



# Conservancy NEWS

Protecting the special natural features of the Couchiching region for future generations.

Seasonal Highlights from The Couchiching Conservancy

NOVEMBER 2009

## Conservancy Cycling Adventure a Success!



**T**he first-ever Conservancy cycling tour of Orillia-area land trust properties was held on October 4, and we are proud to say that the event was an overwhelming success.

Despite the cool temperatures and the threat of rain, 57 participants, including several children, pedalled their way from Couchiching Beach Park in downtown Orillia to Wilson Point Wetlands and to Grant Wetlands. Some of the heartier riders went on to Carthew Bay Nature Reserve.

While at each property, participants took part in an Amazing Race type of challenge based on an environmental theme. For example, at Wilson Point Wetlands, large letters were placed up on tree branches surrounding the property, and the cyclists had to record the letters and scramble them into the

name of a plant found on the property. Participants even helped each other out with the answers; talk about cooperation. And because the event was not a race, everyone had time to take in the scenery at each property and ask questions of the volunteers stationed there.

Feedback from participants and volunteers indicates that the adventure helped achieve our hoped-for goals. The event increased awareness of the Conservancy's land trust projects and illustrated to the public the type of work and amount of effort that goes into the properties.

Plans are underway for a similar adventure in 2010, and we hope to build on the concept to reach even more people next year.

Thanks to Chris Tomasini and Robert Ormerod, two local cyclists and champions of active transportation, for partnering with us on this project.

We would like to thank the Casino Rama Community Wellness Program for sponsoring our cycling adventure.

### *Thanks to our sponsors for helping out:*

#### **Lead sponsor:**

Casino Rama Community Wellness Program

McLean & Dickey Insurance and Financial Services

The Water Store

Mariposa Market

Apple Annie's

Ron Reid (Blackwaterfoot Originals)

The Bird House Nature Company

The Bike Stop

Bayview Wildwood Resort

Toronto Brigantine Inc.

Meridian Credit Union

Velocity Bike & Multisport

OPP

Good for Life (Simcoe Muskoka Dist. Health Unit)

Waterway Wildlife (Parks Canada)

Wildflower Farms

### **Please don't delay!**

The order form for **Pelee Island wines** is enclosed. **Deadline for getting the completed form back to us is Friday, November 20.** This is to ensure delivery in time for the festive holiday season. Remember to make your cheque payable to Pelee Island Winery.

# Corporate membership: businesses show support

Last year The Couchiching Conservancy was honoured to receive the very first Ontario Land Trust Alliance award for outstanding community engagement. The award recognizes our strong history of partnerships with other community organizations and local media, the involvement of our corporate members, and our network of active volunteers.

We are tremendously proud of the support from our corporate sponsors; it reflects a belief that conservation of our natural world is good for the community and good for businesses. We are delighted to report that the following businesses and organizations have joined for the 2009/2010 season.

## Level V

Casino Rama

Metroland North Media – Orillia Today

Mid Ontario Disposal

Pelee Island Winery

The Packet & Times

## Level IV

J.R. Booth, Chartered Accountant

Orillia Power Corporation

The Davey Tree Expert Co.

## Level III

Dalt's Honda

David Hawke

Donald D. Scott Custom Builder & Renovator Inc.

Ego's Nurseries Ltd.

G.H. Stewart Construction Ltd.

Joanne Haskins, Think Communications

Mawdsley's Mobile Crane Rental Ltd.

Ms. Liz Antochin

Mundell Funeral Home Ltd.

Ontario Waterway Cruises Inc.

Orillia Chamber of Commerce

RBC-DS, Paul Russell

Russell Christie, LLP

The Birdhouse Nature Company

The Water Market

Unison Engine Components

Wes' Tree Service

## Level II

C.T. Strongman Surveying Ltd.

Century 21 Sparkling Waters Realty

Coldwater Road Animal Clinic

Crawford McKenzie McLean Anderson  
& Duncan LLP

Donald H. Worling, QC

Dr. Ravi Aggarwal

Garfield Dunlop, MPP

Hehn Trickey Professional Corp.

Julia A. Bailey, Barrister & Solicitor

Mariposa Market

McLean & Dickey Ltd. Insurance & Financial  
Services

Speedy Truck & Sign Lettering

## Level I

Artech Promotional Wear

Bayview Wildwood Resort

BDO Dunwoody

Birchmere Retirement Residence

Champlain Manor

D. Saulnier Auto Parts Wreckers &  
Used Cars Ltd.

Ellis Hearing Aid Service

First Student Canada

HGR Lawyers

Kathy Hunt Communications

K. McKechnie Architectural Design

Office Links

Orillia Mazda

Roy E. Pearn Enterprises

Snuggles Pooch & Kitty Holiday Camp

Washago TIM-BR MART

Zwicker Evans Lewis, LLP

Next time you patronize one of these businesses, say "Thanks!" for their role in keeping the Couchiching area green for future generations. ∞

## Little Bluestem Alvar campaign a big success

The Nature Conservancy of Canada became the proud owner of Little Bluestem Alvar in late September, adding another 645 acres of important habitat to the growing protected landscape on the Carden Plain. Little Bluestem is located adjacent to the Prairie Smoke Nature Reserve.

The Couchiching Conservancy is playing a key role in the Little Bluestem acquisition in two ways. We are creating a special Carden Conservation Fund to provide long-term stewardship for protected alvar properties. The fund will also help us work with adjacent landowners, who continue to play an essential role in the preservation of important natural habitat. At the same time we are working to raise money to help with the purchase price of Little Bluestem.

Thanks to the generosity of Conservancy supporters who have responded to the campaign, we have reached our goal of \$50,000 for the two initiatives. A grant from the EJLB Foundation helped push the effort over the top.

Together, we continue to make gains in protecting one of North America's finest alvar communities. ∞



# BRIEF NOTES

## Notes

### Dragon Hearts, September 26

A brave and enthusiastic group of women paddled their hearts (and muscles) out in this year's Dragon Boat Race. Faced with some tough competition, our team did not place so well in the standings, but all had a great time and many will be back for next year's races. Best of all, the team managed to raise almost \$3,000 for the Conservancy's Stewardship Endowment Fund. Donations can still be made to the fund by contacting either the Conservancy office or the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area.



### Easier Access

Thanks to the work of dedicated volunteers and our summer staff, Grant's Woods now features a wheelchair-accessible forest trail and a specially designed ramp for the gazebo. Thanks also to Kristi McKechnie, one of our board members and an architectural designer, for assisting with the projects. Orillia Home Depot provided \$1,000 in material for the ramp and offered assistance with the construction.

### Summer Students Needed

Believe it or not, we are already planning for a busy summer in 2010 and we will need the assistance of two, perhaps three, hard-working, dedicated and skilled staff. If you know of someone who has good field skills, excellent analytical skills, and an eagerness to help the Conservancy, please have them forward a resume to our office. Many of our former summer staff used the skills and experience developed here to further their careers in the environmental field.



### Annual General Meeting Jan 30, 2010

The Conservancy's AGM will be held at Hawk Ridge Golf & Country Club on Saturday, January 30, at 2 p.m. The guest speaker for the meeting will be Elizabeth (Liz) Ross, who is originally from Orillia but has spent time in the Canadian Arctic working on science research projects. While visiting the Arctic a few years ago, she discovered the 20-million-year-old fossil of a creature never found before.

### Paddle Raffle

Win a pair of hand-crafted wooden canoe paddles (total value \$450) by purchasing your raffle tickets from the Conservancy office or from The Birdhouse Nature Company, where the paddles are on display. Tickets are only \$5 each, and the draw will take place at our Annual General Meeting on Saturday, January 30, 2010. Thanks to Gary Peters, a local woodworker, for his generous donation of the paddles.

### Protect An Acre

The holiday season is fast approaching, and there is a growing trend toward "green" giving – special gifts that also help the environment. The Couchiching Conservancy has the perfect way to give green this Christmas with our Protect An Acre campaign. For only \$25 per acre you will receive a gift card, a full-colour protected-habitat note card of your choice, and a tax receipt for the full amount.

For more information, please contact Gayle at 326-1620 or at [gayle@couchconservancy.ca](mailto:gayle@couchconservancy.ca).

# New Volunteer Coordinator

The Couchiching Conservancy welcomes Betty Forward as our new Volunteer Coordinator. Betty is an Orillia resident with many years of experience working with volunteers for various non-profit organizations.



Betty Forward

Betty was involved with Helping Hands from the very beginning of the organization. While living in Calgary, she was involved in the daunting task of coordinating church groups and drivers to deliver for Meals on Wheels.

When she has spare time, Betty enjoys sewing and has created her own design of baby blankets much loved by new mothers.

Betty describes herself as a people person and is excited to learn more about what the Conservancy is involved in and how she can help.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Conservancy, please call our office at 326-1620 and Betty will call you back with the details. ☺

# Leaving a green legacy is a natural choice

Charitable organizations such as The Couchiching Conservancy depend on the financial assistance from people, like you, who have a connection to the land and especially the natural beauty of the Couchiching area. But if more people thought about us in their will, we could do so much more.

As a registered charity, certified under the Ecological Gifts program, we can use a range of tools to help minimize the tax burden on your estate. And we can ensure that a cherished piece of natural heritage lives on to benefit your community.

Give us a call at 326-1620. We would be pleased to sit down with you and your professional advisors to explain your options and to explore how you would like your gift to be recognized. ☺

*One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. — William Shakespeare*



## Couchiching Cycling Adventure



Looking forward to next year!



## The Couchiching Conservancy Board

- Isabelle Thiess, President .....259-5547
- Jane Ball .....835-2674
- Peggy Foley .....325-2287
- David Kennedy .....835-5131
- Kristi McKechnie .....689-9491
- Jamie Powell .....835-0149
- Lou Probst .....438-1324
- Bob Sullivan .....325-8775
- Ingrid VanderMarel .....835-2289
- Nathalie Rockhill (Ex-officio) .....438-1301

The Couchiching Conservancy office ..326-1620

- Mark Bisset, Executive Director
- Kyra Howes, Stewardship Coordinator
- Gayle Carlyle, Outreach Coordinator
- Kristen Field, Science Intern

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The Couchiching Conservancy 

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