

CAROLINIAN CANADA



N E W S L E T T E R

W i n t e r 2 0 0 3 - 4

New Tree for Carolinian Canada

Aynsley Morris, Nature Conservancy of Canada

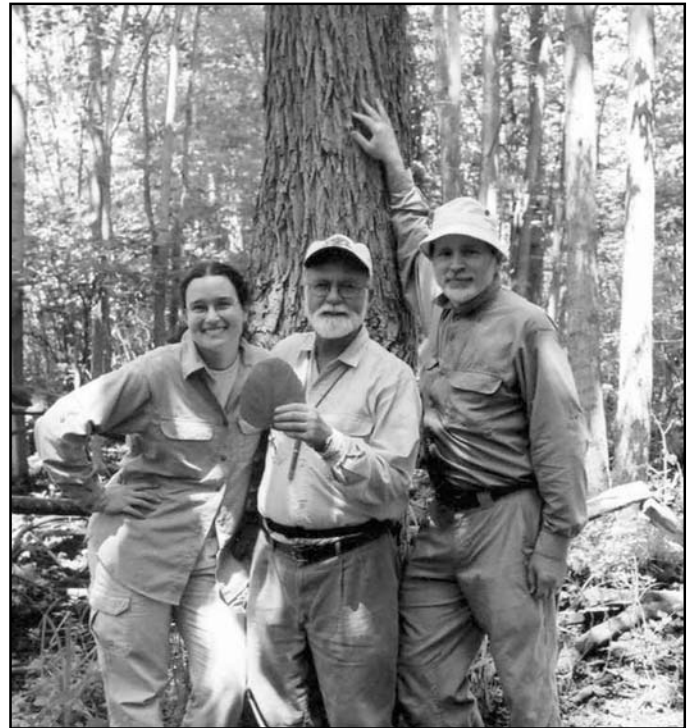
Swamp Cottonwood, a native tree never seen before in Canada, was recently discovered at Bickford Oak Woods, on the St. Clair River, south of Sarnia in Lambton County. The stand of over 60 Swamp Cottonwood (*Populus heterophylla*) was found during a site inventory in November 2002, after the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) secured the site earlier in the year.

"We are very excited about this discovery," said John Riley, Director of Science and Stewardship for NCC. "Ecologists in Canada are still learning about the basics of our biodiversity and now we can add another species to our country's biological inventory list. This is a great example of why it's important for us to protect the natural heritage we have left."

Bickford Oak Woods is located in Canada's Carolinian Zone, an ecoregion where forest cover has been reduced to 11% from its original 80%. NCC purchased the 762-acre site in 2002 in partnership with the Province of Ontario and other donors. The discovery of Swamp Cottonwood confirms the national importance of the site.

"Large forested patches such as Bickford Oak Woods are extremely significant core areas of the Carolinian landscape," said Dr. John Ambrose, a member of NCC's Scientific Advisory Network and Vice-chair of Carolinian Canada, who did the ecological survey of Bickford Oak Woods with Gerry Waldron and Lindsay Rodger. "This large stand of Swamp Cottonwood might have been inadvertently wiped out if NCC hadn't protected this property."

Bickford Oak Woods has a rolling topography of heavy clay soils, and contains a diverse variety of oaks, maples, ashes, hickories and elms. In addition, there is a series of low depressions throughout the site, some with pockets of maple swamps, others that are open and ringed with



Recording a new tree for Canada, the Swamp Cottonwood, was a highlight for (from left) Lindsay Rodger, Gerry Waldron and John Ambrose during a biological inventory of Bickford Oak Woods in Lambton County. (Photo by Peggy Hurst)

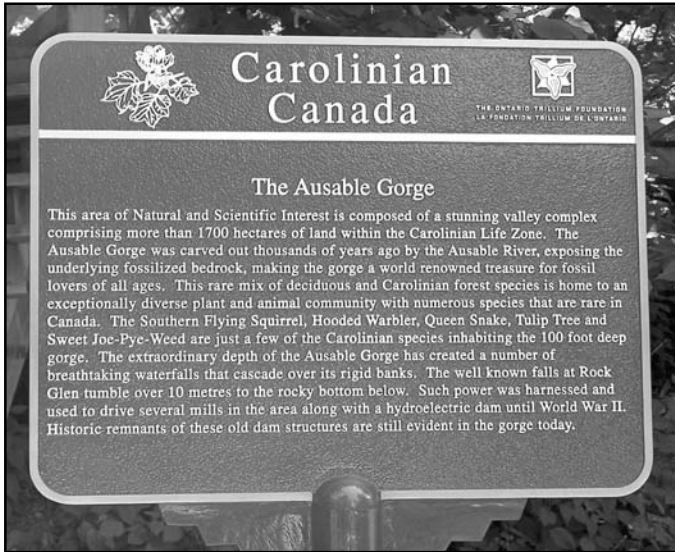
Buttonbush or Winterberry. It was at the end of one of these depressions that the Swamp Cottonwood stand was discovered. Other rarities at Bickford Oak Woods include the Cerulean Warbler, Butler's Garter Snake, Swamp White Oak, and Eastern Fox Snake.

Swamp Cottonwood is found more commonly in the southern United States but is very rare in the north; for example there are only four populations in adjacent Michigan. Swamp Cottonwood is similar in stature to other poplars and cottonwood, but with a reddish hue to its bark. It is also recognizable by its olive green twigs, small buds and orange pith.

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

Ausable Gorge Celebration

The Carolinian Canada Marking Project:



The Ausable Gorge plaque is placed at the centre of more than 526 ha (1300 acres) of habitat managed by Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA).

The 38 Carolinian Canada sites are among the most significant natural areas in the region. In many cases these sites have only been protected through the Stewardship and foresight of local community members.

The Marking Project:

- ◆ Raises community awareness of the natural treasures within their midst
- ◆ Celebrates the community's role in conservation
- ◆ Acknowledges the natural and cultural legacy that we have inherited
- ◆ Encourages communities to take responsibility for the future of this legacy.

The text of the plaques highlights the human role in conservation by telling the local stories. Events are planned for early 2004 and a guide book to sites is due out next year.

The stunning beauty, ecological significance and community support for the protection of Ausable Gorge was celebrated on July 6th, 2003. A bronze plaque was erected at the Rock Glen Conservation Area, overlooking the Gorge, near Arkona and its abundance of natural beauty and diverse wildlife. The plaque is part of Carolinian Canada's multi-year Community Marking Project to commemorate the unique natural significance of the 38 critical sites identified by the Coalition in 1984.



Averaging 30 m deep and 19 km long, the Gorge was carved out over thousands of years by the Ausable River through the Wyoming Moraine and the soft limestone bedrock beneath beginning near the boundary of Lambton and Middlesex Counties. As the river cut through the limestone it exposed multitudes of Middle Devonian fossils. The Gorge encompasses over 1,500 ha (3,700 ac) of primarily forested land, designated as a Carolinian Canada Site and a Ministry of Natural Resources Area of Natural and Scientific Interest due to its large size, relative natural condition and wide diversity of habitats and landforms.

Marking of the Dundas Valley took place on September 21, 2003 with Hamilton Area MPP, Ted McMeekin, Hamilton Councillor, Marvin Caplan, Acting Chair of Hamilton CA - Frank MacIntyre, Aaron Smith and Carolinian Canada chair Paul Smith in attendance. Dundas Valley exemplifies how planning tools can protect critical ecological sites. (Photo courtesy of Hamilton CA)

In attendance at the dedication were the Chair of ABCA Bob Norris; the assistant for MP Rosemarie Ur, Louise White; the Deputy-Mayor of Lambton Shores, Carolyn Jamieson; the Mayor of North Middlesex, Chuck Hall; members of Lambton Wildlife Incorporated, Ric Wellwood of Carolinian Canada and many residents whose properties are adjacent to the gorge. The Healthy Watersheds Specialist for ABCA, Erin Dolmage served as Master of Ceremonies.



**THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION**

The Carolinian Canada Coalition acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, which receives annually \$100 million in government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

Leaders in Carolinian Canada protect Ecology and Economy: "It can be Done!"

Can our natural environment co-exist with pig farms, crops, business, tourism and community development? The answer is 'Yes!' as proven by four leaders in Ontario's Carolinian Life Zone, the nation's most populated and most threatened region, where land-use disputes are prevalent.

Carolinian Canada announced four conservation awards this month to leaders in progressive environmental protection - leaders who demonstrate overwhelmingly how nature and other land uses go hand-in-hand. "The four award recipients show that all sectors can get involved in protecting our natural environment," said John Ambrose, Carolinian Canada's Vice-chair. "Carolinian Canada is proud to recognize these contributions to conserving Carolinian species and habitats."

The achievements of the recipients range from local to national conservation action:

◆ The Natvik Family operates swine and crop operations near Highgate in Chatham-Kent while protecting and 'adding back' to their local environment. They have restored extensive portions of the farms to native species and operate a native plant nursery. With less than 4% forest cover in this part of the Carolinian zone, this family is critical to protecting what remains. They network with neighboring farms to make 'natural linkages', implement eco-friendly agriculture and search out new ideas to help keep the landscape healthy.

"I cannot imagine anything more they could do to make a better, more environmentally appropriate farm operation. This family has gone well beyond any existing guidelines and have a viable farm operation plus a well maintained and restored natural environment," said Ambrose

◆ Ron Tiessen founded the Pelee Island Heritage Centre which works closely with the island's burgeoning tourism industry. He has been critical to the local municipality in developing a 'Green Vision' to set the island as an international leader in eco-friendly economic development. Currently, he is creating a Stewardship Demonstration Farm to show how water, air and nature can be protected through progressive farming techniques.

◆ Patricia Rhoads of Essex County helps landowners who want to make a difference. She gave local landowners access to specialists by organizing the first Habitat Restoration Conference in Essex-Kent. She started a native plant nursery to provide the species needed in her region and established monitoring plots to assess the effects of

restoration. She also co-founded the Canada South Land Trust, which facilitates landowners in receiving financial incentives for protecting natural areas.

◆ One of Canada's leading environmental organizations also takes a special interest in the Carolinian zone - and partners with all types of business. The Nature Conservancy of Canada has secured many key natural habitats across the Carolinian zone including species-at-risk habitat, wetlands, old growth forests and other habitats at Middle Island, Bickford Oak Woods, Clear Creek Forest and Stone Road Alvar, to mention a few sites. This organization is dedicated to working out creative, voluntary, 'win-win' solutions with landowners. Conservation agreements with farmers, golf courses and mining companies result in significant 'natural saves' which rely on compatible, leading-edge land management practices.

Each year Carolinian Canada presents awards for conservation and education efforts related to the special natural heritage of the Carolinian zone by recognizing outstanding contributions by individuals, corporations, non-profit organizations and government organizations.

We look forward to sharing stories about past and present Carolinian Canada Award Winners in future newsletters.

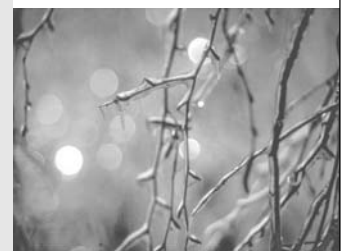
AWARD NOMINATIONS FOR 2004

Do you know a group or individual who should be recognized for their significant contributions to conservation in Carolinian Canada?

Nominations for next year's awards are due on February 27, 2004.

Nomination forms are available at:

<http://www.carolinian.org/Awards.htm>.



**CAROLINIAN
CANADA** 

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Patricia Rhoads: Leading Locally

Award recipient Patricia Rhoads of Woodslee is a leader in natural heritage restoration in Essex County. By working with the community, bringing the best science to bear, and consistently 'getting involved', Patricia has made a significant difference to her natural environment and her community. Not to forget, her amazing list of accomplishments includes raising three children and managing the family property, a 50 ac Oak Hickory Forest, along with husband Chuck

Patricia has been actively restoring natural habitats in Essex County for many years, from writing funding proposals to 'getting her hands dirty' on site with landowners, community and school groups. She aims for high quality restoration: many of her sites have incredible start-up diversity, with over forty species of indigenous trees and shrubs, propagated from seeds collected locally. She runs a native plant nursery – Woodland Farm. At last count the number of trees, shrubs and wildflowers, all derived from local seed sources, was over 20,000 and growing. To expand the science of restoration, Patricia is working with the Association for Canadian Educational Resources (ACER) to monitor various stages of restoration and succession. Alice Casselman, ACER President nominated Patricia for the award.

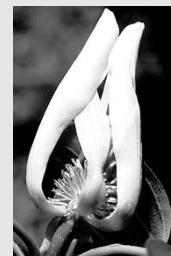
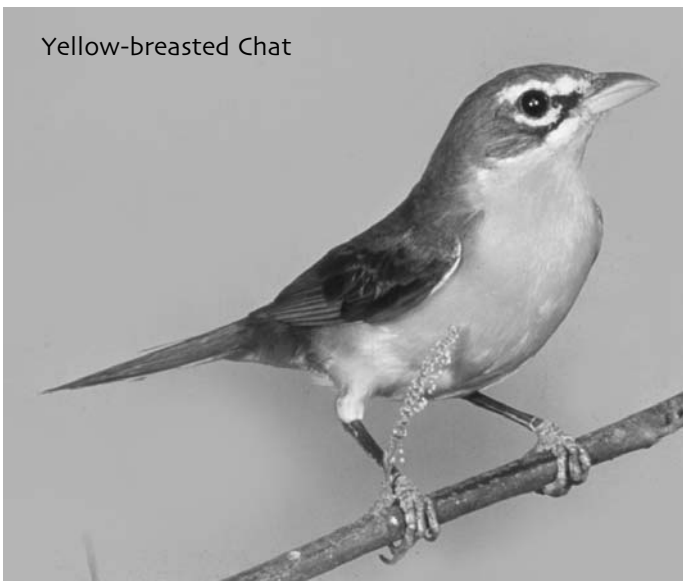
As chairperson of the first Habitat Restoration Conference for Essex and Kent Counties, Patricia aimed to provide tools to landowners who want to do the "right thing", but are often frustrated by the lack of accessible resources. Held in March of 2002, this conference brought landowners together with experts from across Ontario.



Vicki McKay presents the Carolinian Canada Conservation Award to Patricia Rhoads (right) for her dedication to Carolinian habitats at an Essex County Field Naturalists dinner in Windsor on November 1, 2003. (Photo by Brett Groves)

Continuing to build resources for local and appropriate environmental action, Patricia became one of the co-founders of the Canada South Land Trust. As she builds this organization, she will be able to draw on her considerable experience as Director of many local conservation organizations including: Essex County Woodlot Owners' Association, Essex County Field Naturalists' Club, Christian Farmers Association of Essex County, Natural Habitat Restoration Program and the Friends of Marshfield Woods.

Yellow-breasted Chat



WHAT IS THIS?

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new website and find out!

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Hey, What's Happening...at Marcy's Woods?



Marcy's Woods is part of the Point Abino Peninsula Sandland Forest identified in 1984 as one of the 38 Carolinian Canada sites. It consists of 110 hectares of forest and Lake Erie shoreline dunes, just 14 kilometres west of the Fort Erie. The original cabin remains as the only building in the natural area of the property (there is a house and barn in the agricultural field near the road).

One of Ontario's last surviving old-growth forests is a 'hot spot' for the Carolinian life zone. A dying man's wish, family strife, international court battles, a high-profile purchase by a Niagara Falls hotelier, media wars, a canoe portage to Queen's Park and unprecedented government orders only tell part of the story. The saga began in 1922 when the Marcy family built a sleepy cabin in the woods by the lake to escape hectic city life in Buffalo. Now, the property has generated a whirlwind of controversy, a far cry from the peaceful vision of earlier generations of Marcy.

The Marcy property, dubbed Marcy's Woods, on the Point Abino peninsula has been largely untouched for centuries. The property is rich in biodiversity including southern flying squirrel, some of the rarer interior species of nesting birds, and flora such as the black maple, tulip, hop and sassafras trees and many of the imperiled species of the Carolinian life zone.

Naturalists had been aware for many years of the significance of the site and had been in discussion with various generations of Marcy's. The property was recently handed down to four siblings who then listed the property for sale. A binational group of environmentalists, including the local Bert Miller Nature Club, fought unsuccessfully to block the property's sale. After lengthy negotiations, the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) made a bid that, with local and government partnership, was competitive to the \$2.85 million offered by hotelier Dino A. DiCienzo of Niagara Falls. When three siblings accepted the DiCienzo offer, the

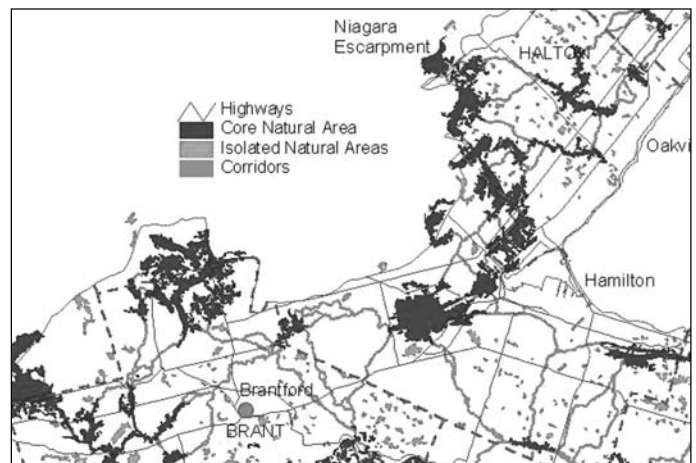
remaining sibling, Patti Marcy, took legal action and obtained a restraining order on the sale. The order was later released by the court in Buffalo.

Mr. DiCienzo has maintained that he has no plans to develop the site and will use it as a personal retreat in the same way the Marcy's had. But the battle heated up again in late summer when local naturalists noticed saplings uprooted and bulldozer activity along a roadway leading into the woods.

They worry that this demonstrates the threat for the property's natural heritage. So, activists boarded war canoes on Point Abino's west shore Aug. 22, and arrived in Toronto five days later, where they portaged to Queen's Park, demanding that the Ontario government expropriate the property to keep it from being developed. Mr. DiCienzo has purchased full page newspaper advertisements to communicate his own concerns and assert that he will be a good steward to the property.

The Ontario government issued a rare zoning order preventing any change of use of the site for one year, and requested that the Nature Conservancy of Canada assist in a long-term plan for the property. The freeze offers short-term protection and naturalists are concerned that the significant features will be impacted over time and as the property continues to change hands.

When George Marcy died in 1994, he hoped his family would preserve the woods and the sensitive dunes for posterity, but his wish might not come to pass and an important part of Ontario's natural heritage may shrink and eventually disappear as coming generations of owners chip away at one of Carolinian Canada's greatest treasures.



WHERE AM I?

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Legally SARA

The long-awaited Species at Risk Act, SARA was proclaimed into law in early June this year. The Minister of the Environment, David Anderson also announced \$9 million in funding for 164 species at risk stewardship projects under the federal Habitat Stewardship program.

SARA will be phased in:

- ◆ As of June 6th, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife (COSEWIC) has legal recognition. It has been functioning in an unofficial capacity for more than twenty-five years.
- ◆ Legislation against harming a listed species or its critical habitat has been delayed until June of 2004 in order to set up the infrastructure needed for enforcement.
- ◆ A general regulation on compensation is being developed and the draft regulation will be published by the end of 2003.
- ◆ The clock is now ticking on the recovery process for the 233 species that have legal protection on Schedule 1 (species that have legal status under the Act). 20 species including the Prairie Loggerhead Shrike, American



The Carolinian Canada Coalition acknowledges the financial support of the Habitat Stewardship Program. Carolinian Canada has received \$10,000 towards the development of two posters and a guidebook to the endangered flora and fauna in the Carolinian Life Zone.

Chestnut, Lake Erie Watersnake and Northern Bobwhite are expected to be reassessed by next May.

- ◆ COSEWIC has 3 years to reassess Schedule 2 species (species on the COSEWIC list that are not on the legal list), using criteria required by the new Act including Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge.

The on-line SARA registry is now up and running at: www.sararegistry.gc.ca where you can view the Act, status reports and recovery strategies as they become available. Visit www.carolinian.org Species and Habitats for information about the listed species in Carolinian Canada.

Explore the Zone.

Watch for the Carolinian Canada Roadshow in your community. Presentations, Displays, Interactive Workshops, Educational materials, Species at Risk, Landscape Planning, Leading Landowners, Stewardship Incentives, Agriculture Innovations



Be Part of the Big Picture.

Call (519) 433-7077 to Host or Volunteer. Generously Funded by the

George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation



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Carolinian Canada appoints new Executive Director

Carolinian Canada has retained Michelle Kanter, most recently from the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), to guide their activities aimed at conserving the wildlife and ecosystems of Canada's most threatened ecological zone--the Carolinian Life Zone.

"Carolinian Canada is pleased to retain someone of Michelle's calibre," said Paul Smith, Chair of Carolinian Canada. "Michelle understands the threats to our Carolinian species and ecosystems and the importance of working cooperatively with people. She brings a wealth of experience from her Canadian and international work. Michelle will guide our new projects promoting a system of Carolinian natural areas across the zone to conserve our many species-at-risk".

Trained as a wildlife biologist, Michelle has extensive experience with conserving Carolinian species and habitats. At NCC, she worked on acquiring some of the best remaining natural areas in the region including Bickford Oak Woods in Lambton County, Clear Creek Forest in Chatham-Kent and Stone Road Alvar on Pelee Island in Essex, to mention a few. Working with private landowners, assisting them in understanding the significance of habitat on their properties has also been part of Michelle's professional work. She was also chair of the City of London's Ecological Policy Advisory Committee in the late 90's.



No stranger to the region, Michelle Kanter, new Executive Director for Carolinian Canada grew up on a small rural property near Dorchester where she got early exposure to wildlife, wetlands and woodlands. Her conservation work has also taken her far afield to the tropical forests of northern Australia and to Canada's Arctic coast near Tuktoyuktuk, N.W.T.

"It is a privilege to join Carolinian Canada." Michelle Kanter said. "The Carolinian zone is Canada's most threatened ecological region with great pressures on our wildlife. I intend to make a difference and help restore ecological health to the region."

True South Wild and Free

We Stand on Guard for Thee?



Thank you for your support.

Have you renewed?
Core supporters are critical.

For 19 years, the Carolinian Canada Coalition has worked successfully to build a strong, action-oriented community in Canada's southernmost Life Zone collaborating for the future of our unique species and ecosystems.

Your membership helps guard our remaining wild places and their inhabitants in the far south through leading-edge programs in research, awareness, policy, landowner incentives, multi-sector partnerships and private land stewardship.

Renew your support and be part of the Big Picture.

See back page for renewal form.

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

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

20th Anniversary Conference for Carolinian Canada

Diane Haselmayer, President of Lambton Wildlife Incorporated (LWI), is pleased to announce that LWI will co-host the AGM of the Carolinian Canada Coalition in September of 2004.



Red-Headed Woodpecker

This event will celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Carolinian Canada program.

Visits to LWI lands in the Port Franks Forested Dunes and Wetlands ANSI, Pinery Provincial Park and the Lambton County Heritage Forest will be featured.



CAROLINIAN CANADA

True South Wild and Free

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- Individual \$20 Organization \$50

Gift or Enhanced Memberships also receive a Carolinian Canada certificate:

- Opossum \$25 Red-headed Woodpecker \$60
Tulip Tree \$40 Karner Blue \$100

Thank you for your support.

Cheques payable to Carolinian Canada. Charitable Receipt issued. Mail to: 1017 Western Road, London, Ontario N6G 1G5

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR

Environmental Impact Statements

TAKE CAROLINIAN CANADA TO THE LIMIT Carolinian Canada, in partnership with Grand River Conservation Authority, hosted a successful conference in spring 2003 covering the issues of policy, process and pragmatics to complete Environmental Impact Statements. More than 100 planning professionals participated in discussion groups to identify best practices and standards that municipalities and practitioners can use in their work.



Kentucky Warbler

HOW CAN I GET THIS?

Explore Carolinian Canada's new website and find out! www.carolinian.org



Barn Owls

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