



CAT TALES

Winter 2010 Issue

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Check out the latest news in Cat Tales, then bundle up and head outdoors with us. Try out a winter sport or just enjoy nature.

- Looking for something to do this winter? Check out our What's Happening section on pages 6 and 7. There are plenty of activities for the whole family to enjoy.
- The Cataraqui Conservation Foundation held another successful fundraiser in November. Read about this and their plans for spring on page 11.
 - The Friends of Lemoine Point successfully continue their battle with aliens and predators. See pages 4 and 5.
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- Outdoor education, winter fun and summer camp are featured on page 12.
 - Plus news from all around the CRCA watershed.

CRCA produced watershed report card

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) has joined a majority of Ontario's conservation authorities that publish a watershed report card, a document that grades the region's environmental health.

"It presents the results of monitoring and evaluating the health of our region's natural features," explains Watershed Management Coordinator Mara Shaw. "The watershed report card is a snapshot of current conditions of our environment."

It is intended to publish the document every five years; the next is due in 2012. Watershed report cards are an initiative of Conservation Ontario, the umbrella organization for Ontario's 36 conservation authorities.

A watershed is defined as an area of land that drains to a river, lake or stream. The Cataraqui Region is composed of 10 watersheds within an area bounded by the Bay of Quinte on the west to Brockville on the east, north to Newboro.

Watersheds within the Cataraqui region include: the Bay of Quinte; Amherst Island; Millhaven Creek; Collins Creek; Lit-

tle Cataraqui Creek; Great Cataraqui River; Gananoque River; Lyn, Golden and Jones Creek; Buells and Butler's Creeks; and the St. Lawrence River.

The report card focuses on three indicators: surface water quality, groundwater quality and forest conditions.

Surface water quality grades are mostly As and Bs, but two areas were not graded due to insufficient data. Surface water quality is based on water chemistry and invertebrate species that live in the water. Three sub-watersheds scored an A.

The report card notes that: "Surface water quality is generally good, but there is room for improvement."

Similar grades were awarded for groundwater quality. This is determined by natural conditions although changes may result from human impact. Six out of seven groundwater monitoring wells scored an A. The remaining well received a B due to elevated chloride levels.

The amount of forest cover and forest interior are used to grade the quality of watershed forest conditions. Throughout



The CRCA's watershed report card is available on our website or at the Administration Office.

most of the region, forest conditions are generally healthy and are graded A. One sub-watershed was graded C.

Grades are calculated based on provincial standards established by Conservation Ontario.

The watershed report card is available on the

CRCA website www.cataraquiregion.on.ca. Printed copies are available upon request at the CRCA Administration Office at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area or by calling (613) 546-4228 ext. 221 or toll-free 1-877-956-CRCA (2722).



Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority
P.O. Box 160,
Glenburnie, Ontario
K0H 1S0



Creature Feature

Northern River Otter, (*Lontra canadensis*)

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Finance Coordinator Cheryl Rider is the luckiest of all CRCA employees. Her office overlooks a natural arena where some of nature's most playful clowns frolic.

In winter, her office window provides a grand view of northern river otters (*Lontra Canadensis*) playing on the reservoir ice here at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

"Otters often amuse themselves by rolling, sliding, diving or 'body surfing'," notes Mammals of Ontario by Tamara Eder.

Wikipedia echoes Eder: "Sliding occurs mostly on even surfaces of snow or ice, but can also occur on grassy slopes and muddy banks."

Wikipedia further defines otter play as: "sliding, chasing one's own tail, swimming, juggling sticks or pebbles, rolling around in the grass or snow, wrestling, and playing with captured prey or with other river otters."

Eder writes that otters seem particularly interested in playing on slippery surfaces. "... they leap onto snow or mud with their forelegs folded close to their bodies for a streamlined toboggan ride."

Adult river otters weigh between five and 14 kg (11 and 30 lb) and males are slightly larger than females. Body length ranges from 0.66 m (26 in) to 1.07 m (42 in). About one third of the total length is a long, tapering tail.

Agile in the water,

otters move rapidly on land although they lose some of their aquatic agility. Their sense of touch is well developed and otters are dexterous. The senses of smell and hearing are acute.

Otter are large, weasel-like carnivores yet their bodies are streamlined. Their fur is dark brown, almost black when wet, on the upper body, but paler below. They have broad, flat heads with small eyes and ears (ears and nostrils close when the animal dives), but sport prominent whiskers for extra sensory input. Their toes are webbed.

"On land, the river otter can walk, run, bound or slide," notes Wikipedia.

River otters are sensitive to pollution since it

affects their predominantly fishy prey so an otter in the Little Cataraqui Creek reservoir is good news.

They are ambush hunters and their prey includes fish, crayfish, turtles, frogs and occasionally birds or other mammals.

Otter habitat consists of wooded lakes, ponds or rivers. They live in burrows along the banks. A permanent den includes entrances both above and below the waterline.

Wikipedia suggests that river otters may live as long as 21 years in captivity. In the wild they normally live for eight or nine years, but can survive for 13 years.

Otters are active year-round although more so at night. These highly mobile creatures have

been known to travel as far as 42 km in one day although daily movements average less than 10 per cent of that.

An otter can remain submerged holding its breath for four minutes.

Wikipedia says they can attain a swimming speed of 11 km per hour, dive to almost 20 metres and travel 400 metres submerged on one breath.

These members of the weasel family are far more social than their cousins. Social groups consist of a mother and her pups and may include helpers, unrelated adults, yearlings or juveniles. Wikipedia says that although rare, adult males may establish groups.

Female otters may reproduce at two years of age. Just before giving

birth to one to five, or possibly six pups, she appropriates the den of another animal, perhaps a beaver. Otter pups are born in March or April, blind and toothless.

Their eyes open after a month and they start to play at five or six weeks. Solid food consumption begins at nine or 10 weeks.

Males do not play a role in raising the pups. The young can look after themselves by fall, but usually remain with the family until the following spring when they depart to establish their own home range.

River otters occur through the CRCA jurisdiction wherever there is suitable habitat. In Canada, they occur in every province except for Prince Edward Island.

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Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

Editor – Karla Maki-Esdon

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Contributors

Tom Beaubiah, Chris Cannon, Donna Cellini, Stefan Foerster, Shannon Fleming, Rob Gerritsen, Chris Hargreaves, Jason Hynes, Richard Horton, Rick Knapton, Steve Knechtel, Stana Luxford Oddie, Karla Maki-Esdon, Larry McCurdy, Rob McRae, Erin Oogarah, Mara Shaw, Teresa Shevchenko, Michael Sykes, Sean Watt, Jerry Zabel



Send Mail to:
Editor

c/o Cataraqui Conservation Authority
P.O. Box 160 Glenburnie ON K0H 1S0
E-mail: karla@cataraquiregion.on.ca
Phone: (613) 546-4228 Fax: (613) 547-6474
Toll-Free Phone (613 area code) 1-877-956-CRCA (2722)

Member of



Otters are found throughout the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority watershed.

Draft Assessment Report Delayed

The Cataraqui Source Protection Committee is delaying publication of its draft Assessment Report. It was scheduled to be published in January 2010, but will now wait until the spring. After consultation with the Ministry of Environment it was determined that more details need to be filled in before the document is published.

The Assessment Report is one of the major stages in the drinking water source protection process. The report builds upon the background data compiled in the Watershed Characterization Report and pulls together the findings of 16 technical studies.

The purpose of the Assessment Report is to identify areas where drinking water sources are vulnerable to contamination or over use and to prioritize drinking water issues and threats within those vulnerable areas. This report will help us to prepare a source protection plan by 2012.

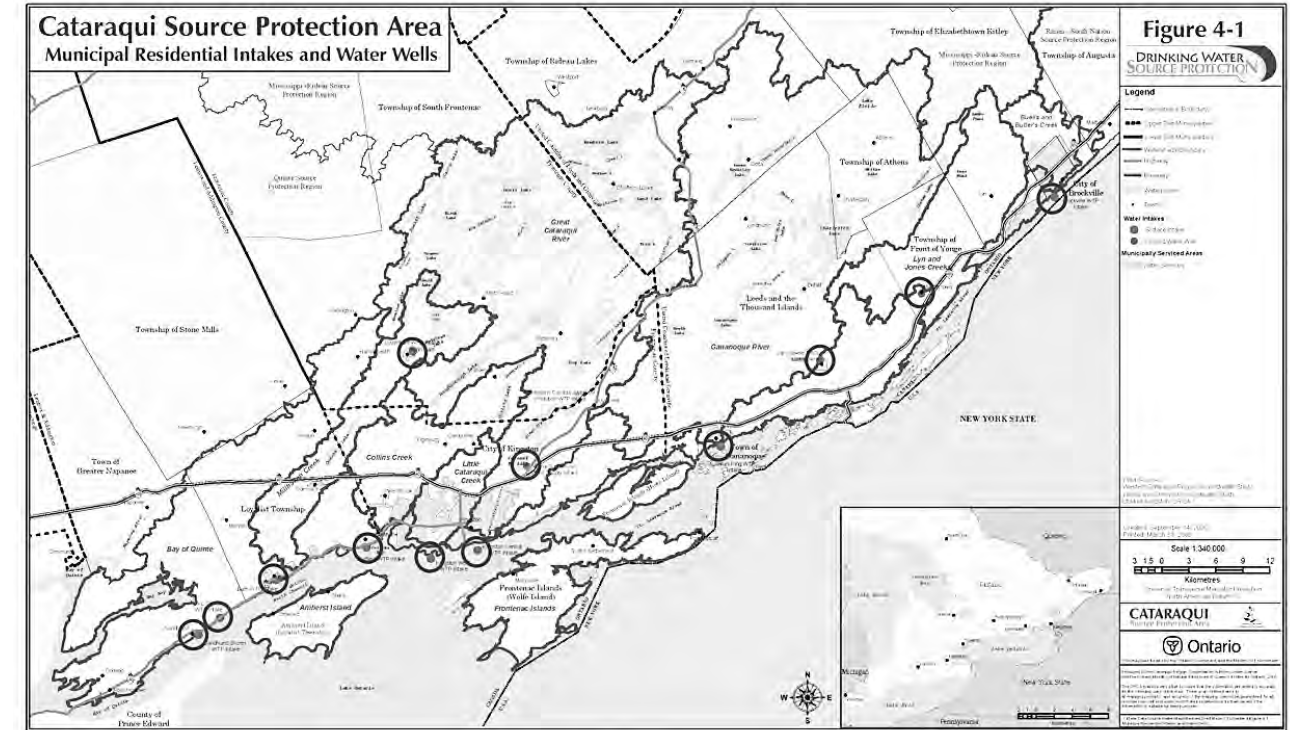
Our public consultation will be delayed until the spring but we will be meeting with our 12 municipal councils from January to March 2010. Staff will be updating the councils on the findings of our work so far. The public is welcome to attend any of these meetings and to speak with staff following the council presentations.

Cataraqui Drinking Water Source Protection Presentations to Municipal Councils

All meeting times are 7:00 p.m. except where noted. Meeting locations are the local municipal offices.

- January 11** – Loyalist Township
- January 12** – City of Brockville
- January 18** – Township of Front of Yonge
- January 19** – City of Kingston 7:30 p.m.
- January 25** – Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley
- January 26** – Town of Greater Napanee
- February 1** – Township of Athens
- February 2** – Town of Gananoque
- February 8** – Township of Frontenac Islands
- February 15** – Township of Rideau Lakes
- February 16** – Township of South Frontenac
- March 8** – Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands

Draft Assessment Report - Our Findings So Far



This map shows the Cataraqui Source Protection Area as well as the location of the municipal wells and water intakes.

The Assessment Report pulls together the information that we have gathered about our water resources in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area. This includes information about the amount and quality of our surface water (lakes, rivers and streams) and groundwater across the entire area plus a more detailed focus on the three municipal wells and 12 municipal water intakes in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area. The report also assesses water quality threats and issues around these intakes and wells and other areas where groundwater is considered to be vulnerable on a broader scale.

A brief summary of our findings is provided here. More detailed information is provided on our website www.cleanwater-cataraqui.ca.

The process for assessing risks to source water quality is prescribed by the Ontario government. The source protection initiative focuses on specific places where the source water is considered to be most vulnerable or sensitive to pollution and/or overuse. These places are called vulnerable areas. These vulnerable areas are either related to groundwater resources on a broad scale or to groundwater and surface water around municipal water treatment plants.

In these vulnerable areas, we evaluate drinking water issues and inventory drinking water threats. By assessing and ranking past, present and future activities that could harm the quality of source water, local communities can make informed decisions about how to protect their water supplies.

A drinking water issue is a problem in the source water for a municipal water treatment plant that could:

- affect the normal operation and effectiveness of that system and/or
- harm the health of people who drink the treated water.

An example of an issue is salt. It can come from natural sources, but it is also used in water softeners and to melt ice on roads.

A drinking water threat is an activity or a condition that has harmed or could harm the quality or quantity of a drinking water source. The Ministry of Environment has prescribed a list of 21 types of drinking water threats. These could include land uses such as old industrial sites located near a municipal water intake or well.

There are three municipal wells in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area.

There are eight municipal intakes along the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River shoreline in the Cataraqui Source Protection Area.

There is also one municipal intake located on Sydenham Lake.

CRCA staff have identified water quality issues at each of our municipal wells and we are in the process of evaluating potential threats to drinking water at each of our municipal wells and intakes. Water quality issues have been identified at four of our eight municipal intakes and at all three municipal wells.

More details about our Assessment Report findings can be found on our website: www.cleanwater-cataraqui.ca



Climate change: it's imprecise science

Sean Watt is the epitome of precision in all his pronouncements. After all, he is a water resources engineer at the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA). And professional engineers deify precision.

So he is cautious in addressing climate change, a subject that is possibly the epitome of imprecision. His dialogue is peppered with qualifiers like "I'm not sure that's absolutely substantiated by the data."

He is not alone. CRCA General Manager Steve Knechtel has an environmental science background. He also values precision.

"We don't really know what the impacts (of climate change) will be," he admits.

Okay, now try to imagine providing environmental services based on imprecise and often contradictory data. Welcome to the climate change discussion at a conservation authority. It's not about melting arctic ice packs at this level. The focus is flood plain mapping, storm water management, changes in eco regions and flood forecasting. Nothing as large as flooding coastal regions or desertification. Just life in a changing eastern Ontario climate.

So who speaks as an authority about climate change. Mr. Watt doesn't hesitate: "I'm not sure there really is one. So many different people do different stuff. Each country seems to have their own model based on their data. But chances are the Canadian model works best for Canada because it's set up using Canadian data."

So can he generalize about what data say about eastern Ontario?

"For temperature, yes," he replies. "All the models seem to say the temperature will increase."

But then it's back to the imprecision that frustrates his engineer persona.

He adds that at least three different computer models seem to suggest that regional precipitation may not change much. His actual words are that "... the predicted changes are not within a statistically significant difference."

There's a "but" implied and it's a biggie.

"If temperatures go up, specifically in the wintertime,



More frequent heavy storms and overflowing storm sewers are one likely effect of climate change in this area.

then chances are we get more rain and less snow. That might mean more freezing rain depending on how the temperature and precipitation work together," says Mr. Watt.

So is rainfall heavier now?

"That depends on whom you ask and how the data is put together," he replies with caution. He says that some studies are contradictory although it seems as if there are fewer rain events.

"That's one of the thoughts out there, but I'm not sure it's absolutely substantiated by the data," he warns.

But ask CRCA GM Knechtel about rainfall and he worries about more intense storms.

"That's going to have a big impact on one of our key business points which is flood plain management," he notes.

Floodplains are traditionally calculated using historic data. But that's rendered obsolete by the more intense type of rain event that accompanies climate change.

"When we get these heavy rain storms, you're seeing all kinds of water running down the sides of streets," Mr. Knechtel says.

tel says. "That's because the design for all those storm sewer systems is based on historical patterns and those patterns are being superseded. And chances are that some of our flood-plain mapping is not providing the safety it is intended to do."

This has serious implications for home owners, developers and municipal land use planners.

Mr. Watt reminds that the CRCA reviews proposed developments.

"If rainfall is changing then storm water management changes as well."

Storm water management is a consideration in development review.

Other climate change issues concern conservation authorities. For instance, the CRCA is justifiably proud to have planted more than 1.5 million trees since 1983. But climate change may cause shifts in eco regions affecting species that should be planted in future. That, in turn, also may change bird and animal habitat.

And if water levels are impacted, "... that's going to change the flow of streams and ultimately that may affect all the fish and other creatures dependent on it," theorizes Mr. Knechtel.

He notes that a green committee is considering how CRCA operations change through actions like alternative energy sources or self-supporting energy facilities.

Mr. Watt, the water resources engineer, echoes his general manager.

"The kind of things we can do around here ... to reduce our energy use, our water use, that's really as much as we can do from a conservation authority perspective," he says.

Mr. Watt concludes by noting that the United Nations predicts that climate change is happening faster than expected.

Are you ready for climate change? What are you doing to prepare? Cat Tales invites readers to send comments about how climate change will affect you and what you plan to do about it. Please limit your submissions to 250 words. Cat Tales will publish some submissions in future editions.

Friends group pioneers tree protection technique

The Friends of Lemoine Point Conservation Area's Native Plant Nursery are thwarting damage inflicted by hungry grazing animals on shrubs and young trees in this popular conservation area.

"So far, most of our efforts to protect reforested areas from predators have been ineffective or effective for only a short time," notes Friends member Larry McCurdy. "The primary villains are deer, voles and rabbits."

These predatory grazers eat bark, buds, foliage and twigs and that can destroy a small tree or shrub. Further,

voles burrow and eat roots as well. Rabbits and voles girdle trees by nibbling bark, killing them. On larger trees, deer also eat the foliage. In spring, they rub their antlers against trees stripping away bark, often killing the tree.

"Every cedar on the property has been browsed up to the height deer can reach," says Mr. McCurdy. "And any freestanding small tree will show antler scars on the trunk."

He adds that trees that are not killed outright are weakened and become vulnerable to drought and disease. This is discouraging when you're in the business of volunteering your time to plant young trees and shrubs.

"For smaller trees and shrubs, flexible plastic spiral wraps have provided reasonable protection from voles and rabbits, but not deer," says Mr. McCurdy.

In the wild, these grazing animals would be controlled by meat eaters like coyotes, wolves, bobcats, foxes, weasels, hawks and owls.

"Natural conditions don't exist at Lemoine Point because predators can't handle the human traffic so plant eaters flourish," laments Mr. McCurdy.

"We have planted thousands of trees over the past 10 years, but damage to them has been escalating and we are now in danger of losing them faster than

we can grow them," he adds.

The solution? Four-foot lengths of four-inch Big O perforated plastic piping most often used for drainage purposes.

"The piping is buried an inch or so into the ground around the trunk and pinned to keep it down," explains Mr. McCurdy. "This should keep out the voles. Four feet should be high enough to protect the trunk from deer antlers and rabbits."

The cost is about \$2 per tree and the process takes two volunteers about 15 minutes to protect one tree.

"The tubes have been paid for and installed by the

Friends of Lemoine Point," says Mr. McCurdy.

If successful, they will be removed in five to 10 years before they interfere with the tree's growth.

This leaves one problem: what to do about deer browsing on new growth and the lower twigs of any given tree.

"This sets the plant back, but it doesn't always destroy it," says Mr. McCurdy.

He notes that deer repellent works for a while, but its application is labour intensive. And it wears off rapidly.

But thwarting two out of three grazers (voles and rabbits) is still an excellent day's work.



Photo by Jerry Zabel

The Friends of Lemoine Point are having success protecting trees from deer, mice and voles using perforated plastic drainage pipe.



Davies Foundation grant funds improvements



Thanks to a grant from the Davies Foundation, improvements to the facilities at Gould Lake Conservation Area were made this past fall. Improvements included more sand in the beach area and replacing sections of dock and shoreline boardwalk shown here.

Thanks to the generosity of the Davies Charitable Foundation, improvement to facilities at the popular Gould Lake Conservation Area are proceeding.

"Over the years, wear and tear takes place on the facilities and upgrades are required," notes the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority's (CRCA) Conservation Lands Coordinator Rob Gerritsen.

The CRCA earmarked \$11,000 for this work. But \$8,000 of it comes in

the form of a grant from The Davies Charitable Foundation, the balance is funded by a CRCA budgetary surplus from earlier years.

"Gould Lake is a very popular property," notes Mr. Gerritsen. "We have a grassy area adjacent to the beach, some picnic tables, barbecues as well as a beach with access to the lake with canoe rentals so it's really popular with families and other groups."

The Gould Lake Con-

servation Area, located near Sydenham, contains 589 ha of wilderness located in the Canadian Shield. This day-use area has 20 km of trails and is an excellent place to commune with the natural world.

Already two of four dock sections have been replaced as part of the upgrades and improvements. Further, sand has been added to the beach swimming area.

Because of heavy public use, repairs to a boardwalk were delayed until traffic eased this fall.

If any money remains, more work is planned on the docks, adds Mr. Gerritsen.

CRCA operations staff provide the expertise.

"The actually, physical work is all carried out by our operations staff and also student summer staff where feasible," says Mr. Gerritsen.

A limiting factor is that there is no electricity in the conservation area. Mr. Gerritsen notes that noisy power generators are not appreciated by the public.

"After all, the public comes here for the quiet contemplation of nature."

Consultant's report examines feasibility of new Mac Johnson Wildlife Area Nature Centre



The Nature Centre at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area was built in the 1970s. The approved Master Plan recommends building a new nature centre in a different location.

A just completed consultant's report is generating investigation and discussion about replacing the Nature Centre at Brockville's Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.

"The report was in response to a recommendation in the property's master plan," explains Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) General Manager Steve Knechtel. "It looks at increasing user activity at Mac Johnson and how this property can be viewed as more of an asset to the community."

The consultant suggests

there are opportunities for partnerships with local organizations.

"One of the big issues is replacing the existing Nature Centre with some sort of new structure and the question is the scale of that building," Mr. Knechtel adds.

The consultant proposes three options. One is a building geared to support current programs. Another option would also add a possible meeting hall and outdoor garden space for use by community groups. A third option would include an eco-tourism centre.

Now that the report has been received by the CRCA board, some follow up is planned. Proposed partnerships will be investigated to examine possible property use and revenue potential. Also, the CRCA will try to determine costs.

"Our intention is to provide information to (CRCA board) members so they can decide if they want to charge ahead with the study recommendations," says Mr. Knechtel.

He adds that this work makes no commitment to any line of action. Further, costs will come from a special Mac Johnson Wildlife Area fund and not from the CRCA's general levy money.

"We want to do the immediate work over the next couple of months so the members will have that information early in the new year (2010)," says Mr. Knechtel.

The report was prepared by Francis Loughheed of BMB Consulting Services Inc. of Ottawa. He also calls for a coordinated development plan for the north and south sides of the property.

The report calls for building and expanding relationships with key community people and a focus on fundraising. The existing Nature Centre was built in the 1970s and the consultant advises that it has outlived its useful life. A new Nature Centre could be designed to meet many needs including educational goals, teaching an appreciation of wetland ecology and our relationship to our environment.

Friends of Lemoine Point continue invasive species battle

The Friends of Lemoine Point Conservation Area continue their battle against invasive (not native) plant species at the popular Kingston conservation area.

"We are trying to control three species," said Chris Hargreaves of the Friends in a previous interview. "They are: garlic mustard, dog-strangling vine and European buckthorn."

Several Friends spent Friday mornings during the fall removing European buckthorn from the con-

servation area.

There are approximately 300 varieties of wildflowers, shrubs and trees in the conservation area.

"About 100 are not native to Ontario, but most of the introduced species co-exist with the native species," Mr. Hargreaves says. "However the three species mentioned are expanding their ranges and replacing other plants."

The Friends of Lemoine Point launched a garlic mustard control program in May 2000. They expanded to include dog-

strangling vine in 2005 and again in 2007 to include European buckthorn.

"After a (buckthorn) tree is cut down, the stump is thoroughly smashed up with an axe to expose the wood just under the bark," explains Mr. Hargreaves. "The stump is then soaked with Ecosense."

This product's basic ingredients include strong vinegar and lemon juice. When applied to a stump, the immediate area takes on the aroma of a fish and chip shop. If done soon after the tree is felled, the

Ecosense is drawn down into the root system causing the stump's death.

"The good news is that Ecosense seems to be working," says Mr. Hargreaves. "Most of the stumps we treated in September have not produced suckers over the last two months."

Mr. Hargreaves cautions that treated stumps need to be checked in the spring to ensure their destruction.

To help, or to join the Friends, call Chris Hargreaves at (613) 389-8993.



From left to right are: Bill Stevenson, Claudia Stevenson, Marilyn Chilton, Phillida Hargreaves and Chris Hargreaves.



Enjoy the great outdoors this winter and spring in one of our conservation areas. Visit our website at www.cataquieregion.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. Effective January 1, 2010 the fee is:

- \$4.75 per person for adults and children over 12
- \$2.50 per person for children 12 and under
- Maximum fee of \$12.00 per car.
- Annual passes are available for \$70.00 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 6
- 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekends from April 11 to April 26
- Closed Good Friday and Easter Monday

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 in January and February from noon to 3:00 p.m. (weather permitting).

Winter Fun Day
Saturday, January 30
(11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)

You won't want to miss our ninth annual Winter Fun Day at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area! Enjoy dog sled races by the Mush

Larose Association - Training Division, skating on the pond, cross-country skiing,



snowshoeing and winter activities for children, displays and refreshments. 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 2 to February 27, weather permitting. Register in advance, or on the

day of the lesson, at the Outdoor Centre. Cost is \$14.00 per person. Group les-



sons are one-hour in length. Lesson times are 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Equipment Rentals

Cross-country skis, skates and snowshoes are available for rent at the Outdoor Centre. Rentals are available from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. All rentals must be returned by 4:00 p.m.

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 for more information or to make a booking.

Evening Skate

Saturday, January 16
(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.

Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet

Sunday, January 17
Register for each event 30 minutes before start time. (Registration fee is \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 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 7). Skis, skates and snowshoes are available to rent at the Outdoor Centre.

2010 ParaSport Winter Games

January 22 to 24
Come and cheer on the athletes to this cross-country skiing event. Certain trails will be temporarily closed to public access as part of this event.

Owl Prowl

Saturday, January 30
(6:00 p.m.)
Bundle up and join us as we go on an evening hike in search of owls at Little Cataraqui Creek Conser-

vation Area. Meet at the Outdoor Centre for the 6:00 p.m. hike.

Ski Waxing Clinic

Sunday, January 31
(2:00 p.m.)
Join the Canadian Ski Patrol for this hands-on workshop on ski waxing. Learn all about waxing techniques for different snow conditions. Bring your skis and waxing gear and think snow!

Winter Sports P.A. Day

Monday, 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, sledging and snowshoeing through the fields, forest and wetlands 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 register in advance. For more information call (613) 546-4228 ext. 251.

Mardi Gras

Sunday, February 14
(2:00 to 4:00 p.m.)
What a great way to spend Valentine's Day with the family. 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.

Family Day Wildlife CSI Nature Hike

Monday, February 15
(2:00 p.m.)
Learn how to identify animal tracks and scat on this fun winter hike. Use your new identification skills to investigate the animal scene to figure out

description.



Little Cat Classic Ski Loppet

(Alternate Date)
Sunday, February 7
This will be our alternate ski loppet date if the weather doesn't cooperate in January. For details, see January listing.
Evening Skate
Saturday, February 13
(6:00 to 9:00 p.m.)
See January 16 for a description.

what happened.

Trails: They Are a Changin'

Family Mini-Hike 4
Sunday, February 21
(2:00 p.m.)
Bring your family out to join Conservation Authority interpreter Anne Bown for her monthly mini-hikes. You'll get to see the seasonal changes happening on Trail 5.

Fishers

Sunday, February 28
(2:00 p.m.)
Jeff Bowman is a research scientist with the Ministry of Natural Resources. He will discuss the recovery of the fisher in southern Ontario and how climate change, agricultural practices and forest cover have altered our landscape and improved the habitat for fishers.

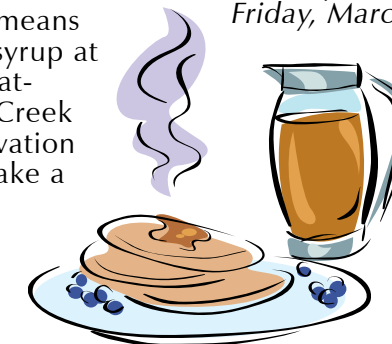
Trails: They Are a Changin'

Family Mini-Hike
Sunday, March 7
(2:00 p.m.)
See description on Sunday, February 21.

Maple Madness

March 13 to 21
(March Break)
March 27 and 28
April 3 and 4
(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 13
(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 every Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 14
(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
Take a guided tour of the sugar bush and learn about sweet water. See how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now.

Puppet Shows

Monday, March 15 to Friday, March 19
(Daily at 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 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 puppet shows from Monday to Friday during the March Break.

Guided Tours

Monday, March 15 to Friday, 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. There are sugar bush tours from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday during the March Break.

Foundation Bake Sale

Puppet Shows
Saturday, March 20
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 13 description about our puppet shows.

Guided Tours

Sunday, March 21
(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
Take a guided tour of the sugar bush and learn about sweet water. See how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how

we make it now.

Olde Thyme Sugar Bush Chores

Saturday, March 27
(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 28
(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
Take a guided tour of the sugar bush and learn about sweet water. See how maple syrup was made in the olden days and how we make it now.

Puppet Shows

Saturday, April 3
We have two puppet shows daily at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. See Saturday March 13 for more information.

Guided Tours

Sunday, April 4
(10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.)
Take a guided tour of the sugar bush and learn about sweet water. See how maple syrup was made in

the olden days and how we make it now.

Spring Activities

Trails: They are a Changin'

Family Mini-Hike
Sunday, April 11
(2:00 p.m.)
See description on Sunday, February 21.

Volunteer for Nature

- Spring Trail and Garden Cleanup
Sunday, April 18
(2:00 to 4:00 p.m.)
Free admission for volunteers
Celebrate spring 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.

Tick Talk

Sunday, April 25
(2:00 p.m.)
Ticks are our neighbours that don't plan on moving out anytime soon so we might as well learn to live with them. Learn all about ticks from CRCA Biologist Tom Beaubiah. Find out how to prevent tick bites, how to identify a tick and what to do if you get bitten.



CRCA prepares for Maple Madness

Maple Madness at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, the annual celebration of Canada's iconic maple tree, happens this year during March Break (March 13 to 21) plus the weekends of March 27-28 and April 3-4.

But would you believe that event planning began last summer?

"Starting in June, I begin preparing lists of how much stuff we need, from pancake mix to butter pats," says the event organizer, Shannon Fleming.

This is her 13th year of involvement with Maple Madness in various capacities.

If you've attended the event, you know that it is labour-intensive. Consid-



Ian Brown (left) CRCA operations staff and Don Pope volunteer running the evaporator.

given voice by staff and volunteer puppeteers.

Guided tours of the sugar bush are informative and educational. Visitors get to the sugar bush by riding in tractor-pulled covered wagons. There, they fill up on pancakes and maple syrup to the delight of one and all.

Last year, chief pancake flipper Rick Knapton, by day the CRCA's forestry technician, set a flipping record, 1,600 pancakes in one day.

"It's going to be tough to break his record," predicts Ms. Fleming. "I don't think we can improve upon that number."

Supervising this wide-ranging event ties Ms. Fleming up for 12-hour days for the event's duration.

"I'm exhausted (when it's over)," she says, taking two weeks vacation to recharge her batteries.

Ms. Fleming has some interesting memories. Perhaps the most vivid happened years ago when a stack of plates with pancakes on them erupted in flames. It seems that someone bought the wrong kind of paper plate.

"We had a stack of pancakes on these plates on one of the grills and were taking a break," she recalls.

Suddenly the stack of plates and pancakes ignited. Acting quickly, she fired off a fire extinguisher that coated both grills with gunk.

"We had to clean both grills before cooking any more pancakes," she says.

The burned pancakes and plates were placed outside in a bucket where they reignited, just to add insult to injury.

To return to present day, this year Maple Madness will continue to 'go green' as much of what used to end up in landfill is diverted to composting. Last year the event went green reducing garbage by 94 per cent.

"We set out to make an effective change and we did it," says Jason Hynes, a CRCA lands planner who organized the greening of the event. The idea to go green originated with Mr. Knapton.

Not the stairway to heaven, but almost as complex

It's long and complicated, but it's not the stairway to heaven.

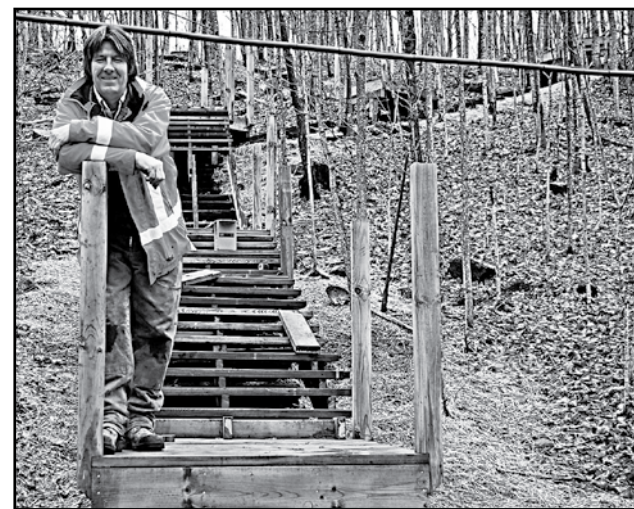
Instead, this stairway scales an 85-foot hill behind the sugar shack at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

"The stairs give access to a maple syrup pipeline and you can join up with Trail 3 as well," explains Richard Horton of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority's (CRCA) operations staff.

Mr. Horton designed the complex staircase and built it. The 79 stairs climb the hill, zig to the right, climb some more, then zag to the left. The six connected sets of stairs link six platforms (landings) anchored in concrete.

"The most difficult part was getting the platforms laid out, especially at the turns," says Mr. Horton.

Built entirely of pressure-treated materials, the staircase replaces an older



Richard Horton, CRCA operations staff, pauses during the construction of the sugar bush staircase.

version that was at the end of its useful life. There is something like 120 feet of stringers (what each step is fastened to) used in the construction.

In December, when the photo was taken, Mr. Horton was racing the weather to complete the project in time

for 2010's Maple Madness celebration.

Mr. Horton was helped in construction by two students, Ben Hogeboom and Alex Swan, both members of the Building Internship Program operated by the Limestone District School Board.



This trio of friends share a love of pancakes and maple syrup.

er the 2009 numbers: it occupied seven full-time staff; 11 part-timers; 23 volunteers plus another 25 to 30 volunteers who functioned as recycling monitors.

The event grossed about \$70,000 last year so it produced much needed revenue for the CRCA. Last year, more than 13,000 pancakes were served to 10,000 visitors. Attendance figures reflect weather conditions. The 2009 event's weather might be described as winter-balmy.

Although Ms. Fleming's planning begins in June, hiring part-timers happens in early December.

"Staffing starts when I start hiring for winter," she says. "When I hire for winter activities, I'm also hiring with Maple Madness in mind."

Maple Madness involves a variety of fun, family activities starting with puppet shows. The CRCA puppets explain the operation of the sugar bush in a lighthearted way that is a hit with young and old alike. The puppets are an eclectic collection of woodland characters

CRCA employee and Guide leader devises challenge

Watersheds of Ontario will be under the spyglass of crime scene investigators from the Girl Guides, thanks to the work of a CRCA employee.

Watershed Management Coordinator Mara Shaw has devised a new program for Ontario's Girl Guides that has them investigating what makes their local waterbodies healthy . . . or not.

"I led a provincial committee to develop a challenge for Ontario's guides to investigate and improve a local waterbody," says Ms. Shaw. "A challenge is harder than a badge; this is a year-long challenge that you work on."

The challenge is applicable to all ages, from four and five-year-old Sparks to high school students in the Pathfinders and Rangers, says Ms. Shaw. The program is called the Watershed CSI Challenge in reference to a popular television show. Working as a group, girls conduct their own investigations of their local watersheds.

"They start with a visit to a local wetland, creek, pond or shoreline with an expert to help them figure out what is healthy about it and what isn't. It may be denuded of a natural buffer or receiv-

ing sediment from local development. Then they move on to learning about the watershed that feeds into the waterbody," explains Ms. Shaw.

They map their own watershed, including its inflows, and learn what can affect a watershed through hands-on activities and videos.

"They build a small scale watershed from clay and sand and look at run-off," adds Ms. Shaw. "In the end they look at everything surrounding their waterbody and figure out what might influence the health of that waterbody."

"Finally, they tackle a project to improve the watershed. It could be stenciling storm drains or getting information out to local media about the waterbody or it could be nest boxes or picking up trash."

Her own Guide group examined the Butternut Creek wetland east of Highway 15, where they live.

Developing the program took six months of hard work and Ms. Shaw says she's glad to see conservation authorities and Guide units from across Ontario excited about the challenge.



CRCA plants endangered butternut trees



Those tubes in the ground are shelters to protect 40 butternut seedlings.

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) has planted 40 endangered butternut tree seedlings on behalf of Ontario's Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

This agreement reflects MTO's butternut replacement strategy to compensate for butternut trees that had to be removed for a nearby roadway project. The CRCA/MTO agreement covers planting and maintaining the seedlings.

They were planted back in October by CRCA Forestry Technician Rick Knapton and Biologist Tom

Beaubiah. They established the seedlings in a field beside the service road leading to the sugar bush at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

They also installed tree shelters and mulch mats to give the seedlings every chance to prosper. A tree shelter is a plastic tube that surrounds each seedling to prevent browsing by deer, rabbits and other grazers. It also provides a greenhouse effect by sheltering a seedling from wind and providing warmth.

Mulch mats are plastic squares pegged down

around the base of each seedling. They reduce water loss and inhibit the growth of grasses that compete with the butternut seedlings' growth.

The planted stock becomes part of the Managed Forest Program at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

Both Mr. Knapton and Mr. Beaubiah will monitor the seedlings development. Any that perish will be replaced with stock from the CRCA's Lemoine Point Conservation Area's Native Plant Nursery.

Butternut trees are now listed under the Endangered Species Act because of a fungal disease called butternut canker. It was first observed about 20 years ago, appearing on tree trunks and soon spreading to other parts of the tree. Eventually the tree's nutrient flow stops and the tree dies. This takes about two to four years.

To date there is no remedy for the butternut canker.

The tree's wood is prized by artisans, especially woodcarvers.

Dog sled races return to Newboro and Mac Johnson Wildlife Area

The third annual Rideau Lakes Cup Dog Sled Races take place in Newboro on February 20 and 21 and the purse has grown to more than \$6,000.

Since 2008, a team of dedicated volunteers have realized their dream of bringing the exciting sport of dog sledding to the Township of Rideau Lakes.

Dog sled teams from all over Ontario, Quebec and northern United States mush their way along 50 miles of the region's scenic wooded trails and beautiful waterways. Participants race a distance of 25 miles each day and hundreds of spectators turn out to experience the winter fun and excitement.

"With the success of our first two events, volunteers are really looking forward to hosting the races once again," says Brian Patterson, chair of the organizing committee.

Leaving the start line from the Newboro lock station, teams will set out at top speed on a trail over frozen lakes and parts of the Cataraqui Trail. An alternative course over land only has been



Enjoy two dog sledding events this winter – January 30 at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area and February 20 and 21 in Newboro along part of the Cataraqui Trail.

mapped out and is ready to go depending on ice conditions.

"The race is always really competitive and we are hoping to attract some top teams from around Ontario, Quebec and beyond," says Patterson. "Following the main event, we'll hold skijoring races (two dogs pulling a racer on cross-country skis) and on Sunday afternoon, a kid

and mutt competition, so once again it will be a great family weekend with something for everyone."

For more information about the Rideau Lakes Cup Dog Sled Race or to view the course map, visit www.twprideaulakes.on.ca/dogsledraces or contact Brian Patterson at (613) 272-3059, e-mail Lori.Patterson@live.ca.

Although there are no big prizes, the ninth annual Winter Fun Day at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville is scheduled for Saturday, January 30. The Mush Larose Association-Training Division has organized dog sled races as part of the annual celebration of winter.

The dog sled races are a big draw to the event but you can also enjoy skating on the pond, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and winter games for children. A barbecue lunch by the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area will round out the day.

Winter Fun Day runs from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and admission is just \$5 per car.

Grant money used to enhance Cataraqui Trail

The Cataraqui Trail Management Board and the Lennox and Addington Snowmobile Club are investing \$36,000 and \$22,000 respectively to enhance sections of the Cataraqui Trail.

Fifty percent of the funding comes from the National Trails Council and the rest has been raised in the area. The National Trails Coalition (NTC) is the operating name for the Coalition of Canadian Trails Organizations. The NTC was formed in 2007 to bring the broad spectrum of trail-based activities together in a collaborative manner to build, maintain and promote trails and trail use across Canada.

"The 50 per cent funding from the NTC was used for trail improvements in the Camden East and Sydenham areas," explains Jim Hase, speaking for the Cataraqui Trail Management Board. "The work involved the placement of a stone surface on the trail; this provides a smooth traveling surface for trail users such as walkers, runners and cyclists."

The improvements were made for the 1.4 km stretch from Hogan Road to the Boyce Island east

bridge on the north shore of Sydenham Lake and for the 3.2 km stretch from Curl Road westwards to Camden East, adds Mr. Hase.

"The trail was not closed to accommodate the work," explains Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority Conservation Lands Coordinator Robert Gerritsen. "The public was asked to observe local temporary conditions for safety purposes."

Construction affected trail users in the Camden East, Newburgh and the Sydenham areas. It was completed by the end of 2009.

The 104 km long Cataraqui Trail links Strathcona and Smiths Falls. It is a multi-use recreational trail located on a former railway bed. It is part of the Trans Canada Trail, a nationwide network of trails that cross Canada.



(Above)
The finished trail.



(Left) Levelling the trail.



Green committee seeks new hills to climb

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) green committee is taking on new challenges as it strives to bring what chair Jason Hynes calls "greenology" to the conservation authority.

"We are beginning a partnership, with St. Lawrence College through their energy systems programs to see where we can combine our efforts as stewardship leaders in the community," says Mr. Hynes, a lands planner with the CRCA. "Also, we're hoping to provide opportunities for students to gain real, on-the-ground experience here at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area."

In a related move, the committee will visit the college's Energy House to improve committee members' knowledge of green technology and inspire further improvements to the conservation authority's facilities and operations.

In other news, the green committee continues to reduce the amount of waste generated at the CRCA Administration Office and Outdoor Centre. This is accomplished by collecting used paper towels for composting. Further, the committee is investigating whether a switch to electric hand dryers is advantageous. In most circumstances, electric hand dryers have less environmental impact than paper towels. However, this must be balanced against noise considerations.



CRCA green committee chair Jason Hynes (left) with St. Lawrence College students Brad Milne, Geoff Bramley and Mykel Abernethy and professor Ian Kilborn.

"We are also looking at the potential benefits of switching our hot water systems for tankless models,"

says Mr. Hynes.

Green committee membership is also turning its attention to the up-coming Maple Madness celebration at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. Last spring, the committee significantly reduced the amount of garbage by composting.

"We've begun discussing Maple Madness for 2010 to make certain that we meet or beat our success from last year," says Mr. Hynes.

A significant factor in this success was the number of CRCA employees volunteering to serve as garbage monitors, dubbed Trashkops.

Meanwhile the committee is establishing a shared folder on the CRCA computer system. Other conservation authority employees are asked to submit green ideas, events, subjects or products for consideration.

"We're looking for anything that could be of interest to the conservation authority in terms of greening up our operations as well as enhancing our image and role as stewards in the community," says Mr. Hynes.

Finally, green committee members are working to define their role within the conservation authority to ensure that time and efforts are used effectively to produce results.

Kingston Field Naturalists: enjoying and preserving nature

The CRCA works closely with the Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) on a number of initiatives including land acquisition, education and habitat protection. In this issue of Cat Tales we are featuring the KFN.

Are you interested in having a greater appreciation and knowledge of the natural beauty and diversity that the Kingston area has to offer? Why not consider joining the Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN)?

The club, established in 1949, offers many activities allowing people to observe and understand the natural world including a variety of field trips and guided nature walks. Bird trips

are particularly popular as are trips to observe insects,

plants and other natural phenomena. Rambles (slow walks) to explore various aspects of nature are



held throughout the year.

The club owns two large nature reserves including a large mixed forest near Frontenac Park and a migratory bird stopover and grassland on Amherst Island.

As part of their objective to preserve natural habitat and raise public awareness, the club is active in conservation issues and hands-on projects. The KFN

participates in various conservation efforts such as breeding bird surveys, marsh monitoring, and habitat and species preservation. They develop, and present to governments, positions on local issues affecting the preservation of our natural heritage.

Monthly meetings feature guest speakers who expand our understanding of the natural environment. Members receive monthly newsletters announcing details of field trips and club activities. Our quarterly journal, *The Blue Bill*, reports on various aspects of natural history.

The KFN also offers exciting programs for young naturalists including classroom activities and field trips for Juniors (age 6 to 12) and Teens (age 13 to 17).

New members and visitors are always welcome. For more information, visit www.kingston-fieldnaturalists.org.

Source Protection News in Brief



Staff from the CRCA and Intera Engineering Ltd. presented findings from the Lansdowne Wellhead Protection Area Study at a public open house held in November 2009.

The Cataraqui Source Protection Committee will host an evening with Mr. Bruce Davidson in Kingston on the evening of Thursday, February 11. Mr. Davidson is a co-founder of Concerned Walkerton Citizens and a member of the Saugeen, Grey Sauble, Northern Bruce Peninsula Source Protection Committee. He will offer a first-hand look into the May 2000 water contamination

tragedy that led to seven deaths and thousands of illnesses in the Ontario community of Walkerton.

Details about this event are being finalized - watch the www.cleanwatercataraqui.ca website for more details!

In late November the Cataraqui Source Protection Committee and the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands held a public open house to present our ongoing

research at Lansdowne.

Two studies were discussed: Lansdowne Wellhead Protection Area Study Phase 3 and the Lansdowne Tier 2 Water Budget. Intera Engineering Ltd. of Ottawa presented their draft findings, which show a wellhead protection area that extends over much of the community of Lansdowne. The studies are expected to be completed in early 2010.



FOUNDATION NEWS

The Catarauqui Conservation Foundation supports conservation in the local watersheds through raising funds for Catarauqui Region Conservation Authority education programs and acquisition of conservation lands. A volunteer board of conservation-minded residents guides the Foundation in its fundraising activities, and a number of activities provide an opportunity to achieve financial objectives.

We recently completed two major fundraising endeavours and also have news to relate about education programs and our volunteer board.

The Mapleloft canoe

Earlier this year, Foundation board member Lorna Hendry's husband Bill led a small team of fine crafters as they constructed the hand-laid cedar strip canoe and named it the "Mapleloft



Canoe builder Bill Hendry (left) with canoe winner Robert Cumming.

canoe" after Rev. Hendry's woody acreage. This spectacular handmade prospector canoe required many volunteer hours for planning, acquiring materials and crafting the vessel.

Winning the canoe involved purchasing an opportunity to estimate the labour hours involved in all aspects of building this canoe. Tickets were \$10 each, or three for \$25. A trusted individual held the actual time log for canoe construction, and a team of volunteers compared purchased tickets against the actual time log. The winner was announced at the November 14, 2009 Forever Green gala evening.

Congratulations to Robert Cumming for the accuracy of his estimate. Mr. Cumming guessed that it took 148.25 hours to build the Mapleloft canoe, while Rev. Hendry and his team logged 147.25 hours to complete the beautiful canoe. We hope Mr. Cumming will enjoy many quiet hours paddling his new cedar strip canoe. And we again thank Rev. Hendry and his team for their hours of craftsmanship in building the beautiful canoe.

The Forever Green gala evening

More than 160 people enjoyed an evening of fine dining, raffles, live and silent auctions at the Catarauqui Conservation Foundation Forever Green banquet. Many local and some distant businesses and individuals donated money and/or goods for the raffles and auctions so that the Foundation could raise thousands of dollars for CRCA education and land acquisition programs.

The gala evening was a resounding success, raising more than \$20,000. Please note the list of sponsors/donors listed below. We thank all everyone who contributed to the success of our gala evening.

Conservation Award nominations due

Since 1995 the Catarauqui Conservation Foundation has annually honoured an individual or group who has made a significant contribution to conservation in the region. This last year the award was announced at our Earth Day Celebration in April. In order to heighten conservation interest, we have decided to establish different categories for the awards: one for individuals, one for schools, one for businesses and one for employees of the Catarauqui Region Conservation Authority. It is possible that there may not be an award each year in each category.

Nominations for the

conservation award close March 1, 2010. Details and forms will be available on our website shortly.

We ask for your help. What we are asking you to do is to identify people or organizations that you think might be suitable recipients. If you could suggest who might be a suitable person to make the actual nomination and write the citation, we will do the asking. Just let us know by sending us an e-mail at foundation@cataraquiregion.on.ca or a fax at (613) 547-6474.

Membership in the Conservation Foundation

The Catarauqui Conservation Foundation is a membership-driven organization. Vital funds come from membership fees as well as monies earned through special fundraising efforts. Also our Board members and volunteers come from our body of membership. Thus we need a robust and growing membership. Please ensure you renew your membership annually, and please ask your like-minded friends and neighbours to join as well.

And more about our board members

We plan to introduce our board members to you in future issues of Cat Tales. But our treasurer, John Kitney, can share a fascinating story with you concerning how he got interested in conservation.

John Kitney's story

John Kitney joined the board of the Catarauqui Conservation Foundation in May 2008. Recently retired from the Limestone District Board of Education, John taught science and mathematics in five different high schools over more than 30 years.

John came to Kingston to attend Queen's University in the early 70s having grown up in the West Indies. His parents worked with the United Church Overseas Mission (as it was called in those days) and John



Foundation Treasurer John Kitney (left) with Foundation Director Stewart Fyfe.

was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad. After a brief stop at North Toronto Collegiate to pick up some Canadian university prerequisites, John arrived in Kingston and soon decided to make this his new home. John's interest at university was biochemistry and his first job in the area was with the Department of Pharmacology before deciding to attend the Faculty of Education for qualification in Biology, Mathematics and General Science.

"I first became aware of the Conservation Authority with a visit to Little Catarauqui Creek that was related to a biology project, assigned by my professor, Bert Horwood," says John. "I paired up with another student who shared common interests in ecology and outdoor education and we decided that our project would be to design a conservation education program modeled after our own experiences at the Toronto Island Natural Science School."

"Working at my early teaching positions with biology classes (first at Sydenham High School and then at QECVI) mentors such as Glen Pugh, Rose Jones and Sandra Hannah quickly gave me the confidence (and the necessary curriculum support) to get my classes outside for field studies at both Gould Lake and Little Cat. There were no facilities like there are now at either location, and the programs that we conducted were all of our own design. There was a lot of extra work involved but I guess it was important to me to try and share the

impact that some of my own field studies experiences had had on me, as a student."

"The treasurer's portfolio on the Foundation board (occasionally balancing accounts into the late evening so as to have a new report ready for the next day's meeting) keeps me connected to my years as a math teacher — striving for new ideas to make the next day's lesson plans fresh and

interesting (and yes, all too often working into the wee hours of the morning). The Board comprises a diverse group of people with varied backgrounds, but they all share a strong commitment to conservation and the goals of the Catarauqui Region Conservation Authority. I am proud to be associated with this group and I look forward to some landmark achievements with my colleagues."

Thank you to our Forever Green 2009 Auction Donors

Anchor Concrete Products, Angeline's Restaurant, Anglin Bay Pottery, Anonymous, Aqua Terra Restaurant, ArboreCare Tree Service, Barbara Bradfield, Bergeron Estate Winery, Betty Boone, Brian Mantrop, Bruce Wilson, Brunet Plumbing Supply, Buffet Taylor and Associates, Cakes by Krista, Camera Kingston, Canadian Tire Catarauqui, Canadian Tire Kingston Centre, Carolyn Hetherington and Fred Euringer, Cat Nap B&B, Catarauqui Golf and Country Club, Catarauqui Conservation Foundation Board, Chez Piggy/Pan Chanco, Le Chien Noir, Clearwater Design, Collins Bay Marina, Cornerstone, CRCA, CRCA staff, Cruickshank Construction, Curry Original, Dan & Marion Attack, David Hurley, Diana's Esthetics, Digigraphics, Dolce Bella Spa, Donna Stoness, Doug & Christine Radford, Doug Snyder, Dwell Interior Design Boutique, Earthworx, Evergreen Farm, Fab Hair & Aesthetics, Festival Players of Prince Edward County, Four Points Sheraton, Garrett's Meat Shop, Gerry Wyatt, Glen Supply, Glenburnie Grocery, Glenhaven Memorial Gardens, Graham Thomson, Grand Theatre, Healthy Plates, Heather & Ben Mortimer, Hendrix Hotel & Restaurant Equipment & Supplies, Hotel Belvedere, Jack Bowes Auto Service, James Keirstead Studio, James Reid Furniture, Janet Pentney, Janet Sorbie, Janise Scott, Joan and Roger Shaw, John Morse, John Selkirk, Katherine Stone, Kingston Frameworks, Kingston Symphony, Kingston Thousand Island Cruises, Lorna and Bill Hendry, LSP Designs, Marian Ellis, McLaren Landscaping, Melonpatch Interiors, Mike Evans, Minaker's Nursery, Miranda Clark, Multituli Coffee Merchants, Nadine Grieve-Deslippe, Neil's Flowers, Olivea Restaurant, Partners Auto Shop, Peak Experience, Peter Milliken, Philips Tree Service, Pilot House, Potter's Nurseries Ltd., Pyke Farms, QECVI Grade 12 art students, Queen's Performing Arts Office, Reid & Siemonsen Design Group, Rideau Lakes Golf and Country Club, Riley's Garden Centre, Robert Bateman, Robert Reid Funeral Home, Scott Environmental Services, Starbuck's, Stewart Fyfe, Sun Harvest Greenhouse, Sundance Studio, Templeman Menninga, Thirty-Three Vines, Thousand Island Playhouse, Tom McAneney, Totten Sims Hubicki, Trugs, Turf King, Urban Paws, Vern Miles, Via Rail, Vicki Schmolka, W.J. Henderson Recreation Centre, Wellington Foreign Exchange, Wendy Cain, Western Landscape Services, Wilton Pottery, Wolfe Springs Resort



There's plenty of winter fun in our conservation areas

Opportunities abound for family winter fun at the conservation areas of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA).

At Kingston's Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, there are 13 km of groomed, cross-country ski trails. Don't own a pair of skis? No problem, you can rent them at the Outdoor Centre.

Don't know how to cross-country ski? The CRCA offers lessons on Saturdays starting January 2 and continuing to February 27. The cost is \$14 per person and these group lessons last one hour. Lesson times are 10:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Trail 5 is reserved for snowshoes. Visitors are asked not to walk or snowshoe on the

groomed ski trails. You can also rent snowshoes at the Outdoor Centre.

Weather permitting, Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area is home to Kingston's largest, natural ice skating rink. And yes, the Outdoor Centre staff also rent skates.

The CRCA has scheduled several evening skating sessions, again, weather permitting. Check the centrefold of this newsletter for details. Or, you may rent the rink and hold your own skating party. Call Shannon Fleming at (613) 546-4228 ext. 222 to make a booking or for information.

If hiking is your interest, there are two service roads that are ideal. Your family dog is welcome, but please keep him or her on a leash that is



Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area has Kingston's largest natural ice skating rink.

no longer than two metres. And remember to stoop and scoop.

There are fun and educational activities for the whole family every weekend during the winter and spring at Little Cataraqui Creek Conserva-

- \$2.50 per person for children 12 and under to a maximum fee of \$12 per vehicle.

Annual passes may be purchased for \$70. These provide unlimited access to both Little Cataraqui Creek and Gould Lake Conservation areas. Donation boxes are located at other CRCA conservation areas and visitors are asked to make contributions each time they visit.

In Brockville's Mac Johnson Wildlife Area, there are 11 km of cross-country ski trails as well as a skating rink. The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area serve hot chocolate and coffee at the skating shelter every Saturday

in January and February, weather permitting, from noon to 3:00 p.m.

And the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area are holding their ninth annual winter fun day on Saturday, Jan. 30, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Events include dog sled races, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, skating and winter activities for children as well as displays and refreshments.

Admission is \$5 per vehicle.

Hours of operations at all CRCA conservation areas are 7:30 a.m. to dusk daily.

For a full listing of winter and spring events please turn to the What's Happening section in the centrefold of this newsletter.

Book now for CRCA outdoor education programs



Winter education programs at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area and Mac Johnson Wildlife Area can be done on snowshoes.

Book now while there are still spaces available for winter and spring school programs at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

"We have spaces available from January to June 2010 in our curriculum-based education programs for preschools, elementary and secondary students and English as a second language, adult learners and seniors," says Education Officer Stana Luxford Oddie.

The Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) offers curriculum-based conservation education programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12. To learn more, visit the CRCA website at www.cataraquiregion.on.ca. To make a booking for a program, call Ms. Luxford Oddie or Angela McAneney at (613) 546-4228 ext. 251 or toll-free in 613 area code, 1-877-956-CRCA ext. 251.

Winter specific and regular programs are offered for January and February. In March, the focus is on Maple Madness. And spring specific and regular programming is offered during the period of April to June.

And for parents

wondering what to do for P.A. days, why not send your children to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area? The CRCA offers two great P.A. day events.

On Monday, February 1, is the winter sports P.A. day event. Participants will enjoy a day full of winter adventure and fun that includes cross-country skiing, sledding and snowshoeing. The cost is \$40 per child and you must register; for more information call (613) 546-4228 ext. 251. This program runs regardless of the weather.

The spring awakenings P.A. day on Friday, April 30, is an event full of spring adventure and fun. The cost is \$30 per child and you must register. For more information call (613) 546-4228 ext. 251.

Winter and spring education programs are also offered at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville. Weather permitting, winter programs are done on snowshoes.

Programs are geared to the curriculum and are offered for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Several of the programs such as mapping and orienteering, instincts for survival and the biosphere hike are offered year-round and are adapted to the seasons. There are also winter and spring-specific programs.

The wetland programs are particularly popular and fill up early so consider making a booking now to guarantee space. Bookings can be made by calling Ron Gardiner at (613) 342-5824 or by e-mailing mrgardiner@cogeco.ca.

Program descriptions, costs and other details are always available on the CRCA website www.cataraquiregion.on.ca.

Register early for summer day camp

It's not too early to start thinking about summer camp! The CRCA will once again be operating our summer Nature Explorer's Camp in 2010. Registration forms will be available by the end of January.

This day camp experience is for children who are six to 11 years old. There are seven separate, one-week camps and each has its own theme. Activities include adventures at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area and swimming at Gould Lake Conservation Area.

Choose from one of seven theme weeks:

July 5-9:	awesome aquatics
July 12-16:	rockin' reptiles
July 19-23:	wilderness warriors
July 26-30:	earth investigators
August 3-6:	eco heroes
August 9-13:	magnificent mammals
August 16-20:	animal armour.
For information, call (613) 546-4228 ext. 251.	

The CRCA staff have extensive experience working with children. And a certified lifeguard supervises swimming at Gould Lake. The ratio of instructors to campers is 1:8.

The cost per child is \$165 per week except for the week of August 3 to 6 which is \$135.



Campers look for nature clues during the Wildlife CSI theme week.

Two trips to Gould Lake Conservation Area each week are part of the CRCA's Nature Explorer's Camp.

