



CAT TALES

WINTER 2008 ISSUE

In This Issue

Winter is here,
so why not get out and enjoy it.

- We've got lots of great activities planned. Check out What's Happening on pages 6 and 7.
- We're offering workshops on grazing management (see page 8), groundwater and wells (page 10) and tree planting programs (page 10).
- The drinking water source protection program continues to move ahead with the selection of our Source Protection Committee plus continuing research. See pages 1 and 3. See who's on our committee on page 3.
- The Cataraqui Conservation Foundation had another successful year raising funds for the CRCA. Find out who helped to make the Forever Green gala a success plus more on page 11.
- They're cute little critters, but can be a real nuisance if they get into your house. *Peromyscus maniculatus* is our Creature Feature on page 2.
- More critters on page 4. Turtles are having a tough time. Find out how you can help them.
- Low water levels have been causing problems across our watershed. See pages 4 and 10 for details.
- What is the Collins Creek Greenway? Why did Queen's School of Urban and Regional Planning study it? Find out on page 8.
- The Cataraqui Trail Management Board had a busy fall and so did we. See page 9 for news about the Trail and the International Plowing Match.
 - CRCA staff are on the move. More on page 5.
- Plus the latest on education programs, summer camp and Lemoine Point Conservation Area on page 12.

Cataraqui Source Protection Committee formed



Cataraqui Source Protection Committee members Kevin Riley, Utilities Kingston; Nona Mariotti, lake association representative; and Richard Lindgren, environmental association representative at the December 2007 meeting.

The Cataraqui Source Protection Committee (SPC) held its first meeting in November 2007. This initiated the process of preparing a terms of reference, an assessment report and a source protection plan. They will be assisted in this process by a number of technical staff from the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, municipalities, health units and other government agencies with an interest in clean and plentiful drinking water.

The SPC consists of 16 members from across the whole Cataraqui Source Protection Area. The composition and number of members on the SPC is set out in Ontario Regulation 288/07. One-third of the members must be from each of the following sectors: municipal; economic and other public interests.

The assignment of seats within each

sector was done by the Cataraqui Source Protection Authority (SPA) based on land use characteristics, water use and potential influences on water.

The selection process for Source Protection Committee members varied depending on the sector.

For the municipal sector, members were selected by the municipalities in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area.

The agricultural sector selected its own representatives to the SPC. This was done through community meetings organized by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

For the industry and tourism/recreation sectors, we worked with business owners and industries to develop a self-selection process

The Cataraqui Lake Stewards Network was used to help the lake associations

select a representative.

Applications from interested lake association members were reviewed by the Cataraqui SPA.

Applications from environmental organizations and the general public were solicited by advertising for these positions. We also contacted environmental organizations by mail and e-mail to advise them of the opportunity to participate in the SPC.

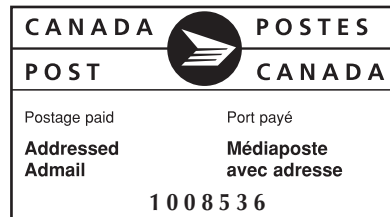
Applicants for the tourism/recreation, lake association, environmental organization and general public positions were interviewed by a small committee of Cataraqui Source Protection Authority members.

The resulting Source Protection Committee has a wide variety of members

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Creature Feature

Deer mouse, *Peromyscus maniculatus*

It's winter and some rural residents unknowingly provide shelter and sustenance for tiny tenants – deer mice. Their scientific name is *Peromyscus maniculatus*. *Pero* refers to the animal's pointed snout. *Peromyscus* means little pouched mouse while *maniculatus* means small-handed.

Indeed, deer mouse paws are tiny, but dexterous.

The common name, deer mouse, refers to a distinctive, two-toned fur coat resembling that of white-tailed deer, dark above, white below. With flashing dark eyes, long ears and long tail, deer mice are attractive, interesting creatures, but only in the wild.

These rodents are the most abundant and widely distributed of North American mice. They are not normally found in cities. In the wild, deer mice thrive in a variety of habitats. In fact, the deer mouse may be the most abundant mammal on the North American continent. In Canada,

they are found in every province except Newfoundland.

Wild deer mice are seed eaters but dine on other plant materials including mushrooms and berries, insects and their larvae as well as bird eggs, among other things. Since deer mice are active at night, their activities may pass undetected by humans . . . until they move in for winter. It is not uncommon to hear gnawing noises coming from walls signaling unwanted tenants. In a house, deer mice will nest in almost any confined space in basements, attics or between walls. Their nests are domed and resemble small piles of available nesting materials. This may include insulation, string, cloth or paper.

In the wild, deer mice dig and occupy burrows but are not adverse to appropriating burrows abandoned by other animals. They also make homes in a variety of other protected locations where they build nests

of shredded plant materials and fur.

Although deer mice do not hibernate, they anticipate winter by gaining weight and storing seeds in caches near their sleeping quarters. According to some authorities, deer mice carefully sort their winter seeds stock according to species.

The average deer mouse measures about 4.8 inches (12.2 cm) in length. The tail measures between 1.8 inches (4.6 cm) and five inches (12.7 cm).

Males mature 40 to 45 days after birth while females achieve maturity in 32 to 35 days. Litters number between one and 11 young but usually are between four and six. It is estimated that in the unlikely event of all young surviving, one pair of deer mice can produce 10,000 offspring in one season. But reality is something else.

Few survive beyond one year in the wild, 32 months is cited as a maximum, but captive individuals have lived for as long as eight years.

Deer mice are important links in the food chain for owls, weasels, snakes, squirrels, skunks, mink, raccoon, bears, coyotes, wolves and the occasional fish that finds a mouse swimming.

Winter is a challenge for deer mice. They are vulnerable to predation crossing snow-covered fields where cover is sparse.

Sometimes their winter runways are tunnels beneath the snow.

The chewing habits of deer mice inside homes and other structures poses a threat. It is estimated that 25 per cent of fires of unknown causes are the results of rodents chewing electrical wires, according to a pest control company website.

Deer mice also are associated with the dangerous Hanta virus contained in feces and urine. This may be contracted when people breathe in or ingest the virus on dust particles by sweeping or vacuuming contaminated places. If you clean up after deer mice, wear a face mask and soak all surfaces with chlorine bleach before cleaning. Further, if you experience flu-like symptoms after such activity, hospital treatment may be necessary.

Preventing deer mice for entering your home is the best defence. Seal all openings including cracks and gaps in your foundation. One authority claims that deer mice can squeeze through a one-quarter inch (0.6 cm) gap. Because deer mice also climb, they may also enter a home via chimneys or roof vents.

If you live-trap deer mice, bear in mind when you release them that their homing instinct is effective for 2.5 miles (four km).

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These images were provided by Associate Professor Phil Myers, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Associate Curator, Mammals, Museum of Zoology and Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Michigan and the Animal Diversity Web (<http://animaldiversity.org>).

Source Water Protection moves ahead



Protecting sources of municipal drinking water is the main focus of source water protection.

Although field work is over until the spring, work continues in many areas of our drinking water source protection program. The re-elected Liberal government in Ontario has confirmed its commitment to drinking water source protection under the *Clean Water Act, 2006*. The provincial government continues to develop regulations and guidelines to direct the process. As regulations are developed, they will be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) website for public comment. We will be providing links to these postings from

our website as they become available. The Hon. John Gerretsen, one of our local MPPs in the Cataraqui area, now serves as the provincial Minister of the Environment. Minister Gerretsen recently addressed the 19 source protection committee chairs in Mississauga, and indicated that he looks forward to reviewing the local outcomes of the source protection planning process. CRCA staff and local consulting firms are awaiting the approval of an assessment report regulation and technical standards by the Ontario government. These docu-

ments should be available during the first half of 2008. In the interim, we are following draft technical standards to complete our background studies. The technical standards (called Director's Rules) will provide a *road map* for our research about drinking water sources. Our research findings will be used by the Source Protection Committee and the community during the preparation of a Source Protection Plan. Some of this research includes technical studies on drinking water source protection. For example, we are currently gathering and analyzing data about the source water for the municipal supplies at Lansdowne and Sydenham, as well as along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. These studies will be completed during 2008. Work is also underway to assess the vulnerability of groundwater to contamination, and to identify areas in which there is a high volume of surface water recharging into the ground. We have completed a conceptual water budget, which includes general findings about the amount and movement of water in the Cataraqui area. A water budget examines the supply and demand for water within the area. It's similar to a financial budget, except it looks at water rather than money. We are now working on a tier 1 water budget that will refine our knowledge using monthly data for specific river watersheds. Watch for future issues of *Cat Tales* and visit the CRCA website for notices about

upcoming consultation sessions to discuss our water budget findings. The formation of the Cataraqui Source Protection Committee at the end of 2007 provides an opportunity for us to raise the profile of Drinking Water Source Protection (DWSP) in our local communities. The Committee formation signals a ramping up of the project. We will place an increased emphasis on communications and raising public awareness in 2008. A *Portraits and Profiles* segment about the local DWSP initiative is now airing on CKWS television. A new website will launch at the beginning of February. Watch for our new site at www.cleanwatercataraqui.ca. The Cataraqui Source Protection Committee will have an important task to complete during 2008. They will work with municipalities and the Cataraqui Source Protection Authority to develop proposed Terms of Reference for the remaining assessment work and the planning work. The proposed Terms of Reference will include a work plan and budget for activities over the next four years. Although it sounds very boring, the Terms of Reference will define the scope of the whole source protection planning process as well as determining what issues get examined during the process. This document is due to be submitted to the Ontario government by October 2008. There will be two opportunities for members of the community to provide comments, and a round of consultation sessions in the spring.

(cont. from page 1)

representing various community interests, backgrounds, geographic areas and experiences. We look forward to working with them on this important project.

Cataraqui Source Protection Committee Membership

Chair
· John Williamson, Inverary

Municipal Sector
· Councillor Richard Bresee, Loyalist Township
· Mayor Gary Davison, South Frontenac Township
· Kevin Riley, Utilities Kingston
· Mayor John Conley, Athens Township
· Peter Raabe, City of Brockville

Economic Sector
· Kim Sytsma, Athens - Agriculture
· Jeff Peters, Inverary - Agriculture
· Robert Cumming, Bath - Large Industry
· Chris Mangan-Greene, Gananoque - Tourism and Recreation
· Scott Ewart, Mallorytown - Tourism and Recreation

Other Sector
· Nona Mariotti, Loughborough Lake - Lake Association
· Richard Lindgren, Wolfe Island - Environmental Association
· Kathleen Laird, Kingston - Public
· Alex Palilionis, Inverary - Public
· Jody Willis, Bath - Public

Biographies of each of the committee members will be available soon on the CRCA website at www.cataraquiregion.on.ca.



Fisheries Act violations relate to low water levels



CRCA Biologist Tom Beaubiah

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) reminds shoreline land owners that approvals are needed to perform work made possible by recent low water levels.

"There has been an increase in the number of potential violations to the Fisheries Act, conservation authority regulations and Public Lands Act as a result of landowners conducting activities without first contacting the appropriate public agencies," notes CRCA Biologist Tom Beaubiah.

He explains that areas exposed

due to low water are still valuable aquatic habitat for many organisms.

"Land owners should be aware that although water levels have dropped exposing more shoreline, approvals are still necessary before undertaking any work," says Mr. Beaubiah. "In so far as the CRCA is concerned, approvals are required for both in-water and adjacent lands activities."

He cites examples of requests made to fill shorelines to the current water level. Further, low water reveals problems particu-

larly with gabion basket walls and older concrete and rock structures.

"Although the chance to repair them is aided by low water levels, approvals are still required from the CRCA," says Mr. Beaubiah. "The approval process is designed to regulate work timing with respect to critical periods for fish spawning."

Depending on where your property is located, the land exposed at the shoreline may not be part of your property. It may be owned by the federal or provin-

cial government.

Also, if you are filling in the low area to try to make more land or to create a beach, it will likely be washed away when the water levels return to normal. All that sediment in the lake is not healthy for the lake environment.

For more information, or to determine whether you need permit approval, contact Mr. Beaubiah at (613) 546-4228 ext. 240.

Turtles in perilous times!

Turtles have been on this Earth for well over 200 million years and have even survived through the time of the dinosaurs. They have continued to survive and in many instances thrive while countless other creatures have disappeared around them. Today, however, the turtle is facing a grim future. Nearly 70 per cent of the world's turtle species are now listed on The World Conservation Union's Red list of threatened species.

For some turtles it is already too late. Several species have already gone extinct. For many people the term endangered species conjures up images of exotic animals far from home. But the turtle's current state of peril can be seen in our own backyards.

Populations of the nine turtle species found in Ontario are on the decline. Seven of these nine species have been listed as *Species at Risk* by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. This is a both a despairing and unsettling fact as turtles have been around for so long and their current state is almost completely due to the actions of people! There are a

number of different factors contributing to the endangerment of the world's turtles.

The biggest issue affecting turtles today is the loss or fragmentation of their natural habitat. It is estimated that 50 per cent of all wetlands in southern Ontario have been lost. Southern Ontario has the greatest diversity of turtle species in Canada. Wetlands are critical habitat for many turtle species, and the many animals that they depend on for food.

Turtles don't just reside in wetland habitats. Certain turtles like Wood Turtles, can be found in meadows and forested areas in parts of Ontario. These kinds of habitats are also destroyed due to construction for developments. What natural habitat is left is often fragmented, meaning that the healthy areas of habitat and thus turtle populations are usually very far and isolated from each other. This prevents gene flow between populations.

The loss of habitat and the increase of human activities and recreation on the water and on beaches also affects turtles and their nests. Waterfront developments restrict turtles from prime basking and nesting sites. Sewage run off from such developments can also cause harm to turtles. Pesticides, oils, chemicals, and industrial pollution may contaminate the habitats of turtles and

their food sources. Contaminated prey poisons turtles and they may die.

Developments may also cause water levels to rise, which can drown nest sites, destroying turtle eggs. Recreational activities on the water can also have devastating effect on turtles, such as being killed or injured when they are hit by boats or water vehicles. Driving on beaches with cars and four wheelers can destroy nests in the sand.

Where good habitat does still exist, it is often altered by roads and highways. This leads to the death of countless turtles on roads. Legions of turtles must cross roads when looking for nest sites to lay their eggs. This is particularly detrimental to turtle populations because not only does it lead to the death of a large portion of the breeding population, the female turtles, but the next generation of turtles is also killed off when the eggs are destroyed.

Even if the female turtles do successfully find nesting spots and lay their eggs, the baby turtles only have a one per cent chance of reaching maturity. Nests are often preyed on by raccoons and skunks. While human activities have negative effects on turtles, they have helped increased these predators. The increase in garbage provides an unlimited food source for them. This has caused their



Photo Credit - Cheryl Rider

Snapping turtles are misunderstood creatures and are not dangerous if they are left alone.

populations to increase dramatically.

Turtles also suffer from illegal collecting from the wild, whether it is in high numbers from poachers or from kids who simply want to take a little turtle back with them after a camping trip. The exact number of turtles captured from the wild for personal collectors, or to be sent off to the pet trade is unknown. However it can have devastating effects on the populations. Over collecting can lead local exterminations of populations in many areas.

Certain turtles, especially snapping turtles, are often the victims of direct killings by people. Many people believe snapping turtles are dangerous to swimmers and will kill them on sight. Fisherman will also kill snappers because they believe that the turtles prey upon game fish. The truth is snapping turtles are not dangerous if left alone. If stepped on under-

water the turtle will merely withdraw its head, and if encountered by a swimmer, the turtle will flee the area.

When all the issues above are combined it accounts for a massive amount of turtles being lost. It is hard to come up with exact figures, because not enough research has been done, and it is even harder to monitor the effects of issues like illegal collecting. What is known is that turtle species are dwindling and it is largely due to our actions.

If we do not take the time to take better care of our natural resources and trying to reverse our detrimental actions towards turtles we could lose one of our oldest and successful creatures. If this happens, what hope do other species really have? To find out how you can help turtles please visit www.turtleconservationist.co.nr



Long-time CRCA employee retires after 24 years



Always one to dress up and to help out, Pat helped the Kidney Foundation raise money by serving time in 'jail' and raising cash for 'bail money'.

Catarqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) Secretary, Patricia Hudson Mills,

retires on January 31 after 24 years of service. Pat was hired in February 1984, and held

a variety of titles over the years including Secretary, Administrative Secretary, Office Manager and Authority Secretary.

When asked to reflect on the CRCA's progress in that time, Pat said, "I'm amazed that we still function because we receive so little funding from the province. That we manage to keep things going at all is a reflection of the dedicated staff that I have known over the years. My hat is off to them."

Important projects that have been completed during her time at the CRCA include the Outdoor Centre at Little Catarqui Creek Conservation Area, the acquisition of Parrott's Bay Conservation Area and the Bayview Wetland, the pavilion at Lemoine Point Conservation Area, two new roofs on the administration building (the most recent doesn't leak!), new signs, new trails and the lighting of the skating rink at Little Catarqui Creek Conservation Area.

We asked Pat if she plans to maintain a

connection to the CRCA. "I might help in the gardens or on the trails but nothing to do with meetings!" she quipped.

What did she enjoy the most during her time at the CRCA? "I enjoy working with younger people. They keep me thinking young. Conservation Authority staff are very interesting people who care about our world and have a lot to offer. The CRCA has been very fortunate, in my opinion, to have so many great people working for it over the years," she said.

The staff and board members of the CRCA wish Pat well on her retirement.



Patricia Hudson Mills started with the CRCA in February 1984.

CRCA welcomes new staff

Conservation lands planner joins the CRCA

Lands Planner Jason Hynes joined the Catarqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) on October 30 and works in the conservation lands division.

He completed a post-graduate management program at Sir Sandford Fleming College. Before that, he earned a diploma as a park operations and outdoor recreation technician. He also spent a year at the Haliburton School of the Arts campus of Fleming College in the ecotourism/adventure tourism management program.

His key responsibilities include:

- coordinating resource inventories of CRCA land holdings and appraising buildings and infrastructure;
- recommending priorities and funding opportunities for property maintenance and development;
- preparing and implementing master plans;
- preparing policies and procedures that incorporate best management practices for property maintenance and development; and
- exploring funding opportunities and partnerships.

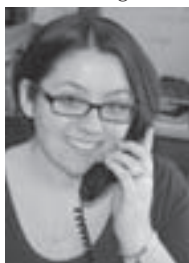
His first assignment is to conduct initial reviews of requirements for master plans for Parrott's Bay Conservation Area and Bayview Wetland.

Jason's interests include camping, canoeing, hiking and snowshoeing as well as cooking. His hometown is



Jason Hynes, CRCA Conservation Lands Planner

Calling the CRCA office will put you in touch with Stephanie Vinkle, our new receptionist.



Markham.

New receptionist at CRCA

Also new at the CRCA's front desk is Receptionist/Clerk Stephanie Vinkle who began work in mid-September.

"I love the atmosphere here," she says, "it's a wonderful place to work."

Born in Kingston, Stephanie lives in Harrowsmith. She attended Sydenham High School and St. Lawrence College. Her previous employment was with Saputo Food Ltd. or the Armstrong Cheese Factory, also known as the Harrowsmith Cheese Factory.

Working for the Conservation Authority is a good fit for Stephanie's interests.

"The great outdoors is a passion of mine so to be able to come to work in this atmosphere is amazing," she says.

Her hobbies and interests include travel, walking, music, photography and spending time with family and friends.

Shortly after her arrival, a new roof was installed on the CRCA's administration building.

"All the dust and woodchips came raining down and people were picking things out of my hair," she recalls with a laugh.

Ah, the hazards of the job!

Rick Horton joined the Catarqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) operations staff in mid-April of 2007.

"I really like the outdoor aspect of the job," says this Kingston native. "Also I enjoy the huge variety of things we have to do."

Rick attended high school in Odessa, worked 10 years at Alcan, 14 years at Bombardier and operated his own contracting business for a spell. For relaxation, he cuts and splits his own firewood, "therapy" he calls it.

Another interest is boating and Rick has an 18-footer that he uses mostly on Lake Ontario.

"Also, I'm an avid reader and a bit of a news junkie although I'm trying to cut back on that," he confesses.

His 'most interesting' moment at the CRCA occurred after a wind storm. Rick was cleaning up fallen trees at Gould Lake Conservation Area. Taking a break, he walked along one fallen tree trunk and reached out to steady himself by grabbing a branch.

But it moved.

"As soon as I touched the branch I pulled my hand back . . . it was a four-foot black rat snake," he says. "I've petted a black rat snake and he didn't seem too upset by it."

But it's not an action Rick hopes to repeat any time soon.

Richard Horton, CRCA operations staff.

CRCA announces new toll free telephone number

The Catarqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) has set up a toll free number so residents anywhere within its jurisdiction may call without incurring long distance telephone charges.

The toll free number is 1-877-956-CRCA or 1-877-956-2722.

"The addition of this toll free service ensures that residents of our jurisdiction have a full range of choices to communicate with us by the method convenient for them," says CRCA General Manager Steve Knechtel.

Here is everything you need to know to choose how you wish to communicate with the CRCA:

Telephone: 613-546-4228 for local calls

Toll Free: 877-956-2722 effective from anywhere within the 613 area code

E-mail: [cra@cataraquiregion.on.ca](mailto:crca@cataraquiregion.on.ca)

Website: www.cataraquiregion.on.ca





Keep active all winter and spring in one of our conservation areas. Visit our website at www.cataquairegion.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
- maximum fee of \$10.00 per car.

Annual passes are available for \$60.00 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 4:30 p.m. on weekends from January 1 to April 1
- 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from April 5 to April 27
- Closed Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Closed weekends from May to September. Available for room rentals.

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 26
(11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
You won't want to miss our fifth 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 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 5 to February 23**, weather permitting. Register in advance, or on the day of the lesson, at the Outdoor Centre. Cost is \$14.00 per person or \$12.00 per person for annual pass holders.

Group lessons are one-hour in length. 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, skates and snowshoes are available for rent at the Outdoor Centre.

Ice Rink Rental
Host your own evening skating party! Rink rental includes access to the warming huts. Call Shannon Fleming at (613) 546-4228 ext. 222 or sfleming@cataquairegion.on.ca for more information or to make a booking.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet Sunday, January 20
Pre-register for each event 30 minutes before start time. (Registration fee is \$2.50 per person or \$5.00 per team.) The day's events include:

- 10:00 a.m. - Family Fun Relay, skate, snowshoe and ski.
- 1:00 p.m. - Cross-Country Ski Loppets, 5 km or 10 km.

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 10). Skis and snowshoes are available to rent at the Outdoor Centre.

Evening Skate Saturday, January 26
(6:00 to 9:00 p.m.)
Bring out the whole family and skate under the stars on Kingston's largest natural ice rink. We'll have the rink lights on and the woodstove burning so you'll be able to enjoy a fantastic evening outdoors. You can stop by the Outdoor Centre for a cup of hot chocolate. Skate rentals will also be available.

Tracks and Scat Hike Sunday, January 27
(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 tracks and scat hike led by Anne Bown. You'll leave knowing a lot more about who has been in your own backyard.

Winter Sports P.A. Day Friday, February 1
(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, 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, and sleds. The program will run regardless of weather, we have alternate plans for interactive games and activities, if there is not enough snow. Cost is \$40.00 per child which includes equipment rentals and you must pre-register. Space is limited for this popular program, so register early. For more information call (613) 546-4228 ext. 251.

Mardi Gras Sunday, February 3
(1:00 to 4:00 p.m.)
Even though it's Sunday, come and celebrate Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras) with us. You can make yourself a mask, participate in cookie decorating, have your face painted and make s'mores by the campfire. It's a great way to get rid of the winter blahs.

Evening Skate Saturday, February 9
(6:00 to 9:00 p.m.)
For details see January 26.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet (Alternate Date) Sunday, February 10
This will be our alternate ski loppet date if the weather doesn't cooperate on January. For details, see the January listing.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Tracks in the Snow Thursday, February 21
(10:30 a.m.)
Meet at 10:30 a.m. at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre for a winter walk. We'll be looking for animal and bird tracks. Dress for the weather, bring lunch and drinking water.

Evening Skate Saturday, February 16
(6 p.m. to 9 p.m.)
For details see January 26.

Owl Prowl Saturday, February 23
(6:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.)
Bundle up and join us for a hike as we go on an evening hike in search of owls at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. Meet at the Outdoor Centre for either the 6:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. hike.

Polish Easter Egg Decorating Sunday, March 2
(1:00 to 4:00 p.m.)
Easter is in March this year, so we have scheduled this popular program in time for you to display your decorated eggs at Easter. Lisa Morriss-Andrews and friends will instruct you on the intricate art of Polish egg decorating. You must pre-register for a fee of \$5.00 per person, all supplies are included. Call (613) 546-4228 ext. 221 to register. Due to the use of candles during this class, only children 12 and up can register for this program.

Turtle Conservation Sunday, April 6
(2:00 to 4:00 p.m.)
Come for an informative talk on turtles. Join Matt Ellerbeck at the Outdoor Centre to learn about turtles, the many threats they face, and what can be done to help our shelled friends. Matt's presentation will feature a special, live turtle friend. You can also visit with Matt and friends after his talk from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m.

Keep It Natural - And They Will Come Sunday, April 13
(2:00 p.m.)
How do I enhance my backyard to attract wildlife? Naturalist Terry Sprague offers a few hints on what berry and seed producing shrubs and trees to plant, as well as bird feeders, nest boxes, and providing water. Come and learn about the basic needs of wildlife. Nesting boxes will be on display and there will be plenty of handouts to take home.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program Signs of Spring Thursday, April 17
(10:30 a.m.)
Meet at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre. It's springtime out there and we're searching for frogs and other spring arrivals. Dress for the weather. Be sure to bring lunch and water.

Volunteer for Nature Open House Spring Trail and Garden Cleanup Saturday, April 19
(1:00 to 4:00 p.m.)
Rain date: Sunday, April 20 (1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.)

Free Admission
Celebrate Earth Day by volunteering for nature at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. Help prepare the trails and butterfly gardens for spring. Bring your work gloves, safety glasses and any trimming and digging tools labeled with your name on it. We have extra if you need to borrow tools.

Spring Awakenings P.A. Day Program Friday, April 25
(8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)
Ages 6 to 11
Give your child(ren) a P.A. Day full of spring adventure and fun. We'll be exploring the fields, forests and marshes of the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. Our activities will include searching for salamanders, making friends with frogs, singing with the birds, playing tonnes of games, doing a craft and having wonderful experiences in the great outdoors.

Drop-off begins at 8:30 a.m. and the program runs until 4:30 p.m. Bring your own snacks, drinks and lunch as well as suitable outdoor clothes. The program will run regardless of the weather. We have alternate plans which include interactive games and activities. Cost is \$30.00 per child and you must pre-register. Space is limited for this popular program, so register early. Registration forms are available on our website and at the CRCA Administration Office and the Outdoor Centre. For more information call (613) 546-4228 ext. 251.

Introduction to Fly Fishing and Fly Casting Saturday, April 26
(10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)
The Kingston and Area Fly

Fishing Club is offering a one-day introduction to fly fishing and fly casting course. The emphasis will be on casting technique with hands-on instructions. Some time will be spent on related concerns such as equipment, safety, and other topics associated to fly fishing in the Kingston area. A demonstration of fly tying is also planned.

The cost is \$20.00 per person (ages 12 and up), plus the gate entry fee. Necessary equipment will be provided but you may also bring your own. Bring a lunch and wear weather appropriate clothing. A hat is a good idea. Participants under age 15 must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is required. Registration forms are available on our website or by calling (613) 546-4228 ext. 221.

Maple Madness

March 8 to 16 (March Break)
March 22 and 23
March 29 and 30
(9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)
March means maple syrup at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. 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!

Puppet Shows Saturday, March 8
(11:30 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. We have two puppet shows daily 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Guided Tours Sunday, March 9
(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 10 Wednesday, March 12 and Friday, March 14
(Daily at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 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., 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the March Break.

Guided Tours Tuesday, March 11 and Thursday, March 13
(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. and 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday during the March Break.

Brown Bag Seniors' Program A Visit to the Sugar Bush Thursday, March 13
(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 and join in a guided tour back in the sugar bush. Dress warmly, bring drinking water and your camera.

Foundation Bake Sale Puppet Shows Saturday, March 15
Pick up some sweet treats at the annual Foundation Bake Sale at the Outdoor Centre. We have two puppet shows daily 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. See Saturday, March 8

Frog Night Hike Friday, May 2
(7:30 p.m. Family Hike)
Bring everyone in the family out to our annual frog hike. You'll learn about the different frogs that live at Little Cataraqui Creek and go on a short walk to try to find our friends.

description for more information about our puppet shows.

Guided Tours Sunday, March 16
(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 Saturday, March 22
We have two puppet shows daily 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. See Saturday March 8 for more information.

Guided Tours Sunday, March 23
(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.

Olde Thyme Sugar Bush Chores Saturday, March 29
(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
Try your hand at some "olde thyme" sugar bush chores today. You can try log sawing, emptying sap buckets, tapping trees, and butter making. We'll also have taffy-on-the-snow demonstrations.

Guided Tours Sunday, March 30
(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.

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Students study Collins Creek greenway; make recommendations



The Queen's School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) worked with a number of groups including the CRCA to develop a discussion paper for the Collins Creek Greenway.

Students at Queen's University's School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP) gained practical experience working on a greenway project for the Collins Creek watershed.

A greenway is a linear corridor of land and water. Its purpose is to protect ecological integrity and provide open space.

The Collins Creek watershed begins at Inverary Lake, flows southwest into Collins Lake which continues into the main portion of Collins Creek. From there it flows in a southwestern direction through a more urbanized area ending at the Bayview Wetland and Collins Bay. Tributaries include the Glenvale and Westbrook creeks.

The project dates back to a 2006 discussion paper prepared for Loyalist Township, the City of Kingston and the CRCA. It was agreed that a greenway for the Collins Creek watershed is worthwhile. The Township of South Frontenac subsequently

joined the project.

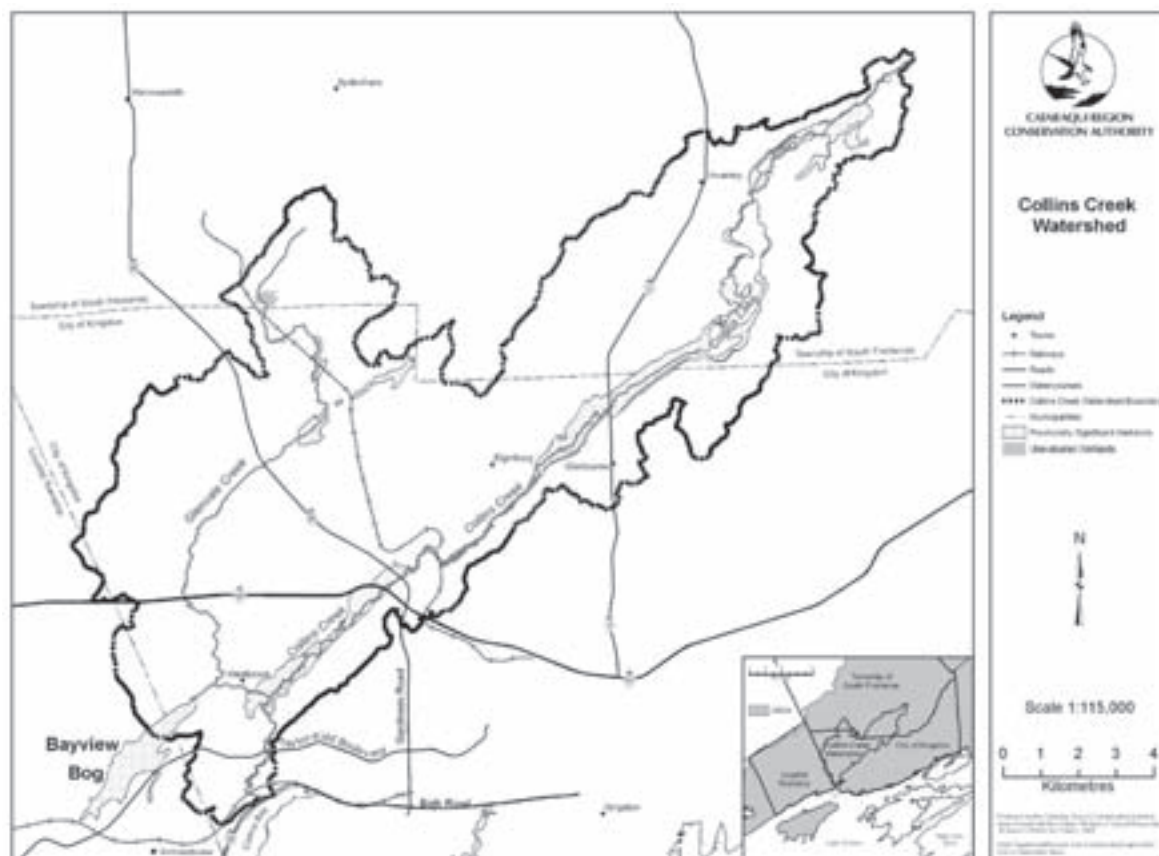
The watershed flows through all three municipalities and lies within CRCA jurisdiction, hence the four-way agreement.

SURP students acted as consultants for the client group consisting of staff from the CRCA and the municipalities. Terms of reference guided the students. Their focus was:

- development and growth pressure
- ecological evaluation
- land use policy
- trails
- possible land acquisition strategies.

Concurrently, community stakeholders from the three municipalities assembled. The group included an area developer, watershed residents and farmers. The stakeholders group involved representatives from the environmental, health and economic sectors.

The students produced a



Collins Creek Watershed Map – The headwaters of the Collins Creek watershed is Inverary Lake. It includes parts of three municipalities – South Frontenac, Loyalist and Kingston. Collins Creek empties into Lake Ontario at Collins Bay.

report entitled *Collins Creek Watershed Greenway Study: Discussion Report*. This is available for viewing at the CRCA office.

SURP students presented the main findings and recommendations on December 10. This meeting was attended by the stakeholder group, community members, staff from the CRCA, Loyalist Township and the City of Kingston.

The students' work is com-

plete.

"Municipal and CRCA staff and the stakeholder group will reconvene early in 2008 to continue work on a greenway strategy drawing on report recommendations," says CRCA Environmental Planner Lindsay Closs who supervised the students' efforts. "Eventually, the final greenway strategy will be presented to the three councils and the CRCA board for consideration."

OMAFRA specialist to speak March 19

Jack Kyle, a specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) will discuss grazing, pasture and forage management on Wednesday, March 19 at 7:00 p.m. at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre.

Mr. Kyle is a recognized provincial expert on livestock grazing and is visiting Kingston to share his expertise. This event should be of special interest to anyone with livestock.

Come, bring your questions.

More details about the event will be provided shortly on the CRCA website at www.cataquairegion.on.ca.

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It was a busy year for the Cataraqui Trail Management Board

The proximity of 2007's International Plowing Match (IPM) to a section of the Cataraqui Trail inspired three major initiatives.

Project One: Cataraqui Trail Management Board member Katherine Cartwright headed a project that put to good use a \$1,934 grant from the provincial Communities in Action fund.

"This is an initiative of the Ministry of Health to encourage people to go out and do things, to get more exercise, with emphasis on kids," says Ms. Cartwright. "The hope is that maybe they'll stick to being active all their lives."

The money was used to promote awareness of the Cataraqui Trail through a mass mailing to 7,000 households adjacent to the trail. Results included 48 new trail memberships and \$2,600 in donations, says Ms. Cartwright. The trail management board also expects to attract more volunteers.

"People now are much more aware of the Cataraqui Trail and will use it more," predicts Ms. Cartwright.

She cites the example of a school class outing led by Kingston Field Naturalists members Anne Robertson and Erwin Batalla. Ms. Cartwright reports that participating students, teachers and parents enjoyed the event.

"It's a start," she says. "Maybe next year we can expand on it with other schools."

Project Two: The trail's management board applied to Leeds

and Lanark Counties Valley Heartland fund.

"It's a fund to help promote business and bring in industry and tourism," explains trail management board member Pat McNamee.

The management board was granted \$14,000 and contributed 40 per cent as its share. The money funded 30 loads of crushed stone to grade and resurface the trail in the Forfar-Portland area, near the IPM site, as well as equipment rental. Further, new large signs were erected promoting the trail where it crosses Highways 15 and 42, both near the IPM site. Additional smaller signs were also erected along the trail and at the IPM site.

The balance of the cash was

used to create a parking lot for hikers to park their vehicles at Elgin Station on Highway 15, also near the IPM site.

Project Three: Doug Knapp is a section coordinator for the Cataraqui Trail. He explains how an annual \$5,000 grant from the Bedford recreation committee, in South Frontenac Township, was invested in new signage identifying the trail where it crosses roads.

"The signage is useful because it has a definite purpose," explains Mr. Knapp. "It identifies the (Cataraqui) Trail."

Most of the new signage was erected in the Bedford District of South Frontenac Township. Before municipal amalgamation, Bedford was a separate township, now a district within South



An example of the new large signs erected along the Cataraqui Trail.

Frontenac.

Some of the grant money was invested in improving the trail surface by grading it and applying new crushed stone then compacting it.

"All this benefited the Cataraqui Trail," says Mr. Knapp.

IPM memories offered by Cat Trail Board

The Cataraqui Trail Management Board is offering one-of-a-kind souvenirs of the International Plowing Match held last September 18 to 22.

Proceeds from this fundraising event support the Cataraqui/Trans-Canada Trail.

"This offer includes a chance to acquire a 45-minute DVD containing both aerial and ground-level photographs," explains Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Conservation Lands Coordinator Rob Gerritsen. "Anyone interested should fill out the form below then send it in including a cheque or postal money order."



This is what the IPM looked like from the air.

Cheques and money orders should be made payable to:
Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Photo Offering
1641 Perth Road, Box 160
Glenburnie, ON, K0H 1S0
Please allow three to four weeks for delivery.

ITEM	QUANTITY	TOTAL ITEM COST
a. IPM 2007 Air & Ground 45 min. DVD	@ \$25 each	
b. Selected photos, set of 10 best aerial 4"X6"	@ \$20 each	
c. Antique tractors & machinery – aerial 11"X14"	@ \$28 each	
d. RV camping area, special aerial photo 11"X14"	@ \$28 each	
e. Int. Plowing Match, the big picture 11"X14"	@ \$28 each	
f. IPM air & ground 45 min. VHS tape	@ \$20 each	
Prices include taxes & shipping costs		TOTAL ORDER COST

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Offer expires 31 March 2008

CRCA participates in International Plowing Match



The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority wagons were borrowed for use at the International Plowing Match.

Photo credit: Rob Gerritsen

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) joined five other eastern region authorities to participate in the International Plowing Match (IPM) September 18 to 22 at Crosby, north of Gananoque.

The conservation authorities' display was in the conservation tent. The tent measured 60 feet by 150 feet and sheltered 25 conservation displays. The six eastern Ontario Conservation Authorities shared a double booth arranged by CRCA personnel. The overall conservation tent was organized by the Grenville Stewardship Council and a committee representing some participants.

IPM attendance was estimated at 88,000. About 45 per cent, or 39,740 people, visited the

conservation tent and the conservation authorities' booth.

The booth featured:

- Professor Trout, an animated, talking fish model that delivered conservation messages through a sound system, operated by a concealed person;
- a large display unit was the booth centerpiece; and
- a map illustrated the six participating conservation authorities and their towns.

Visitors were invited to locate their hometowns with a pin. Due to the popularity of this interactive exhibit, the map had to be changed twice and the pin supply was exhausted by 10 a.m. the second day. It was replenished by Day Three.

Participating conservation authorities included: CRCA, Quinte Conservation; Rideau Valley Conservation Authority; South Nation Conservation Authority; Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority and the Raisin Region Conservation Authority.

The five-day event included a massive, tented city consisting of farm and rural-related exhibits and vendors. This included antiques and historical displays,

educational tents, a huge recreational vehicle park and a variety of entertainment in addition to the plowing competition. More than 80 musical groups entertained over the five days of the event.

It required 52 committees of volunteers to stage the IPM. Organizers expected the IPM's economic impact to exceed \$25 million to the local economy. It cost more than \$3 million to stage.

The IPM was billed as the largest event ever staged in Leeds and Grenville Counties.

CRCA participation provided a public face for the conservation authority and demonstrated commitment to the agricultural community. The IPM is a public spectacle, a celebration of rural life. It is an entertainment event with a strong cheer-leading component that celebrates country living.



Low water alert has ended for CRCA jurisdiction



The CRCA watershed experienced a Level I drought this past fall due to low rainfall. Under a Level I drought, residents are asked to reduce water consumption by 10 per cent.

On December 5, the Cataraqui Region Water Response Team (WRT) ended the Level 1 Low Water Condition declared on September 18.

"Rain throughout November has replenished regional lakes and streams and has started to alleviate low ground water levels," says Mara Shaw, watershed management coordinator for the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA).

The conservation authority is the WRT's convening authority. CRCA and WRT jurisdictions correspond and include all or parts of 11 municipalities covering 3,500 sq. km. These are: Athens, Brockville, Elizabethtown-Kitley, Front of Yonge, Gananoque, Kingston, Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Loyalist, Greater Napanee, Rideau Lakes and South Frontenac.

The WRT is convened after an extended period of low rainfall often resulting in low

water levels. It may issue three successively serious low water level declarations. Under a Level I warning, the WRT advocates for a 10 per cent cut in water consumption. Under Level II, this increases to 20 per cent. A Level III is a severe drought declaration.

"The WRT asks that residents continue to conserve water because groundwater levels are still low in many areas," says Ms. Shaw. "We note also that Lake Ontario remains below average levels for this time of year."

The WRT does not supersede existing agencies, policies or laws. Instead, it coordinates actions of water management agencies, private sector organizations and water users during drought.

"The low water declaration followed an August that saw less than 40 per cent of the normal rainfall and a dry start to September," said Ms. Shaw. "Streams across the region were quite low, even for late summer. The long-term Environment Canada forecast was for continued above average temperatures and below average precipitation through the fall."

WRT membership includes water managers, major water users, public health, agriculture, school boards, marina operators, golf courses, government agencies, dam operators and others.

The team convenes as necessary to evaluate a range of water data including precipitation, stream flows, groundwater levels, lake levels and forecasts.

Everyone loves a parade, even the CRCA

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority demonstrated its Christmas spirit during December.

Watershed Management Coordinator Mara Shaw, also a leader of the First Fort Henry Girl Guides, convinced the CRCA board of directors to make available one of the authority's wagons for the Kingston Santa Claus parade on November 17. About 30 guides rode on the float during the evening parade down Princess Street.

The wagon's usual use is to convey visitors to the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area sugar bush during the Maple Madness program in March. For the Santa Claus parade, it was towed by a CRCA vehicle driven by Richard Horton sporting a hard hat decorated with flashing Christmas lights. Mr. Horton works in the CRCA's Operations department.

But a Christmas float needs decoration. CRCA employees joined Ms. Shaw to decorate the wagon. They included: General Manager Steve Knechtel, Communications Coordinator Karla Maki-Esdon, Source Water Protection Manager Rob McRae, Authority Secretary Pat Hudson Mills, Biologist Tom Beaubiah, Communications and Marketing Assistant Michael Sykes, and Conservation Lands Planner Jason Hynes. Operations staff Clarence Shetler, Ian Brown, Rick Knapp and Richard Horton modified the wagon to hold a banner and made sure that the lights had electricity.

The decorating crew untangled metres of strings of coloured lights then mounted them on and around the wagon and the Christmas tree. Others hand-coloured signs reflecting the various stages in the life of a tree. The finishing touches were



The CRCA's Richard Horton wore a specially lighted helmet to drive the vehicle that towed the CRCA float in Kingston's Santa Claus parade.

The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area assisted with the CRCA float in the Brockville Santa Claus parade.



added later by the Girl Guides.

A week later, Ms. Shaw drove the float to Brockville where the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area climbed aboard for their city's Christmas parade.

And shortly after that, Conservation Lands Coordinator Rob Gerritsen braved sub-zero temperatures to enter the CRCA float in the Harrowsmith Christmas parade.

Tree Planting and Well Information Workshops Coming to the Outdoor Centre

Do you want to learn more about maintaining your well? Or maybe you're interested in planting trees and want to know what programs are available. Well you're in luck!

The CRCA is co-hosting two evening workshops at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre.

On **Thursday, February 28**, come out and learn about **groundwater and wells** with Mary Jane Conboy of Well Wise. Learn how to protect your drinking water and maintain

your well. The workshop begins at 7:00 p.m. More information about this workshop, will be available shortly on the CRCA website.

Tree planting programs will be the focus of a second workshop on **Thursday, March 6**. Trees Ontario and the CRCA will host a free tree planting workshop to introduce landowners to their local planting agencies. The sessions will provide both parties the opportunity to discuss tree planting capacity and local programs available.

This is an opportunity for landowners and local partners to come together, meet and talk more about tree planting options. Workshop space is limited and pre-registra-

tion is strongly recommended. Call Trees Ontario now at 1-877-646-1193 to register for the workshop.



The CRCA is co-hosting workshops on wells and tree planting programs this winter.



Foundation News

The Cataraqi Conservation Foundation supports the CRCA in raising funds for Authority projects – such as acquisition of environmentally sensitive land – and programs such as education of young people concerning the environment. Two major fundraising endeavours are the Partners in Education and the Forever Green fall gala banquet. Thanks to you readers and many more patrons, we are achieving considerable success in providing funds for special Authority initiatives.

Forever Green

The Cataraqi Conservation Foundation organizes a gala evening each year. Purpose of the gala evening is to raise funds for CRCA initiatives and to provide a special pre-holiday celebration for friends of conservation. This year the gala evening convened at the Royal Military College Senior Officers' Mess on Saturday, November 10, 2007. We were highly successful at achieving both objectives.

Financial sponsors contribute generously to the success of **Forever Green**. An outstanding example of sponsorship generosity was INVISTA, who presented the Foundation with a cheque for \$10,000 in support of Forever Green fundraising. Business and individual sponsors added more than \$16,000 to the bottom line for Forever Green.

More than 160 friends of conservation attended the November 10 gala evening. Wonderful food, professional service, door prizes, a live auction, and a silent auction heightened the success of this pre-winter celebration. And don't forget the music.

Special thanks go to Erica Pulling, whose soft and sweet harp music kept attendees company through the pre-dinner festivities, and bagpiper Allison Shannon, who piped dinner guests to their tables. Additional thanks to Rick Knapton of the CRCA and the Lemoine Point native tree nursery group for their help with the table centrepieces.

We will keep you posted as we confirm a date for next year's **Forever Green** gala evening. Watch these *Cat Tales* pages! Meanwhile, we thank all of those who contributed to the success of the November 10 event, including its sponsors, advertisers, auction item donors, and attendees. Net profits for the evening totalled an estimated \$35,000, all of which goes to the conservation authority in support of its land acquisition and education programs.

Partners in Education

The **Partners in Education** annual campaign reaches out to the community seeking contributions toward conservation education programs run by the



INVISTA Canada presented a cheque for \$10,000 for CRCA conservation education programs to the Cataraqi Conservation Foundation at the 2007 Forever Green event.

Guests at the Forever Green event enjoyed a live and silent auction as well as dinner at the Royal Military College Senior Staff Mess.

Cataraqi Region Conservation Authority. We approach members of the community through direct mailings, providing the recipient with a return form and mailing address to facilitate contributions by cheque or credit card.

Partners in Education letters were distributed in September. Any contributions you send the through this program directly support CRCA education programs at Little Cataraqi Creek Conservation Area and Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. If we missed you with our letter distribution, please call the CRCA at (613) 546-4228 for help with ensuring your contribution reaches the Foundation.

New Board Members

The board of directors of the Cataraqi Conservation Foundation constitutes the executive management team for the Foundation. Working closely with the general manager and other staff of the Cataraqi Region Conservation Authority, the Foundation board serves the interests of residents of the area by securing funds and



providing custodianship for Foundation endowment funds. John Morse, president of the Foundation's board, is pleased to announce that two new area residents have accepted an offer to join the Foundation board. Ian Wilson and Don Workman joined the Foundation board at the end of 2007.

Other Foundation Activities

Pencil into your calendar a note for March 15 and the Cataraqi Conservation Foundation bake sale. Once again focused on raising funds for authority programs, this bake sale features home-baked goodies that will grace your springtime table beautifully. March 15 is the Saturday ending March Break. Save that date.

Forever Green 2007 Sponsors and Donors



Our thanks to all those individuals and businesses who contributed so generously with their goods and services to our annual fundraiser for conservation education and land acquisition.

Thanks also to Alicia Gordon, Auctioneer.

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Teachers, it's a good time to book your class visits now

It's a brand new year and a great time to book a school class visit to the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

For several years, school teachers booking programs have made their arrangements with the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority's Education Officer Stana Luxford. For the next 12 months, Education Assistant Angela McAneney will fulfil Ms. Luxford's duties while she is on maternity leave.

Ms. Luxford is expected to return to the CRCA in January 2009. Meanwhile book your visits by calling Ms. McAneney at (613) 546-4228 ext. 251. If your call is long distance, use the CRCA's new toll free number, 1-877-956-2722 ext. 251.

More than 8,000 school children from the region visit Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area every year. A variety of interesting and fun educational programs are available for all ages.

The CRCA has offered outdoor education for many years. Since the early 1980s, more than 100,000 area school children have visited Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area as part of a class visit.



Education Assistant Angela McAneney, left, will fill in for Education Officer Stana Luxford during Ms. Luxford's year of maternity leave.

Education programs continue at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

For those schools in the Brockville area, conservation education programs are also offered at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area. There are several programs that can be run during the winter months and, of course, our spring wetland programs continue to be popular.

Please visit the CRCA website at www.cataraquiregion.on.ca to see what programs are available. Then give Ron Gardiner a call at (613) 342-5824 or e-mail ron.gardiner@sympatico.ca to make a booking for your school group.



"Wet Paint!" at Lemoine Point Conservation Area

The small bright yellow signs with the bold lettering draw your eye to the fine print describing the third in the assaults this past summer against invasive species at Lemoine Point Conservation Area. The cheeky epithet is the brainchild of Friends of Lemoine Point Treasurer, Chris Hargreaves and his active volunteer committee of invasive species guerrilla warriors.

"Wet Paint! is both a warning and an invitation to learn more about our campaign," explains Chris. Curious site visitors learn that painting the stumps of the European buckthorn cut down in the campaign is one experiment by the volunteers to determine how best to prevent suckers growing back up and continuing to proliferate.

"Once established, invasive species are very difficult to eradicate," Chris said. "If we are able to restrict these species, we can achieve our goal of maintaining the current diversity at Lemoine Point." Having attended the recent Ontario Terrestrial Invasive Plant Group conference in Hamilton, Chris noted that we have less of a problem than elsewhere, thanks partly to various attempts to control invasive species in previous years. The Friends are also one of the few

groups using purely mechanical controls – pulling and removal by hand. Most other sites across Ontario don't have the manpower available that the Friends' much-appreciated volunteers provide, and many resort to chemical means to combat the rapid spread of problem non-native species.

The volunteers at Lemoine Point have launched a three-tiered assault. Garlic mustard is pulled until June when seeds have formed and pulling would only help the spread – visitors will have noticed the yellow plastic garbage bags filled with garlic mustard with notices attached explaining that campaign. Then dog-strangling vine is tackled in July and August, mostly this year along the verges of the roads into the north entrance – aided by the City's cutting crews. This invasive vine that has laid waste to long stretches of the Don Valley Parkway escarpment in Toronto, for example, has not yet taken a firm hold at Lemoine Point. The final assault, in the fall, is on European buckthorn, which is everywhere at Lemoine, and spreading rapidly, "European buckthorn is easy to spot in the fall, as its leaves stay on much later than the native species," Chris said, "It has small blue-black berries, which birds

avoid as long as there is anything else to eat because they are a laxative."

Another committee member, Jane Murphy, is continually searching for different methods to control the invasions. In some respects, the whole campaign is a series of monitored experiments to discover what works and what doesn't – with new ideas in store for next year, drawn from the invasive species conference and elsewhere. Among the successes so far is that garlic mustard pulled last year on a much smaller scale, resulted in less re-growth this year. Also, by cutting the same patches of dog-strangling vine several times, the volunteers observed that the last re-growth did not have time to set seed before frost, which they hope will mean a reduced infestation next year.

The pay-off? – preserving the rich diversity of plant and animal life at Lemoine Point Conservation Area. "If we don't do this," Chris said, "in 10 to 20 years we could have a European buckthorn forest with a garlic mustard understory, edged by dog-strangling vine."

The Lemoine Point Invasive Species Control Group welcomes new members. – If you would like to help, please call Chris Hargreaves at (613) 389 8993 for more information.

Community Foundation of Greater Kingston funds ski boot investment

Chair Robert Morrison of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) accepted a \$4,000 grant cheque on November 29. The money will buy new ski boots for use by area school children participating in the CRCA's winter outdoor education program.

"It is a pleasure to accept this grant from the Community Foundation of Greater Kingston on behalf of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority," Mr. Morrison said at a reception held to dispense grants to community groups. "Be assured that we shall put it to good use in our outdoor education and public recreation programs."

The CRCA provides area school children and members of the public with quality, outdoor educational experiences. In winter, this means making available snowshoes, skates or skis so visitors can experience the natural world at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. This activity not only engages them in learning, it requires physical exercise.

The CRCA winter outdoor education program relies on skis to convey stu-

dents onto frozen wetlands and into the winter silence of forests to learn survival techniques, both human and animal. On weekends the recreational equipment is available for rental by members of the public.

"Our existing stock of ski boots is worn out; many are beyond repair," Mr. Morrison noted. "This generous grant will enable us to complete our replacement of ski equipment."

The CRCA believes it is essential to prepare the next generation to be good environmental stewards. This means taking them to the 'outdoor classroom' in all seasons. About 8,000 area school children pass through this program yearly, many in winter. More than 100,000 area school children have participated in the program, in all seasons, since the early 1980s.

Mr. Morrison issued an invitation to everyone to "visit us at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area where you can rent either skis, snowshoes or skates, assuming we have a traditional winter with ice and snow, this year."

Looking ahead to summer

Although it seems far away, it won't be long until July rolls around again. The CRCA is once again offering our summer day camp for children aged six to 11. The Nature Explorers Camp is based at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. It runs weekly from July 7 to August 22. Choose from one of seven theme weeks. Each week includes two trips to Gould Lake Conservation Area for swimming and other outdoor activities. Cost is \$160 per week per child. Registration forms will be available shortly on the CRCA website, at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre and the CRCA Administration Office.



The Nature Explorers Camp includes two trips to Gould Lake Conservation Area each week.