



CAT TALES

WINTER 2004 ISSUE

In This Issue

Welcome to winter. We have had an active fall and we're getting ready for lots of winter and spring activities, including some special anniversary celebrations.

- The CRCA turns 40 this year! More about this on page 1 and in What's Happening on pages 6 and 7.
- Water management is one of the CRCA's main programs. The Western Regional Groundwater Study is nearly complete. More on page 3.
- Look for an update on water levels on page 4 and about the importance of testing your well on page 2.
- We're working on our dams and structures. See page 4. We're continuing our study of Millhaven Creek. More on page 10.
- Have you always wondered what benthic invertebrates are? Me too! Find out on page 8.
- Stewardship and environmental improvements are also an important aspect of our work. Read about the Wilton Creek Partnership on page 4, fish habitat enhancements and forestry improvements by the Friends of Lemoine Point on page 9.
- We also help people to learn more about their natural environment. We're hosting an Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop for contractors on April 7 (see page 4). We're working with local post-secondary students (see page 5). And don't forget our terrific conservation education programs. See page 12.
- Plus our regular Creature Feature, Cataraqui Conservation Foundation News and plenty more!

CRCA Reaches an Important Milestone

The CRCA is celebrating its 40th birthday this year. It is an important time to reflect on our history and our accomplishments.

To establish the CRCA, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Committee worked with local municipalities to develop a natural resource management program based on local needs. The CRCA's original goals were to:

- protect the area waterways to ensure adequate supplies of clean water for farm and city use
- develop and improve recreational areas establish forests on land unsuitable for agriculture
- provide interested farmers with assistance in many aspects of farm improvement
- preserve and increase wildlife
- restore and retain historic sites
- assist education in resources management and natural history.

In 1964, municipalities from Brockville to the Hay Bay area and north to the village of Newboro joined together to form the CRCA and work toward these common goals.

Much has been accomplished since that time. Perhaps the biggest accomplishment has been the acquisition of more than 4000 hectares (9883 acres) of conservation land. This includes facilities for recreation and access to the outdoors, such conservation areas, trails, boat ramps and water access points. It also



The CRCA's first project was the Broome-Runciman Dam in Brockville. Harvey Benton, Elizabethtown, Mayor John Broome, Brockville, and the Hon. James Auld, Minister of Tourism and Information officially opened the dam in June 1967.

includes lands which have been purchased for water management, forestry or environmental protection purposes.

We have also built a comprehensive water management and environmental planning program, planted well over one million trees and educated thousands of area school children about the natural environment.

In the early days, much of our work was done by volunteer board members, with a very small staff. As the organization grew and the program

expanded, so did our need for qualified staff to run our water management, forestry, environmental planning and education programs. The CRCA grew significantly during the 1970s.

Since the 1990s, the organization has actually gotten smaller. Provincial funding cutbacks required us to reduce our staff. Municipal amalgamations reduced the size of our governing board. Now we have only 18 full-time staff and 17 board members for a jurisdiction of more than 3500 square kilometres. How do we do our work? We work closely with our 11 member municipalities, government agencies, schools, community groups, environmental organizations and individuals.

Our 40th birthday is a time for us to celebrate our accomplishments with the members of our community. We hope that you will join with us in recognizing this milestone. Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for you to get to know us a little bit better. We will be holding our regular meetings in communities across our watershed. We plan to attend as many community events as we can and we will be having a number of events throughout the year.

Stay tuned and bookmark our web site (www.cataraquiregion.on.ca) so that you can keep up with our plans as they progress.

Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Founders

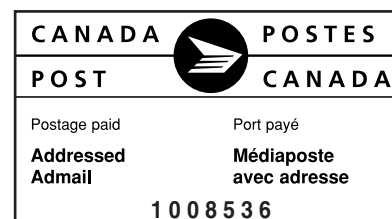
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**Cataraqui Region
Conservation Authority**
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Creature Feature

The Cardinal (*Richmondia Cardinalis*)

Cardinals are among North America's most popular songbirds. The male is a vibrant shade of red with a black patch around the head, while the female is a duller shade of rusty brown with lighter streaks along the wings and tail. While the male's vibrant colors help mark it for mating, the female's more muted tones help hide it from potential predators. Cardinals can be found in southeastern Canada, eastern United States, and in some southwestern states. The adult cardinal can grow up to between 20 and 23 centimetres in length.

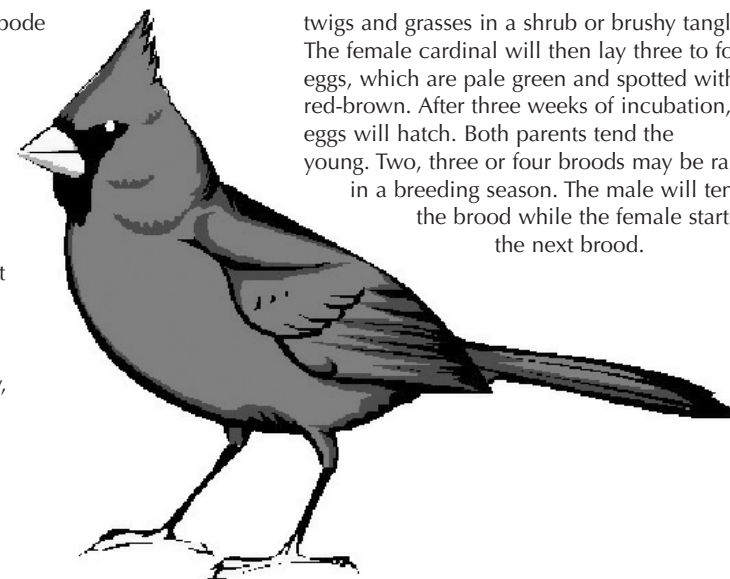
Cardinals are very eager to eat at any available bird feeder. They will visit your feeder starting early in the morning and they'll keep returning to it well into the evening. Cardinals prefer birdfeeders that are about three metres above the ground. They prefer a steady stationary

feeder to a hanging birdfeeder. The one trick to attracting cardinals is to have a feeder with a tray on the bottom since they are not very fond of eating from perches. Sunflower seeds are a favorite food for cardinals. They will usually sift through the entire mixture of seeds to get to every sunflower seed before starting in on the other seeds. They also enjoy white proso millet and safflower seeds when they can't get sunflower seeds.

Cardinals are not migratory birds. Although they often wander during the winter months searching for food and water, very rarely do they stray more than a few miles from their nest. Since they don't migrate, if you establish a habitat that is attractive to them, you can have a cardinal family reside in your yard or garden for many years. A birdhouse placed on a fence-post or in a tree near the edge of your lawn

makes a welcome abode for cardinals. Like most birds, Cardinals prefer to have a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees in the vicinity of their nesting area. They'll often build their nest in shrubs or bushes that face a meadow or lawn. Cardinal nests are very bulky, and tend to be built 3 metres from the ground or less.

The female builds a nest of small



twigs and grasses in a shrub or brushy tangle. The female cardinal will then lay three to four eggs, which are pale green and spotted with red-brown. After three weeks of incubation, the eggs will hatch. Both parents tend the young. Two, three or four broods may be raised in a breeding season. The male will tend the brood while the female starts the next brood.

Cat Tales is published three times per year by the



Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

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Kingston This Week

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CRCA Water Response Team Encourages Well Water Testing

During low water conditions, private wells can experience water quality problems. While the contaminants in the water may always be present, they can be concentrated during times of drought, and can have a greater impact. During times of high water (generally spring and fall), the specific possibility of bacterial contamination in private wells can be increased.

The CRCA's Water Response Team says it's a good idea to test your well water regularly. Bacterial testing should be done three times each year, after spring run-off, mid-June, and over the summer when the water levels are at their lowest. Other chemical testing should be done at least once each year.

The local Health Unit provides free bacterial testing for area residents, but a well free of bacteria does not necessarily mean it is free of other contaminants. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) administers a *Rural Water Quality Testing Program* which tests for other contaminants such as metals, minerals, gasoline, solvents, and pesticides.

The sampling procedure is easy. Just fill the provided bottle with tap water and send it away to be tested. The results are sent back to you with an explanation of what they

mean.

Having your well tested regularly, and maintaining an ongoing record of the water quality, is always a good practice.

If you would like more information please contact:

Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Health Unit

Phone: 549-1232 or (800)267-7875

Web:

http://www.healthunit.on.ca/factsheets/dp.cfm?action=Fact_Sheets_Details&ContentID=113

Leeds-Grenville Lanark Health Unit

Phone: (613)345-5685

Web:

http://www.healthunit.org/safe_wat/water/water.htm

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Phone: (800)668-3276

Web: <http://www.ofa.on.ca/water>

The OFA website also includes some information on how to care for your well during times of low water, as well as other best management practices.

Western Cataraqui Regional Groundwater Study Nearing Completion

The groundwater study being conducted in the municipalities of South Frontenac, Kingston, Loyalist and Greater Napanee is in its final stages. The study is being coordinated by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority.

Information about bedrock, soils, water quality, water quantity, land use and potential sources of contamination has been gathered and analyzed. We are currently developing a management plan that will result in recommendations for groundwater protection that could be incorporated into municipal zoning by-laws and official plans.

Groundwater Conditions

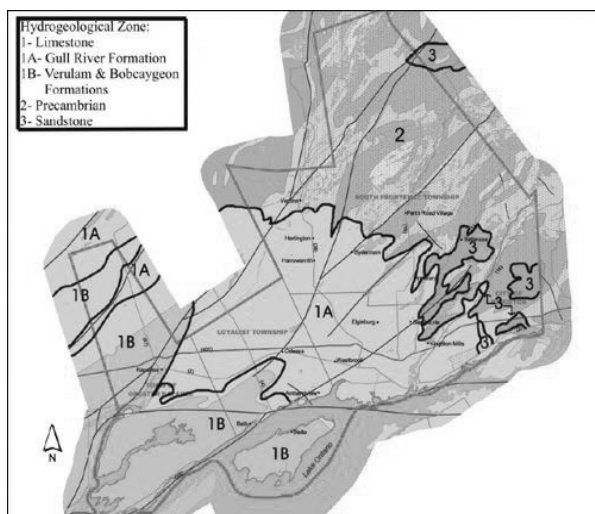
It was found that there are three distinct geologic divisions in the study area that, among other things, determine the quality and quantity of the groundwater. The geologic divisions are shown on the map.

Not surprisingly, most of the study area is limestone, which the Kingston area is known for. The limestone area is the most heavily populated part of the study area. Agriculture is the predominant land use. The groundwater in this area is susceptible to contamination and there is a greater chance of drilling a dry well.

There are two distinct limestone formations. Since the physical properties of the two limestone formations are so different, it was divided into the two zones that are shown on the map. Limestone Zone 1a is the middle of the study area. It contains the highest number of wells and has a concentration of older wells. The

natural groundwater quality is generally not as good as that of the Canadian Shield area.

Limestone Zone 1b is the most westerly part of the study area. It has the second most wells. Here, there is the greatest chance of drilling a dry well. Like Limestone Zone 1a, the natural groundwater quality is not as good as that of the Canadian Shield.



This map shows hydrogeological zones in the Western Cataraqui Region. Zone 1 are limestone bedrock areas. Zone 2 is Canadian Shield and Zone 3 is sandstone.

Zone 2 is the Canadian Shield area with its hard rocks, forests, fewer wells and greater quantity of water. Sandstone is the third Zone, which is much smaller than the other zones. It has similar

characteristics to the Canadian Shield. Zone 3 has the most available water and the quality is generally good, with some higher iron levels.

In general, within the study area:

- groundwater recharge is widespread
- one-third of wells tested have elevated levels of bacteria, especially those in the limestone areas
- groundwater generally flows to the south
- two-thirds of the region is hydrogeologically sensitive.

Public Information Sessions

In November and December 2003, four information sessions, one in each of the participating municipalities, for the groundwater study were completed. At these sessions, groundwater conditions were described and management plan options were presented. There was also a question and answer period where members of the general public learned more about groundwater. CRCA staff and our study consultants, Trow Engineering Inc., gathered valuable information from the public that, in addition to the input provided on questionnaires, will be considered when revising the study and developing the management plan.

Where to See the Study

The study will be completed in March 2004 and will be available for viewing in at local libraries, municipal offices and the CRCA administration office. Until then, please visit the study web site at www.trow-cataraquiregion.com for more information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is there more water in the Canadian Shield area than in the limestone zones?

Water is stored in the spaces or fractures between the rocks. Because these spaces are smaller and fewer in limestone regions, especially zone 1b, than in the granite of the Canadian Shield, there is less water available.

What is natural water quality?

Natural or ambient water quality is the quality of the water without human influence. Some parts of the limestone have salty or sulphur water while some of the smaller pockets of sandstone have higher concentrations of iron. The rocks themselves cause the water to become salty, or to contain minerals such as sulphur, by releasing ions (tiny particles) into the water.

Why is water quality generally better in the Canadian Shield?

This is because the granite the Shield is made of is very hard and does not break down and release ions as readily as the limestone and other softer rocks.

Why is the groundwater more susceptible to contamination in the limestone?

There is very little soil, the water table is close to the surface and there are cracks or crevices that allow potentially contaminated surface water runoff to flow directly to the groundwater.

What is recharge?

Recharge occurs when precipitation such as rain or snow soaks into the ground.

What is Karst?

It is a formation caused by water eroding limestone and can be anything from a sink hole to deep crevices in the rock.



CRCA Represented at 2003 Conference

Rob McRae, CRCA resource planner, and Sean Watt, CRCA watershed engineer, presented a paper at the Canadian Coastal

Conference at Queen's University in October 2003. The goal of the Conference was to bring together researchers and prac-

tioners who have an interest in coastlines, in order to share knowledge about natural processes, engineering, and management.

Rob and Sean's paper is called *Planning for Natural Hazards along the Shoreline of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River: Recent Experience in the Cataraqui Region of Southeastern Ontario*. Having considered flooding, erosion, and dynamic beach hazards, the authors prepared a number of recommendations for best practices. The paper was well received and it generated an interesting discussion.

The authors have submitted a similar abstract to the Canadian Water and Environment Conference, which will be hosted next year by the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers in Saskatoon. Way to go Rob and Sean!

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Wilton Creek Partnership Encourages Good Stewardship

Since this past summer, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) has been working with the Lennox and Addington Stewardship Council (LASC), the Wilton Creek Association and Ducks Unlimited, to encourage conservation efforts in the Wilton Creek watershed. The collective group is called the Wilton Creek Partnership (WCP). The LASC has directed some of its funds and Ducks Unlimited has secured a grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston to perform targeted stewardship work in the Wilton Creek area. This money will be used to help private landowners develop stewardship plans for their properties.

The goal of the project is to complete 20 stewardship plans that will address the objective of sound management of soil, air, water and wildlife. These plans will be geared to specific landowner goals, provide a site description, identify rehabilitation opportuni-



About 25 people attended the Wilton Creek Partnership's *Natural Connections Workshop* held on December 6. The Partnership hopes to encourage the preparation of stewardship plans.

ties, estimate project costs and link rehabilitation projects to available funding opportunities. Deciding whether or not to complete any of the components identified in the plan is the responsibility of the landowner, as is their decision to

have the plan completed.

A *Natural Connections* workshop was held on December 6 at the Wilton Women's Institute hall to encourage participation in the stewardship plans and to educate landowners about:

Landscape Ecology

- How everything is connected.

Wetlands

- Benefits and how to manage.

Woodlands

- Benefits, sustainable management, expansion, appreciation.

Streams

- Discover how to protect and enhance this critical system.

There was also a brief and chilly site tour where attendees learned about tree identification, woodland succession, wetland nutrient cycles and stream dynamics. About 25 area residents attended the workshop and some have already expressed interest in preparing a

stewardship plan. If you live in the Wilton Creek area and are interested in having a qualified person help you prepare a free plan to get the most out of your property, please call 531-5733.

If more than 20 landowners are interested in the project, the Wilton Creek Partnership will select, based on preset criteria, those landowners with properties viewed as more critical to maintaining and improving the ecological health of the watershed.

It is hoped that the work will raise awareness of a variety of conservation issues and encourage participation in available grant programs the CRCA and others deliver. The proposed stewardship plan process is similar to that of the Environmental Farm Plans. The Partnership also serves as a pilot project to assess different ways in encouraging landowner participation in the stewardship of our natural environments on a watershed basis.

Workshops for Shoreline Landowners, Contractors and Realtors

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, with funding support from the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston, will be hosting a Sediment and Erosion Control workshop for contractors on **April 7, 2004**. The intent of the workshop is to improve the implementation of sediment and erosion control measures in the Cataraqui Region watershed.

When erosion occurs, soil sediments are washed into lakes and streams reducing water quality and harming aquatic habitats. With the continued development of shorelines, there is a need to preserve and protect our aquatic resources by reducing sediments that result from erosion.

The workshop will offer a friendly environment to discuss shoreline development issues and problems and to teach some of the commonly used sediment and erosion control techniques.

It is important to control erosion and sediments, particularly during construction. It is generally less expensive, both financially and environmentally, to use proper techniques during construction rather than try to clean up or restore sites after construction.

The CRCA wants to work with builders and contractors to help protect the environment. By influencing and altering the activities that take place along the shoreline, we can reduce the



impacts on the environment and foster a healthy and responsible community. After all, we don't want to destroy the very habitat that attracted us to

build along the shoreline in the first place!

Successful Shoreline Workshop Held in the Fall

The CRCA has already held the first in a series of shoreline workshop. The workshops on shoreline development issues were developed to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining a natural shoreline.

The first session held October 9, 2003 was intended to assist contractors in their design and construction of environmentally friendly structures. The presenters stressed the need to maintain the natural characteristics of the shoreline while providing adequate access and use of the land. The second session was an open house and lecture-based workshop that allowed individual landowners and the community to meet the agencies responsible for the protection and regulation of shorelines. Slide presentations highlighted the natural features that are often taken for granted. Workshop participants left with a greater appreciation for their land and its aquatic resources.

The final workshop session is being developed with the support of the Kingston Area Real Estate Association for local real estate professionals.

The CRCA would like to thank the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston for their financial support, as well as Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ministry of Natural Resources, Canadian Coast Guard, and Parks Canada for their participation with the workshop series.

If you would like more information about the workshops, please call Tom Beaubiah, CRCA biologist at (613) 546-4228 ext. 240.

The Ups and Downs of 2003 Water Levels

When we last left our discussion of water levels, things were looking good. Levels had been improving, but the possibility of another drop was looming if a few weeks of minimal rain were experienced. That was in early August. Since then, there were a worrisome few weeks when levels were falling, but this year seemed typical of normal years, rather than lower than ever before. Starting in September, and continuing through October, and November, the Cataraqui Region has been experiencing quite regular rain (much more than normal amounts for October and November). In fact, there were some times when the worry was not for low water levels and drought, but high water levels and flooding!

The current water levels in the creeks appear to be slightly higher than normal for this time of year, but are continuing to fall when the rain lets up, and should be normal through the winter and into the spring. The long-term Environment Canada forecast predicts normal to below normal precipitation for the winter, with normal temperatures, and below normal temperature and precipitation for the spring.

Inland lake levels were reasonably normal for most of the summer and fall, but with the rain through the fall months, many lakes are much higher than normal for this time of year. Area water managers are trying to bring levels down, but the cold weather is fast approaching and stable water levels may not occur before freeze-up. This could cause **unstable** and **unsafe ice** throughout the winter.

Lake Ontario levels are above average for this time of the year, and are expected to stay above or close to normal into next year.

The groundwater levels across the region would be expected to be normal to high, given the precipitation this fall, and the observations of water ponding in fields across the region. The CRCA Provincial Groundwater Monitoring Network wells would confirm this, as they have all been rising since September, and are generally higher than last fall.

Overall, water levels throughout the Cataraqui Region appear to be in good shape, and should remain that way into the spring of 2004.

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CRCA and HRDC Create Ten New Jobs

In fall 2003, the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, in cooperation with the government of Canada, initiated a *Job Creation Partnership* (JCP) program. JCP programs support the creation of meaningful work opportunities for unemployed individuals in activities that help develop the community and the local economy.

Funding for the program is provided by Human Resources Development Canada. This federal funding provided resources to the CRCA to hire ten full-time participants for nine months, from December 2003 to August 2004. The program participants are working on fundraising, marketing, communication and educational projects, and on upgrading and maintaining the conservation area facilities.

A Park Planner has been hired to assist the CRCA and its supporting partners with a range of park planning and design services. He will be developing conceptual designs for recreation oriented facilities in CRCA's conservation areas, including trail systems, our maple syrup demonstration area, park entrances and boat launches. The Park Planner will also review existing park master plans, make recommendations where appropriate, gather background data and help with preparation

of future park master plans.

A team of five field workers will be working on a variety of construction and renovation projects in the CRCA's conservation areas. They will build and renovate conservation area facilities ranging from docks to a water distribution system. They will also participate on upgrading of existing trail systems and on an expansion of the sugar bush at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

Two participants will assist CRCA with communications and marketing. Specific duties will include researching, designing and developing brochures, trail booklets, newsletters, web page updates, displays and news releases. Participants will also be in charge of advertising and organizing of various recreational, educational, promotional and fundraising events. With these additional employees, the CRCA will be able to enhance our public relations, marketing and sponsorship programs.

The Fundraiser will assist the CRCA and Cataraqui Conservation Foundation on raising funds for the Authority's projects and programs. Specific duties of the Fundraiser

include defining targets, designing campaigns and assisting with their implementation, organizing and attending community events and promoting the conservation authority and its fundraising activities.

Also, a Geomatics Technician comes to us to work on development of a document management system that is focused on the Authority's properties.

The objective of the JCP program is to provide unemployed, eligible individuals with work experience which can lead to an on-going employment. The project is designed to provide hands-on work experience for unemployed participants who are job ready, with opportunities to maintain or enhance their skills, enabling them to increase their chances to successfully integrate into the labour market, while making a valuable contribution to the community.

We trust that the present JCP program will enable the participants to gain a valuable experience that will help them in finding a permanent employment. At the same time, the project activities will help the CRCA to complete additional work in support of its goals and objectives.

CRCA Working With Local University and College

The CRCA is fortunate to have the resources of two universities and one community college within our watershed. At the present time, we are working with Queen's University and St. Lawrence College on two different projects which will benefit the CRCA and the students who are involved with the projects.

Queen's Students Study Role of the CRCA in Nature Appreciation and Outdoor Recreation

For a second year, graduate students at the Queen's University School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) have worked with the CRCA to help us plan for the future health of the Cataraqui Region. Under the supervision of Dr. John Andrew, a group of ten students looked at the role of the CRCA in providing opportunities for nature appreciation and outdoor recreation. They also considered existing and future (year 2021) demand for such activities, and the function of our properties to help meet this demand.

A field visit in September introduced the group to part of our network of conservation areas, boat ramps, water access points, trails, and other open space lands. The students later interviewed individuals from across the region and elsewhere, and considered population and tourism data and parks planning theory before making their recommendations. The research was conducted in the context of the School's Environmental/Social Project Course, for which the students act as a consulting team to explore a planning question.

The students found that Conservation Authorities have an established and valid role in providing day-use access to open space on a regional scale, which complements the roles of municipalities and the provincial government. They found that the existing supply of accessible open space in the Cataraqui Region meets present demand as well as the anticipated increase in population and tourism visits by 2021. It was noted that the aging trend of



Students from the Queen's School of Urban and Regional Planning worked with CRCA resource planner, Rob McRae (centre) on a study of the CRCA's present and future role in regional recreation.

our population will result in the need for the CRCA to tailor our facilities and programs to the needs of older visitors, who are expected to continue to enjoy our properties. While the group indicated that new conservation areas will not be required prior to 2021, they did prepare a series of recommendations for improving the quality of our existing properties and programs.

The project course is an example of how the CRCA can work effectively with local educational institutions to conduct research about conservation, and to increase our knowledge about the future of the Cataraqui Region. The students will present their findings to the CRCA at our Annual General Meeting in January.

St. Lawrence College Students Preparing a CRCA Video

On a similar note, the CRCA is working closely with a group of St. Lawrence College Marketing students to prepare a promotional

video. The video, which is scheduled to be completed in May 2004, will provide a general overview of the CRCA and our programs. Watch for more information in our Spring-Summer issue.

Welcome Christine and Leanne

This past September, Christine O'Malley joined the CRCA as our environmental planner for a period of one year. Christine is a graduate of the University of Guelph programs in agriculture and rural planning, and was the recipient of the 2003 President's Scholarship from the Canadian Institute of Planners. She has assumed Andrew Marshall's duties during his travels to Australia, including the review of planning applications in the east and north areas of the Cataraqui Region.

For planning applications, Christine has the lead in the municipalities of Athens, Brockville, Elizabethtown-Kitley, South Frontenac, Gananoque, Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Rideau Lakes and Front of Yonge. Rob McRae takes care of planning applications in Kingston, Loyalist and Greater Napanee.

We also welcomed Leanne Fletcher in May 2003. She is our accounting assistant/receptionist for a one-year period while Laura Dietrich is on maternity leave. If you have called or visited our office lately, Leanne is the friendly face at the front desk and the friendly voice on the telephone.



Winter Calendar 2004

What's Happening

Celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority by keeping 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 and events 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 Saturday and Sunday in January and February from Noon to 3:00 p.m. (weather permitting).

Winter Fun Day

Saturday, January 24
(8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.)

9:00 a.m. - Cross-country Ski Loppet

10:30 a.m. - Dog Sled Races

Noon to 1:00 p.m. - Inuit Games for Children

You won't want to miss our second annual Winter Fun Day at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area! In addition to dog sled races by the Stormont and Glengarry Kennel Association and a cross-



country ski loppet hosted by the Triangle Cross Country Ski Club, you can enjoy a variety of winter activities all day long.



Skate from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on the pond. Evening skating will be hosted by the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. Bring your skis and ski the trails. There will also be snowshoe rentals for children available at the Nature Centre. Children can also take part in Inuit games led by Environmental Connections.



Displays from different community groups and a ski waxing demonstration by the Triangle Cross Country Ski Club will be contained in a heated exhibit tent. You can also buy tickets from Brock Air Services to take a 30 or 45 minute flight from the Brockville Airport. (Tickets must be purchased in advance if you wish to fly on the Winter Fun Day. Call (613) 345-1990 for more information.)

A barbecue lunch and refreshments will be available at the Nature Centre. The admission 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. Proceeds from the event will go to the Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program and improvements to the Nature Centre.

Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area

Try out a new winter sport! 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

Cross-country Ski Lessons

Learn how to ski or improve your technique.

Cross-country ski lessons are offered on Saturdays from January 3 to February 28, 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

Equipment Rentals

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

Ice Rink Rental

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

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Winter Adventure

Thursday, January 15

10:30 a.m.

Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Outdoor Centre for a winter walk or, if there is enough snow, we'll go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Dress for the weather and bring a brown bag lunch for afterwards.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet

Sunday, January 18

Pre-register for each even 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 Sunday, February 16).

Mid-Winter Celebration

Sunday, January 25

(1:00 - 4:00 p.m.)

Mid-winter is a traditional time for the aboriginal people to celebrate their community. Join in the celebrations at the Outdoor Centre with Eartha from the Native Studies Centre at St. Lawrence College. There will be drumming, corn soup and other activities.

Winter Sports P.A. Day

Friday, January 30

(8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

Ages 6 to 11

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, and snowshoeing through the fields, forest, and wetland areas of Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. 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. The program will run regardless of weather, we have alternate plans for interactive games and activities, if there is not enough snow. Cost is \$30.00 per child and you must pre-register. Space is limited for this popular program, so register early. For more information call 546-4228 ext. 251. Drop-off begins at 8:30 a.m. and pick is at 4:30 p.m.

Fireside Talent Night, Evening Skate and Owl Prowl

Friday, January 30

(7:00 to 9:00 p.m.)

If you enjoy walking in the woods in the winter and you are curious about owls, come out for our family owl prowl beginning at 7:00 p.m.. You can also try out our beautiful natural ice rink for an evening skate.

After your winter adventures warm up in the West Hall during our Fireside Talent Night. You still have a chance to share your talents in a comfortable, relaxed and fun atmosphere. Sit by the fireside with a hot chocolate or coffee and enjoy the performances of your friends, family, and fellow community members. All ages are welcome. If you play the guitar, sing, keyboard, write poetry, tell stories, or simply enjoy being a part of a supportive and easygoing audience then the Fireside Talent Night is for you! The regular entry fee applies to entertainers and spectators alike.

Hike the High Arctic

Monday, February 2

(7:00 to 9:00 p.m.)

All past, present and prospective members of the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation are invited to attend this presentation by Peck Peckover, a long-time Foundation member. Peck will present a slide show and talk about his trip last summer to Ellesmere Island

as a member of a small group of ardent hikers. Following his presentation, Board Members will be available to discuss some of the Foundation's recent activities. Light refreshments will be available. Admission fees are by donation.

Winter Watercolour Painting Workshop

Sunday, February 8

(11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

Join artist Marta Scythes for a watercolour

painting workshop to remember. Marta is a well known local artist and an excellent art instructor. Learn how to work with watercolour or fine tune some of your own painting skills. You will leave with a couple of successful paintings. You must register in advance by calling 546-4228 ext. 221. The cost is \$40.00 per person plus materials. (A materials list will be provided when you register.)



Brass Pub Limestone Classic Shiny Hockey Tournament

Friday, February 13

(2:00 to 6:00 p.m.)

Saturday, February 14

(10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Bring the whole family out to enjoy watching a Canadian classic — shiny hockey! The Brass

Opening 2004

Winter Calendar 2004

Pub has organized a tournament in support of a local charity and you're welcome to watch and enjoy. If you would like more information about the tournament, please call Jibin Joseph at 544-8334 or 547-5553 ext. 402. Please note that the skating rink will not be open to the public during the tournament.

Valentine's Lantern Snowshoe Hike & Evening Skate

Saturday, February 14
(7:00 to 9:00 p.m.)

The Lantern Snowshoe Hike will start off at the Outdoor Centre at 7:00 p.m. with an evening journey through marsh, field and forests and end with a warm drink by the fireside in the West Hall. Come out with your sweetheart or bring the family for a lovely Valentine's evening of either skating or snowshoeing or both.



Brown Bag Seniors' Program Winter Wonderland

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

Enjoy all the wonders that winter has to offer! Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Outdoor Centre for a winter walk or, if there is enough snow, we'll go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Dress for the weather and bring a brown bag lunch for afterwards.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet (Alternate Date)

Sunday, February 22

This will be our alternate ski loppet date if the weather is inclement for the ski loppet on January 18. For details, see the January 18 listing.

Fireside Talent Night and Evening Skate

Friday, February 27
(7:00 - 9:00 p.m.)

You still have a chance to share your talents in a comfortable, relaxed and fun atmosphere. Sit by the fireside with a hot chocolate or coffee and enjoy the performances of your friends, family, and fellow community members. All ages are welcome. If you play the guitar, sing, keyboard, write poetry, tell stories, or simply enjoy being a part of a supportive and easygoing audience then the Fireside Talent Night is for you! The regular entry fee applies to entertainers and spectators alike.

Maple Madness

March 13 to 21
(March Break), March 27 & 28, April 3 & 4
(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. Check it out!

Pancake Eating Contest

Saturday, March 13

So you think you can eat a lot of pancakes? Enter a team in our pancake eating contest and help raise funds for improvements to the sugar bush facilities. Details and entry forms coming soon to our web site at www.cataraquiregion.on.ca.

Music and Guided Tours in the Maples

Sunday, March 14

(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Tours 2:00 p.m. - Pipers)

Join us back in the sugar bush for guided tours. Learn how maple syrup was made in the past and how we make it now. We will also have a special guest appearance by members of the Rob Roy Pipers back in the sugar bush, adding a little Celtic flavour to our celebrations.



French Canadian Heritage Day

Monday, March 15

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

Sirop d'Érable is an important part of French Canadian culture! Join the education staff and special guests of different ages for special presentations at the Outdoor Centre to learn French Canadian songs, dances and vocabulary.

Puppet Shows

Tuesday, March 16

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

Start your visit off at the Outdoor Centre with the story of the sugar bush as told by our puppet friends. These shows are educational and entertaining. Be sure to join us at the scheduled times and dates offered.

St. Patrick's Day Guided Tours

Wednesday, March 17

(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

Wear green and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with us! Guided tours of the sugar bush are featured today.

Puppet Shows

Thursday, March 18 (see March 16)

Guided Tours

Friday, March 19

(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

Join us back in the sugar bush for guided tours. Learn how maple syrup was made in the past and how we make it now.

Cataraqi Conservation Foundation Bake Sale

Saturday, March 20

Pancakes and maple syrup not sweet enough?

The Cataraqi Conservation Foundation is hosting a bake sale at the Outdoor Centre. There will be lots of tempting treats available to buy and take home or to enjoy here.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 21 (see March 19)

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Maple Syrup Time

Thursday, March 25

(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 treat of pancakes and maple syrup (extra cost) and then hike back. Come enjoy the spring at the sugar bush. Meet at the Little Cataraqi Creek Outdoor Centre. Dress for the weather and bring drinking water.

Sweet Water Celebration

Saturday, March 27

Maple trees and the "sweet water" that they produce have a special significance in aboriginal culture. Eartha from the Native Studies Centre at St. Lawrence College and other community members will be on hand for a sweet water celebration and demonstration.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 28 (see March 19)

Olde Thyme Sugar Bush Chores

Saturday, April 3

Today children can try their hand at some "olde thyme" sugar bush chores like emptying sap buckets, log sawing, tapping trees and making butter for pancakes.



Guided Tours

Sunday, April 4 (see March 19)

Polish Egg Decorating

Sunday, April 4

(1:00 - 5:00 p.m.)

Lisa Morriss-Andrews will be teaching the intricate art of Polish egg decorating just in time for Easter. Pre-register for this workshop at the Outdoor Centre or the CRCA Administration Office. Cost is \$3.00 per person, which includes all supplies. This program is recommended for ages 12 and up.

Fun Egg Dip and Stick Decorating

Saturday, April 10 & Sunday, April 11

(11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

In celebration of Easter, bring your children out to Little Cataraqi Creek to decorate eggs. We'll

be using dye, stickers and markers to decorate eggs. After your decorating is done, enjoy a spring hike on the trails.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Springtime in the Woods

Thursday, April 15
(10:30 a.m.)

Join us for an early spring visit to the woods. We hope the frogs will be singing. Meet at the Little Cataraqi Creek Outdoor Centre. Dress for the weather. Bring your brown bag lunch and drinking water and come out and enjoy spring.

Birds Returning

Sunday, April 18
(2:00 p.m.)

Kick off National Wildlife Week with the Kingston Field Naturalists leading a birding hike at Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area.

Earth Day Open House

Sunday, April 25

(1:00 - 4:00 p.m.)

In celebration of Earth Day and our 40th Anniversary, the CRCA is hosting an Open House at the Little Cataraqi Creek Outdoor Centre. Learn about the CRCA, local environmental groups and renewable energy at this community open house. Admission to Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area is free for today.

West Nile Virus

Sunday, May 2 (2:00 p.m.)

Join Tom Beaubiah, the Cataraqi Region Conservation Authority's biologist for an informative presentation on West Nile Virus. Find out how to protect yourself this summer and separate fact from fiction about the virus.

Frog Night Hike

Friday, May 7

(7:00 - 8:00 p.m.)

Tom Marsh is back by popular demand for our second annual Frog Night Hike. Bring your friends and family to this fun and educational frog identification walk. We'll be identifying species of frogs by their calls as we walk around the wetlands.

Canoe Fun Day

Sunday, May 16 (Noon to 4:00 p.m.)

Come out and spend an afternoon paddling on the reservoir at Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area.

Try out canoes and kayaks courtesy of the Cataraqi Region Conservation Authority, Kingston Outfitters and the Cataraqi Canoe Club. Regular conservation area admission fees apply, but there will be no charge for canoe rentals.



CRCA Forestry Programs Helping to Green Up the Watershed

fall is always a busy time for the CRCA's forestry program. The winter months are spent preparing for spring planting. Here's what we have been working on.

Potted Tree Sales

The first annual potted tree sale fundraising initiative was very successful. During the spring of 2003, staff and three co-op students from Bayridge Secondary School potted around 600



Potted tree and shrub stock were grown over the summer in a fenced compound at the CRCA Workshop. The trees were sold in the fall of 2003, raising over \$4000 for our conservation services program.

seedlings into one to two litre pots, filled with garden mix soil that was donated by Earthworx on Counter Street in Kingston. The species that were grown included White pine, White spruce, Norway spruce, White cedar, Tamarack, Black walnut, Poplar, Silky dogwood and Nannyberry.

The seedlings were fertilized and watered, grown within a small compound (to keep the deer out) erected beside the workshop at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. They were pampered throughout the course of the season until early fall 2003.

Potted trees were then advertised and sold at the Outdoor Centre in late September and early October. Trees were sold by volunteers at a cost of \$10.00 each. A total of 415 trees were sold, which raised over \$4,000.00 for the CRCA's conservation services programs. Some of those funds helped to support the Municipal Assistance Large Stock planting program that also took place in the fall.

Staff expect to continue with the potted tree initiative next fall; offering an even larger variety of tree and shrub species. We are also considering expanding the program to the eastern portion of our watershed, near Brockville.

Municipal Assistance Large Stock Planting Program

This program was reinstated in the fall of 2003. Just under 120 caliper-sized deciduous trees and whip stock were ordered and delivered by the CRCA to assist our municipal partners and schools to help green their communities. This program has been a popular part of our conservation services offered since 1995, with a brief hiatus during 2000 and 2001, when staff of the

CRCA were very busy with ice storm recovery operations and planting projects.

During the fall, four member municipalities, two stewardship councils, the Friends of Lemoine Point and the Society for Conservation Biology (Queen's University) all participated in this program. The species that were planted included Sugar maple, Red maple, White ash, Green ash, White birch, Basswood, Ironwood, Black cherry, and Shagbark hickory.

Stock ranged in size from 125 cm to 300 cm tall some potted and some balled and burlapped. Tree stakes and rodent guards were included, along with delivery, for a price of \$35.00 to \$55.00, depending on the size of stock.

The goal of the program is to involve community volunteers to assist with the greening of the local environment. CRCA staff have been successful in securing over \$35,000.00 since 1995 to assist with the planting of over 1,800 trees in communities and schoolgrounds throughout the watershed. Staff plan to continue with this program in 2004 and beyond.

Community Greening Initiative for Area Schools

The CRCA began a new program in 2002 to assist local schools to raise funds while helping to green their communities. The CRCA uses the funds raised through this initiative to help support its conservation services programs, while schools raise funds to support library book purchases, schoolyard greening, equipment purchases or other items needed by the school.

The program is quite simple. The CRCA offers seedling container stock to the schools and the school sells them through their student body. The program is called the *Community Greening Initiative* because the end result is that these trees will be planted throughout their communities! This is what we call a "win-win-win" situation!

Local schools were sent information about this program in early October 2003 with a deadline

to apply for trees of January 15, 2004. There is a minimum of 250 seedlings, with a choice of White pine and White spruce species available. The CRCA sells them to the school for \$0.50 each, while suggesting that the schools in turn sell them for at least \$1.00 each. One school in 2003 raised over \$700.00 through this program. They plan to purchase outdoor benches for their school grounds with the money raised by their tree sales.

Reforestation Assistance Program

Staff are busy preparing for the spring 2004 tree planting season. The CRCA has an order of around 80,000 seedlings for next spring, of which are comprised a large list of tree and shrub species. Over 20 species are available, but they are going fast!

The CRCA offers both tree planting assistance as well as a source of tree seedlings for those who wish to plant their own, called over-the-counter sales. Prices for the tree stock ranges from \$0.31 to \$0.48 each, depending on species. Last year, over 22,000 trees were planted on 12 properties by the CRCA through various programs, while another 52,000 seedlings were sold to over 70 landowners through our over-the-counter sales. From 1992 to the present, the CRCA has distributed just under 1,040,000 seedlings.

There is still plenty of time to order trees for the spring 2004 planting, however staff encourage that residents consider sooner, rather than later, to place an order for trees. Even though it may seem a long time before April 2004 when the trees arrive, the trees are going very quickly now, with limited species available.

You may also be eligible for funding grants through a variety of programs to help you plant the trees on your property, depending on where you live and the characteristics of your site. Call Rick Knapton, CRCA forestry technician at (613) 546-4228 ext. 247 or (613) 389-3651 for more information.

A tree order form is available on our website (www.cataraquiregion.on.ca), but staff suggest that you call for the latest species updates as they are changing constantly!

Benthic Invertebrate Monitoring Program Begins

Just what are benthic invertebrates and why are they important? Benthic invertebrates are those tiny creatures that live in the bottom sediments of lakes and streams. They are important because they are a good indicator of water quality. Typically you will find more creatures, and a more diverse sample of creatures in areas with better water quality.

As part of the Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network (PWQMN) and the Millhaven Creek Instream Flow Requirement Pilot Project, CRCA summer students began benthic invertebrate sampling at some sites this past year.

Equipment was provided by the Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network (EMAN), the Ministry of Environment, as well as purchased by the

CRCA through the Millhaven Creek Pilot Project funding.

Unfortunately, our time lines were constrained by funding, equipment receipt, and summer student availability, and we were not able to sample quite as many sites as we had originally planned. There were only nine sample sites in 2003, but in 2004 we plan to sample additional sites multiple times.

This work is being done across the whole province. Eventually, it will be included in a database of sites. One of the goals for the network is to have a set of reference sites that have a good benthic community that can be used as a comparison or an ideal for sites that have deteriorated.

The CRCA's water quality monitoring program continues to monitor water chemistry, but the addition of benthic monitoring will provide additional information on the water quality of the region.



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CRCA Water Control Structure Maintenance

In the last *Cat Tales*, we told you about our plans to undertake a Water Control Structure Assessment and Maintenance project for CRCA dams and structures.

Since that time, the project has progressed and a report entitled *Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Safety and Maintenance Assessment Study for Water Control Structures* was prepared by Trow Associates. This study identified various maintenance needs and issues at the ten CRCA water control structures. This maintenance work, along with other items that had previously been identified, has begun, and is expected to continue to the end of March 2004. The CRCA is hoping to spend upwards of \$150,000 on major maintenance and studies under this project. Fifty per cent of the money is provided by the province, and 50 per cent by the local municipalities.

This project covers large maintenance works such as replacement of old stop logs, erosion repairs, sediment cleanouts, and worker and public safety improvements.

The work is the result of a four-year major maintenance plan prepared by CRCA staff in 2002, and a one year funding source provided by the provincial Superbuild fund.



Regular maintenance of dams, such as Sydenham Dam (above) are necessary to maintain the safety and integrity of the structures. The CRCA is in the middle of a major water control structure maintenance program.

Buells Creek Fish Habitat Enhancement Project

Over the last few years, the Leeds County Stewardship Council have been working on a project to restore and enhance Buells and Butlers Creeks. They have completed planting projects around the Buells Creek Detention Basin (Brockville Memorial Centre), Baker Park, and Rotary Park. The CRCA has participated in this work in the past, providing equipment and staff.

This year, the group has been putting together an enhancement project in the lower portion of the creek. Over the winter, the creek channel between St. Paul Street and the River Walk Mill Restaurant will have large limestone blocks added to the sides of the channel to concentrate

the summer flows towards the centre of the channel, making the water deeper, as well as providing some refuge and rest areas for fish. In addition, the channel between King Street and St. Paul Street will have rock deflectors placed to encourage the channel to meander back and forth, and again provide refuge and rest areas for fish. The Committee, Stewardship Council and CRCA have combined their expertise to design and place the structures in the most beneficial places.

While this specific project is to be finished by March 2004, the restoration in general is planned to continue for years to come and will eventually cover the length of the creek.

Friends of Lemoine Point Focus on Restoring Forests

The Friends of Lemoine Point annual general meeting was held on November 26, 2003. There were brief reports of ongoing projects that including tree planting, Heritage Forest Project, Access Lemoine Point, garlic mustard removal, benches, Native Seed Nursery, and a presentation of "Where the Wild Things Are: restoring forests where you live" given by speaker Jennifer Clinesmith, MSc, from Guelph University.

Red Oak Plantation

2003 marks the fifth year for the Red Oak Plantation Project. So far 2300 seedlings have been planted, with 300 seedlings expected to be planted in April. This was carried out by the Friends and volunteers, assisted by a group of

Queen's students. Last summer there was some damage due to gypsy moths. In spring of 2004, the Friends will look at every existing seedling, map survivors and do maintenance on stakes, mats and shields. The information collected will be used to review the project's effectiveness and plan for future years.

Heritage Forest Project

The Friends of Lemoine Point completed planting at their second location near the farm fence in spring of 2003. In fall of 2003, they completed planting a third location on service road south of the woods. Work, both spring and fall, was carried out by 25 volunteers from Friends of Lemoine Point with refreshments donated by Tim Horton's. This year, over 150 native trees



Planting and restoring the native forests at Lemoine Point Conservation Area has been a major focus of The Friends of Lemoine Point's work.

the third location, connecting it to the existing forest. Survival at both location 1 and location 2 has been very good and response by passers-by has been very positive. Heritage Forest donations and other money raised by the Friends of Lemoine Point cover the entire cost of the program, has been averaging about \$2500 per year.

Native Seed Nursery

A \$2,000 grant was received from the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston (CFGK) to help CRCA and Friends of Lemoine Point to establish a half acre plant nursery at the Lemoine Point Conservation Area. The project is expected to cost \$13,000 to get up and running with the initial \$2,000 grant from CFGK. The intent is to collect seed and cuttings from native plant materials that exist at Lemoine Point, and grow them in the nursery. The plants will then be used for such projects as the Heritage Forest Program, the Red Oak Restoration Program and other community restoration type projects. This project will also include training on proper seed forecasting and collection techniques.

Friends Web Site

The Friends of Lemoine Point now have a presence on the web, thanks to the CRCA. Be sure to check out our website:

<http://www.cataraque-region.on.ca/lands/friendsoflemoine.htm>



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The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

The Friends of Mac Johnson have had a busy fall and are looking forward to the winter season.

Fall Open House and Tree Sale a Success

Over 25 young trees were removed from the tree nursery in October and several were sold at the Fall Open House on October 5 as a fundraiser. At the October meeting, the Friends group also approved a partnership with the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority and Land Stewardship Council in the Tree Nursery with Jack Henry as our representative. This will require a commitment of \$100 per year to restock with seedlings and also contribute volunteer time to maintain the nursery, from which we can obtain 25 trees each year to sell for fundraising. Also at the October meeting, an attraction of a guided canoe tour was added and proved to be a very successful day for attendance and activities for the family.

Fall Work Days

On October 24 and 25, 12 members of the Friends attended the Fall Work days over the two mornings. The main effort was to remove the vines from the entire length of the south fence, which was accomplished in approximately two hours.

Assistance was also provided to help replace the posts and a section of a fence that was recently damaged by a car. Garbage was removed from both south parking lots, the flowerbed at the Broome-Runciman sign was cleaned out, and the low branches and suckers were all trimmed on the maple trees in the southeast lot.

Volunteers

During the year, many volunteer hours were also spent by various members of the Friends on activities such as grooming the ski trails, assisting with the grass cutting, and road repairs (65 person hours), removing vines along the south fence and fall cleanup (28 hours), constructing and erecting



Dog sledding was a big hit at last year's Winter Fun Day at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, January 24.

the new Mac Johnson Wildlife Area sign at the south parking lot (50 hours), painting trail markers and trail maps (12 hours), installing signs and posts for the Community Watch Program (14 hours), planting trees and installing benches in DuPont area (26 hours), and picking up garbage and trimming the branches along the trails (18 hours).

DuPont Helps Out

The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area contacted the Maitland Site Benevolence Committee of DuPont on the possibility of obtaining a display board for their photos of activities. DuPont kindly donated two lovely Velcro type boards that they

have used at both the Spring and Fall Open House and in the 1000 Islands Mall on May 24 in association with the Environmental Connections display, and for a public display at St. Peter's Church hall on May 25 on Stewards of the Environment.

Publicity

The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area has received good publicity in both the St. Lawrence EMC and the Brockville Recorder and Times with not only the activities and meetings, but with also candid photos of the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. Thanks to Darcy Cheek, Roy Lewis, Megan Gillis, Mark Calder, and Steve Healy. As a result, 19 articles and pictures have appeared during the past year.

Winter Activities

Once again this winter, the Friends will be hosting skating parties at the rink at Mac Johnson every Saturday and Sunday from noon to 3:00 p.m. (weather permitting). Drop by for a visit and warm up with a hot chocolate after skating or skiing.

We are also hosting our second annual **Winter Fun Day on Saturday, January 24**. You won't want to miss the dog sledding, skating, skiing and other fun activities.

Improvements to Conservation Areas

Parrott's Bay Trail Work

The Loyalist Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation has raised funds and in-kind contributions for improvements to the Parrott's Bay Conservation Area. The trail from the main parking lot on the Loyalist Parkway to the south shore of the bay will receive gravel treatment to deal with accessibility issues. A look-out platform is to be installed at the end point of the trail overlooking the bay. Work has been initiated on the trail but completion of the trail and the platform will not be completed until sometime in 2004.



CRCA staff completed accessibility improvements to the washroom facilities at Lemoine Point Conservation Area in the fall of 2003.

improved and lengthened to reach the main washrooms. The washrooms have been remodeled as well to allow for wheelchair access. Improvements have also been made to one picnic area for easier access. New tables will be built shortly and should be available in the spring.

The Friends of Lemoine Point received funding from Healthy Community Fund in the amount of \$8,000. This will allow for additional trail

work to extend the accessibility trail from the washrooms back to the service road alongside the wetland. Construction should take place in the late spring of 2004.

Sugar Bush Improvements at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area

Trans Canada Pipeline has donated \$3,475 towards funding for Maple Madness improvements. These funds will be applied to gift shop roof, building renovations, stairs and interpretive trail upgrades.

Improving Accessibility at Lemoine Point Conservation Area



The CRCA completed Phase 1 of the Lemoine Point Accessibility Improvement project. The trail from the north parking lot has been

Millhaven Creek Pilot Project Continues

As mentioned in the summer 2003 issue of *Cat Tales*, the CRCA received funding in June from the Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE), through Conservation Ontario (CO), to conduct an Instream Flow Requirements Study on Millhaven Creek. This is one of a number of watershed management pilot projects the province has funded over the past two years.

The goal of this project is to establish a method for use across Ontario to determine how much water is needed in creeks to minimize effects to the environment.

The Millhaven Creek study is one of three being conducted concurrently across the province. The CRCA has gathered information about the environmental aspects of the creek (fish, flow, soil, rock, structures), as well as how the water is used by local residents. The first part of the study will be to determine the best way to esti-

mate what instream flow requirement are; the second part will be to estimate the instream flow requirement specifically on Millhaven Creek.

The CRCA started work in June, and finished the field season in November. You may have seen any number of staff out standing in the stream with a variety of gadgets strapped to them — current meters, sampling nets, survey equipment, and electrofishing units. We gathered a great deal of data that will prove useful for this project, as well as for future work.

In November and December 2003, the data was analyzed and report writing begun. The draft report for the Pilot Project is due at the end of 2003, with an expected final completion date of February 2004. However, there is hope that additional funding can be found which will enable the CRCA to continue with similar work in 2004.



81 Princess Street

Foundation News

Maple Madness

Members of the Foundation will be volunteering at Maple Madness in March as they have in previous years. This year we will be assisting at the Pancake Eating Contest to be held on Saturday, March 13. On March 20, Foundation members are hosting a bake sale at the Outdoor Centre. We plan to have some special treats for the children but their parents and other people who are young at heart won't be forgotten. You are invited to take home some tasty treats in support of our conservation efforts.

Coming Events

February 2 is an evening in which new and current members of the Foundation and friends are invited to explore the wonders of the Canadian Arctic in a photographic slide show and talk by F.L. (Peck) Peckover. In the summer of 2003, Peck and his daughter Joan Patterson, traveled to Ellesmere Island National Park and Resolute Bay for two weeks. Each day they and other members of their group hiked out from their base camp exploring areas around the camp. Entitled *Hiking the High Arctic*, viewers will be taken around this most northern of our national parks with its rugged beauty. It will be held at the Outdoor Centre from 7 to 9 p.m. and Foundation members will be warming things up following the show with cookies and cider. A freewill offering will be taken.

Forever Summer a Hit

Arlington's was a blaze of summer colours on Friday evening, November 14 for the Foundation's second annual Forever Summer dance and auction. Attendees joyfully pulled out everything from sundresses to summer slacks from their closets and forgot about the cold November wind blowing outside for a few hours. The always entertaining Alicia Gordon, acting as aucioneer, persuaded those in attendance to bid generously on items ranging from a one week vacation at a cottage site north of Kingston to a wonderful 16 foot fibre glass canoe complete with paddles. Silent auction items were also responded to generously as was a raffle for \$1000.00 cash in a brand new leather briefcase. While final figures are not completely tabulated the net profit is estimated at close to \$20,000. This is an increase of approximately \$3000.00 over the previous year. Thank you to all of our donors and sponsors who made the success of the event possible. A complete listing of donors and sponsors is provided on this page.

Thank you too to all the volunteers and the CRCA staff who worked diligently in the weeks leading up to the event and volunteered again on the evening to take tickets, sell raffle tickets, accept payment and the hundred and one things required. Thanks are also due to our DJ Liana Parr who enlivened the dance portion of the evening with great music and to Arlingtons for the delicious snacks.

The Foundation had previously agreed at their Board meeting to donate one third of the net profit from the evening towards the purchase of land at Parrott's Bay Conservation Area. This is in addition to the \$5000.00 from the Foundation's general funds which was given to acquire the 16 acres.

Parrott's Bay Conservation Area

In addition to making the donation for the purchase of the Parrott's Bay Conservation Area mentioned above, members of the Foundation undertook responsibility for issuing an appeal letter for the acquisition of the land. Close to 2000 letters were sent out in the first week of December requesting support either in 2003 or a pledge to be forwarded in 2004. Foundation members also hand delivered close to 60 letters to residents in the Parrott's

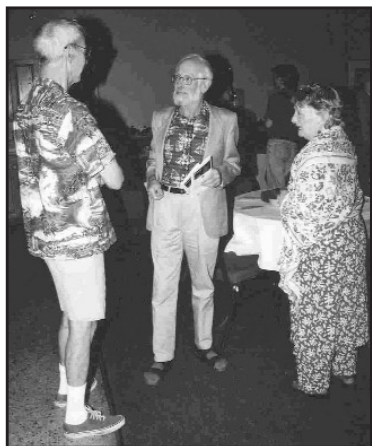
Bay immediate area.

Foundation members are interested in investigating if walks could be organized in the area in the spring. Parrott's Bay is regarded by the province as a regionally significant wetland.



Auctioneer Alicia Gordon helped the Foundation to raise around \$20,000 to assist the CRCA's education programs, the Outdoor Centre and the acquisition of additional land at Parrott's Bay Conservation Area.

Photos by Reg Aitken



Foundation director Watson Oglivie (left) chats with a couple attending the Forever Summer fundraiser.

Cataraqui Bay Marshlands Land Exchange

By the time you see this issue of *Cat Tales*, the CRCA-Llynlea land exchange should be complete. The property involved in the land exchange is located along the Little Cataraqui Creek just north of King Street West and west of the Cataraqui Golf and Country Club. The next step in the process is to look at the proposed improvements to the trailhead of the Rideau Trail located beside the affected property. Early in 2004, the Cataraqui Region Conservation

Authority will host a public information session to review and discuss proposed improvements to the trailhead. This will include items such as road access, parking, lighting and landscaping. Details about this information session are currently being arranged and more information will be available soon. Check the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority's web site at www.cataraquiregion.on.ca for updates or check your local newspapers for this upcoming event.

Forever Summer 2003 Donors

Thank you to everyone who contributed and everyone who attended.

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CRCA Education Programs Change with the Seasons

The CRCA's conservation education programs provided environmentally based and curriculum linked educational experiences to all ages this past fall. Students from local secondary schools such as Loyalist Collegiate and Vocational Institute, LaSalle Secondary School and Sydenham High School participated in the popular secondary school programs: *Instincts for Survival* and *Wetland Conservation*.



Wetland programs are becoming more popular with secondary and older elementary school students. Stana Luxford (right) CRCA education officer shows a group of grade 8 students how to use a dissolved oxygen meter.

Elementary students from the Limestone District School Board, Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, and private schools took part in a diversity of interactive conservation education programs that help to connect them closer to nature through their "head, heart, and hands". Students, teachers, parents participated in our new *Buried Soil Treasures* program. Our programs are always being adapted and revised to meet the growing needs of the community. The CRCA believes that instilling awe and respect for the natural environment today leads to a conservation ethic in decision-making for tomorrow.

The conservation education program staff are gearing up for an exciting winter filled with cross-country skiing and two new programs: the *Pioneer Snowshoe Excursion* and *Winter Trees and Weeds*. The staff are also looking forward to this year's Maple Madness and Spring Programs filled with sap buckets, pond dipping and much more!

If you haven't booked your class for a winter or spring education program, there's no time like the present. Detailed information about our programs is available on our web site www.cataraquiregion.on.ca. Or you can call Stana Luxford, CRCA education officer, at (613) 546-4228 ext. 251 for more information or to make a booking.

Winter Sports P.A. Day Program

Just in time for the school P.A. Day on **Friday, January 30**, the CRCA is offering a Winter Sports P.A. Day for six to 11 year-olds. Your children will have a day of winter adventure and fun including skiing, skating, sledding, snowshoeing all while enjoying nature in winter. The cost is \$30 per child and pre-registration is required.



Learning winter skills such as cross-country skiing is just one of many winter education programs that the CRCA has available.

The program will run regardless of the weather. If the snow and ice don't cooperate, we have alternative plans for interactive games and activities.

Drop off begins at 8:30 a.m. and the program runs until 4:30 p.m. Bring you lunch, snacks, drinks, sleds, skates and warm clothing. Space is limited, so be sure to register early.

Looking Ahead to Summer

Up and coming this summer is the new Nature Explorers Camp for 6 to 11 year olds that features theme weeks and two swimming adventure days at Gould Lake! The Wilderness Backpacking Experience for 12 to 14 and 14 to 16 year olds has new routes and skills and more adventures to share with returning and new campers.

Trumpeter Swan Update

The CRCA now has Trumpeter Swans at two of its conservation areas -- Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville and Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area in Kingston. We have been involved in the Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program since 1999, when we received a breeding pair of swans at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area (MJWA). A further 11 captive-bred swans were released at MJWA in 2000. Some of those swans have had cygnets and many continue to visit MJWA regularly. There are about 14 regular swans and up to 10 visitors that frequent the Wildlife Area.

In July 2003, 12 captive-bred Trumpeter Swans were released at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. The hope is that these swans will help to re-establish a wild population in the Kingston area. Ten of the 12 swans are still at Little Cataraqui Creek. One died and the body was returned to Aurora, headquarters for the Trumpeter Swan program, for post-mortem. The other decided to take a walk down Sir John A. Macdonald Boulevard. Lucky for him, a passing driver, who happens to work for the Metro Toronto Zoo, spotted this distressed swan and took him back to the zoo! He has since been released at a new location.



The Trumpeter Swans released at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area in the summer are staying close to home. Captive-bred Trumpeter Swans have large yellow wing tags, as shown on these birds.

The captive bred swans all have large yellow tags with numbers on their wings. If you spot one of them, we'd love to hear from you. Please call our office at (613) 546-4228 or e-mail Stefan Foerster at foerster@cataraquieregion.on.ca. If you spot a Trumpeter swan without a yellow tag, it's probably a wild swan.



The remaining ten swans are staying close to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. As long as they have access to open water, they can feed and take care of themselves. With portions of the creek remaining open and nearby Lake Ontario, we hope that they will be able to adapt to their new environment.

PEST ALERT Asian Long-horned Beetle

It seems that there are more and more invasive species affecting our lakes, rivers and forests. The Asian long-horned beetle is the latest pest imported to Canada from Asia, likely through wooden shipping containers.

The beetle's preferred food are maples and other hardwoods. Unfortunately, once they decide to take up residence, they kill the tree.

The Kingston Horticultural Society is sponsoring an information session on the Asian Long-horned Beetle on **Monday, January 26 at 7:30 p.m.** in Memorial Hall, Kingston City Hall. The guest speaker will be Stephen Clare of the **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)**. For more information about the beetle and what it looks like, please visit the CFIA web site at www.inspection.gc.ca.