physical health, spiritual and

emotional well being, and conservation awareness that accompany outdoor recreation, at truly modest cost, would be recognized at every government level. Alas, instead we must seek support from members of the public who appreciate the importance of preserving access for growing populations to such beautiful natural areas as the

Cataraqui Trail linear park.

We urge you to help maintain it by purchasing an annual membership for \$25 and by making a tax-deductible donation. Your support is needed for the development and upgrading, that will ensure continued enjoyment for you, and generations to follow.

A Four Season Trail

The Cataraqui Trail started over a century ago when the Napanee, Tamworth and Quebec Railway was launched in 1879 to connect the Bay of Quinte to the Ottawa Valley, and became the lifeline connecting mining, farming and logging communities. Developed in stages by several railway companies, the line reached Ottawa in 1913. The last

Canadian National train ran in 1979, and CN donated the old line to the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority. Now the abandoned railway provides a new kind of connection to history and to nature.

The 104 kilometre recreational trail is lined with testaments to our past: hamlets and villages, active and abandoned farmsteads, old mills, regenerating forests, historic bridges, forgotten mines and the historic Rideau Canal.

The trail cuts through rugged granite hills of the Canadian Shield and pastoral limestone plains, wanders beside lakes and streams, and crosses fields, forests and wetlands. The trail's mix

of habitats with abundant and varied wildlife, is ideal for nature viewing and photography.



The Cataraqui Trail is a year round, shared use recreational trail. It serves hikers, joggers, cross-country skiers, cyclists, horseback riders, birders, naturalists and snowmobilers. The trail is groomed for snowmobiling in the winter and open to snowmobilers bearing a current Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs trail permit.

Winter on the Cataraqui Trail

Bicycles and hiking boots are being stored away for the next season. In their place, engines are being tuned and cross-country skis are being readied. Then come the fervent wishes for snow, snow and more snow! Snowmobile clubs, the Lennox and Addington Ridge Runners and the Rideau Ridge Riders, are

chomping at the bit for that adequate snow base that will allow these clubs at the opposite ends of the Cataraqui Trail to declare the season open for fun.

These snowmobile clubs have a long history with the Cataraqui Trail. Many don't realize it was they who leased the rail line from the CNR, long before it became the Cataraqui Trail. The

Ridge Runners and The Ridge Riders, plus the Athens and District Snowmobilers provide the prime financial support from user groups. They groom the Trail and post speed limit and safety signs. Off season, they repair and rebuild bridges and assist with trail maintenance.

Hats off to those dedicated snowmobile clubs whose grooming allows me to walk my dog and ski!

Ride Safely

When snowmobiles were introduced into the Canadian market, I doubt the manufacturers had any inkling that these machines were destined to become almost a way of life for so many people. Trappers, hunters and fishermen now have a fast run to traps and fishing holes.

Your Support is Greatly Appreciated

☐ I wish to renew/become a Cataraqui Trail Member. Enclosed is my tax-deductible \$25 membership fee for 2002.

I would like to make a charitable donation to the Cataraqui Trail. Enclosed is my contribution for :

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$200 ☐ Other

Name (please print) _____

Street Address _____

Town/City _____ Postal Code _____

Phone No. _____ Email _____

Payment Options:

Please do not send cash by mail

Cheque (enclosed) Amount \$ _____

Please make cheque payable to
Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

Credit Card _____ Amount \$ _____

Check One: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Expiry Date: Month _____ Year _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Registered charitable number 106879158RR0001

Please send this form to Cataraqui Trail,
c/o Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority,
P.O. Box 160, Glenburnie, Ontario K0H 1S0.
Telephone (613) 546-4228, ext. 304
e-mail: cattrail@rideau.net
Web: www.rideau-info.com/cattrail/

Families and friends gather just for the adventure of a ride through the countryside or to take a shortcut across a lake for a winter picnic. Of course there are always those few who abuse the sport by trespassing or driving recklessly and endangering others. Sadly, this reflects back on snowmobilers as a whole. But if enthusiasts treat their machines and the use of designated trails properly and with respect and privilege it should be a great ride for everyone this winter.

Hikers, skiers and snowmobilers alike will have company on the trails from now on. Along with volunteers, the OPP will be

patrolling the Cataraqui Trail during all seasons to catch those who would misuse the trail and deter those in unauthorized vehicles. The OPP now have a special team called SAVE (Snowmobile ATV Vessel Enforcement Team). Already they have solved two cases of dumping; making the offenders responsible for clean-up and restoration. Offences could lead to anything from fines to actual charges being levied.

So, if you see an unauthorized vehicle or anyone misusing the trail, call your local OPP. They'll be on the trail, in more ways than one.



How to Find the Cataraqui Trail

Many people have called the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority offices asking for details on how to find the Cataraqui Trail. The trail is the former Canadian National Railroad running from Smith Falls to Strathcona. It can be used by hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers.

The route of the trail is shown on the 1:50,000 scale EMR maps of 31C/16 Perth, 31C/9 Westport, 31C/8 Gananoque and 31C/7 Sydenham. In total there are about 50 public road crossings. This page describes the main access points and shows them on the map below.

Smith Falls - Km. 0. The trail starts behind Harveys and Tim Horton's on Highway 15 at the south end of town. Restaurants and stores nearby.

Lombardy - Km. 9.1. Access is from Leeds-

Grenville Road 1, 1.3 km south of Highway 15. No nearby restaurants or stores.

Otter Lake - Km. 17.8. Access is from Leeds-Grenville Road 5, 0.1 km south of Highway 15. No nearby restaurants or stores.

Portland - Km. 24.8. Travelling along Highway 15 take Portland Station Road (next to Rideau Realty office). Trail is 0.7 km from Highway 15. Stores and restaurants in Portland.

Forfar - Km. 29.6. Access is 0.4 km southeast of Forfar along Leeds-Grenville Road 42. Store and cheese factory in village.

Highway 15 - Km. 34.5. Access is off Highway 15, 2.5 km north of Elgin and 3.5 km south of Crosby. No nearby restaurants or stores. Parking available beside trail on east of highway.

Chaffey's Lock Road - Km. 37.6. Access is

off Leeds-Grenville Road 9 (Chaffey's Lock Road) - 3.6 km from Highway 15 & 4.7 km from Chaffey's Lock. No nearby restaurants or stores.

Chaffey's Lock - Km. 43.1. Access is at junction of Indian Lake and Opinicon Roads - 1 km west of lock. Seasonal restaurant beside canal.

Maple Leaf Road - Km. 58.8. Access is 0.1 km from junction of Opinicon and Maple Leaf Roads. No nearby restaurants or stores.

Perth Road Village - Km. 60.7. Access is on Frontenac Road 10 and 0.6 km north of Perth Road Village. Corner store at south end of village.

Sydenham - Km. 71.7. Access is on Frontenac Road 19 - Bedford Road. Trail runs between the beer store and IGA. Stores & restaurants in village.

Harrowsmith - Km. 78.2. Access is on Highway 38, 0.1 km north of OLCO gas

station. Parking available beside trail on east of highway. Stores and restaurants in village.

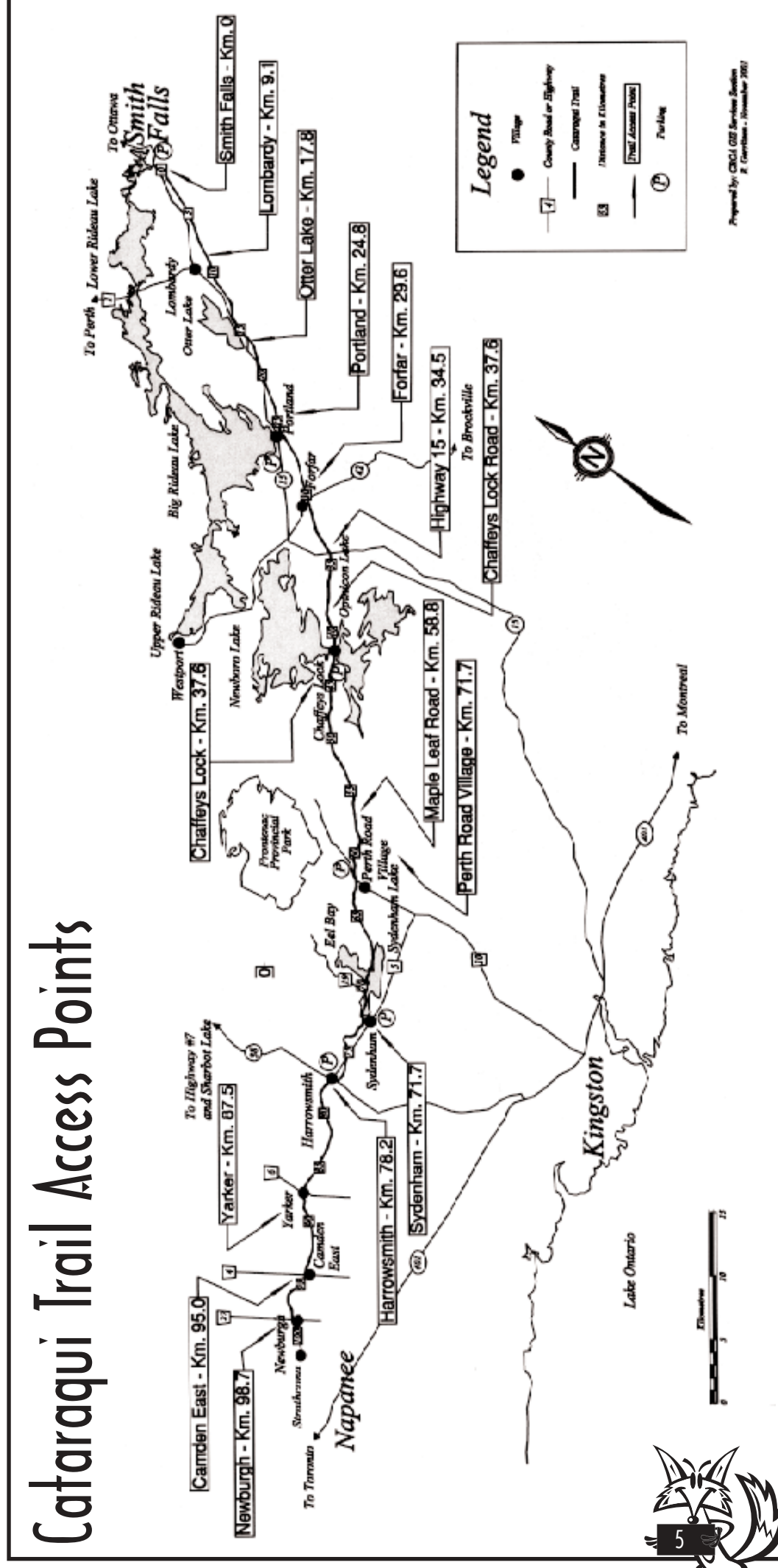
Yarker - Km. 87.5. Going along Lennox & Addington Road 6, turn uphill on Cutler Road opposite the Old Bank Cafe. Trail is on Sidings Street. Stores and restaurants in village.

Camden East - Km. 95.0. Trail crosses Lennox & Addington Road 4 0.4 km north of village. Store and restaurant in village.

Newburgh - Km 98.7. Trail is on Main Street at north end of village. Food and stores in village.

Strathcona - Km. 102.2. A recent addition of the Strathcona Paper factory has made the trail more difficult to find. Go to the south end of Finlay Street and trail is to northeast of factory buildings. No nearby restaurants or stores.

Cataraqui Trail Access Points



What's Happ

Keep warm and active during the winter and spring in one of our conservation areas. Visit our web site at www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca to find the conservation area closest to you.

There are special winter activities at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville and winter and spring programs at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area in Kingston.

Entry Fees

Gould Lake and Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Areas have a daily entry fee. The fee is \$4.00 per person for adults and children over 12, \$2.00 per person for children 12 and under, with a maximum fee of \$10.00 per car. Annual passes are available for \$50.00 per year and provide unlimited access to both of these conservation areas.

Donation boxes are located at our other conservation areas and at our boat ramps. Your donations help to maintain these facilities, so please make a contribution each time you visit.

Hours of Operation

Conservation Areas
7:30 a.m. to dusk daily
Little Cataraqui Creek Outdoor Centre
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekends and holidays from January 1 to May 5

Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

Take Highway 29 north from Brockville to Tincap, turn east on Debrugge Road and drive for 2 km to the main entrance. Enjoy 11 km of hiking and cross-country ski trails, a Nature Centre, picnic facilities and a skating rink.

The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area will be serving hot chocolate and coffee at the skating shelter every Sunday in January and February from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (weather permitting).

Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area

We have great facilities including 13 km of groomed cross-country ski trails, a natural ice rink, warming huts and

an Outdoor Centre with lots of great programs for the whole family.

In the early spring, plan a visit to our sugar bush to enjoy the sweet taste of maple syrup. As the snow melts and nature awakens, join us for great spring activities.

Winter Activities

Evening Skating



Come out and skate every Friday in January and February from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m., weather permitting. The lights will be on and you can warm up by the bonfire or in the warming hut. Call 546-4228 ext. 501 for rink conditions.

Ice Rink Rental

Host your own skating party! Rink rental includes a bonfire and access to the warming huts. Call Shannon Fleming at 546-4228 ext. 222 for more information or to make a booking.

Equipment Rentals

Cross-country skis and snowshoes are available for rent at the Outdoor Centre. A limited selection of ice skates is also available.

Cross-country Ski Lessons

Learn how to ski or

improve your technique. Cross-country ski lessons are offered on Saturdays from January 5 to March 2, weather permitting. Register in advance, or on the day of the lesson, at the Outdoor Centre. Cost is \$11.00 per person or \$8.50 per person for annual pass holders.

Group lessons are one-hour in length. Private lessons can also be arranged. Group lesson times are as follows:

10:00 a.m. - lessons for children 14 and under (children must be able to put their own equipment on or a parent must be available to assist the child)
11:30 a.m. - all ages
1:30 p.m. - all ages

Programs and Activities

Ski Waxing and Repair Clinic



Sunday, January 6 (2:00 p.m.)

The Canadian Ski Patrol will be providing a hands-on ski waxing and repair clinic. So bring your skis, wax and any questions with you. Be prepared to have fun.

Winter Mammals



Sunday, January 13 (2:00 p.m.)

Have you ever wanted to discover what beaver, muskrat and other fur pelts feel like or touch a real animal skull? Join wildlife rescuer and expert Gary Ure for a session on winter mammals at the Outdoor Centre.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Winter Fun!

Thursday, January 17 (10:30 a.m.)
Calling all seniors who love to get together and celebrate in the fresh air of winter. Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Outdoor Centre. Weather permitting, we'll try out skis and snowshoes. So think snow! Otherwise we'll take a winter walk. Dress for the weather and bring your brown bag lunch for afterwards.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet

Sunday, January 20
Pre-register for each event 30 minutes before start time. The day's events include:
10:00 a.m. - Winter Relay Triathlon, Skate, snowshoe and ski.

Registration fee is \$5.00 per team.

1:00 p.m. - Cross Country Ski Loppets, 5 km or 10 km.
Registration fee is \$2.50 per person or \$5.00 per team.

This annual winter fun day is hosted by the Canadian Ski Patrol - Frontenac Zone. (If poor ski conditions exist, the alternate date is February 10.)

Winter Wonderland - Fireside Coffee House and Evening Skate

Friday, January 25 (6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)

Bring your musical instruments, stories, and poetry for an evening of sharing and entertainment around the crackling fire in the Outdoor Centre West Hall. You can also bring your skates and enjoy gliding under the stars on Kingston's largest natural skating rink. Whether you want to participate or just want to warm up after your skate, our fireside coffee house has something for everyone. All ages are welcome. This coffee house is a monthly event hosted by musical talent Paul Arnold.



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Natural Environment Canoe & Kayak Centre

Canada's

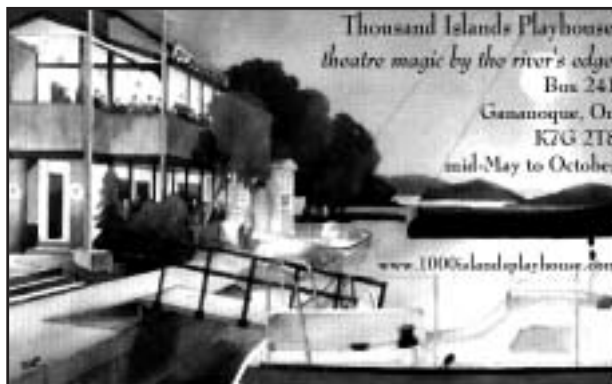
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web site: www.frontenac-outfitters.com



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Snowshoe Tour



Sunday,
January 27
(2:00 p.m.)

Bring the whole family out for a snowshoe tour over the frozen marshes, fields and forests with Bill Murdoch of the Rideau Trail Association. You'll have an opportunity to look for signs of animal tracks, scat, chews and much more!

P.A Day Winter Sports and Adventure Day



Friday,
February 1
(8:30 a.m. to
4:30 p.m.)

Give your child(ren) an opportunity to have a P.A. Day full of winter adventure and fun. We'll be cross-country skiing, skating, sledding, or snowshoeing through the fields, forest, and wetland areas at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. Pre-register for our special day program. Drop-off begins at 8:30 a.m. and the program runs until 4:30 p.m. Bring your lunch, snacks, drinks, warm and extra clothes, sleds and skates.

Cost is \$30.00 per child and you must pre-register. For more inform-

ation call Stana Luxford at 546-4228 ext. 251.

Winter Photography

Sunday, February 3
(2:00 p.m.)

Join Philippe Baud, local nature photographer, for a fantastic slide show of nature in winter. If you enjoy nature photography this is an excellent program for you! Philippe will be also giving tips on how to take those difficult winter shots.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet

(Alternative Date)
Sunday, February 10
(See January 20 listing for more details.)

Come out with your family for a hike and eyes only scavenger hunt where you take only pictures and leave only footprints. Afterwards warm up in the West Hall with a hot drink.

Winter Camping Clinic

Sunday, February 17
(2:00 p.m.)

Calling all hikers, campers and outdoor enthusiasts or those keen on learning about winter camping and preparing for winter outings. Join

certified professionals and experienced staff from Hiker's Haven for an informative session on gear and advice for winter camping.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program - Meet Musician and Artist Don McCallum

Thursday, February 21
(10:30 a.m.)

Join Don McCallum at the Outdoor Centre for a talk on the digital process as applied to paintings. Weather permitting, we'll take a walk in the woods. Ski or snowshoe if you wish. Bring your lunch, water to drink and dress for the weather.

Love Is In the Air Fireside Coffee House and Evening Skate

Friday, February 22
(See January 25)
(6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)

Winter Birds Our Brave Feathered Friends



Sunday,
February 24
(2:00 p.m.)

Have you ever wondered how the birds who have stayed the winter survive? Or how to find winter birds? A speaker from the

Kingston Field Naturalists will be giving a slide show and talk about winter birds in the area. This is a must for all those interested in birds. Be sure to bring your warm clothes and head out for your own birding journey after the talk to search for winter birds. If you are lucky, a Black-capped Chickadee may even say hello!

Introductory Orienteering Clinic

Sunday, March 3
(2:00 p.m.)

Come out for a hands-on, introductory session on using a map and compass. All ages welcome! The skill of map and compass reading will help you with your hiking adventures, road trips and many other outings. Be prepared to put your new skills to practice by participating in our various mapping activities. Come dressed for the weather.

Maple Madness



March 9-17
(March Break)
March 23 and
24
March 30 and 31
(9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.)

Remember the delicious smell of pancakes, the tasty maple syrup and the beautiful fresh air at the sugar bush? Take a tractor-drawn wagon back to our sugar bush to see how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how it is made now. We've got special activities happening on different days throughout the program.

Maple Madness Guided Tours

Saturday, March 9
(10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m.,
1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.)

It's the first day of Maple Madness 2002 and we're celebrating by having guided tours back in the sugar bush.

Sweet Water Celebration First Nations Dance Presentation and Legends

Sunday, March 10

Dancers from the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory will put on a presentation of traditional aboriginal dances and what these dances mean. Also, hear legends of how maple syrup was discovered.

Puppet Shows

Monday, March 11;
Wednesday, March 13;
Friday, March 15 and
Sunday, March 24
(10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m.,
1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.)

All the puppets have been practicing and are excited as ever to fill you in on what's happening this year in our sugar bush. Join us at the Outdoor Centre for another

exciting season of Maple Madness theatre.

Sugar Bush Stories



Tuesday,
March 12
(10:00 a.m.,
11:30 a.m.,
1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.)

Share in sugar bush stories of the past and present. We will be telling tales in the General Purpose Room of the Outdoor Centre. Any story tellers who wish to share sugar bush or nature stories are welcome. All ages are invited.

Puppet Shows

Wednesday, March 13
(see March 11)

Play Like the Pioneers

Thursday, March 14
(10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m.,
1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.)

Bring your family out to hop along in our three-legged races and sack jumping races just outside the Outdoor Centre. Try your hand at sawing wood or tapping a tree back at the sugar bush - just a few of the jobs that many pioneer families had to do during sugaring off in the springtime.

Puppet Shows

Friday, March 15 (see
March 11)

Pre-St. Patrick's Day Celebration



Traditional
Highland
Dancers
Saturday,
March 16 (1:00 p.m.)

A must-see show of the Connemara Dancers

(Continued on Page 8)



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What's Happening

(continued from page 7)

who will be dancing in the General Purpose Room at the Outdoor Centre at 1:00 p.m. These dancers will knock your socks off! Join in the pre-St. Patrick's Day celebration and take in some traditional Irish dances.

St. Patrick's Day Celebration



Sunday, March 17
Find the mysterious leprechaun

roaming around the sugar bush and Outdoor Centre for a tasty green treat. For good luck, get your face painted with a shamrock!

Brown Bag Seniors' Program

Sugar Bush Visit

Thursday, March 21 (10:30 a.m.)

It's that time again! The sap is running and pancakes are cooking. We'll walk out to the sugar bush have a tasty pancake treat (\$1.25 per pancake) and hike back. Come enjoy the spring at

the sugar bush. Meet at the Outdoor Centre.

Sweet Water Coffee House

Friday, March 22 (6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)

Bring your musical instruments, stories, and poetry for an evening of sharing and entertainment in the Outdoor Centre West Hall. All ages are welcome. Come and celebrate sugaring-off time. This coffee house is a monthly event and will be hosted by musical talent, Paul Arnold.

French Heritage Day

Saturday, March 23

Learn traditional, French Canadian folk songs, stories and much more at the Outdoor Centre. French Canadian culture and the sugar bush go hand-in-hand, so join us for some stories and musical fun!

Magical Maples

Sunday, March 24

The maple tree has a special significance in

aboriginal culture. Join Betty Maracle of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory for a special presentation on the maple ceremony and the traditional uses of maple syrup as a medicine. Presentations are at 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Musical Entertainment with David Archibald



Saturday, March 30
David

Archibald, a local musical entertainer, will be leading in the sugar bush celebration with music and fun. Show times are at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. in the West Hall of the Outdoor Centre.

Spring Celebration and Creative Drawing Contest



Sunday, March 31
Enter a

Spring Celebration Creative Drawing Contest (all ages) that can win you a bottle of maple syrup.

Contest starts at 10:00 a.m. and runs until 2:00 p.m. Judging will take place at 2:15 p.m. The maple syrup prize will be awarded to the most creative Spring Celebration drawing. If you're lucky you may even get to visit with the Bush Bunny for some tasty treats!

Spring Awakenings Nature Art and Hobbies Open House



April 7 (10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

Talented local crafters and artists will be displaying and demonstrating their work. The art and hobbies will include some of the following: stained glass, sewing, knitting, scrap-booking, wood finishing, print making, woodworking, nature painting, and wood sculpting.

Kingston Rocks!

Sunday, April 14 (2:00 p.m.)

Curious about those rocks in your back yard

or the rocks alongside the road? Mark Badham, geology expert from Queen's University, will be giving an informative talk on the rocks of the Kingston area. All ages welcome.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Spring Flowers Slide Show



Thursday, April 18 (10:30 a.m.)

Think April showers and May flowers. Winnie Smith will be with us to talk about those very things and will be presenting a slide show. Bring your lunch, water to drink and dress for the weather.

Earth Day Celebration Learning to Live Lightly

Sunday, April 21 (1:00 p.m.)

Celebrate Earth Day by participating

in an Ecological Footprint workshop. Discover what your footprint on the earth is and how to reduce your

impact. The CRCA will also be hosting a community open house. Come out and meet the staff and join in the fun of learning to live more lightly on the earth!

Spring Fever Coffee House

Friday, April 26 (See March 22) (6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.)

Mother's Day Recycled Craft

Sunday, May 5 (2:00 p.m.)
Always rushing to get a Mother's Day gift ready? If you want to make something for your Mom this program is for you! Bring out the whole family (even Mom) to create an environmentally friendly spring Mother's Day gift. You'll be decorating your very own reusable pots with recycled materials. Once your pot is decorated, you'll get to plant it with some of your Mom's favourite garden herb such as basil or chives.

A CRCA Work Plan for 2002-2007

Achieving the Vision

Where are we going? How will we get there? These are two of the basic questions addressed by *Cataraqui to 2020*, a strategic plan which

was adopted by the CRCA in March of 2001. The strategic plan outlines a

vision for the Conservation Authority, as well as broad goals and objectives for the next twenty years. The full text of *Cataraqui to 2020* can be found on the Authority web site, www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca under the heading of What We Do.

During the fall of 2001, members and staff developed a

Work Plan for 2002-2007, structured around the five goals in *Cataraqui to 2020*. The purposes of the Work Plan are to identify those actions by members, staff, and our partners that will help to achieve our vision, to assign priority to those actions, and to identify the resources required for their execution.

The CRCA is committed to supporting conservation efforts in all ten watersheds of the Cataraqui Region. The Work Plan suggests actions that could be undertaken to safeguard the quantity and quality of water, protect against flooding and erosion, promote the stewardship of forests, wetlands, and streams, manage Conservation Authority properties, and encourage public involvement in conservation work. The extent to which actions listed in the Work Plan will be

implemented will depend largely upon the availability of funding. It is anticipated that the Work Plan will be revisited on annual basis, to ensure that the Conservation Authority is working in support of the vision endorsed by its strategic plan.

If you have an idea on how the CRCA might further conservation efforts, please contact Rob McRae, Resource Planner at (613) 546-4228 ext. 224, or via email at robmcrae@cataraquiregion.on.ca



Little Cataraqui Creek Buffer Project

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, in partnership with the many other agencies that make up the Kingston Wetlands Working Group, are currently working on the Little Cataraqui Creek Buffer Project. The project is attempting to reduce the amount of sediments, nutrients, and pollutants that enter Little Cataraqui Creek by establishing a buffer of native vegetation along the banks of the creek.

This fall we completed the second phase of planting for this project. Four locations were selected for the fall planting: The Bay Park Baptist Church, Frontenac Penitentiary, Lion's Civic Park, and the Little Cataraqui Creek

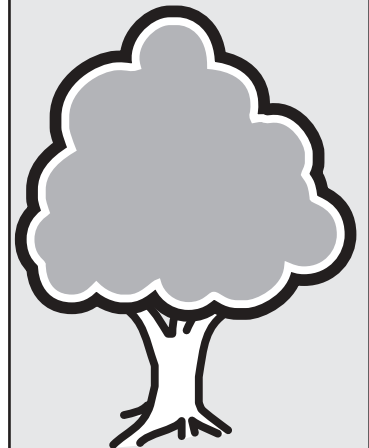
Conservation Area. With the help of volunteers from the Church, Canadian Forces Base Kingston, Frontenac Penitentiary, the CRCA, and Queen's University students, 1500 native trees and shrubs were planted. Special thanks is extended to all that participated.

These plants will help improve the water quality of the creek and will also discourage Canada Geese who enjoy manicured lawns that are mown to the water's edge.

If you have any questions or comments about this project, or would like to discuss the plantings planned for the spring of 2002, please call Tom Beaubiah at 546-4228 extension 240.



Fall Tree Planting



Fall is a great time for planting trees. Normally, the CRCA staff would be busy in the fall planting trees in school yards and along roadsides with community volunteers. Not this year, however. Despite applications to 12 different funding organizations, the CRCA failed to receive any grants for our Large Stock Planting Program. As a result, many planned community projects will have to wait until next fall.

We were able to plant trees on CRCA properties under the Tree Replacement and Management Strategy. These trees were planted to replace trees damaged during the 1998 ice storm. Large caliper trees were planted at various conservation areas and along the Cataraqui Trail. The CRCA would like to thank the Township of Rideau Lakes for their contribution to the planting project at Portland Station. The use of their tractor and back hoe made the work a lot easier. CRCA office staff helped to plant the trees at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.



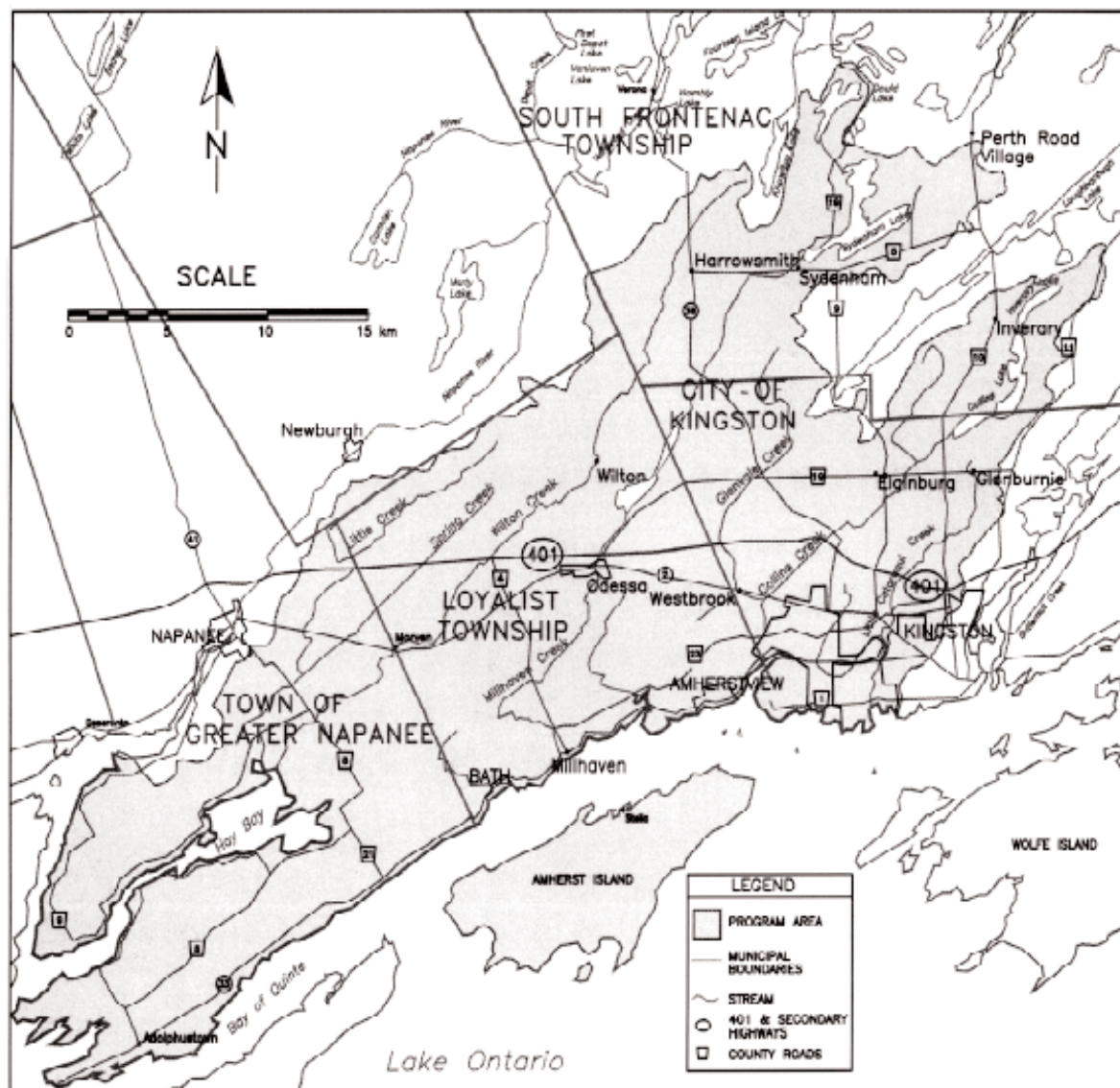
Healthy Watershed Program: Agriculture Areas Eligible for the Program

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority is offering a rural water quality improvement program called Healthy Watershed Program: Agriculture. The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance as well as technical advice to farmers who implement Best Management Practices on farms. This program is made available by The Agricultural Adaptation Council with funds from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

To be eligible for the program you must have an Environmental Farm Plan and live in the program area detailed on the adjacent map.

Grant rates range from 50 per cent to 75 per cent, with the possibility of two-thirds of the landowner's share being in-kind donations. The grant ceiling is \$5,000 per on-farm project. Eligible projects include buffer strips and wind-breaks, alternative watering devices, livestock restriction, stream bank stabilization, low level crossings, and surface water run-off management. Land retirement at \$300/acre for one year, is also eligible.

For more information please call Holly Evans at (613) 546-4228 extension 244.



Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

The CRCA is fortunate to have a group of dedicated volunteers that works to maintain and promote the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. As usual, they have had a busy and active fall and they are getting ready for the winter season.

Fall Work Day

The Friends held their Fall Work Day on Saturday, September 22. Among the many jobs completed were the installation of a new Purple Martin house near the Trumpeter Swan compound, cleanup of the flower beds, and cleanup and weeding of

the handicapped accessible trail (Trail 1). A major effort was the erection of cedar rail fencing around the foundation of the Joyce farm site. This is being developed into an interpretive site with a plaque.

The Joyces used to live on part of the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area property. All that remains of the farm are parts of the stone foundations from the house, barn, well and outbuildings.

Fall Open House

The annual fall Open House was held on Sunday, September 30 with displays, nature activities for children,

and guided hikes. The event was well attended and a large crowd enjoyed a special presentation by Leslie Hunt of the Kemptville office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Leslie is an intern at the MNR office. Her slide presentation on Species at Risk created an interest in her work.

The Friends would like to thank Leslie, as well as representatives from the Brockville and Area Field Naturalists who helped to lead nature hikes.

Winter Skating Days

The Friends will once again be hosting winter skating

days during the months of January and February. These will be hosted on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the warming hut, weather and conditions permitting. Saturdays and an evening skating event are also being

considered.

Skaters and skiers are welcome to drop by, meet the Friends and warm up with a hot drink. You can also warm up by the new bonfire pit, built by the Friends and CRCA staff, with a donation from DuPont.



Above: Cedar fence around Joyce Farmstead

Left: Leslie Hunt, MNR at Fall Open House

Friends of Lemoine Point

The Friends of Lemoine Point have also been a busy and active group this fall. They have been working on a number of initiatives including reforestation, removal of garlic mustard, a membership blitz, visitor counts, and closing of unauthorized trails.

The Friends have also been a presence at this busy and active conservation area, speaking to visitors about the importance of leashing their dogs and staying on the trails and allowing the forest to regenerate.

working title of Trees Please) has been established. The goal of the program is to encourage donations to help restore the original composition and character of the woodland at Lemoine Point Conservation Area. So far, donated funds have been used to purchase 108 native shrubs and 20 large caliper trees. These were planted by volunteers on November 3 in an area between the north entrance and the north parking lot. Restoration of the woodland is one of the key goals contained in the Lemoine Point Conceptual Plan.

Signs were placed this spring on some unauthorized trails through the wooded areas at Lemoine Point. The

purpose of the signs is to discourage foot traffic and allow the forest undergrowth to regenerate, restoring the health of the forest. The signs say *Ground Under Repair*. Most people are complying with the signs. Friends who are in the conservation area are also spending time speaking to visitors about why it is important to stay on the authorized trails.

The CRCA would like to thank the Friends for their dedication to Lemoine Point Conservation Area. They are helping to provide a presence in the area, which we would not be able to provide with current staffing levels.

News from Other Conservation Properties

A reminder for all visitors to CRCA properties. Most of our properties have posted hours from dawn to dusk. Of course, those times vary during the year. Dawn means one half hour before official sunrise and dusk means one half hour after official sunset. After dusk and before dawn, our properties are closed and you should not be there. Please note that Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area opens at 7:30 a.m.

We have been busy this fall getting our boat ramps, dams, forest properties and other conservation areas ready for winter.

Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area

The previously approved, but never built, road to the Outdoor Centre is now under construction. The new road will provide direct access to the Outdoor Centre from the main access road. Once completed, you will no longer have to drive through the Administration Office parking lot to reach the Outdoor Centre. This should make it easier for visitors to find the Centre.

These improvements will also include expanding the parking lot at the Outdoor Centre. This will help reduce parking problems during peak periods like winter and spring. Entrance and gatehouse improvements are also underway.

At the same time, the City of Kingston is building a road just south of Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. This road comes out on Division Street across from McDoo's Lane. This is a City project being undertaken on lands owned by the City of Kingston.

Appreciation Night Improvements

At our Appreciation Night held in August, we were to plant trees and make other improvements on our properties to recognize the volunteer contributions and donations from various people and groups. We are pleased to report that all 18 trees have now been planted at various locations. The ski rack recognizing the Canadian Ski Patrol will be put to good use this winter at the Outdoor Centre. The bench honouring the Foundation has been installed at the intersection of trails 1 and 2 at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

Fencing at CRCA Dams

What is with the chain link fencing at our dams? Recently we have secured chain link fencing to the existing railings at some of our dams. This is an extra safety feature for our staff that operate and maintain the dams.



A new Heritage Forest Program (formerly given the

Foundation News

Xeriscaping

On Thursday, September 27, the Cataraqi Conservation Foundation held a most successful event. The speaker was Jennifer Bennett of Sydenham. Jennifer's talk was about xeriscaping - gardening in drought or low water conditions. She is a wonderful gardener, author of many gardening books and articles, and a very good speaker. The Outdoor Centre was packed with people and they were not disappointed.

As well as the gardening talk, there were excellent displays by Neil's Flowers, Simple Country Pleasures from Napanee, Simply Landscaping, Hearthmaker's Energy Co-operative, magazines from The Limestone Gardener, and secondhand books from Berry and Peterson.

We were lucky to also have wonderful raffle prizes donated by Gardening Life Magazine, Niagara Parks Commission, Harrowsmith Country Life, the Campus Bookstore, Marianna's Hair Stylists, Kingston Horticultural Society, Potter's Nurseries, Lone Star Cafe, The Kingston Brewing Company, Simply Landscaping, and Simple Country Pleasures.

With the success of this presentation, the Foundation is considering inviting other guest speakers or hosting other events.

Partners in Outdoor Education

The Foundation has two main goals for fundraising - conservation education and land acquisition. One of our annual fundraising drives is our Partners in Outdoor Education appeal. Letters were sent out earlier this fall to potential and past donors. Your valuable contributions help to support the CRCA's conservation education

programs. Last year, more than 6500 area school children were able to learn more about nature and the environment thanks to your contributions. If you have already made a donation, thank you. If you have not, we hope that you will consider donating to this worthwhile program.

Fundraising Initiatives and Membership

The Foundation is currently looking at additional ways to attract more members and to raise additional funds. During the winter, we plan to be at Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area promoting our organization and selling memberships. Winter is the busiest time of year at Little Cataraqi Creek and many of our current members are people who use this facility. Funds raised through membership fees help to contribute to the CRCA's education and land acquisition programs.

We have also formed a committee to look at the feasibility of holding some fundraising events such as an art show, theatre night or guest speakers. This committee is in the process of drawing up a multi-year plan.

Coming Events

The following events are in the process of being organized for the spring. All three events will be taking place at the Outdoor Centre, Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area.

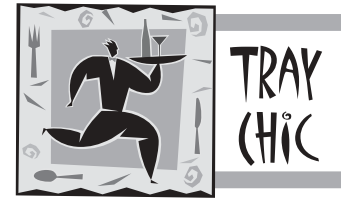
- April 11 at 7:00 p.m. Tea Tasting and Presentation by Leslie Allan, Tulipwood Teas, Kingston. Desserts, tea and raffle items.
- May 28 at 3:30 p.m. Cataraqi Conservation Foundation Annual General Meeting
- June 25 Ecology Award and Strawberry Social

Tray Chic Fundraiser

This year's annual fundraiser, Tray Chic, was co-hosted by the CRCA and the Cataraqi Conservation Foundation. The event which was held on October 18, featured hand-painted and decorated trays donated by local artists, as well as many other silent

auction and raffle items. Despite a smaller than normal crowd and a hospitalized M.C., we still managed to raise \$7,500 for the Outdoor Centre and Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area.

Thank you to the volunteers and CRCA staff who helped to organize and



run the event, the donors, the advertisers, the artists and the people who came out that evening. We would also like to thank the staff at Arlington's for providing the facilities and for serving us a delicious dinner!



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Tray Artists

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Yes, We're Still Having a Drought

The summer of 2001 was the driest in more than thirty years for most of eastern Ontario. The January through October precipitation levels in the Kingston area were approximately 80 per cent of the average precipitation for that period.

August, September and October 2001 had near average precipitation. Flow in area streams, which had been non-existent midsummer, started to show a return to normal in early October, after two months of average rain. However, the flows

in area creeks are still well below average for this time of the year.

Drought generally occurs slowly, over a long period of time. Recovery from a drought will also take a long period of time. The current drought situation has been the result of a prolonged period (approximately 5 years) of average, to less than average, precipitation. With the very dry year of 2001, there was no extra capacity in the surface water or groundwater, and essentially, the system ran out of water.

Without a prolonged

period of above average precipitation, the situation will not improve enough to withstand another dry year. The hope for the winter is a greater than average amount of snow, with a gradual melt through the springtime to increase the amount of water percolating into the ground for water table recharge. However, if this does not occur over the winter and spring, and 2002 is another dry year, conditions next summer could rival, or be worse, than conditions this year.

The CRCA Water

Response Team has decided to maintain the Level 2 drought condition through the winter, with ongoing monitoring. Given the uncertainty of spring conditions, the WRT decided to maintain this level until it was shown that conditions had definitely improved and stabilized.

It has become apparent that most people on municipal water systems do not regard drought conditions as a problem. They see Lake Ontario as an inexhaustible supply of water and continue to

water their lawns every day throughout the summer. This supply is by no means inexhaustible. There is a finite amount of water available each year in Lake Ontario to use without taking more water out of the system than can be replenished, slowly drying up the lake. As an analogy, if Lake Ontario were a 2 litre pop bottle, the amount of water available for use in any year would be 15 millilitres, or 1 tablespoon. In addition, given that 7 million people (135,000 in the

CRCA jurisdiction) draw their drinking water from Lake Ontario, what would happen if that supply were contaminated so it could not be used as a source?

Couple that with a year like this past year, where there is not enough groundwater to supply the households (45,000 people) that rely on it and there would be a major disaster. Everyone relies on water to survive and conservation of that resource is imperative to a continued clean, steady source.

Mac Johnson Wildlife Area Nature Centre

New Lights and New Fees

New interior lights, courtesy of a donation from the Royal Bank, have been installed at the Nature Centre. This will be a big help to the school groups and other groups who make use of this facility.

Effective January 1, 2002, the rental rates for the Nature Centre will increase to \$30.00 per day and \$1.00 per person plus GST. We hope to put the additional revenue into other improvements to the building.

News from the Trumpeter Swan Compound

Milli and Mac, our resident swans, are settling

down for another winter at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. Although they did not produce any cygnets this year, everyone remains hopeful that next year will be more successful.

As the weather turns colder, the other Trumpeter Swans, released into the Wildlife Area in May 2000, have returned. They have all paired off. From the four remaining pairs, three have returned to the swan compound. No cygnets have been observed.

These swans will have to be fed over the winter. Donations for feed are greatly appreciated. Income tax



receipts will be provided for donations of \$10.00 or more. For more information, please call Stefan Foerster at the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area at (613) 345-1990.

Gala to Benefit Trumpeter Swans

As Cat Tales goes to press, Brockville is gearing up for a unique and exciting fundraiser to benefit the Trumpeter Swans. Jane Yaeger, a local artist and dedicated volunteer has organized a benefit called *A Voyage of Beauty*, which will be

held on December 8 at Fulford Mansion.

During the day, until 4:00 p.m., people will bid on silent auction items, tour the mansion and enjoy music and Christmas goodies. A black tie evening gala begins at 6:00 p.m. The gala features gourmet food, a silent art auction, music and dancing. Half the proceeds from the silent art auction will be directed to the Trumpeter Swans at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.

The CRCA (and the swans) would like to thank Jane Yaeger for her hard work and dedication. We'll have a full report on the event in the Spring/Summer edition of Cat Tales.

Merry Christmas



from the Staff & Members of the

**Cataraqui Region
Conservation Authority**

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