



# Conservancy NEWS

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

Seasonal Highlights from The Couchiching Conservancy

May 2004

## Building a strong base for the future

**T**his spring issue of *Conservancy News* is a little different. It focuses on one of our key priorities for 2004: growing a strong membership base. We wanted to let you know why your membership is so important to us, and how you can benefit. And we're introducing a special membership challenge so you can win valuable prizes by signing up new Conservancy members.

A family membership amounts to less than \$1 per week – what better investment could you make in a green and healthy future for our community? We hope you will help us reach out to people across our region who support our mission to protect special natural areas, and ask them to express that support through a membership.

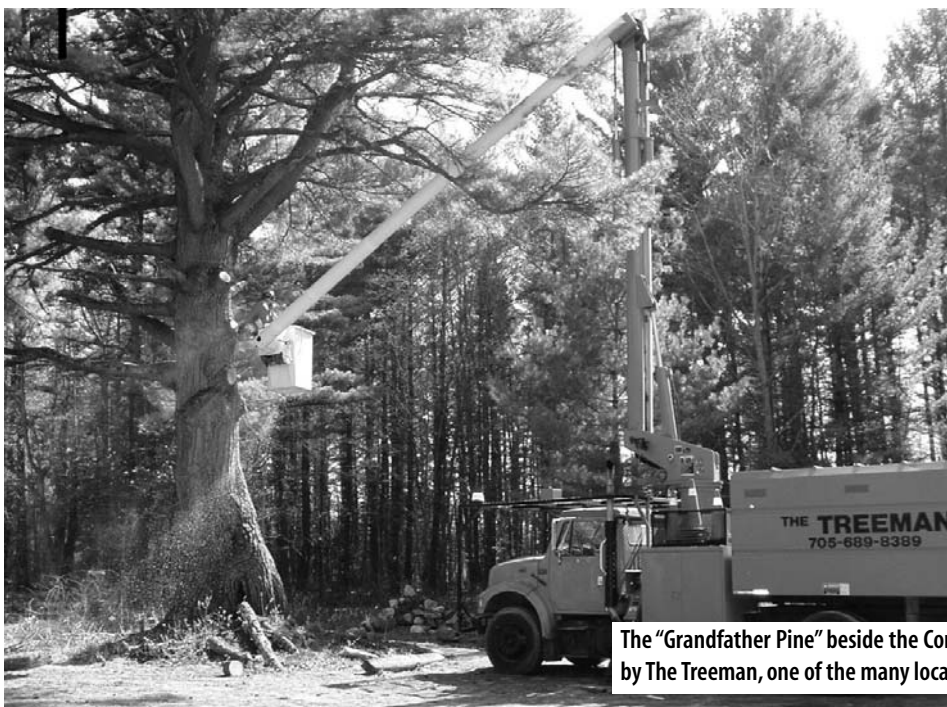
### Help comes in many forms

One of the great strengths of the Conservancy is our flexibility in working with others who share our interest in protecting nature. A few examples from recent months include:

- Students from Sir Sanford Fleming College in Lindsay, Ont., installed 25 wood duck boxes in wetlands on the Carden Plain as part of a course project. Wildlife Habitat Canada and the Probst family provided funding for the boxes.
- The Severn Township Ratepayers Association contributed \$1,200 toward a future conservation project within Severn Township.
- Dr. Nancy Ironside provided a significant grant to be

drawn down gradually over the next decade to support the costs of our website. She has also arranged to post her extensive field records of mushrooms in a new ecological-data section of the website, which should be available shortly.

- The children, parents and staff at Marchmont Elementary School hosted Conservancy past-president Adam Thomson as part of their Earth Day celebrations and collected \$600 toward our Protect an Acre program. ∞



The "Grandfather Pine" beside the Conservancy Centre has its dead branches trimmed by The Treeman, one of the many local companies who donated services to the Centre.

# Why are members so important to the Conservancy?

Most people in the Orillia area think that The Couchiching Conservancy is doing good work – in fact, many of the people we talk to tell us we're doing a *great* job. And you may have already supported individual Conservancy projects, either through cash donations or volunteer time.

We appreciate that support greatly. But the reality is: *we also need memberships* for the Conservancy to be effective. Here's why:

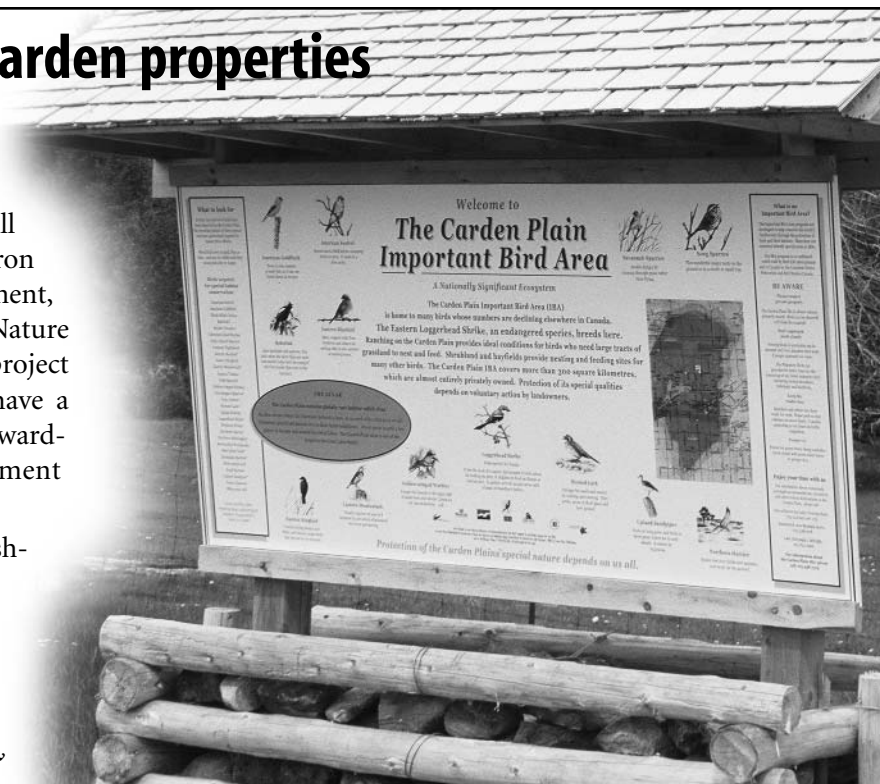
- ✓ **Membership revenues support the core of the organization**, especially our ability to have quality staff. Private foundations will often support projects, but only if there is someone to write top-notch proposals and make sure results are delivered. Most foundations won't provide funding for core staff, so without a strong membership base our ability to attract project funds is very limited.
- ✓ The Ontario Trillium Foundation has provided a four-year capacity-building grant that covers part of our staff costs, but the amount of their support decreases each year. **Membership growth has to make up the difference.** We plan to double our membership base this year, and to reach 500 active members by 2008.
- ✓ **Members become our voice in the community**, comprising a growing group of people who are familiar with the Conservancy's work and can tell others about us.
- ✓ **A strong and growing membership attracts other supporters.** Most funders, and even most individual donors, look for evidence that the Conservancy has community support. Our member base is the most important piece of evidence we can provide. ∞



## Join us on a tour of Carden properties

A bus tour of several protected properties on the Carden Plain is planned for **Sunday, June 27**, from 12:30 p.m. until late afternoon. We will give you a first-hand look at Cameron Ranch, the Turnbull conservation easement, the Catherine McCuaig MacDonald Nature Sanctuary, and another major new project area yet to be announced. You will have a chance to hear from the property-stewardship team leaders about management activities and challenges.

To cover the cost of the bus and refreshments, the tour will be \$10 each for Conservancy members and volunteers, and \$15 each for non-members (if space available). **To reserve a spot**, call us at 326-1620, or e-mail us at [nature@couchconservancy.ca](mailto:nature@couchconservancy.ca). ∞



# Membership: What's in it for you?

In terms of direct benefits, we can offer only a little – an official tax receipt for the entire membership amount, this quarterly newsletter to keep you informed, access to our annual meeting, and other special events.

But if you're like most of our members, you join the Conservancy simply for the satisfaction of knowing you are helping to protect the special natural places within our community.

It's easy to see the challenges that are coming – a rapidly growing population, especially in attractive rural settings; massive new quarries to feed the Toronto market; and expanding highways and commercial areas. Through the Conservancy's projects, we ensure this economic growth doesn't destroy the best of our natural environment.

So if you're telling a friend or neighbour about the Conservancy

and why they should join, you could point out:

- All membership dues and donations support protection of nature *in our own backyard*, rather than in some distant region.
- The Conservancy has a *proven track record of delivering results*, and is often used as a model for community land trusts elsewhere in the province.
- We take a *reasoned, cooperative approach to conservation*, often working hand-in-hand with landowners, rather than one of strident advocacy.
- Our members have opportunities to *get together with like-minded people* to monitor properties, learn about nature, or participate in other volunteer activities.
- Members can *visit most of our properties* to see for themselves the exceptional natural areas we have preserved; an updated guide to our reserves is planned for later this year. ☺



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## Couchicing Conservancy goes global

The Conservancy's Executive Director, **Ron Reid**, was asked to represent Canada at a recent conference in Spain on private land stewardship. Ron presented an overview of the rapid growth of nonprofit land trusts in Canada; he also drew on examples of our own work on the Oro Moraine and elsewhere. Other speakers came from the U.S., Britain, Holland, Poland and Chile, as well as various parts of Spain.

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**SPRING**  
**Membership Challenge**

**Deadline: June 30, 2004**

# Couchiching Conservancy by the numbers

- 3 .....conservation easements held by the Conservancy
- 4 .....pairs of endangered Loggerhead Shrikes nesting on Cameron Ranch in 2004
- 5 .....nature reserves managed under agreement with other organizations
- 8 .....properties donated to the Conservancy as nature reserves
- 16 .....active property-stewardship teams
- 18 .....presentations made to clubs and seminars last year
- 44 .....media articles about Couchiching Conservancy last year
- 85 .....% of members who renewed last year
- 107 .....species of birds counted during a 24-hour period in our region in June 2001
- 145 .....average \$ amount donated by each Conservancy member last year
- 180 .....land trusts currently active across Canada
- 4,657 ....acres protected to date by Couchiching Conservancy projects
- 204,000 ..\$. contributed toward the Cameron Ranch purchase last year

## The Couchiching Conservancy Board

- Bob Sullivan, President .....325-8775
- Rob Cutler, Treas. ..robert.cutler@rbc.com
- Earl Dertinger .....487-2840
- Kim Gavine .....835-5716
- Renee Good .....326-2563
- Nathalie Rockhill .....438-1301
- Joan Rosebush .....329-1448
- Dan Stouff .....329-8232
- Isabelle Thiess .....326-5547
- Ron Reid, Executive Director ...326-1620

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# SPRING

## Membership Challenge

Help us build our membership, and earn rewards in the process! By signing up the greatest number of new Conservancy members, you can win one of three special prizes donated by generous local businesses:



- A handcrafted cherry and walnut bird feeder, beautiful and functional, donated by the Bird House Nature Company.
- A free-range turkey, fresh for Thanksgiving or Christmas, from Highland Farms.
- An Indian-cuisine meal for two, provided by Grover's Family Restaurant.

*Here's all you need to do:*

**Step 1:** Identify friends, colleagues or neighbours who you think would be interested in the Conservancy.

**Step 2:** Write your name (Referred by .....) on the enclosed membership forms and pass them on to your prospects, along with an explanation of membership's benefits to them and to the community.

**Step 3:** Return the forms and payment to us by **June 30**; payment can be made by cheque or VISA, or people can even join over the phone (326-1620).



If you're not a member already, you can include your own membership toward the contest prizes. We'll add up the results this summer, and present the prizes at a gathering being planned for late summer.

**Good luck!** If you need more membership forms, or have questions, give us a call at 326-1620. And remember, qualifying memberships have to reach us by June 30, so don't delay!