

HEY, WHAT'S HAPPENING AT...OJIBWAY?



Naturalists are concerned about the impacts of a truck bypass route on the Ojibway Prairie Complex.
(Photo by Gerry Kaiser)

By Lorraine Johnson, Editor, Carolinian Canada newsletter

It's a multi-million-dollar project involving all levels of government. It will require agreement from two countries, Canada and the United States, each with their own laws and regulations. It will affect thousands of homeowners and pretty well every resident of Windsor to some degree. No wonder it's creating controversy.

"It" is the plan for a new Windsor border crossing and associated access routes.

The project is mired in turf wars. And the "turf" that many naturalists are concerned about is the Ojibway Prairie Complex – in particular, a proposal to tunnel under a portion of the prairie to provide a truck bypass route to the border.

This proposal is contained in a document called the Schwartz Report, which was released by the City of Windsor in January 2005 and unanimously endorsed by City Council. The Schwartz Report recommends that the City not wait until a new border crossing site has been chosen but, instead, build a truck bypass route now to relieve traffic congestion. And the preferred bypass route identified by the Schwartz Report includes a tunnel underneath the southern perimeter of the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve.

Alan McKinnon, founder of the group Citizens Protecting Ojibway Wilderness (CPOW), is fighting to stop the proposed

bypass route in its tracks. "Every mayor since 1958 has enhanced and furthered the protection of Ojibway," says McKinnon. "Our goal is to stop the City from putting a road through Ojibway and to instead continue to protect this legacy for our grandchildren." Phil Roberts, president of the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, agrees: "Any plans to put a road through Ojibway will be adamantly opposed by the community."

Windsor Mayor Eddie Francis rejects the characterization of the bypass as "through" Ojibway. "Anybody that's characterizing it as 'through' Ojibway is doing that for their own reasons," says Mayor Francis. "Going through' Ojibway seems to try to create the impression that we're in favour of destroying Ojibway, and that's completely inaccurate."

However, Mayor Francis does not rule out a tunnel underneath a portion of Ojibway: "Our engineers tell us that you can tunnel underneath without affecting anything in the area. But we realize that that's one engineer's perspective. What we're saying is that the proposal has to be subjected to the most comprehensive environmental assessment there is. If it can be tunneled so there's no impact, then obviously we'll consider that, but it's a full and comprehensive environmental assessment that will determine this."

The City of Windsor is not the only player in the decision-making process. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation is leading the Canadian portion of the Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) environmental assessment process. The Schwartz Report was released right around the same time as DRIC was generating its own study. According to David Wake, manager of the Windsor Planning Office for the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, "We did identify the Schwartz truck bypass route as a possible corridor, but our conclusion was that it should be set aside. We ruled out Ojibway. Our view is that the right place for the route is the existing Huron Church/Talbot Road corridor."

The City has major concerns with DRIC's analysis, and, in particular, with DRIC's focus on the existing roadway, Huron Church. Says Mayor Francis, "DRIC has scoped it down to one corridor, and they're not looking at other options available west of Huron Church. Our concern is that they've done that without a comprehensive environmental assessment comparing every option."

In response to concerns that the area west of Huron Church includes the Ojibway Prairie Complex, Mayor Francis says, "The entire area is not covered in (continued on page 2)

prairie. There's also open farmland. An environmental assessment would tell us what we can and can't do."

Whether or not DRIC accedes to the City's desire to consider areas west of Huron Church, including a possible tunnel through Ojibway, for an access route remains to be seen. However, even if DRIC sticks with its preferred area of the existing Huron Church corridor, David Wake acknowledges that there could be some impacts on parts of Ojibway: "There could be some edge effects on the Spring Garden ANSI with a widened Huron Church Road." DRIC envisions a six-lane freeway to the border, and there's a high probability, Wake says, that there will be some service roads: "Do we widen existing roads to the west or to the east? Do we have service roads, and if so, how many?"

These are just some of the questions that DRIC will study further, as it continues to narrow down the options and come up with a recommended crossing site by mid-2007. For his part, Alan McKinnon of CPOW is "cautiously positive and optimistic" about DRIC's decisions to date, such as ruling out a route through Ojibway and focussing instead on existing roads.

In the meantime, says Wake, "I encourage people to keep in touch. We've got lots of information out there, and it's good to have dialogue. We're always looking for input."

For more information on DRIC, see www.partnershipborderstudy.com. DRIC invites comments by e-mail at detroit.river@mto.gov.on.ca. For more information on the Schwartz Report, see www.citywindsor.ca/00142.asp or e-mail schwartzreport@city.windsor.on.ca.



Controlled burns help to maintain healthy ecological functioning at the Ojibway Prairie Complex. (Photo by Gerry Kaiser)

The Carolinian Canada Coalition has been invited to participate in the DRIC process and to provide input. The Coalition is doing this through local partners, who attend meetings and information sessions, and who voice concerns regarding natural heritage protection. The work of volunteers is invaluable; many people have devoted countless hours to meetings, along with reviewing complex documents and updating contacts throughout the region. Many thanks to those volunteers who are "speaking up" for Ojibway!

COALITION NEWS

Awards Celebration

The Carolinian Canada Awards ceremony is always a moving event, but this year there was added poignancy. Arthur Teasell, who passed away shortly after being nominated, was granted a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award. His son Scott Teasell accepted the award on his behalf. Arthur Teasell worked patiently and with good humour to integrate conservation and make a positive difference on the Sarnia landscape. For more than 20 years he worked as a volunteer in his community and was responsible for organizing the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee, which protects and manages five natural areas. He left an exceptional legacy.



Vicki McKay, the Awards Committee Chair, presents a Lifetime Achievement Award to Scott Teasell, who accepted the award on behalf of his late father, Arthur Teasell.

Conservation Awards Call for Nominations



Carolinian Canada Coalition

The Carolinian Canada Coalition is pleased to invite nominations for the 2006 Conservation Awards to recognize outstanding contributions of people who protect Carolinian Canada's unique nature. The deadline is May 31, 2006. For more information, see www.carolinian.org.



Peter Carson (right) receives congratulations from Vicki McKay on being honoured with a Carolinian Canada Conservation Award.

Five other recipients were recognized at the Conservation Awards ceremony, held on November 10, 2005, at the Carolinian Canada Stakeholders Meeting in Ingersoll:

Individuals:

- ◆ Peter Carson works tirelessly with landowners, communities, and conservation allies to protect and restore green spaces in Norfolk, his home county, and across the Carolinian zone.
- ◆ Allan Elgar involved himself to such a degree in protecting ecological gems in Oakville that he ran and was elected City Councillor. He has inspired other members of the organization Oakville Greens to do the same.



Photo by John Overmyer

BOOK WORKS

For the past year, the Coalition has been hard at work on an illustrated book that celebrates the unique nature of Carolinian Canada. The book is written by experts from across the zone and features photographs by dozens of contributors. More information, including details on special orders, will follow in future issues of the newsletter.

Groups:

- ◆ Pelee Island Winery grows grapes with minimal impact on the environment, a demonstration to the rest of the industry. The business has also been a long-time supporter of conservation events and is working closely with conservation groups to steward the significant natural areas that they own.
- ◆ Hamilton Naturalists' Club volunteers have worked hard over decades to fundraise, protect, and steward the best remaining natural areas in their region and beyond.

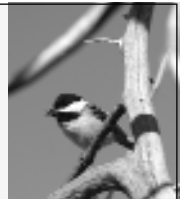


Oakville City Councillor Allan Elgar (middle) and the group Oakville Greens have been enthusiastic and effective advocates for protecting the remaining natural areas in Oakville, a region facing enormous growth.

Youth:

- ◆ Environmental Leadership Program at Elgin Secondary School is the most sought-after class in the school, and the students take on any conservation challenge that comes their way. They are an invaluable aid to many restoration and cleanup projects.

From industry to schools, the awards highlight the “good news” of the environmental movement.



By Nikki May

The Carolinian Canada Coalition is embarking on a new outreach program to raise the profile of landowner actions for species and habitats at risk in Carolinian Canada. The program is being piloted in Chatham-Kent, Elgin, Lambton, and Norfolk. CCC will highlight leading-edge stewardship actions by private landowners and public agencies in each county and watershed. The 140 Big Picture Core Natural Areas will provide the context. The program will focus on habitat solutions for rare species that also provide benefits to the landowner and landscape.

The Coalition is working closely with local partners such as municipal governments, Stewardship Councils, Conservation Authorities, agricultural associations, naturalists' clubs, the Ministry of Natural Resources, and First Nations to develop factsheets carrying a shared message that will promote pride in local natural heritage and a positive, pro-active attitude towards conservation. A key part of the project is liaising with the 45+ species at risk recovery teams in the zone to profile "do-able" landowner actions that may help several species. Ultimately, this project will expand the tools available to support the work of groups and individuals who are interested or involved in stewardship projects.

Two Outreach Coordinators have been hired to lead this project. Bernie Solymár is working with stakeholders in Norfolk and Elgin Counties, and Nikki May is doing the same in Lambton and Chatham-Kent. They have contacted lead partners and hosted stakeholders' meetings where representatives from all interested groups came together to give their input on what they would like to see in the factsheets and future outreach programs. This program is generously supported by the Habitat Stewardship Program of Environment Canada.

If you want to know more about this program in your area, contact Carolinian Canada at (519) 873-4631 or info@carolinian.org.



CANADA DAY

Middle Island Heritage Plaque Celebration

A Carolinian Canada Signature Site Event
At Point Pelee National Park
Saturday, July 1, 2006

Free entry to the Park
Special Canada Day Events

Hosted by Parks Canada and the Friends of Pt. Pelee

Check www.carolinian.org for more details.



THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION

Mark Your Calendars!



Carolinian Canada Coalition Annual General Meeting

Full Day Forum
Conservation Awards

Friday, October 20, 2006 Elm Hurst Inn, Ingersoll



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For more information call 519-433-7077 or look us up on the web at www.carolinian.org

BIG PICTURE ROADSHOW

The Big Picture vision of a healthy landscape has been adopted and discussed widely in Carolinian Canada, in a large part due to the Coalition's Big Picture Roadshow, sponsored by the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation. Our Roadshow has been a great success, reaching thousands of individuals through presentations, meetings and discussions across Carolinian Canada with our members, partners and stakeholders. While public presentations are a staple of the Roadshow, there is a quieter but very critical part of this program: the foundation's support has allowed us to participate in a variety of municipal-advisory committees and stakeholder programs, by invitation.

We believe this type of involvement is important to build understanding between sectors and work cooperatively with local groups and decision-makers for the common goal of healthy landscapes. We look forward to continuing to work with funders like the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation who share the vision of our Coalition.

A HEARTY THANK-YOU!

George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation

FIRST BOARD FOR CCC

This is an exciting year for the Coalition as we look forward to becoming an independent registered charity and installing our inaugural formal board. Until now, Lambton Wildlife Inc. has generously hosted our finances, and the CCC Management Committee has managed the affairs of the Coalition. This arrangement has worked very well; however, as our programs mature, the Coalition sees this move as a way to enhance member involvement and fundraising.

The new organizational structure and by-laws aim to bring together "Groups" and "Individuals" to enhance the quality of life in Carolinian Canada. The current Management Committee worked carefully to ensure that the new structure of 18 board members retains the successful formula of group networking, and at the same time, opens the door to increased involvement by individuals on the board. Several committees will work under the new board, including a new Management Committee, with board and non-board members to oversee programs and projects.

The inaugural board members who are submitting applications for incorporation and charitable status include current Committee members whose organizations have agreed to sponsor them on the new board:

Dr. J. Gordon Nelson, University of Waterloo
James Duncan, Nature Conservancy of Canada
Peter Banks, Lambton Wildlife Inc.
Jim Oliver, Conservation Ontario
Tara Tchir, Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
Scott Peck, Ontario Professional Planners Institute
Peter Carson, Ontario Nature
Alice Casselman, Association for Canadian Educational Resources
Ron Wu-Winter, Ontario Forestry Association

Nominations for the first elected board will be accepted this year. Elections are expected to be held at our first official AGM on October 20, 2006.

IS THE BIG PICTURE WORKING?

Zone-wide Monitoring in Carolinian Canada

In 2000, Carolinian Canada Coalition published the Big Picture, a mapped vision of how we can protect and restore the natural areas on our landscape using a linked system of cores and corridors. Since then, many groups, both government and non-government, have taken action to implement the Big Picture vision in different ways. It is timely now to look at our progress on the landscape and begin to monitor our conservation success in the context of the Big Picture. Based on a consensus from the November Stakeholders meeting, a Carolinian Canada Monitoring Working Group was formed in January to examine the potential development of a monitoring program. The initial discussion pointed to "monitoring the existing monitoring programs" to bring together a cohesive picture of conservation action. Building on the experiences of Conservation Authorities, a report card was suggested as an ideal tool to use for reporting and informing communities, conservation programs and decision-makers.

The Monitoring Working Group quickly identified links to other monitoring initiatives, such as provincial SOLRIS. A gap was also identified: a focus and overview on landscape health and action in Carolinian Canada, ecologically the most diverse and threatened region of Canada. A pilot project is now being developed to bring together existing resources to generate a "snapshot" assessment of the Big Picture at several scales using a range of tools from satellite imagery to on-ground indicators.

The establishment of a zone-wide monitoring program will have a range of benefits including improving our ability to refine the Big Picture and implement and monitor recommendations from the Carolinian Woodland Recovery Strategy. As this project develops, the Working Group encourages input from other groups involved in monitoring in Carolinian Canada.

Contact info@carolinian.org for more information.

Mapping the Future with Carolinian Canada Stakeholders

The Carolinian Canada Coalition depends on input from its many stakeholder groups to set the vision, goals and priorities of the Coalition's work. On November, 10, 2005, a major meeting was held to "map" directions for the Coalition in the coming years. The table below summarizes the results of this vision meeting and identifies the informal consensus reached on priorities.

COMMON THEMES		
"Carolinian Canada is all about connections" - Gordon Nelson		
PROVIDE FOCUS "The challenges are immense but the opportunities are greater" - Steve Hounsell	CONNECT STAKEHOLDERS "We need to debunk myths and build relationships" - Peter Carson	LINK NATURE & CULTURE "Change the people and you will change the landscape" - Dan Bissonette
MAJOR DIRECTIONS		
Informal consensus: ** Top priority * High priority		
1. Coordinate a vision * ♦ Help us all use and understand the same language, visions, priorities * ♦ Clarify what CCC is / lead strongly ♦ Clarify member roles 2. Monitor for viable ecosystem function ** ♦ Monitor the monitoring ** ♦ Expand coalition oversight relative to monitoring ♦ Monitoring report cards * ♦ Ecoregion Monitoring - landscape scale * ♦ Identify a common management vision / Ecosystem health reporting ♦ Monitor biodiversity ♦ CC to host monitoring workshop ♦ Monitor change	3. Connect recovery teams to local partner groups ** ♦ Link between recovery strategies 4. Landowner connections * ♦ Determine what would remove stewardship impediments * ♦ Promote ALUS * / Recognize landowners with incentives * ♦ Support a central registry of stewardship information * ♦ Coordinate with landowner organizations * ♦ Develop communications relevant to farmers 5. Bridge science & policy ♦ Encourage public funding for land protection / conservation* ♦ Support materials for municipalities ♦ Influence policy	6. Move beyond science * ♦ Develop a business case for protection ** ♦ Integrate big picture with ecosystem health and services * ♦ Incorporate social sciences 7. Influence perception & awareness ** ♦ Target appropriate audiences * ♦ Tailor message to target audiences ♦ Market the vision ♦ Focus on communities to draw threads together for coherent tapestry



SUMMARY REFLECTIONS

FOCUS ON... ...Voice for many groups ...larger, fewer projects that have a meaningful impact ...Big Picture core areas, jewels on landscape ...monitoring, How well are we doing? What are the trends in threats? ...large-scale, multi-species ecosystem management ...common ground, e.g., riparian forest ...stewardship to achieve long-term goals ...skilled field biologists to balance current GIS trend ...hierarchical planning ...landowner incentives to do the right things, e.g. ALUS	CONNECT... ...between multiple scales ...issues, topics, fields of interest, stakeholders, media, scales ...ideas and facts with emotion and action ...local groups with tools, e.g., advocacy toolkit, business case for land trusts ...to reduce overlap, e.g., Recovery teams ...with planners for PPS implementation guidelines ...landowners with stewardship tools and resources ...municipalities with best management practices for by-laws ...with interested landowners - many out there, not just farmers, but also ex-urbanites	LINK... ...outreach and monitoring programs with culture ...to communities - Highlight broad ecosystem health - i.d. cultural landscapes ...with human health ...to values ► emotion - promote discussion - Issue of values can't be understood through science ...to economics, e.g., show value of natural areas (\$), cost-effective way to manage land ...to social implications ...to common concerns, e.g., Nuisance wildlife ...to balanced landscapes - profile demos, demonstrate best planning, report cards, threats ...to landowner pride - Recognise voluntary protection, leader landowner registry ...to sustainable use ...to public attitudes - monitor
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Proceedings available at www.carolinian.org

HAVE YOUR SAY

Do you agree with the directions identified by the November Stakeholders Meeting? Do you have more to add? Go to www.carolinian.org to submit your comments. All will be considered as we put together a strategic plan for the Coalition. Strategic planning consultants Chetna Inc. of London, Ontario, are working with the Management Committee to draft a plan that will be available for review by members and stakeholders. To receive notice by CCC E-news, send an email to: info@carolinian.org. This project is generously sponsored by the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Photo by John Overmyer



GREENING CAROLINIAN CANADA

Carolinian Canada's Big Picture goal of conservation will happen, gradually, through thousands of actions across the zone. Habitat projects being carried out by non-profit groups, individuals, companies, and governments in a wide variety of places, from corporate grounds and school grounds to natural areas, not only restore degraded landscapes – these actions can also inspire and educate. In each issue of the newsletter, we will highlight habitat projects so readers can share and learn from these successes and challenges. If you're interested in submitting a story for the Greening Carolinian Canada section, send a note to newsletter@carolinian.org.

From Grit to Green

By Nikki May, Chair, Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee

Sarnia has a reputation as a gritty, industrial city, perhaps due to its location in Canada's "Chemical Valley." But Sarnia is also home to some outstanding natural areas, and since 1984 the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee (SUWC) has been working hard to conserve and create wetland, prairie, and upland forest habitat – transforming the city's image from grit to green.

Five properties are managed by SUWC in cooperation with the City, and the group is continually seeking out further promising sites within Sarnia's boundaries. The Dennis Rupert Prairie Reserve was the first major site preserved mainly due to the work of the SUWC. This eight-hectare Reserve protects a rare wet prairie community that is believed to be largely untouched since before the introduction of agriculture in the 1800s. The rare Riddell's Goldenrod and Sullivant's Milkweed are both found at the Reserve.

The group is also working to conserve a series of old gravel pits close to the Lake Huron shoreline. The Art Teasell Wildlife Refuge (ATWR) now protects two of these pits. Partly owned



The Native Garden in downtown Sarnia was created by Bruce and June Strangway of the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee. (Photo by Karen May)

by the City and partly by a local landowner, the ATWR contains two deep ponds, a forested area, and an area that is temporarily wet in the spring. There is good potential here for wetland and forest rehabilitation. Frogs, turtles, beaver, muskrat, and herons are just some of the species that inhabit or visit this spot.

Not too far away to the west is the larger Logan pond, which is partially surrounded by homes. The SUWC has persuaded the City to declare Logan Pond a Natural Area and reserve a six-metre-wide buffer strip on the south shore of the pond as open space. SUWC is currently working with the City to restore this buffer to a natural state. The goal is to have natural shoreline around 80 percent of the pond's perimeter, with limited low-impact access so that migrating birds and other wildlife can find refuge. *(continued on next page)*



Art Teasell (left) and Gerry Clements, both founding members of the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee, plant trees at the Art Teasell Wildlife Refuge, circa 2000. (Photo courtesy of SUWC)

In collaboration with other community groups, SUWC has created natural areas within the downtown core. These include naturalization projects with two neighbouring schools and the development of two native gardens, one in a small downtown horticultural park and one on a private commercial corner that, until recently, had been covered with non-native weeds and gravel.

SUWC also helps manage two larger natural areas at the city's boundaries. One is the Bright's Grove Lagoon Woods, a hardwood bush that abuts a small sewage lagoon complex. In the spring, this second-growth woodland is rich in ephemerals such as Red and White Trillium, Spring Beauty, Trout Lily, and Wild Geranium. The woods and lagoons are havens for native interior and water-loving birds, and a favourite spot for local birders. The other large area is the Perch Creek Management Area at the southeast corner of the city. Perch Creek Management Area contains a wide variety of habitat, including meadow, hardwood plantations, and cattail ponds. SUWC has organized the planting of prairie species in some of the open spaces of this property and plans to host a public tour in the fall.

Along with these larger-scale projects, SUWC also engages homeowners, one property at a time, by distributing American Chestnut seedlings to interested individuals. With the help of a local nursery, SUWC also collects seeds and raises Sandcherries, and distributes plants to landowners along the Lake Huron shoreline, including the Pinery Provincial Park.

All projects have originated from the community, are financed through community fundraising and grant applications, and are carried out by individual volunteers coming together for a common goal. The group works with partners from government and industry, but is self-directed. Major funders include the Shell Environment Fund and TD Friends of the Environment Fund.

The Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee is small – only ten members – but we have “grit,” too, and we plan to continue working towards a greener Sarnia.

Volunteers for Nature Going Strong

By Erica Thompson, Nature Conservancy of Canada

Close to 3,000 volunteers, 4,400 volunteer days, 19,000 hours, equaling an in-kind contribution of nearly \$300,000...The numbers alone are impressive, but beyond the statistics are the on-the-ground results: bridges and trails built, seeds collected, plugs planted, species inventoried, populations monitored.

Since 2002, the Volunteer for Nature (VfN) program has been a conservation success story in Ontario, a partnership effort between the Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ontario Nature principally funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. Throughout the program's four-year pilot run, volunteers participated in 132 conservation projects, including 75 designed to benefit species and habitats at risk and 62 dedicated to improving access while reducing visitor impacts to natural areas.

In the Carolinian zone, conservation volunteers have worked with local partners such as Norfolk Field Naturalists, Bird Studies Canada, Friends of Rondeau Provincial Park, and McIlwraith Field Naturalists at many different sites, from Clear Creek Forest and Pelee Island to the Walsingham Sand Ridges.

“Through the VfN program we found that people, given the opportunity, were thrilled to get involved in land and species conservation,” says Lisa McLaughlin, Stewardship and Government Manager at NCC.

With the completion of the four-year pilot, the VfN program is now expanding, thanks to a grant from The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation. And that's great news for Yvette Tsang, a self-described “city girl,” and her partner Brian Contreras, two of VfN's most active participants.

“Some people go downtown, some people go shopping, but we want to do something different. A day immersed in nature is very calming yet invigorates your spirit,” says Tsang, as she dusts off her knapsack and gears up for the coming field season.

For more information on the 2006 Volunteer for Nature schedule of events, see www.natureconservancy.ca.



Volunteer for Nature Yvette Tsang plants native seedlings at Turkey Point in the summer of 2005. (Photo by B. Smith)

Rouge Legacy

Bob Hunter was a familiar face in the conservation movement. Recognized by Time magazine as an “Eco-hero” of the 20th century, he was a co-founder of Greenpeace and became a popular broadcaster who covered environmental issues for CITY-TV until his death in May 2005.

The provincial government announced in the autumn that a new 500-acre park in the Rouge Valley will be created in his honour. “The Bob Hunter Memorial Park is a fitting tribute to one of our greatest environmental pioneers,” says Premier McGuinty. Adds Tony Wong, MPP for Markham, “This will help further protect the Rouge Valley and provide a welcomed and valued recreational green space for generations to come in our community.”

A map of the new park is available on the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal website at: www.pir.gov.on.ca.

Norfolk Sustainability

In the fall of 2005, the Long Point World Biosphere Foundation (LPWBF) held a series of public focus group sessions in Norfolk County to receive input from all sectors of the community (including farmers, business people, the public and social sector, and those involved with conservation and land stewardship) on building support for a more sustainable local community, economy, and natural environment. The workshops were based, in part, on a visioning document, *Norfolk County in 2026: A Scenario*, which depicts Norfolk County twenty years into the future. Key stakeholders were invited to discuss methods and actions needed to meet this vision.

On November 4, 2006, a “Building a Sustainable Norfolk Community” conference will be held in Simcoe, bringing together community representatives to build on the concepts and ideas brought forth during the focus group sessions. The conference will feature keynote speakers and several concurrent sessions including Diversification and Eco-Marketing in Agriculture, Health and Social Wellness, Alternative Energy Solutions, Caring for Your Land, Eco-tourism, and “Think Globally, Act Locally.” A wine and cheese reception on Friday, November 3, will feature the photography of Port Dover native Tim Hagen, highlighting the natural heritage of the Long Point area. The conference will be followed by a bus tour on Sunday, November 5, to significant natural areas and sustainable farming operations in Norfolk County. The conference is open to the public.

For more information, contact Bernie Solymár at (519) 426-7124 or solymar@nornet.on.ca.

Building a Better Ark

Ontario last revised the legislation governing its parks in the late 1950s. But hopes are high that new parks legislation, introduced in October and now working its way through the Ontario legislature, will help ensure a healthy future for the province's more than 600 parks and conservation reserves.

“The proposed Parks and Conservation Reserves Act is a major step forward,” says Evan Ferrari, Protected Areas Program Director for CPAWS Wildlands League. “Ecological integrity is the overriding principle, and this really sets Ontario on a new path towards meaningful long-term ecological stewardship of parks and conservation reserves.”

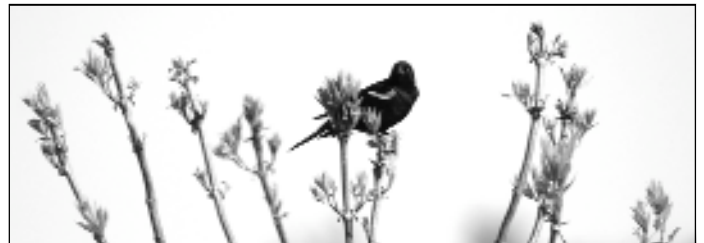
While Carolinian Canada's Policy Committee applauds the government for modernizing the approach to protecting nature in parks, there are some concerns. Currently, Ontario's parks are severely under-represented in Carolinian Canada, with less than 1 percent of the area protected, while more than 10 percent is protected in the rest of the province. The parks here are heavily weighted towards intense recreational uses, and less land is set aside for nature reserves, although this part of the country has the highest biodiversity.

Additionally, intense land use in Carolinian Canada means that parks cannot be managed in isolation from neighbours both in and out of the park system. Gordon Nelson, Chair of CCC, notes that in the Carolinian zone, for example, hundreds of cottages are located within Rondeau Provincial Park, on land leased by people from southern Ontario and nearby U.S. The location of these cottages has been a bone of contention since the 1950s, when rising population and incomes led to demand for more recreational space and beach access for the general public. “Not all of the effects on the indigenous forest are understood by park managers or citizens. For example, recent research indicates that wrens, attracted by cottage bird boxes, are competing with the very rare and threatened Prothonotary Warblers for their nests in the forest,” says Nelson. Similar pressures are expected by cottagers located just outside Long Point Provincial Park, as well as by intensive camping inside the park. Cooperative and adaptive management should become the norm. Ferrari agrees: “There must be clear legislation around being good ecological neighbours to parks.”

For more information on the Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, see:

www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/38_Parliament/Session2/bo11_e.htm or www.wildlandsleague.org.

Photo by John Overmyer



Protecting Paw Paw Woods

By Erica Thompson, Nature Conservancy of Canada

Landowners Jim and Georgina Sheldon are well on their way to realizing their dreams for the family property near Highgate, Ontario. They recently donated their 100-acre property at Turin Paw Paw Woods to the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

“As we followed efforts to protect nearby Clear Creek Forest, we learned that our bush farm was part of the largest block of contiguous woodland in Kent County except for Moraviantown and Walpole Island,” says Jim Sheldon. “Wheels started turning in my head and I approached the Nature Conservancy of Canada about donating the land.”

“This is an incredible gift to the people of Ontario,” says James Duncan, NCC Program Manager, Southwestern Ontario. The property includes 40 acres of mature wetland forest, and provides habitat for many significant Carolinian species such as Swamp White Oak, Tulip Tree, and the globally rare Eastern Fox Snake. As the name Turin Paw Paw Woods suggests, there is also a vigorous and healthy stand of Paw Paw Trees on the property.

The Sheldons' conservation vision is to naturalize the land and, over the years, Jim started the process by planting native species in the corridors between forest and field. Prior to the donation, the Sheldons arranged for the municipal drain, which runs through their agricultural lands, to be closed, a decision that will allow NCC and partners to begin planning for the restoration of a forested wetland. Once restored, the woods will provide critical core habitat and linkages between Clear Creek Forest Reserve and Skunk's Misery – two of the highest priority natural areas in Carolinian Canada as identified in the Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Biodiversity.

“We have great community support for this project,” says Duncan. “Commitments of in-kind support from the Ontario

Ministry of Natural Resources, Stewardship Kent, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Sydenham Field Naturalists will go a long way in helping us carry out the Sheldons' vision for the woods.”

To make a donation towards the \$84,000 restoration goal for Turin Paw Paw Woods, contact James Duncan, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, at (519) 640-6816, or by e-mail at james.duncan@natureconservancy.ca.



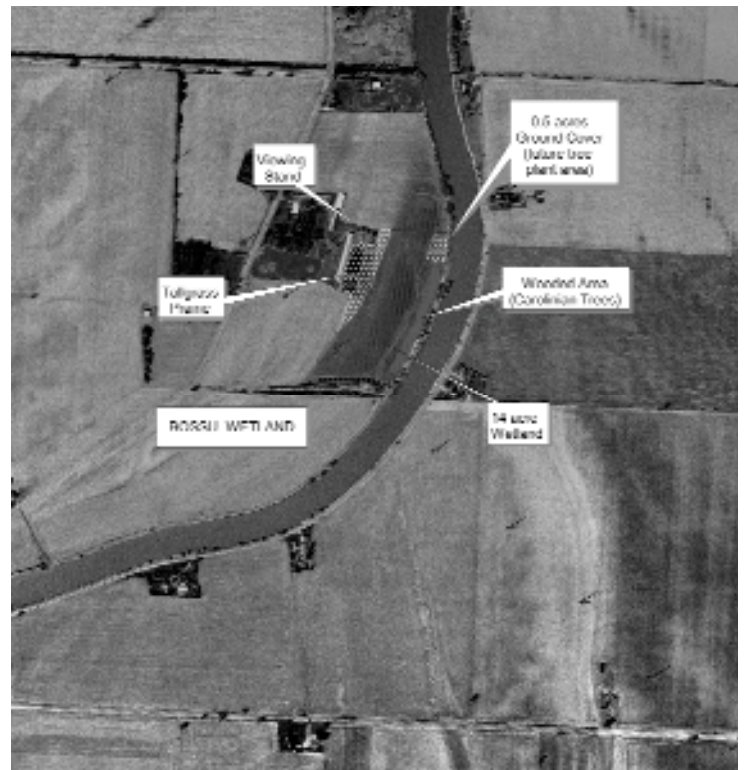
Photo courtesy of John Overmyer

Habitats for Healthy Waters

By Julie Reeder, Lands and Water Intern, Ministry of Natural Resources, Chatham Area Office

Ducks Unlimited Canada, Ontario Stewardship, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation have created the Habitats for Healthy Waters Program, which organizes public workshops to educate landowners on the benefits of wetlands. Utilizing the strengths of each partner, Habitats for Healthy Waters has been able to work cooperatively with landowners throughout southern Ontario.

Larry Cornelis, an active naturalist, provides an example of how such cooperation can restore the landscape. Larry recognized the importance of re-establishing wetlands as a way to create wildlife habitat, improve water quality and quantity, and protect our natural resources. Growing up on a farm, Larry was always surrounded by the outdoors and connected to the land. His childhood memories are of enjoying the wetland at the farm next door with acres of cattail marsh, scattered trees, and dead standing snags. His favourite part of exploring the wetlands was observing the teeming wildlife, including birds, frogs, and snakes. With these memories, Larry had the idea of restoring a wetland on his family farm in Chatham-Kent, but certain questions arose: Where to start? Who could provide advice?



Current and long-term plans for Bossu Wetland show how natural restoration can be integrated into the working farm landscape. (Illustration courtesy of Stewardship Kent)

What permits were required? Fortunately, Larry is a member of the Sydenham Field Naturalists and has also been a council member of Stewardship Kent and the Rural Lambton Stewardship Network, so he had the resources to begin his project.

Larry and his uncle, Robert Bossu, who also lives on the farm, had decided to retire a 15-acre field located adjacent to the north branch of the Sydenham River and restore it to wetland. Larry got in touch with Stewardship Kent in late 2000, prior to the formation of Habitats for Healthy Waters. At that time, Ducks Unlimited Canada and Ontario Stewardship were collaborating on projects that involved creating wetland habitat, and Larry discussed his project with them. Site visits were conducted in order to ensure that the area in question was in the right location, retained water, and wouldn't cause any negative impacts on farming operations. In early 2001, surveys were completed and plans were drawn up.

When Habitats for Healthy Waters was developed in 2003/2004, the program stepped in to assist with finalizing the design, construction, and the installation of the water control structure. In late 2005, Larry completed the construction on the Bossu Wetland and began plans for tree and native grass plantings in the spring of 2006. His future goals include constructing a windmill that will aerate the water within the pond, and constructing a viewing platform. His search for native wetland plants will be an ongoing project in itself. He hopes that the end result will be a wetland with acres of cattails, open water, and wildlife that can be enjoyed by all who visit. Larry's Uncle Robert, the current owner of the land on which the wetland has been constructed, is looking forward to seeing ducklings grow into adults and return year after year. Naturalist groups and some school groups will be invited to visit as the wetland develops. Larry's outlook on this project is restoration rather than "creation," and he encourages landowners whose property originally had wetland to return some of it to its natural glory.

The Habitats for Healthy Waters program was developed to link landowners to the experts, authorities, and financial support necessary for wetland projects. Designed to enhance wetlands on private property, participating landowners keep their right to use and enjoy their land while improving the local environment.

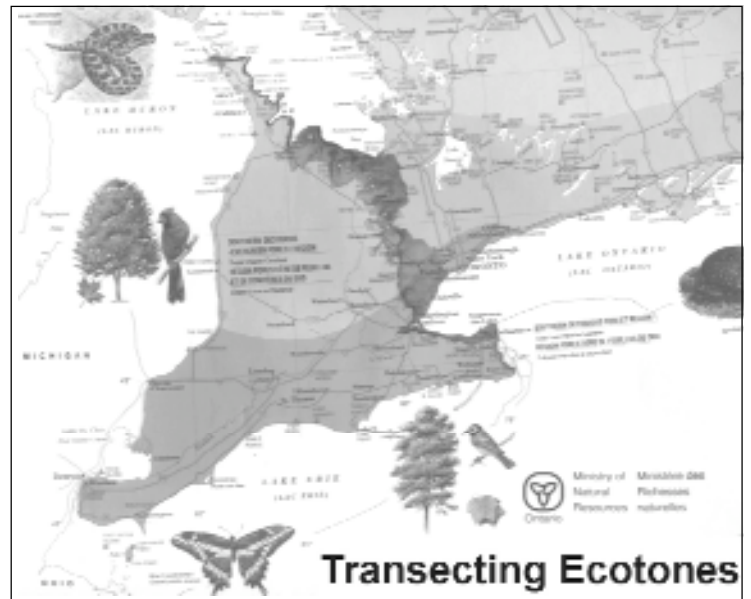
Habitats for Healthy Waters is conducting free workshops for landowners, the first of which was held on February 4, 2006, at Pete and Linda Baxter's Hawthorn Valley Farm in Oxford County. The next workshops are planned for Chatham-Kent on April 1 and Elgin Stewardship Council on July 22. For information on the wetland workshops, go to the Ontario Stewardship website, www.ontariostewardship.org, and then "Select a Stewardship Council," or contact the MNR office in Chatham at (519) 354-7340.

IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

The Boundary of the Carolinian: A Zone Not a Line

By Bill DeYoung and Michael Troughton, Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario

Within the conservation community, you can find variations in representations of the boundaries of the Carolinian life zone. The Big Picture Project, 2000, for example, defined the life zone with finite limits (Jalava 2000), and the resulting Big Picture maps are an excellent information tool. We suggest, however, that the true portrayal of the Carolinian life zone, especially for purposes of education and public awareness, should illustrate the limit of the zone as an ecotonal gradient or "fuzzy boundary" to reflect a dynamically variable life zone.



In this depiction of the Carolinian zone, overlapping tonal gradients illustrate transecting ecotones.

An ecological life zone derives from the interactions of multiple variables, including physiography, topography, soils, and ecoclimate, which influence species range distribution. The extent to which these variables overlap gives rise to ecotonal boundaries and, unlike political or latitudinal lines, cannot be precise. Whereas the southern limit of the Carolinian life zone in Canada - the shorelines of the lower Great Lakes - form an abrupt and sharp boundary line, the northern and eastern edges change gradually, shading into adjacent vegetation complexes, and are best represented as transitional zones of overlapping ecotones.

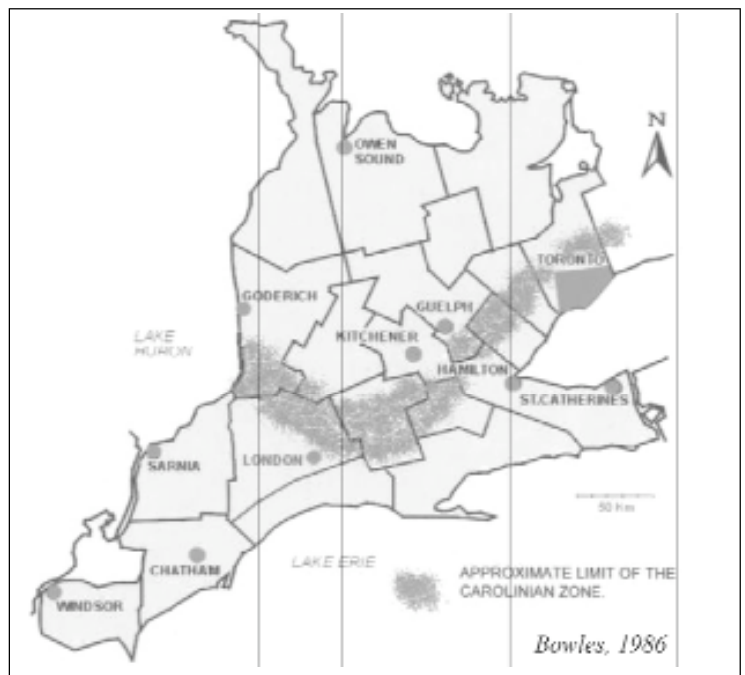
Classic Carolinian species with southern affinities define the core of the life zone and include species such as the Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), Hooded Warbler (*Wilsonia citrina*), and the Great Swallowtail (*Papilio cresphontes Cramer*). But the Carolinian life zone also includes northward affinity species; for example, those (continued on page 12)

found at the Sifton Botanical Bog. This bog is the most southerly bog in Canada, with an open mat of Sphagnum ringed with Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*), Tamarack (*Larix laricina*), and Leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*). Similarly, Mount Elgin Ridges in the Carolinian life zone, with less than 140 Growing Degree Days (GDD), may be compared with areas outside the zone such as the Bay of Quinte or Kincardine, with more than 160 GDD. Plants with northern affinities that are present in the Carolinian life zone include the Yellow Birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), and the Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*). Likewise, it is possible to find southward affinity species extending northward to the Bruce Peninsula or eastward to the Thousand Islands. Examples of southward affinity species include the Broad Beech Fern (*Phegopteris hexagonoptera*), Plantain-leaved Sedge (*Carex plantaginea*), and the Yellow False-foxglove (*Aureolaria flava*).

Based on this, showing the Carolinian life zone with a hard northern edge and at the mid-line of the Rouge River has no basis in the sense of ecotonal boundaries. Instead, we recommend following Bowles' "fuzzy" depiction (2004), and propose that displaying a zonal / tonal limit to the Carolinian life zone should be the norm.

References

Bowles, Jane M (2004). The Carolinian Life Zone. London: University of Western Ontario.
 Jalava, Jarmo V and Peter J. Sorrell (2000). The Big Picture Project. Natural Heritage Information Centre, OMNR.



Rather than representing a sharp and abrupt boundary to the Carolinian life zone, the authors favour the "fuzzy" depiction by Jane Bowles. (Illustration courtesy Jane Bowles)

* This article is adapted from a paper presented at the CCC-PRFO AGM, May 2005.

EVENTS

Ontario Nature is celebrating its 75th anniversary with an AGM and conference hosted by the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists. "Greenways & Waterways" will take place in Kitchener from June 2-4, 2006, with an educational and entertaining slate of speakers, field trips, and social events. For a conference schedule and registration form, see <http://cobalt.golden.net/~kwfnconference>, or call 1-800-440-2366.

The 2006 Annual General Meeting of the Field Botanists of Ontario will be held September 16-17 at the Alderville Community Centre in Roseneath. FBO events are particularly well known for their exceptional field trips; highlights of the AGM promise to be trips to prairies on the Rice Lake Plains, along with outings to the Oak Ridges Moraine and Lake Ontario shorelines. The event includes a First Nations buffet dinner with moose casserole and bannock. For more information, see the FBO website, www.trentu.ca/fbo.



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