



CAT TALES

WINTER 2006 ISSUE

In This Issue

Cat Tales brings you up to date on the activities of the CRCA during fall 2005 and our plans for winter and spring 2006.

A new master plan is in the works for Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville. Find out more on page 1.

More about other activities at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area on page 12.

Find out What's Happening on our winter-spring calendar of events on pages 6 and 7. Gaze at the stars. Skate on the rink. Strap on some snowshoes or enjoy the sweet taste of maple syrup in the sugar bush.

What's blue, noisy and flies around all over the place? Check out our Creature Feature on page 2.

The Clean Water Act is in the works. What does it mean and what will it do? See page 3. Also on page 3, the drought is over.

Conservation Authorities are in the process of updating our floodplain regulations. More about that on page 5.

The CRCA is back helping farmers to keep it green. Read about the Greencover Canada program on page 4.

An update on the natural heritage study and a new watershed perspective can be found on page 8.

Nuts are gathered together at Lemoine Point Conservation Area. More on page 9.

Sydenham dam sinks no more! Details on page 10.

The Cataraqui Conservation Foundation has had a busy fall. See page 11. Also on page 11, the CRCA is ready to assemble a new nature reserve at the Bayview Wetland.

Plus... meet our new staff, measuring water flows, bat man and more!



CRCA Environmental Planner Kyle Munro discusses the concepts with a visitor to the December 1 open house.

A brief summary follows of the three concepts:

Concept 1 - Status Quo/Maintenance; maintain existing resources and developed features as they are.

Concept 2 - Northlands Growth; education, stewardship, interpretation and passive recreation-based development activities are updated and expanded on north side.

Concept 3 - Southlands Growth; new development is focused on establishing facilities and infrastructure supporting environmental education, stewardship, interpretation and passive recreation-based activity at the south end of property. (Concept maps and descriptions are also available on the CRCA web site.)

Public reacts to new Mac Johnson concepts

Public response has been positive and comprehensive to a Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) invitation to comment on new planning concepts for Brockville's Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.

CRCA staff presented three master plan concepts at a December 1 open house called to elicit public comment.

"A master plan is a long-term plan that guides protection, improvement and use of the property for 20 years and beyond," explains CRCA General Manager Steve Knechtel who attended the event.

One concept ultimately will be modified to reflect public input and a new master plan will follow. The existing plan for the 526 ha site was prepared in 1983.

"Typical of many protected areas, Mac Johnson is stressed by adjacent land use and population growth," says Mr. Knechtel. "Demands on the property have changed greatly since the original plan was implemented."

Mac Johnson, known locally as the *Back Pond*, is located on the Brockville and Elizabethtown-Kitley Township boundary.

Because of its popularity, it is important for the public to help shape its future, says Mr. Knechtel.

Kyle Munro is the CRCA environmental planner who is developing the new plan.

"The next step in the process is to take all the comments and feedback and tabulate them so we can recognize what sort of items are repeated or identified," he says.

For the next step, municipal councils will be consulted.

"Hopefully by that point we'll have one or two very clear and distinct concepts," says Mr. Munro.

To date, more than 50 individuals or groups accepted the CRCA invitation to comment on the planning concepts.

"Eventually, what will emerge are specific projects to which we will attach a priority so when we get to that stage people will see clear planning on how we would like to proceed," says Mr. Munro.

He says he expects to have the public responses tabulated early in January. Meetings with municipal staff and municipal councils will follow.

Other stakeholders include: local pedestrians, snowmobilers, the humane society, utility companies with easements on the property and the CRCA operational staff.

Funding for the MJWA Master Plan was provided by the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation, the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area and the CRCA.



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Creature Feature

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

This boldly coloured bird is a showoff. What other conclusion can you draw about a blue jay vocalizing to draw attention with its harsh voice and aggressive manner.

Jays belong to the same family, *Corvidae*, as crows, ravens and magpies and as many as 100 related species. They are capable of a wide variety of calls, but their noisy "Jay! Jay Jay!" announces to all within earshot that a blue jay is present and is disturbed. Jays are capable of many vocalizations including one that is a musical bell-like note.

Blue jays have three distinct features that readily identify them. First is their colour; second is their crest and the third is their raucous cry. Blue jays have black barring and white

patches on their blue wings and tail. Also they sport a black necklace on whitish under parts.

The scientific name, *Cyanocitta cristata*, is derived from Greek and Latin words and translates as crested, blue chattering bird. Males and females appear to be nearly alike. Both sport the characteristic crest that is raised or lowered to reflect the bird's mood. Excitement or aggression cause the crest to be raised. In this condition, the crest is emphasized by a black band that crosses over the back of the head.

Although they have a reputation for destroying eggs and nestlings, their diet more commonly includes acorns, beech nuts and seeds as well as a variety of animal foods.

These include grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars and small vertebrates. Blue jays are frequent bird feeder visitors where they may bully smaller birds out of the way. They measure about 11 inches, or almost 28 cm in length.

Jays are adaptable and will take advantage of any opportunity to find food. One blue jay was observed following a squirrel. As the mammal buried his finds, the jay swooped down and scratched the soil until the earth yielded up a prize. The nut was hastily cached in the bark of a tree and the jay returned to pursue the squirrel on its rounds.

Blue jays usually nests in coniferous trees less than 20 feet above the ground. Sometimes they will appropriate the nests of other birds. Four to five eggs are incubated for 17 or 18 days. Some 17 days after birth the young are feathered and ready to leave the nest although this may take as long as 21 days. The young jays follow their parents for from one to four months.



Their range is extensive: from Newfoundland to Alberta south to Florida and Texas.

Blue jays nest between 10 and 20 feet above ground and are not above appropriating the nests of other birds. The female handles most of the incubating work and she may be fed by the male. Both parents feed the hatchlings who set up an immediate and unceasing racket until they can feed themselves.

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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New Clean Water Act to provide for Source Water Protection Planning

After a long wait, the new proposed *Clean Water Act* was introduced at Queen's Park on December 5.

This legislation and its accompanying regulations set out the process for Conservation Authorities to undertake source water protection plans.

The expected process and time table for the passage of the *Clean Water Act* (CWA) is as follows:

- 1st reading - December 5, 2005
- Posting on the *Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR)* web site - deadline for comments February 3, 2006
- 2nd reading - Winter 2006
- Regulations made under the CWA to be posted on the EBR web site for comments - Winter 2006
- 3rd reading - Spring 2006
- Royal Assent and release of regulations - May/June

2006.

To view a copy of the *Clean Water Act*, please go to the EBR web site at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envregistry/026807ea.htm. A copy is also provided on the CRCA web site.

In order to make sure that our municipal and local health unit partners have a chance to review and understand the proposed legislation, CRCA staff hosted a short workshop on January 12. This provided our partners with a summary of the legislation to help them prepare comments for the February 3 deadline.

Even though the legislation has progressed much more slowly than originally expected, CRCA staff have continued to work on many different aspects of source water protection. Our efforts have been focused on the collection and analysis of watershed data, preparation

of water budgets, and meeting with our local municipal councils. Our first round of municipal council meetings is now complete.

In addition to our 11 member municipalities, the provincial government has requested that the Township of Frontenac Islands be added to the Cataraqui Source Protection Region. The Township of Frontenac Islands has agreed to participate with us.

This winter our main priority is to meet with agricultural groups. Beginning in the spring we plan to meet with lake and cottage associations and other stakeholders.

This will be an ongoing initiative over the next several years. Be sure to watch for more information on the CRCA web site and in upcoming issues of *Cat Tales*.



Water levels were restored by fall rains, as shown by the gauge at the Millhaven Reservoir near Odessa.

Drought declaration lifted

The front page headline in the last issue of *Cat Tales* proclaimed **water-shed swelters; drought declared**. The drought officially ended December 1 after a wet autumn replenished water levels throughout the watershed.

"Although this summer was marked by localized storms dry conditions persisted through the month of September, particularly in the western half of the Cataraqui Region," says Mara Shaw, reviewing events.

As Watershed Management Coordinator for the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA), she convened a Water Response Team (WRT) to advocate for water conservation. WRT membership included municipal, provincial and federal water managers coordinated by the CRCA.

In Ontario, drought triggers a series of increasingly severe low water declarations. Level I reflects concern. Level II indicates a potentially serious problem. Level III indicates failure of the water supply to meet demand. This past summer's drought rated a Level I declaration. However parts of the CRCA watershed were technically in undeclared Level II or even Level III conditions.

"Levels I and II focus on voluntary conservation techniques that we anticipate the public will enact for the good of the watershed," explains Ms. Shaw.

The WRT issued a June 27 appeal for the public to cut water usage by 10 per cent. A media blitz resulted in

print and electronic news stories about a need for water conservation. As the hot, dry summer progressed, municipalities, lake and cottage associations and others published WRT-provided water conservation tips to residents and members.

The WRT had planned to meet August 31 to consider a Level II declaration. However, events overtook plans when Hurricane Katrina caused the meeting to be cancelled. Despite the drought, a flood advisory was issued reflecting concern for Katrina's 60 mm of rainfall dumped in the watershed's southern portion.

The flood advisory was lifted September 1 but the weather seesaw continued. On September 12 Ontario's natural resources ministry confirmed their data was close to that gathered by CRCA. Stream flows in the western end of the watershed fluctuated between Level I and Level III conditions while those in the eastern portion remained at Level I.

The watershed was divided.

"Then October and November saw a return to normal stream flows, normal precipitation levels and inland lakes were at or above seasonal levels," Ms. Shaw recalls.

A wet autumn restored water levels and stream flows so the low water level warning was lifted December 1.



CRCA back in the business of helping farmers

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) is back in business helping farmers undertake projects that benefit agricultural producers and the environment.

"The Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA) is delivering the Ontario portion of the new **Greencover Canada** program," explains CRCA Environmental Technician Holly Evans. "But conservation authorities will provide technical expertise to improve water quality, encourage sustainable land use practices, plant windbreaks, install fencing, remote watering systems and more."

OSCIA selected Ontario's 36 conservation authorities to help deliver the program. It is part of the Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan with \$15 million in new funding announced September 20. Cost-shared funding, possibly as much as \$20,000, is available to agricultural producers for approved work.

Farmers know the value of protecting the land and water since they make their living from them, Ms. Evans notes. Financial incentives available through **Greencover** are the icing on the cake.

"Ontario producers with an Environmental Farm Plan deemed appropriate through peer review can call me to get the process underway," she says. "To learn more, check our website at: [www.cataraqui-](http://www.cataraquiregion.on.ca)



From the left: Dave, Lawrence and John Eyre and Dave's daughter Alison, 17 months. Right: Holly Evans, CRCA Environmental Technician.

[quiregion.on.ca](http://www.quiregion.on.ca)."

Funding applications are channeled through OSCIA, but technical advice is provided by Ms. Evans. Those interested should call her at (613) 546-4228 ext. 244.

Working with the agricultural community is nothing new for this environmental technician.

"I've been involved with environmental projects on something like 40 different farms throughout our jurisdiction," says Ms. Evans.

Ask the Eyre family. Under a similar cost-share program, Ms. Evans helped Eyredale Farms Ltd. acquire a remote watering system, fence a

creek and protect the environment.

The Eyres, father Lawrence and sons Dave and John, operate a 500-acre dairy farm near Athens.

"Some of our young cattle were in (Foster's) creek up to their bellies," Dave Eyre recalls. "And, as the creek went dry and got smaller, they'd muck it up."

This was a problem for the creek while the cattle ran the risk of developing health problems.

"Cattle erode the stream banks and cause sedimentation," observes Ms. Evans. "Also they foul the stream and that may cause algal blooms and generally bad water quality."



The solution was cost-effective, simple yet elegant. She helped the Eyres acquire a remote watering system and arranged cost-shared funding. Also, the Eyres fenced the creek keeping cattle away.

The watering system is simplic-

ity itself. A pump sits inside a 50 gallon drum in the creek. The drum has a mesh covered hole to admit water that is pumped eight feet up to a second drum on the bank. Then it feeds by gravity to a 300 gallon watering trough.

The bank barrel is equipped with a float. A float senses water is needed and triggers the pump. That is powered by a tractor battery recharged by a solar panel. The system is modeled on a boat bilge pump, but works in reverse. Bilge pumps remove water from boats; this system pumps water into a watering trough.

"It will fill that tank in about 35 minutes," Dave Eyre notes. "When it's full, it shuts off. The beauty of it is that there is really nothing that can go wrong with it."

Before Ms. Evans entered the picture, the Eyres were quoted \$5,000 plus \$1,000 year maintenance for a commercial system.

"So I said there's got to be something simpler out there so I kept looking," says Dave Eyre. "I knew what I wanted, but couldn't find it so she found it for me," he recalls.

The project cost \$3,800. Ms. Evans helped the Eyres qualify for a grant for \$2,850.

Today they have a remote watering system that can be installed each spring in 15 minutes.

Is Greencover for you?

If you are considering making some environmental improvements on your farm, a quick phone call to Holly Evans at the CRCA is a good idea. You may be eligible for grants under the Greencover Program or one of the other programs administered by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association. The Greencover Program funds a variety of Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) outlined in the following table. CRCA staff are available to provide technical assistance and can help with completing application forms. Other environmental improvements may be eligible for funding through the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship Program (COFSP) or the Canada-Ontario Water Supply Expansion Program (COWSEP). These programs are available through the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association.

Project Type	Grant Rate
Riparian Area Management - e.g. live-stock watering systems, buffer plantings, livestock fencing, stream crossings, grazing management	50% (\$20,000 maximum)
Erosion Control in Streambank Areas - e.g. contour terraces, gully stabilization, bank stabilization, in-channel control	50% (\$20,000 maximum)
Shelterbelt Establishment - shelterbelts for farmyard, field, livestock facilities, snowtrap and wildlife habitat enhancement	50% (\$10,000 maximum)
Grazing Management Planning - consulting services to develop grazing management plans	50% (\$2,000 maximum)
Riparian Health Assessment - consulting services for assessing streambank health	50% (\$2,000 maximum)



Updated Regulation is in the Approval Process

An updated conservation authority regulation that limits development near wetlands, shorelines or watercourses is proceeding through a formal approval process.

Its official name is *Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alteration to Shorelines and Watercourses Regulation*. The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority board approved the updated regulation in October. On November 10, it was approved by a peer review committee comprised of representatives from conservation authorities and Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources.

The approved regulation was sent to the province for final approval on November 17.

Now the conservation authority needs to write policies and procedures to reflect the provisions of the updated regulation. It is slated to come into effect in

May.

All 36 Ontario conservation authorities have had these regulations, however they were not standardized until this updating began in 2005. Changes will ensure continuity from one conservation authority jurisdiction to the next across the province.

Development of the new CRCA policies and procedures stemming from the regulation is the responsibility of Environmental Technician Holly Evans. GIS Technician Luke Eades is refining maps used to illustrate the regulation limits. Ms. Evans also says she plans to produce information packages for municipalities, contractors and other stakeholder groups as well as holding meetings, especially for municipalities.

The new regulation was unveiled last fall at a series of three public consultation meetings held at Brockville, Gananoque and Kingston.



CRCA GIS Technician Luke Eades (left) explains floodplain maps to a member of the public at the Kingston open house held in October 2005. Inset: Queen's students Michelle Yi and Andrew Downes attended the Kingston open house to learn about the CRCA's new regulations.

New Employees Join the CRCA

Three new employees have joined the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority since the last edition of *Cat Tales*. They are: Tanya Parks, Sheri Burke and Lucas Eades.

Tanya Parks is the new accounting assistant and works in the reception area of the administration building. She grew up in Sharbot Lake, but commutes daily from Sydenham and reports to Finance and Administration Coordinator Cheryl Rider. Among her interests she lists reading, home improvements and decorating so it seemed only natural that she was tasked with decorating the office for Christmas.

Sheri Burke joined the Source Water Protection team as a Water Resources Technician late in November.

"For the most part, I will be working with the Source Water Protection team on water quality and quantity issues in the watershed," she says.

Sheri is from St. Catharines. She completed her undergraduate degree at Guelph (BSc. ecology) and her graduate degree at Carleton (MSc. in physical geography). For her thesis, she used a water budget to study seepage from a sewage lagoon in the Yukon.

Sheri says she likes to ski and has taken up cross-country skiing and skating. She says she also enjoys reading and travel . . . given her (temporary) two-hour commute to work and

home, she's able to indulge that interest while absorbing current events as reported over her car radio.

Lucas Eades was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but says he considers his hometown to be Terrace, British Columbia. He came to Ontario to pursue educational and employment opportunities.

Luke has a B.Sc. in geography from the University of Victoria and an Advanced Technology Diploma in geographic information systems from The College of New Caledonia in Prince George, B.C. Most recently, he earned his Master of Arts in geography from Ottawa's Carleton University.

Luke started working as a G.I.S. Technician and map maker at the CRCA in June.

His interests include: hiking, mountain biking, reading, writing and cooking. He plays classical guitar, but claims his audience is limited to his longtime partner, Sarah, and their three cats.

Welcome to Tanya, Sheri and Luke.

The CRCA welcomed three new staff this past fall – (top to bottom) Tanya Parks, Luke Eades and Sheri Burke.



CRCA participates in KGH vendor day

Kingston General Hospital (KGH) employees' focus is health. The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) provides conservation lands for healthy activities. This represents a healthy convergence of interests.

On December 14 the CRCA participated for the first time in the KGH Vendors Day event where 44 vendors of services and products as diverse as dog walking and banking touted their services. The KGH community includes 3,500 employees so this is a sizeable market for any organization with a product or service.

The CRCA participates each year in several events to raise awareness of conservation authority programs and facilities. These range from maintaining conservation lands for recreational activities to special events and outdoor education opportunities. Among these regular events are annual spring and fall leisure activity shows, community fairs, open houses, an agricultural awareness event in August and the new KGH show.

The KGH event was well attended and elicited a variety of inquiries about CRCA services. Questions included the identification of migrant bird species spotted at the CRCA's Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

Several KGH employees used the occasion to buy annual vehicle passes to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area and Gould Lake Conservation Area.



Winter-Spring Calendar 2006

Enjoy the outdoors during the winter and spring in one of our conservation areas. Visit our web site at www.cataquiregion.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 Cataquai Creek Conservation Area in Kingston.

Entry Fees

Gould Lake and Little Cataquai 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 \$60.00 per year (effective January 1, 2006) 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 Cataquai 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 28

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

You won't want to miss our third annual Winter Fun Day at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area! Enjoy dog sled races by the Stormont and Glengarry Kennel Association, skating on the pond, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and winter activities for children. Admission is \$5.00 per car.

Little Cataquai 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 7 to February 25, weather permitting. Register in advance, or on the day of the lesson, at the Outdoor Centre. Cost is \$12.00 per person or \$10.00 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 evening 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.

Tim Hortons Evening Skate

Saturday, January 28

(6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.)

Free Admission

Bring out the whole family and skate under the stars on Kingston's largest natural ice rink. Admission is free and hot chocolate is provided (while supplies last) courtesy of Tim Hortons.

Tracks and Scat Hike

Sunday, January 29

(2:00 p.m.)

Scat, also known as excrement or "poop," can provide lots of information about the animals who live here. Learn about the animals and their scat on a scat hike with the Princesses of Poop! You'll leave knowing a lot more about who has been in your own backyard.

Winter Sports P.A. Day

Friday, February 3

(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 and snowshoeing through the fields, forest, and wetland areas of Little

Cataquai 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. 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.

Saturday Night Stargazing

Saturday, February 4

(7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. – Buying Your First Real Telescope)

(8:00 to 9:00 p.m. – Observing the Night Sky)
The Royal Astronomy Society – Kingston Centre is back for an evening of winter stargazing. From 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. learn all about buying a telescope. Then from 8:00 to 9:00 observe the moon, Mars, Saturn and the stars in the February sky.

Watercolour Workshop

Sunday, February 5

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

Artist Marta Scythes is back to offer a watercolour workshop on landscapes. All levels are welcome. The cost is \$40.00 per person and pre-registration is required. Space is limited, so register early. The registration fee does not include materials and supplies. (A materials list is provided when you register).

Mucha Merengue Dance Lessons

Tuesday, February 7 and February 14

(7:30 to 9:30 p.m.)

Our Peruvian dance instructors, Natalia and Fernando Flores, are back by popular demand! This time we'll be learning how to merengue. Strap on your dancing shoes for two introductory merengue dancing lessons at the Little Cataquai Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre.

The cost is \$15 per person and includes two separate two-hour dance lessons. Spaces are limited to a maximum of 15 couples, so register as soon as possible by contacting Stana Luxford at 546-4228 ext. 251 or educate@cataquairegion.on.ca.

Tim Hortons Evening Skate

Saturday, February 11

(6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.)

Free Admission

Bring out the whole family and skate under the stars on Kingston's largest natural ice rink. Admission is free and hot chocolate is provided (while supplies last) courtesy of Tim Hortons.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet

(Alternate Date)

Sunday, February 12

This will be our alternate ski loppet date if the weather doesn't cooperate on January 15. For details, see the January 15 listing.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program

Winter Activities

Thursday, February 16

(10:30 a.m.)

Stay active this winter at Little Cataquai Creek Conservation Area. Program depends on the weather, so come prepared to snowshoe, ski, skate or walk. Dress for the weather, bring lunch and drinking water.

Tim Hortons Evening Skate

Saturday, February 18

(6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.)

Free Admission

Bring out the whole family and skate under the stars on Kingston's largest natural ice rink. Admission is free and hot chocolate is provided (while supplies last) courtesy of Tim Hortons.

Snowshoe Adventure

Sunday, February 19

(2:00 p.m.)

Bill Murdoch of the Rideau Trail Association and Jeff Heaton from Enroute to Adventure will be leading snowshoe hikes from the Little Cataquai Creek Outdoor Centre. Don't have your own snowshoes? Don't worry. Rentals are available at the Outdoor Centre. Come and try out this fun winter sport.

Maple Madness

March 11 to 19 (March Break)

March 25 and 26

April 1 and 2

(9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

It's time once again to enjoy the warm sun, cool spring air and the sweet smell and taste of maple syrup. 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. Enjoy pancakes with real maple syrup and buy some maple syrup or sugar to take home.

We've got special activities happening on different days throughout the program. You'll want to visit us more than once.

Sweet Water Celebration

Saturday, March 11

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

Join Eartha from the Native Studies Centre at St. Lawrence College and other community members for a celebration of sweet water, that special spring tonic from our sugar maples. Learn more about the significance of the maple tree in aboriginal culture. Enjoy sweet water, bannock-making and listening to the drummers.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 12

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

Take a guided tour of the sugar bush to see how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now.

Puppet Shows

Monday, March 13 to Friday, March 17

(Daily at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.)

Start your visit to the sugar bush with a puppet show at the Outdoor Centre. Our energetic and fun puppets explain all about the sugar bush and how maple syrup is made in an entertaining and lighthearted way. There are daily shows at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. from Monday to Friday during the March Break.

Guided Tours

Monday, March 13 to Friday, March 17

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

Take a guided tour of the sugar bush to see how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now. There are sugar bush tours from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday during the March Break.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program

A Visit to the Sugar Bush

Thursday, March 16

(10:30 a.m.)

Seniors, think spring! Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Outdoor Centre for a hike to the sugar bush or catch a wagon ride. See how maple syrup was made in the good old days and how we make it now. Enjoy a pancake lunch back in the sugar bush. Dress warmly, bring drinking water and your camera.

Olde Thyme Sugar Bush Chores

Saturday, March 18

Try your hand at some "olde thyme" sugar bush chores today. You can try log sawing, emptying sap buckets, tapping trees, and butter making.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 19

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

Take a guided tour of the sugar bush to see how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now.

French Heritage Day

Saturday, March 25

Maple syrup and visits to the sugar bush are important to French Canadian heritage. Learn

more about sirop d'érable with members of the French community. You can also watch a demonstration of making taffy-on-the-snow.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 26

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

Take a guided tour of the sugar bush to see how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now.

April Fools at Maple Madness

Saturday, April 1

You'd be a fool if you missed out on our April Fool's Day fun at the sugar bush. We'll have a juggler, a balloon artist, and a face painter. and Add a tasty bake sale hosted by the Cataquai Conservation Foundation and of course the usual wagon rides and pancakes in the sugar bush, and you've got a great family outing!

Guided Tours

Sunday, April 2

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

Take a guided tour of the sugar bush to see how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now.

Polish Easter Egg Decorating

Sunday, April 9

(1:00 p.m.)

Learn the intricacies intricate art of Polish egg decorating from Lisa Morriss-Andrews and friends. You must preregister for a fee of \$5.00 per person, which includes all supplies which is the cost of the supplies. Call 546-4228 ext. 221 to register. This program is for ages 12 and up.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program

Spring Tonic

Thursday, April 20

(10:30 a.m.)

Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Outdoor Centre to go for a walk in the woods. We'll be looking and listening for spring arrivals — birds, frogs, animals and wildflowers. Dress for the weather. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen and insect repellent.

Snakes of the Kingston Region

Earth Day Nature Hike (2:00 p.m.)

Saturday, April 22

(2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)

Celebrate Earth Day with snake enthusiast, Matt Ellerbeck. Matt will share his knowledge about local snakes and bring in one of his snake friends for you to meet. Families are welcome. You can also join the Friends of Little Cataquai Creek Conservation Area at 2:00 p.m. for a nature hike.

Volunteer for Nature

Open House

Spring Trail Clean-up

and Garden Clean-up

Saturday, April 29

(1:00 p.m.)

Rain date: Sunday, April 30 (1:00 p.m.)

Free Admission

Come to Little Cataquai Creek for free and volunteer for nature by helping the Friends of Little Cataquai Creek Conservation Area prepare the trails and butterfly gardens for spring. Bring your work gloves, safety glasses and any trimming and digging tools labelled with your name on it. We have extra if you need to borrow tools.

Saturday Night Stargazing

Saturday, May 6

(8:00 to 10:00 p.m.)

Celebrate International Astronomy Day with the Royal Astronomy Society – Kingston Centre. From 8:00 to 9:00 p.m., there will be a presentation on observing the moon, Saturn, Jupiter and the spring stars. Then from 9:00 to 10:00 p.m., we will be out observing the night sky.

Frog Night Hike

Friday, May 12

(7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - Family Hike
8:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Frog Monitoring Hike)
Bring everyone in the family out to our frog hike. You'll learn about the different frogs that live here at Little Cataquai Creek and go on a short walk to try to find our friends. Afterwards, Stana Luxford, the CRCA's Education Officer will be inviting people old enough to stay up after dark to join her on the night time frog monitoring hike of Little Cataquai Creek Conservation Area.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program

Gone Fishin'

Thursday, May 18

(10:00 a.m.)

Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Kingslake Plaza (Division and Benson Streets) to carpool to Loughborough Lake Inn. We'll go for a hike on their nature trail, followed by a shore lunch prepared by our fishing guide, Larry York. You must register by May 1 by calling Moira at 544-9529. Space is limited and there is a cost for lunch.

Winter-Spring Calendar 2006

Women's Wilderness Weekend

Spring Adventure

Friday, May 26

(7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. pre-trip packing at Outdoor Centre)

Saturday, May 27 (10:00 a.m.)

to Sunday, May 28 (4:00 p.m.)

Frontenac Provincial Park

Have you ever wanted to try wilderness backpacking and not had the opportunity? Join avid backpackers and teachers, Stana Luxford and Marie Poisson, for an invigorating weekend of camping out, learning new wilderness skills, and getting away from it all. Space is limited to 8 participants so reserve your spot by calling 546-4228 ext. 221 or signing up at our Administration Office. The cost is \$75.00 per person, which includes equipment and food. Proceeds from this weekend will go directly to purchasing equipment for CRCA conservation education programs.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program

Wildflowers at Lemoine Point

Thursday, June 15

(10:30 a.m.)

Meet at the north parking lot of Lemoine Point Conservation Area (off Coverdale Dr.) for spring wildflower walk. We'll enjoy and photograph the spring wildflowers. Wear a hat, bring sunscreen, insect repellent, lunch, water and cameras.

CRCA Summer Camps

Looking for an outdoor adventure for your kids this summer? Choose from our Nature Explorers Camp for 6 to 11 year olds or our Wilderness Backpacking Experience for 12 to 14 year-olds. For more information or a registration form please call 546-4228 ext. 251 or 221 or visit our web site at www.cataquairegion.on.ca.

Coming Events at Lemoine Point Conservation Area

Earth Day – Saturday, April 22, 2006

Lemoine Point Clean-up

Tree Planting – Saturday, May 6, 2006

Wildflower Walk –

Sunday, May 21, 2006

Special guided walk for members of the

Friends of Lemoine Point

Invasive Species Control

– date to be announced



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Natural Heritage Study Public Consultation Meetings Coming This Spring

Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) staff expect to complete a natural heritage study for Kingston and Loyalist Township by late spring, says the study's ecological planner.

"The study's basic purpose is to ensure that the official plans for Kingston and Loyalist Township are consistent with the provincial policy statement (concerning land use planning)," explains Ecological Planner Christine Woods.

Ms. Woods and CRCA Biologist Tom Beaubiah are conducting the study on behalf of the municipalities. Geomatics Technician Travis York handles the extensive mapping required. The Conservation Authority's role is that of consultant because of its expertise.

The provincial policy statement that Ms. Woods refers to outlines Ontario's interests in land use and development. These must be reflected in local planning documents such as official plans and zoning bylaws. The policy statement requires significant natural heritage features to be protected by restricting nearby development and site alteration, explains Ms. Woods.

A natural heritage study identifies natural features and areas. Some examples include: wetlands, fish habitat, woodlands, endangered species habitat and areas of natural and scientific interest. The study's scope includes all rural and urban lands within the two municipalities.

Work began on the study in the fall of 2004. In the spring of 2005, the study was introduced to the communities through a series of four public consultation meetings.

"Since then, we've been working on refining the criteria used and the maps as well as finishing our report that will contain recommendations for policies and stewardship," says Ms. Woods.

If time permits, the study may consider corridors linking natural features, for example a corridor between two woodlots.

"We are hoping to identify in general some corridors or linkages," says Ms. Woods.

Identifying linkages may be a recommendation for follow-up work by the municipalities.

So why does this study matter?

"The municipalities can use the information to guide development," says Ms. Woods. "The information can also be used by agencies to direct stewardship and rehabilitation efforts."

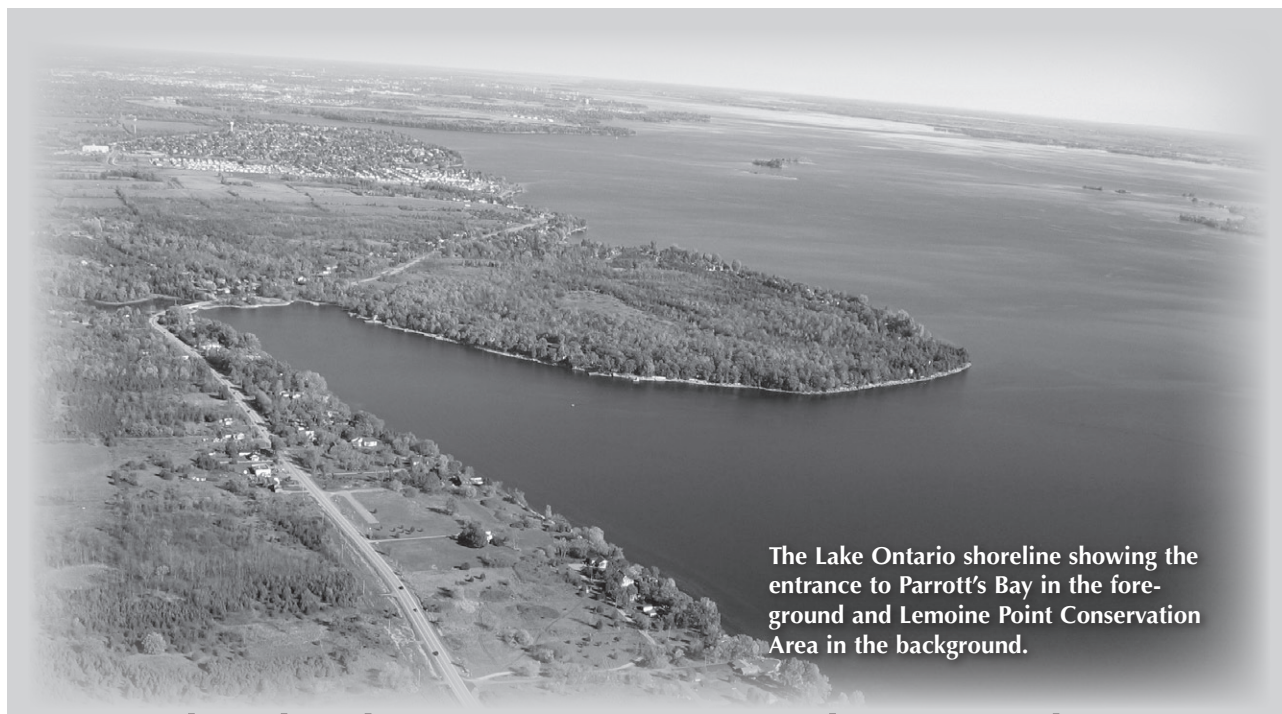
Information contained in the study can be used as well to determine areas that might be problematic if developed.

Ms. Woods says such studies are becoming common.

"There have been a few natural heritage studies done in southwestern Ontario where there is a lot of development and natural heritage features are more stressed by development," she says. "They are becoming more mainstream because municipalities must ensure their official plans are consistent with the provincial policy statement."

Ms. Woods and Mr. Beaubiah consult with two committees associated with the study. The technical steering committee includes staff from both municipalities as well as staff from Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The public advisory committee includes representation from developers, agriculture, academic, environmental groups, the general public and municipal councillors.

The public will also have an opportunity to review the findings of the natural heritage study at public open houses which will be held in the spring of 2006. Check the CRCA web site for up to date information about the study.



The Lake Ontario shoreline showing the entrance to Parrott's Bay in the foreground and Lemoine Point Conservation Area in the background.

Watershed Images Acquired from Above

There's nothing like an aerial view to give you a good perspective of the CRCA watershed. Last October 21 was the picture perfect day to conduct an aerial photographic survey of the watershed so Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority employees took flight.

Planner Christine Woods and Communications and Marketing Assistant Michael Sykes flew the length of every major watercourse in the watershed's western end. This included a pass above Amherst Island. Next, they crossed the top of the watershed, turning south to follow the Gananoque River to the St. Lawrence River. Then the pilot headed east to fly the St. Lawrence shoreline to Jones Creek.

Watershed Management Coordinator Mara Shaw and Planner Kyle Munro focused on the east end of the CRCA watershed including Brockville, the Cataraqui

River and the Lake Ontario shoreline.

The flights produced an archive of several hundred images available for a variety of purposes. Some have already been used on the CRCA web site, for display materials, publications, and in several presentations.

High winds postponed the flight to October 21 which turned out to be a perfect fall day with virtually no wind. Visibility was unlimited except for a thin pollution layer encountered over the watershed's north end.

That was not the only unexpected encounter. A hawk, riding a thermal at 1,800 feet, passed within feet of the aircraft, possibly as astonished at the intrusion in its airspace as the aerial explorers were to encounter the bird so high above the earth.



The north end of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area with a view of the Trumpeter Swan compound, skating pond and Buell's Creek reservoir.

Friends of Lemoine Point Complete a Busy Year and Look Forward to 2006

The Friends of Lemoine Point wrapped up a busy and active year, with two major projects well underway. The Native Plant Nursery and Access Lemoine Point are major projects of the Friends, involving many hours of volunteer time. In addition, the Friends assist with a lot of other work at Lemoine Point Conservation Area. Last year, they contributed a total of 1730 hours of volunteer work!

Speaking of volunteers, a very special and dedicated volunteer was recognized for his work this past fall. Ian Hodson, a founding member of the Friends of Lemoine Point and its first President, has been awarded an Ontario Volunteer Award for his commitment and dedication as a volunteer in Ontario.

Ian was instrumental in initiating and supporting various improvements to the conservation

and public use of Lemoine Point Conservation Area. And, of special note, is his work in the development of the Friends and its volunteer board as an effective organization. He continues to contribute as an active volunteer member of the CRCA's Lemoine Point Advisory Committee.

Congratulations, Ian, and thank you for all of your hard work. We really appreciate it!



Ian Hodson, a founding member of the Friends of Lemoine Point, received an Ontario Volunteer Award this past fall.

And Now for a Very Nutty Tale...

It's a race, squirrels against retirees. The prize is, well . . . nuts. No, really.

The stakes are nuts and seeds. Nut jokes aside, the two-legged competitors tote a sign inviting questions on their travels as they gather native nuts and seeds.

Meet the native plant nursery sub-committee of the Friends of Lemoine Point.

"This is a great hobby," says retired computer programmer and teacher Larry McCurdy. "I spend a couple of days a week out here, and I can't think of a better place to be than Lemoine Point."

Agreed. Lemoine Point Conservation Area is one the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority's (CRCA) prize holdings. This 136 hectare conservation area is home to a mature forest. That's a special focus for CRCA Forestry Technician Rick Knapton.

For reforestation, he advocates planting nuts and seeds from local trees. Mr. Knapton says these are adapted genetically to the area.

"Site specific nursery stock is always more successful than stock that is adapted to other regions," he maintains.

Sired by that assertion, the Lemoine Point Native Plant Nursery sprouted in 2004. It's run by volunteers. It costs CRCA nothing beyond staff time and equipment use. The nursery is funded through donations from outside sources including the Friends of Lemoine Point. Other funds are raised by sales of potted stock from the CRCA's conservation service program.

Mr. Knapton says there are 20 native tree or shrub species in the nursery. These require regular and constant care and watering and that's where volunteers are essential.

Volunteer Barry Robertson, for instance, is a physicist. He links his love of growing things to growing up on the prairies.

"There are more than 24 hours in a day and there are other things to do (besides physics)," he says.

Then there is Jane Murphy.

"I was a nurse for 40 years and a gardener as well and I've always been interested in native plants," she explains. "I've done a lot of seeding of native species at home."

This sparks tribute from retired engineer Peter Butler.

"(Jane) must put in five to seven hours a day, seven days a week here," he says adding that she is writing a book. "We're going to end up with an immensely successful enterprise



CRCA Forestry Technician Rick Knapton, left, shares a laugh with volunteer Barry Robertson.

Below: From left to right, some of the nursery volunteers pose for a picture. They are: Larry McCurdy, Bob Martin, Jane Murphy, Peter Butler and Barry Robertson.

because of her work."

He's a dog lover who walks his four-legged pal here. Mr. Butler attended an early Friends meeting and ended up join-

ing. It's obvious he enjoys the work as he and Mr. Robertson organize tools – long poles with hooks for snaring nuts, buckets for collecting and a sign inviting questions.

Meanwhile retired CRCA employee Bob Martin piles equipment onto a Gator, a mini truck-like all-terrain vehicle that lugs equipment.

He's here because "it's something to do. I'm a gardener, I'm a farmer . . . well a pseudo farmer," he jokes, drawing out the laugh. "Somebody who pretends to farm but never makes any money."

Today it's a race against squirrels to gather shagbark hickory nuts. At the first tree, it's evident the squirrels won. Only three paltry nuts are recovered.

Undaunted, they press on.

Meanwhile the CRCA's Mr. Knapton expounds on his vision. He's raising money, \$40,000-worth . . . he's got \$10,000 in hand leaving \$30,000 to be raised for the project's second phase in 2005.

This will fund an irrigation system, educational materials and an interpretive facility that mimics Lemoine Point's six-sided pavilion. Three sides will bear interpretive panels and a projection screen; the other three sides will be open with seating for as many as 30.

"The idea is to invite speakers to teach both children and adults alike," says Mr. Knapton.

His dream is to fund the nursery through stock sales to other conservation authorities, public agencies or the public.

"During phase one, we raised about \$20,000 in cash and an additional \$5,000 in donated materials and labour was donated to complete that phase," says Mr. Knapton.

This year, Mr. Knapton and the volunteers have collected six species of nuts including red, white and bur oak and shagbark, bitternut and pignut hickory. Also gathered are ironwood and basswood seeds as well as berries from the nannyberry and silky, gray and red-osier dogwoods and from hawthorns and more.

If you're interested in volunteering or donating, talk to Mr. Knapton or the Friends of Lemoine Point. Or, you can donate money. Volunteers learn about gathering and growing native seeds. Donors receive receipts for income tax purposes and their contributions represent a positive contribution to the local ecosystem.

Mr. Knapton may be reached by leaving a voice mail message at (613) 389-3651. His e-mail address is rknaption@cataraquieregion.on.ca.

Or you can leave a message for the Friends of Lemoine Point by calling (613) 546-4228 ext.306. Their e-mail address is lemoine@cataraquieregion.on.ca.



No More Sinking Feeling at Sydenham Dam

A Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) engineer has solved the mysterious incidence of depressions in the earthen embankment below Sydenham Dam.

"Last fall, we performed two major maintenance operations at the site," explains Watershed Engineer Monir Moniruzzaman who supervised the project.

The first challenge was settling of armour stone at the dam outflow on the north-west bank. This was attributable to an unstable foundation bearing the weight of the stone, as well as erosion due to water flow between gaps in the armour stone, says Mr. Moniruzzaman.

His solution was to remove the armour stone and regrade the slope. This was covered with a 'sandwich' composed of a thick layer of shot rock, a geotextile mat then another layer of shot rock. The armour stone was replaced, minimizing gaps. Another application of shot rock helped fill crevices.

So much for the first challenge, the second involved depressions in the earth at the site of an old mill.

"Next to the former mill was a sluice opening, closed off by a concrete bulkhead when the new dam was constructed," says Mr. Moniruzzaman. "Behind the bulkhead, the dam's western downstream earthen embankment was in-filled with soil and abandoned structural components from the mill. This included large chunks of concrete and wooden blocks that created huge voids. This condition contributed to surface settlement."

It was solved by excavating soil and fill materials. Next, geotextile matting was installed and the area was backfilled and compacted. An application of 75 mm of top soil and seeding completed the work.

The original Sydenham Dam was built in the 19th century to provide power for a mill. The CRCA rebuilt the dam in 1978 near the former mill site.



Women's Wilderness Weekend

Dinner was a welcome event at the Women's Wilderness Weekend held in October 2005.

No hairdryers. No cell phones. No manicures. Eight brave women headed out into the wilds of Frontenac Provincial Park on a rainy and cold Saturday morning in mid-October. Spirits were high and laughter filled the air as the women set out to camp overnight in the last bit of autumn colour.

Just before the lunch stop, the misting rain let up and the sky cleared and there was a beautiful warm sun for their picnic. The rest of the day and evening was perfect.

New friends and old friendships were rekindled around the dinner table and campfire. Upon returning to civilization everyone felt rejuvenated and relaxed.

The weekend had filled the two main purposes of introducing women to back-

packing and providing a time to enjoy the wilderness and fundraising for three new camp stoves for the summer youth backpacking camps. Thanks to local outdoor stores: Trailhead, The Peak Experience, and Enroute to Adventure, the proceeds went to purchasing three new camp stoves for the summer youth camps at a very low cost.

The CRCA will be holding two more Women's Wilderness Weekends in 2006. The spring weekend will be held on May 26 to 28 and the fall weekend will be held on September 15 to 17.

Registration forms for the spring weekend are now available on our web site. For more information about these weekends, please call Stana Luxford at (613) 546-4228 ext. 251.



A group of children show the bat houses they built at the CRCA's annual bat talk at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

The Real Bat Man Strikes Again

Kingston's own bat man, Matt Saunders, annual bat talk on October 23, 2005 was as popular as ever.

After the talk families joined CRCA Environmental Planner Kyle Munro to build bat houses. Kyle volunteered his time to prepare bat house kits and help people assemble them.

The CRCA would like to thank *Habitat Restore* located on Bath Road for providing the wood for the bat houses.

Matt Saunders also provided bat house kits to families as well, complete with bat guano! We hope that local bats are enjoying their new homes.



Sydenham Dam, showing the newly refurbished and stabilized grounds and the new stream gauge (foreground).



Foundation directors Jean Churchill-Wilson (left) and Annie Barwise confer during the gala. Special guests Peter Milliken, MP, and John Smol, guest speaker, discuss global warming.



CRCA to Assemble New Nature Reserve at Bayview Wetland

The Bayview Wetland, is an ecologically sensitive area, unique to the region. It is located north of Amherstview on the north side of Taylor-Kidd Blvd. East of County Road 6. The Bayview Wetland is an important ecological link between the CRCA's holdings at Parrott's Bay and Lemoine Point Conservation Areas.

It is known locally as the *Bayview Bog*. Although it is not a bog, it does contain three different types of wetlands – fen, marsh and swamp – and is considered to be provincially significant.

It is home to 379 species of plants, 21 of which are considered to be significant. The Bayview Wetland also contains one of the region's largest heronries.

Because of its natural features and its location just north of Amherstview, the CRCA has decided to proceed with purchasing the properties that make up the Bayview Wetland. This will ensure the protection of this unique natural area for future generations.

The CRCA has a conditional agreement to purchase the first parcel in this land assembly. In order to purchase the land this spring, we will need to raise funds in the local community. Fundraising will begin shortly, in cooperation with the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation. If you wish to make a contribution, please send it to the CRCA office. Charitable receipts will be issued for all contributions over \$10.00.

While recognized for many years as an important area to acquire and protect, it has taken over a decade to negotiate the first deal. It is anticipated that agreements to purchase additional land will be made in the near future.



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Foundation News

From September to December is a busy time for the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation. As we continue to celebrate our fortieth anniversary, our two major fundraisers have taken place and we are now planning events for the spring of 2006.

Many hours were spent in September contacting those of you who help support *Partners in Education*. We have already received many replies and those of you who would still like to contribute, please send in your donations. Thank you to everyone who has donated; your support helps many children participate in the conservation education programs offered by CRCA.

Our *Forever Green* gala dinner and silent auction was held in November for a full house at the Royal Military College's Senior Staff Mess. Special thanks to the Celtic harpist Donna Crozier and speaker John Smol (professor of Biology and Canada Research Chair in Environmental Change) for their contributions to the evening.

Forever Green is what the Foundation works to achieve; a natural environment that is protected for generations to come. Support for the gala was directed to the imminent purchase of land that is of environmental significance, the teaching of conservation education programs, which for many area children are their first significant encounter with nature, and the rehabilitation of our special needs lift at the Outdoor Centre.

Again, the Foundation owes many thanks to our patrons, sponsors, supporters and to those of you who came to the dinner and participated in the raffles and silent auction. The Kingston downtown and surrounding

area business people and the many donors of auction, raffle and other prize items all helped to make this event a success. More than \$25,000.00 was raised at *Forever Green*.

As the members of the Foundation prepare for fundraising in 2006, another series of talks is being planned. This is due to the positive response we received last year. Information about these talks will be available after the Christmas break.

Two Foundation members attended a day long seminar on event management held in December by the Festivals on the St. Lawrence and Downtown Kingston BIA. Many representatives from non-profit organizations were present and there were several talks about fundraising and getting the public involved. In January, the Foundation will meet to discuss fund-raising, membership packages and in general, the Foundation's involvement with Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority.

Kingston is a beautiful city located in a region of lakes, rivers and watershed areas. As public awareness of environmental issues continues to increase we should be proud of our efforts to be custodians of our surroundings. The Foundation directors look forward to the spring and hope that everyone's support and contributions continue.

Cataraqui Conservation Foundation Board of Directors: Dan Attack, Annie Barwise, Don Beckett, Barbara Bradfield, Jean Churchill-Wilson, Harry Cleghorn, John Conley, Pamela Dodd, Liz Evans, Ross Forrest, Stewart Fyfe, Lorna Hendry, Lynne Kenny, Graham Lodge, Sue Miklas and John Morse.



Bidding on silent auction items was a popular activity at the *Forever Green* gala.





This is a typical stream gauge installation; they are often described as resembling steel dog houses.

CRCA Measures Water Flow Telemetrically

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority monitors water levels and stream flows in seven water courses within its jurisdiction and it does it telemetrically.

"The primary reason is to fulfill the conservation authority's job of flood forecasting and warning," explains CRCA Watershed Management Coordinator Mara Shaw. "We use the data to model whether flooding is going to occur so we can issue appropriate warnings. We also use the data to identify drought conditions, assist us in sizing culverts and bridge openings, floodplain mapping, and in technical studies."

The tool used is a stream gauge contained in a shelter that resembles a steel dog house. Stream gauges measure in one of

two ways. Some utilize a float that rises and falls reflecting changing water levels. Others rely on a pressure transducer in the water; this measures and records water pressure.

Either way, the information is transmitted by data line to the CRCA where it is kept and used extensively. The stream gauge program is run cooperatively between the Conservation Authorities and Water Survey Canada, a branch of Environment Canada.

"With our stream gauges, we gather data without having to perform the measurements on site," says Ms. Shaw, adding this saves staff time and reduces transportation costs. "Without the stream gauges, such frequent, year-round data collection would be impossible."

The CRCA has stream gauges installed in Millhaven Creek south of Odessa, at Sydenham Lake and the headwaters to Millhaven Creek, in Little Cataraqui Creek, Wilton Creek, Collins Creek, Buells Creek and Lyn Creek.

"We will finalize the installation of one more stream gauge in the spring at Lyndhurst," says Ms. Shaw.

Stream flow data from stream gauges have assisted the CRCA through three droughts since 2000. Low water levels trigger formation of a water response team, a collection of public and private water managers, that advocates for water conservation during drought. This happened during the summers of 2001, 2002 and 2005.



Our Sizzling Salsa lessons at the Outdoor Centre were very popular. We are offering Mucha Merengue lessons in February.

2006 Activities at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area

There are lots of great programs and events planned for Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area this year. Check out our Winter-Spring Calendar on pages 6 and 7. Once again this winter, Tim Hortons is sponsoring evening skating for families. Weather permitting, free skating will be available from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on four Saturdays during the winter.

Our salsa dancing lessons held last fall at the Outdoor Centre were a big hit. In February, you can learn to merengue! Registration forms are available on our web site. Spaces fill up quickly, so sign up soon.

We Need More Friends

The Friends of Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area are still looking for a few more Friends to help with different activities. If you are interested, please call Stana Luxford at (613) 546-4228 ext. 251 or visit our web site.

The next meeting of the Friends is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 21 at 5:30 p.m.** at the Outdoor Centre. Hope to see you there!



Activities Abound at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

After a busy and active fall, the CRCA and the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area are getting ready for an active year.

Wildlife Festival

October 2, 2005 provided another beautiful day for the Mac Johnson Wildlife Festival. Visitors to the area had plenty of activities to choose from including hikes, canoeing, woodcarving demonstrations, live music, wildlife presentations and children's activities.

Free canoes and kayaks were provided by the CRCA. Many people took advantage of the opportunity to try out canoeing and kayaking for the first time. It was a great way to see the fall colours and the waterfowl on the reservoir.

Children's activities provided by Environmental Connections were a big draw. Children and adults both enjoyed exploring the pond for critters and the

Bring 'em Back Alive nature safari.

Guest speakers Tom Beaubiah and Stefan Foerster of the CRCA and Chris Bellemare of St. Lawrence Islands National Park all provided wildlife presentations. Tom spoke about invasive species, Stefan about Trumpeter Swans and Chris about turtles. Holly Evans of the CRCA led a guided nature hike.

Riverwinds, a Brockville woodwind ensemble, provided beautiful music for the afternoon. Located next door in the picnic shelter, area wood carvers demonstrated wood carving techniques. The Friends and the CRCA would like to thank the carvers and the musicians for their generous contribution to the day.

The Friends organized a delicious bake sale and bar-becue. This managed to keep everyone well-fed and happy.



Canoeing and kayaking was a popular activity at the Mac Johnson Wildlife Festival in October.

Coming Events

The first event on the 2006 schedule is the **Winter Fun Day on Saturday, January 28**. From 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. you can enjoy dog sled races, skating on the pond, skiing on the trails and children's activities. Warm up at the Nature Centre with chili and hot chocolate supplied by the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. Admission is just \$5.00 per car, with all proceeds going to the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.

Join the Friends every Saturday and Sunday during the winter at the skating rink. Warm up at the skating shelter and chat with the Friends about all the great work they do. Volunteers are still needed to help out.

Spring events include:

- Spring Open House – Sunday, May 7 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- Photo Contest – May 7 through the summer. Information will be available at the Spring Open House. Winners will be announced at the fall Wildlife Festival.

The Friends also have regular meetings which you are welcome to attend. For these and other events, please go to the Friends web site at www.cybertap.com/macjohnson/.

Donor Recognition

The CRCA would like to recognize the following contributions:

- Eager Beavers Camping Club for their donation to the Trumpeter Swans.
- Ducks Unlimited for replacing the entrance sign at the south entrance.
- The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area for their many contributions of time and money in 2005 to various projects and activities.