



Conservancy NEWS

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

Seasonal Highlights from The Couchiching Conservancy

SEPTEMBER 2009

Conservancy Cycling Adventure

Using pedal power to promote the Conservancy

As part of its outreach efforts, The Couchiching Conservancy has put together an exciting new outing to promote the conservation goals of the organization.

The event, slated for Sunday, October 4, has been created to increase public awareness of the Conservancy's land trust projects. With this in mind, participants will visit three Orillia-area properties: Wilson Point Wetlands, Grant Wetlands, and Carthew Bay Nature Reserve.

The twist is that instead of driving, participants will be using pedal power to visit the properties. This is an excellent way to promote a green ethic and encourage outdoor, physical activity. Best of all, it's an activity that people of all ages, especially families, can enjoy.

Departure is from Couchiching Beach Park in Orillia at 10 a.m. Cyclists will travel to the Conservancy properties using recreational trails and various streets. There will be a short course that is family-friendly and a long course for those looking for a challenge.

But it won't be just a joy ride!

Upon arrival at the Conservancy

land trust properties, participants will engage in a quiz or a task to obtain a stamp on a "passport" to prove they have completed the journey. Prizes will be awarded for completion of the adventure.

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Going Greener

Conservancy NEWS changes format in December: e-newsletter, we're almost there!

This will be the last hard-copy edition of *Conservancy News*.

The December issue of our newsletter will be the first one to be sent via e-mail, so if you haven't arranged to have it sent to you electronically, please contact Gayle Carlyle at gayle@couchconservancy.ca. Just send a message with the heading "Newsletter Address" and we'll take care of the rest.

There are some important reasons for the switch, other than the obvious green advantage of reducing the amount of paper we consume. The cost of printing and postage is a significant expense to the Conservancy. The money we spend annually on producing a hard copy of the newsletter can be channelled toward our core purpose of land conservation and stewardship.

An e-newsletter can also become an effective way to reach new members and supporters, broadening the reach of our message and our cause.

It will allow us to bring you full colour and important web links to connect you to the wider conservation community.

Don't miss the next edition of *Conservancy News*. Send us an e-mail today if you haven't already done so.

Conservancy Cycling Adventure *continued*

Participants will be required to provide their own bicycles. Helmets are mandatory for all cyclists, and knobby tires or wide touring tires are highly recommended.

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

The Couchiching Conservancy would like to thank the Casino Rama Community Wellness Program for sponsoring our cycling adventure. ∞

Join us on Sunday, October 4,
at Couchiching Beach Park, Orillia.

Start time is 10:00 a.m.

To register for this free event, go to
www.conservancycycling.eventbrite.com

Volunteer Coordinator required

The Couchiching Conservancy needs someone with excellent organizational and communication skills to become our Volunteer Coordinator.

Because the position is also a volunteer one, it would be ideal for someone who has recently retired and is looking to apply their skills on a part-time basis. It's a great opportunity to meet people and help with the conservation goals of the Conservancy.

Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining information for a database of almost 200 volunteers including management teams for Conservancy properties
- Assisting with promotion, recruiting, and training of new volunteers
- Communication with volunteers for special projects and field work
- Assisting with the development of a volunteer training manual

Skills:

- Experience working with the public, especially on the telephone and in person
- Experience working with volunteers

The position has a flexible schedule of approximately one to four hours per week depending on the season.

The position is based out of The Couchiching Conservancy, however most of the work can be done at home.

If you are interested in being our Volunteer Coordinator, please contact Gayle Carlyle at 326-1620 or e-mail gayle@couchconservancy.ca. ∞

Invasive species inventory and eradication project

Invasive species have been named one of the primary threats to biodiversity and therefore natural lands, so with a mandate like The Couchiching Conservancy's – to protect significant natural land for future generations – it is no wonder that summer 2009 has been dedicated to an invasive species project.

It came as a result of a constant battle with garlic mustard on Conservancy-managed lands. Garlic mustard, an herbaceous species introduced as a flavourful garden green by European settlers, is one of the most threatening of invasive plants. Now found on seven Conservancy-managed properties, garlic mustard must be dealt with before it's too late.



Most notable of the garlic mustard infestations is that at Church Woods. Many dedicated volunteers have been pulling it for over three years under guidance from Tim Crooks, the Volunteer Stewardship Team Leader. This year, suggestions from Tim and others with experience, as well as on-site

observations, are being formed into an experiment on the effectiveness of new and traditional methods of eradication: mulching, over-seeding, pulling and cutting.

The main goal of the project is to determine where invasives are occurring on properties owned and managed by The Couchiching Conservancy and to suggest eradication measures for them in the coming years. This will be done through monitoring, research on best methods, observation and creativity. ∞

BRIEF NOTES

Notes

Ontario Land Trust Alliance conference

Once again representatives from The Couchiching Conservancy will be attending the OLTA conference, to be held this year at the Kempfenfelt Centre in Barrie in late October. The three-day conference provides an excellent opportunity for staff and board members to network with other organizations and gain valuable information on the latest in the land trust movement.

A sign of the times

On Saturday, August 29, the Conservancy unveiled a new sign on the 106-acre addition to the Alexander Hope Smith Nature Reserve in Washago. There are plans to have hiking trails on this section of the property with, perhaps, a link across Boyd's Creek. The AHS Nature Reserve provides important habitat for many species at risk. Look for the sign on Cooper's Falls Road between Green River Drive and Riverdale Road.

Join us on Facebook!

We now have a Facebook page devoted to the Conservancy and have had over 50 people join in our first few weeks online. We will be using this social-networking site, called simply "Couchiching Conservancy," to promote upcoming events and provide up-to-date news on the Conservancy and our properties. Have you joined us yet?

Community Foundation/Dragon Boat Festival

The Conservancy has created a fundraising partnership with Orillia Community Foundation. The two groups will work together to identify potential donors to contribute to a new local land stewardship fund. The

endowment funds, established by The Community Foundation of Orillia & Area, will create a permanent source of revenue for local stewardship activities.

The first fundraising initiative will be to enter the fun at Orillia's Dragon Boat Festival on Saturday, September 26. The Conservancy will be recruiting the powerful paddling skills of 12 women to team up with women from the Community Foundation.

You can sponsor the Conservancy team by going to our website (www.couchconservancy.ca) or to our Facebook page.

Carden fundraising

The Couchiching Conservancy is in the process of creating a special fund to provide long-term stewardship for protected alvar properties on the Carden Plain. It's called the Carden Conservation Fund, and the goal is to raise \$25,000 in 2009 to help pay for ongoing stewardship on these globally rare holdings. The fund will also help us work with adjacent land owners, who continue to play an essential role in the preservation of important habitat.

The second component of our fundraising effort this fall is our ongoing campaign to raise money for the purchase of Little Bluestem Alvar, a 654-acre piece of high-priority habitat located adjacent to the Prairie Smoke Reserve. The Conservancy has committed to raising \$25,000 toward the purchase.

To date, we have raised close to \$20,000 toward those twin goals, but we need your help to complete our commitment. For more information or to make a donation, contact Mark Bisset at mbisset@couchconservancy.ca ☺



Goodbye, hello Ron Reid takes on new role

When Ron Reid retired from his role as Executive Director of The Couchiching Conservancy, he was by no means leaving.

He still has too much to do.

Ron has been instrumental in creating new models in land conservation, particularly on the Carden Plain, where he has spearheaded cooperation between land owners, aggregate companies, and naturalists to produce impressive results. Working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, other conservation organizations and individuals, Ron has helped protect about 6,000 acres of important habitat in the Carden area.

Freed from a desk, Ron is taking on a part-time role focusing on Carden. He will continue to work with the key players in the region, seeking more protection for valuable habitat and building the relationships upon which The Couchiching Conservancy has founded its success.

His presence is also providing important continuity in the transition to new Conservancy management under Mark Bisset. ☺

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 the conservation of our natural world is good for the community and good for businesses. Mid-way through this year's campaign, we are delighted to report that the following businesses and organizations have already joined or renewed their membership:

Level I

Bayview Wildwood Resorts Ltd.
BDO Dunwoody
Birchmere Retirement Residence
D. Saulnier Auto Parts Wreckers & Used Cars Ltd.
KH Communications
Champlain Manor
Office Links
Ellis Hearing Aid Service
Roy E. Pearn Enterprises
Zwicker Evans Lewis, LLP
First Student Canada
Orillia Mazda

Level II

Coldwater Road Animal Clinic
Crawford, McKenzie, McLean, Anderson & Duncan LLP
Garfield Dunlop MPP
Hehn Trickey Professional Corp.
Dr. Ravi Aggarwal
Julia A. Bailey, Barrister & Solicitor
C.T. Strongman Surveying Ltd.
Ego's Nurseries Ltd.
The Water Market
Coldwater Road Animal Clinic

Level III

Mawdsley's Mobile Crane Rental Ltd.
Mundell Funeral Home Ltd.
Ontario Waterway Cruises Inc.
Unison Engine Components
Dalts Honda
Donald D. Scott Custom Builder & Renovator Inc.
The Packet & Times
G.H. Stewart Construction Ltd.
Ms. Liz Antochin
Joanne Haskins - Think Communications
The Birdhouse Nature Company
Wes' Tree Service
Metroland North Media - Orillia Today

Level IV

J.R. Booth Chartered Accountant
Orillia Chamber of Commerce
Orillia Power Corporation
Level V
Casino Rama
The Davey Tree Expert Co.
Mid-Ontario Disposal
Pelee Island Winery

This impressive list of businesses and organizations will be recognized at our corporate event on **Friday, October 16**, at Grant's Woods. Next time you patronize one of these businesses, say "Thanks!" for their role in keeping the Couchiching area green for future generations. ☺

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

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

Mark Bissett, Executive Director 326-1620
Kyra Howes, Stewardship Coordinator
Gayle Carlyle, Outreach Coordinator
Kristen Field, Science Intern

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*The Couchiching
Conservancy* 

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