



Conservancy NEWS

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

Seasonal Highlights from The Couchiching Conservancy

SEPTEMBER 2006

Three new properties on the way!



“It never rains but it pours” seems an appropriate catchphrase for fall 2006. The Couchiching Conservancy is in the process of finalizing three new nature reserves thanks to the generosity of supporters across the region.

Just east of Waverley, **Rhonda Cowen** has patiently made her way through a municipal severance and re-zoning process to donate a 23-acre parcel of woodland to the Conservancy. This reserve will protect one of the headwaters of Hogg Creek, as well as provide green space for the nearby village. Our heartfelt thanks go to Rhonda, who works as a financial planner for Investment Planning Counsel in Orillia.

We are also delighted to receive a fine stand of maple and oak hardwoods, 18 acres in size, on the Oro Moraine southeast of Craighurst. This donation is being made by **Don and Heather Elliott** of Oakville to ensure the continued protection of a cherished natural area. Don first became aware of the Conservancy through our landowner-contact work on the Oro Moraine several years ago, and this property lies in the heart of one of the best-quality forested sites on the moraine.

Over by Lake Simcoe, the **Church Woods** project continues to gather momentum, with a dedicated group of neighbours gathering pledges to support acquisition of this 25-acre old-growth woodland. A public ceremony to thank the township of Oro-Medonte for its contribution to the project took place on August 29 at the nearby historic church. Anyone who is interested in supporting this venture can find more information and a pledge sheet on our website at www.couchconservancy.ca.

All three of these projects are registered as Ecogifts to provide the donors with the best possible income-tax benefits. But it is a love of nature and strong public spirit that first motivates the donors, and we want to acknowledge and thank them all for their generosity. ∞

Partnering with the arts

The Orillia Fine Arts Association is hosting a major multi-gallery art exhibit this fall from September 8 to November 7, with proceeds going to the Conservancy. The event, called **Saving the Planet**, will showcase works from a variety of artists at 10 locations in and around Orillia. See the enclosed flyer for details, or visit www.galleryseven.ca/savingtheplanet.html.

All Conservancy members are invited to an opening reception from 7–10 p.m. on **Friday, September 8**, at the Orillia Opera House. ∞

Major support for stewardship staff



The Ontario Trillium Foundation has approved a \$96,000 grant over the next three years to partially support our Stewardship Coordinator position. MPP Garfield Dunlop was on hand to announce this major contribution to the capacity of the Conservancy. Stewardship Coordinator Kyra Howes has hosted a training session for volunteer team leaders and has visited many of our properties, especially those on the Carden Alvar. ∞

Getting that Bullfrog buzz

As an environmental organization we try to do everything we can to minimize our impact on nature – providing composting toilets for trail visitors, recycling our wastes, using discarded materials where possible, and so on. Now we are also able to fill our electricity needs with renewable sources through a contract with Bullfrog Power.

This company purchases power from wind farms and small-scale hydro plants to feed into the electrical grid with funds from individual consumers. The power is still delivered by Hydro One, but the extra fees – about \$10 a month in our case – allow these environmentally friendly sources to be competitive. To find out how you can participate, visit www.bullfrogpower.com. ∞

More choices for Protect an Acre program

For those who hate buying meaningless gifts, the Conservancy has presented an alternative through its Protect an Acre program, which provides a certificate for each \$25 donation toward caring for our nature reserves. This fall, participants will be offered a choice of five habitats to protect – ancient forest, wetland, alvar, grasslands, or barrens. A series of attractive cards featuring protected properties and species will be given to donors, and can also be purchased separately. Details and cards will be available by early October. ∞



Luke Irwin's family donated a bench in Grant's Woods to honour his 85th birthday.

Be part of Ontario's Record-Breaking



Walk/Hike

Help make Ontario history by being part of a province-wide event on **Saturday, September 30**, as we attempt to break a world record for the most participants in a simultaneous walk or hike!

Grant's Woods will be an official location for this ambitious event, which starts at 12 noon (but please plan to arrive earlier to register). Participants have to walk only one kilometre, so you can have your choice of trails through the beautiful autumn woods. Families and groups of all kinds are welcome; just let us know in advance at 326-1620 if you plan to bring a large group. ☺

Coming Events



Friday, September 8

**Saving the Planet Opening Reception
Orillia Opera House • 7 pm**

September 9 & 10

Orillia Fall Fair • ODAS Park

You can meet Conservancy volunteers and have your photo taken with a live snake at our booth.

September 30

**World Record-Breaking Walk/Hike
Grant's Woods**

October 27

Corporate Recognition Day at Grant's Woods

November

Workshop on the options and advantages of planned giving. Contact us for more details if you are interested in attending. ☺

UPDATES **from the Conservation front**

Our **corporate membership** continues to grow, with most of last year's businesses signing on again, and at least eight new members, including a Level III membership from Roy E. Pern Enterprises, a Level II contribution from Teletech, and new Level I memberships from BDO Dunwoody, Julie A. Bailey Law Office, Mid Ontario Disposal, Orillia Square Mall, Birchmere Retirement Residence, and Champlain Manor.

Our **media partnerships** with the Orillia Packet & Times and JackFM radio have been a great success over the past year, and we are delighted to renew them for 2006/'07.

The Conservancy has produced an easy-to-understand fact sheet on the **income-tax advantages** of donating stocks or other securities thanks to the 2006 federal budget removal of capital gains tax from such donations. Contact us for a copy.

Liz Antochin from Washago has kindly volunteered to become our webmaster so that we can keep our web pages fresh and up to date. Have a look at www.couchconservancy.ca to see the results of her work.

Highlights from our recent **member survey** confirmed some things we already suspected – our members are older and better educated on average than the general population, and nearly all joined because they want to protect natural spaces. But there were also a few surprises: over half of our members first heard about the Conservancy through a friend or associate, compared to 27% through the media; over a third support us because they are concerned about the low priority the government gives to environmental issues; and nearly half would recommend the Conservancy to others because of our positive, non-confrontational and results-oriented approach. ☺



The Couchiching Conservancy Board

- Nathalie Rockhill, President 438-1301
- Bob Sullivan, Past-President 325-8775
- Paul Russell, Treasurer 329-1318
- Isabelle Thiess, Secretary 326-5547
- Jane Ball, Vice-President 835-2674
- Julie Cayley julie_cayley@hotmail.com
- Lou Probst 438-1324
- Joan Rosebush 329-1448
- Jane Sloley 689-1252
- Ron Reid, Executive Director 326-1620
- Rosalie Pratt, Outreach Coordinator
- Kyra Howes, Stewardship Coordinator

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