Geoff Rae Sets Ambitious Course as New CRCA General Manager

He may seem like a new face to many, but Geoff Rae has a long history with the Cataraqui region. Born in Kingston and raised just north of the city – in fact less than five minutes from the CRCA administration office at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area – the new general manager of the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority has cottaged in the area for decades. He loves spending time in the outdoors and is happy that he has the opportunity to bring his vast and varied experience and expertise as a professional administrator to bear for the benefit of the CRCA and those living within the Cataraqui watershed.

“We moved away when I was young but our family had a cottage on Buck Lake, up near Westport which is where my mother’s from. We still have family in the area in Odessa and Napanee, and even though we moved away we cottaged in the area and I have always loved the Canadian Shield. I became quite familiar with the out of doors as a kid through lots of camping and paddling. After I got married to my wife, who is also an outdoor enthusiast and an avid bird watcher, I told her there was a really special place that I wanted to take her. We came back to Buck Lake and camped on some of the Crown Land by the lake. We bought a cottage shortly thereafter that we had for many years,” he said, adding that in 2015, they bought a house north of Kingston on a lake with plans to retire. Stepping back a bit, serendipitous timing seems to have played a significant factor in Rae coming to the CRCA in the first place. He and his wife Mary had intended to retire back to the region within the next few years, but an excellent employment opportunity for Mary helped change the timeline – and create a chance for Rae to continue to work, but also be close to home.

“My wife, who is a lawyer, found an opportunity in Kingston, while I was still working in Brantford. We had the house here, sold the house down there so I was living in an apartment and commuting each weekend. After doing that for about five months I knew it wasn’t going to work because she was enjoying it back here so much and I missed it and of course I missed her, so I decided to retire and move back. And the day that I put in my retirement notice [as CAO for the City of Brantford], the posting came up for this position with the CRCA.”

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New invasive wasp targets certain pine trees. It may not be as cataclysmic in its impact on one particular tree species, or as widespread as the Emerald Ash Borer, but the Sirex Woodwasp could prove to be more than just a nuisance as it begins to advance deeper into parts of southern Canada, including Ontario. The insect was first detected around Lake Ontario in 2005 and reports are becoming more widespread. Most of the evidence comes from the destruction left in its wake.

Like other invasive species – one that is not adapted to the natural habitat – the Sirex Woodwasp takes advantage of the lack of natural defenses to continue to thrive and expand its territory. It is a species of ‘horntail’ named because the females in particular have a spine or needle at the end the abdomen, and both the male and female’s abdomens are cylindrical and pointed, looking a little like a horn. Males generally have a metallic blue head and thorax, with an orange abdomen and orange front legs. Females are almost completely metallic blue in hue with orange front legs. Scientists believe that they were introduced into North America within the past 12 to 15 years through packing materials made of planks of pine, and were first noticed near ocean-going ports.

Similarly the Sirex Woodwasp was carried in ships that originated in Asia and Africa over to Central and South America in the 1980s, where they fed on plantations that had transplanted more northern varieties of pine trees. In those instances, once a colony was established and flourished, approximately 80 per cent of the trees died. The numbers for North America are still low, but as climate changes and the environment warms, these invasive insects are bound to spread.

Like the Emerald Ash Borer, the Sirex Woodwasp does its damage at the larval stage, in a similar fashion, by killing the trees from the inside – in this case primarily pine trees. “Sirex Woodwasp, Sirex noctilio, larvae are woodboring that tunnel deep into the trunks of all species of pine (Pinus) trees. As the female Sirex woodwasp, Sirex noctilio, prepares to lay her eggs, she secretes a toxic mucus and symbiotic fungus into the tree which works synergistically to weaken, and in some cases kill the attacked tree(s). The mucus creates a suitable environment for the fungus which decays the wood so it is easier for the larva to digest,” according to the New York Invasive Species Information Service. There are some native woodwasp species, but they only go after dead or dying pine trees – the Spirex have been described as more robust and aggressive in that they attack healthy specimens.

Part of this is because their larvae need the nutrients and moisture from a healthy tree to grow and thrive. According to the USDA Forest Service, adult wasps take flight through the late summer. Females drill their ovispositors (how they deliver the eggs), which are very strong (some can bore through lead) into the outer sapwood of a tree and inject a symbiotic fungus, toxic mucous and eggs, as described above. Females can lay anywhere from 25 to 450 eggs: unfertilized eggs turn into males while fertilized eggs produce females. It takes about 11 months for the larvae to grow and develop into adults. Once reaching adulthood, the female lays its eggs and often dies during the process or not long thereafter, from overexertion.

So how do you know if your pine trees are infested with

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Besides being an experienced and successful administrative professional in the municipal realm, new CRCA GM Geoff Rae, shown here kayaking with wife Mary, is an avid outdoors enthusiast.

After three decades of working in the municipal sector, including the last 20 or more in senior management positions, Rae took up his duties as the new GM in December, and hit the ground running with an ambitious plan to revamp and revitalize the internal corporate structure, methodologies, processes and policies to help the CRCA, its staff and board, be even more effective in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

“What I offered the hiring committee was that even though I was not a technical expert, I had a great deal of interest in the work of the CRCA and knew the geographic area reasonably well. What I was able to offer was to come in as a professional administrator and help the organization with its business processes, to strengthen some things that need strengthening including managing budgets, developing different types of reports, to improve communications both internally and externally and to help develop staff through good succession planning and mentoring,” he said.

“My goal, and it’s sort of my overriding philosophy, is to allow the technical people to do their jobs and to facilitate that by taking away all the noise; put in a little more structure into the organization to give them better tools to work with, and hopefully provide a good professional development environment through mentoring and training,” he said.

“Knowing the ins and outs of the way municipalities operate and the challenges they face, should prove to be a boon to the CRCA, as it means Rae can readily identify with the concerns and needs of the members of the CRCA board, most of whom are elected municipal officials. But through his time working for the City of Brantford, City of Hamilton, Haldimand County and Halton Region, Rae has worked alongside environmental groups and conservation authorities on a host of infrastructure projects. These include treatment and distribution of potable water, collection and treatment of waste water and storm water, as well as development and planning issues where a conservation authority would have involvement – such as those near floodplains or water courses.

In all aspects of his previous jobs, and in his current role as GM with the CRCA, communications is always at or near to top of the priority list for Rae.

“What I try to do, and I have had some success in doing, is to try to support staff...
to do what they do well; to break down barriers, develop relationships, work closely with the people that we need those relationships with, support people. And also to try to develop a strong relationship with our board members and to help them achieve the things that they want to achieve,” he said.

“I want to communicate effectively with them so they can see that we’re working on their behalf and on the behalf of those they represent. With staff, I want to develop relationships that say we’re here to support you, we’re here to develop you. We want them to feel that this is a good place to work, it’s a good place to develop a career and use their energies and technical skills to further the organization and to benefit the watershed.”

Just a few months into his tenure, he said he is already impressed with the level of professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm of the CRCA staff.

“What I am impressed with most is that we have such an interesting group of people that have very diverse skills, from communications and the professional educators, through to planning, engineering and biology, to the people who operate the equipment and do the operations work – all of whom are so important to making this place tick each and every day. And it’s all encompassed within a really small group of people – almost everyone brings a very distinct set of skills to the table,” he said.

“And it’s exciting to see how dedicated and talented these people are; that gets me excited. To have that level of enthusiasm to work with is really incredible and makes it worthwhile to come to work every day. We have people who are very seasoned veterans of this organization who bring a great deal of skill. And they have the patience and the time to share their expertise with the younger staff. And the way our staff works with other stakeholders and partners within the community is tremendous.

“I am just really looking forward to continuing to work with the Board and work with the staff to try and overcome some of the challenges that each of them have had over the years and pave the way for the future.”

Rae can be reached at: grae@crca.ca.

(Cover Story Continued from pg.3)

CREATURE FEATURE - cont. from pg.2

the Sirex Woodwasp larvae? First of all the foliage of an infested tree begins to wilt, changing colour first from its familiar dark green to a light green, then yellow and eventually turning red. There may be dribbles of resin from the tree coming out of the holes that the female woodwasps bored. If there are a number of holes (called a ‘gallery’ by researchers) that are three to eight millimetres in diameter, that means a bunch of adults have eaten their way to the surface, exited the now sick or dying tree to continue their population expansion.

While some biological control agents have been developed to try to combat the Sirex Woodwasp, they have done so with limited effectiveness. Another type of parasitic wasp has been introduced into areas where Sirex Woodwasps are rampant but they could only knock out about 40 per cent of the population, meaning expansion and damage was slowed, not stopped.

A more labour intensive proposal sees thinning of forests to minimize the closeness of trees to one another, as well as removing dying and weakened trees, as well as regular surveillance, has mitigated the attacks in parts of North America, but the resources required would be prohibitive to municipalities and conservation authorities.

Scientists continue to work on innovative biological solutions to the problem, including introduction of parasitic nematodes (roundworm) as well as other species of parasitic wasps before the problem gets to be as severe as the Emerald Ash Borer.
Winter Whiteouts Could Not Dampen Spirits During Maple Madness 2017

Much like the past couple of Maple Madness events, the weather did make an impact on the 2017 edition of the popular activity – for good and for ill. During the March Break portion of the event, one day had to be completely cancelled (March 15), while a second day was cut short (March 14), even though hundreds of die-hards braved the blustery, cold and snowy conditions to get their fix of Maple Madness festivities … and the fresh pancakes.

But for the remainder of that week, and for much of the following two weekends (excluding March 26 when a storm shut the sugar bush down for the day), the white, wintery conditions – many days accompanied by bright sunshine and relatively moderate temperatures - made for a delightful day in the sugar bush for thousands of area residents and visitors.

This year’s CRCA Maple Madness Event took place from March 11 to March 19, and also on the weekends of March 25 & 26 and April 1 & 2, at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. As in past years, the event featured a host of fun activities for the entire family, including puppet shows, First Nations Displays, tree tapping demonstrations, maple taffy and old tyme sugar bush chore demonstrations. Oh, and there were also tasty, fluffy pancakes and maple syrup aplenty.

Statistics gathered by CRCA staff from the Outdoor Centre show that there was a drop in the overall number of visitors from 2016. A total of 8,777 people attended 2017 Maple Madness, compared to 9,764 the previous year. It must be said that losing two and a half days would logically see a drop in numbers. Since 2007, the largest number of visitors happened in 2013, when 11,348 people attended Maple Madness. Throughout the 2017 Maple Madness event, 11,591 pancakes were served. The most ever was 15,015 in 2013.

On March 18, during Maple Madness, the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation held its annual bake sale. A number of local bakeries, as well as volunteers, donated yummy treats for the sale, which raised $717.45 for CRCA Conservation Education Programs.

The CRCA thanks all the folks who ventured out to see our displays and Maple Madness activities. We especially want to thank all the staff, and volunteers, including teacher candidates from Queen’s University, who helped make for a seamless and fun visitor experience.

We look forward to Maple Madness 2018!
Unprecedented Spring Flooding Has CRCA staff, Municipalities and Emergency Services on High Alert

Extreme weather is beginning to become more unpredictable and more frequent as the impacts of climate change are hitting home faster than scientists have expected. More ice storms are predicted for coming years, as are more severe blizzards, thunderstorms, drought scenarios and flooding episodes. Last year, record low precipitation lead to one of the most severe droughts for the Cataraqui Region over the past century or more, with the CRCA, in tandem with its various municipal and provincial partners, declaring a drought – severe at times – from May through to September. The drought warning remained in effect, believe it or not, into November.

So far, spring 2017 has been characterized by the direct opposite – torrential rains, excessive spring run-off leading to some of the most severe, damaging and resource depleting floods in generations. Numerous shorelines, docks and boathouses in the region have been flooded, portions of roads and the Cataraqui Trail were washed out or damaged, and thousands of sandbags have been deployed. The CRCA has worked with local communities over the past four decades to keep new development outside of hazardous lands. As a result, many homes/cottages were spared from flooding and erosion. The CRCA has not been spared any upheaval, as the rising waters caused substantial damage and erosion to parts of the trail system at several Conservation Areas, most notably Lemoine Point Conservation Area where huge amounts of debris were left many metres inland. A Flood Watch Statement was first issued by the CRCA on April 7, warning of the possibility of flooding due to aforementioned combination of rainfall and runoff. As the rain continued to fall and the waters continued to rise, the CRCA then issued a Flood Outlook Statement on April 30 for the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence River with a major storm in the offing for the following few days.

It proved to be an accurate assessment – too accurate in fact, as approximately 70 mm of rain did fall leading to a Flood Watch being issued on May 2 for all lakes, rivers and streams within the Cataraqui Watershed.

More rain happened later that week, so on May 5, with another 40 to 50 mm expected, the Watch was elevated to a Flood Warning, with exceptionally high water levels reported for 18 specific lakes in the region. By this time, it was all hands on deck for CRCA water monitoring staff led by Watershed Engineering Technologist Shawn Fairbank, operations staff and communications staff as the water levels continued to rise, for Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River as levels were still expected that levels were to decrease gradually during the summer. At the time of publication, the Flood Warning continues for Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River as levels were still at record highs, but expected to decrease gradually during the summer.

During the earliest days of the flood warning protocol, the CRCA communications staff redesigned the part of the website dedicated to flood monitoring, putting it front and centre on the home page, and offering not only updates but important information about safety, flood prevention and contact details for all pertinent officials and organizations. It can be found at www.crca.ca/flood.
Spring and summer are ideal times for visiting one of our Conservation Areas! Enjoy hiking, paddling, bird watching and nature appreciation or cool off with a refreshing swim. To find the Conservation Area closest to you visit www.crca.ca.

Gould Lake Conservation Area
Enjoy the warm weather at Gould Lake Conservation Area this summer with a picnic, swim, or paddle in a canoe or kayak. There are 20 km of hiking trails for you to enjoy with many spectacular views of the lake. CRCA staff are available at Gould Lake from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekends only during May and June. During July and August staff are there daily from 9:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Gould Lake has a daily entry fee or you can buy an annual vehicle pass. The Conservation Areas is located 5 km northwest of Sydenham. For more information visit our website at www.crca.ca.

Lyn Valley Conservation Area
Cool off at Lyn Valley this summer! The small spring-fed lake provides an excellent swimming spot with a sandy beach to relax on. Picnic tables and change rooms are also available. Lyn Valley is open from May to September and located north-west of Brockville on Lyn Valley Road. For more information visit our website at www.crca.ca.

Cataraqui Trail Bike or Hike Fundraiser
Saturday, August 19
Noon to 2:00 p.m.
Help raise funds to support the Cataraqui Trail at the annual Bike or Hike Event. Enter the Cataraqui Trail wherever you like by foot or bike and join us at the Chaffey’s Lock Community Hall (1661 Chaffey’s Lock Rd.) for a BBQ from noon to 2pm. For details & registration forms visit www.cataraquitrail.ca

Cataraqui Trail Fundraiser Dinner at The Opinicon
Friday, October 13, 5:30pm
Tickets are $80 which includes a $30 charitable receipt. Join us for a fantastic meal, silent auction and a wonderful evening at the historic Opinicon Resort (1697 Chaffey’s Lock Rd, Chaffey’s Lock) in support of one of Eastern Ontario’s great outdoor gems. Tickets available online at www.cataraquitrail.ca
Utilities Kingston Makes Kingston the First Municipality to Offer Real-Time Public Notification of Sewer Overflows

Utilities Kingston will make Kingston the first municipality in Ontario, and possibly in Canada, to offer real-time public notification of sewer overflows.

“We are proud to represent the first municipality in Ontario to help its residents make more informed decisions on recreational water use, as we continue to both reduce sewer overflows and openly share information,” says Jim Keech, president and CEO of Utilities Kingston.

“Water users can consider our real-time sewer overflow map before they swim at certain locations at Lake Ontario within 48 hours of a heavy rainfall.”

Kingston’s waterfront is a clean, safe place to swim, fish or boat. But, bacteria levels in lakes are rivers are higher up to 48 hours after a heavy rainfall and swimming is not recommended during that time. Sewer overflows can contribute to the problem. Utilities Kingston staff has improved its monitoring equipment and now offers an online map that shows where sewer overflows have occurred in real time.

When Kingstonians or visitors plan to swim, fish or boat in Lake Ontario within 48 hours after heavy rain, they are encouraged to first check the map at www.UtilitiesKingston.com/Overflows

Sewer overflow locations affecting the Great Cataraqui River, the Little Cataraqui Creek, and other surrounding bodies of water are also shown.

Utilities Kingston and the City of Kingston continue to improve infrastructure to reduce sewer overflows. Over the last 20 years, they have been working to separate Kingston’s historic combined sewer system and install large holding tanks to reduce overflows and rainwater that enters the sanitary system. These activities help reduce the sewer overflows associated with heavy rainfalls.

Additional resources at utilitieskingston.com:
- View a brief video animation about sewer overflows in Kingston
- Learn about the project to reduce sewer overflows and see an animated map showing where Utilities Kingston has separated sewers since 2001
- Get frequently asked health and technical questions

Free Tours & Children’s Activities in the Utilities Kingston Water Conservation Garden

Don’t know your Butterfly Weed from your Button-bush? Plan a visit to the Utilities Kingston award-winning Water Conservation Garden at 1211 John Counter Blvd. to see more than 100 types of plants that require less water.

Gardeners will learn how to save water, time and money by building a water wise garden that ‘makes every rain drop count’ to greatly reduce - or even eliminate - the need for watering.

While you may wander the garden at any time during daylight hours, consider taking advantage of one of Utilities Kingston’s free 15-minute guided tours at 10:30 a.m. every weekday until the end of August. Families are invited to stay for free children’s activities, starting at 11 a.m. Little ones can plant a seed, decorate a pot and then take it home to watch the seedling grow. Registration is not required, but mark your calendar today.

Utilities Kingston also offers free Everything Drainage Workshops to provide public education about water conservation, drainage solutions and storm water pollution prevention. The workshops will be scheduled throughout the summer, depending on public interest.

Before you visit, you might like to check the Utilities Kingston online resource for gardeners, picturing and listing the plants used in the Water Conservation garden. Find it on their website.
You don’t need to be a mathematician to understand that ticks represent a growing public health threat. The nasty little insects are growing in numbers throughout the Cataraqui Region and beyond, and as far to the northeast as Ottawa is now considered to be an at-risk area for Lyme Disease, which is spread through the bite of the black-legged tick, also known as the deer tick. The incidence of tick bites and of Lyme Disease has jumped 10-fold there over the past six years. Their numbers are increasing as they are spread by birds and other wildlife, and since study after study has shown that at least one in five, or 20 per cent of all deer ticks carry the bacteria that causes Lyme Disease, it goes without saying that the number of people who contract Lyme Disease will rise at similar levels.

The good news is that a tick must be attached to you after digging its fangs into your flesh, for between 24 to 36 hours before the bacteria is transferred to your bloodstream. That means if you find a tick and it’s not engorged (swollen up after feeding) and is not attached to your skin, wipe it off and you should be fine. If you have been bitten and the bug is still attached, remove it using the standard method: grasp the tick by its head as close to your skin as possible. Pull it straight out using tweezers while holding it firmly but slowly and gently. Then you need to clean the bite area ASAP with soap and water or a disinfectant. Also, make note of the date that you remove the tick.

Do no squeeze the tick, try to burn it off your skin or put anything on it.

According to a publication issued by the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit, a red rash may appear as early as three days after a bite or up to several weeks later. If you have contracted Lyme Disease, you could experience symptoms such as a bull’s eye rash near the bite site, fever, headache, muscle and joint pain. These may disappear within 10 days, but if left untreated, Lyme Disease can lead to debilitating and recurring issues with your nervous system, joints and even your heart.

The best way to avoid a tick bite and the subsequent possibility of contracting Lyme Disease is to prevent the bug from getting, to quote Ol’ Blue Eyes, “under your skin.” Here are some tick-tips:

- Walk in the middle of trails, away from tall grasses or bushes along the trail’s edge.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and/or long pants tucked into high socks.
- Wear white or light-coloured clothing to make it easier to see the ticks.
- Spray an insect repellent containing DEET on clothes and shoes before entering the woods.
- Wear shoes, not sandals and don’t walk with bare feet.
- Check your clothes, body and pets for ticks as soon as you get back home after being outdoors.
- Having a shower will remove ticks if they haven’t attached yet.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high heat for 60 minutes to kill any remaining ticks.
- Around your home, keep the grass in your yard mowed, remove brush and fallen leaves from edge of your property, create a separation barrier between any overgrown areas/forests and your yard using wood chips or gravel.
- Keep areas under and around bird feeders tidy to lower the chances of small mammals like mice or voles coming around, as they help transport the ticks.

For more information, visit our Ticks and Lyme Disease page at www.crca.ca/tick-and-lym-disease-facts.
Ontario’s Lone Eurycea Salamander - By Matt Ellerbeck, savethesalamanders.com

The genus Eurycea is made up of some 27 salamander species. These are commonly referred to as stream or brook salamanders, due to the preferred habitats of some species. However, aside from streams these salamanders may also be found in forest seeps, terrestrial areas adjacent to springs and streams, the mouths of caves, and within caves themselves. The genus is part of the Plethodontidae family (lungless salamanders). This is the largest family of salamanders with close to 400 different species. Ontario is home to several Plethodontids, but only one from the Eurycea genus. This is the Northern Two-Lined Salamander (Eurycea bislineata).

In Ontario these salamanders range primarily in the northeastern region of the province. These salamanders occur in streams under rocks, but also utilize the surrounding terrestrial areas as well, and can often be found under various cover (wooden debris, leaf litter, etc.). They can also be found on the forest floor far from running water.

They prey on a variety of insects and invertebrates. Some populations will also prey on trout fry. The salamanders themselves maybe preyed on by both Eastern Garter Snakes (Thamnophis sirtalis) and Ringneck Snakes (Diadophis punctatus).

To avoid being predated Two-Lined Salamanders often autotomize (the spontaneous casting off of a limb or other body part) their tails. This greatly increases their chances of eluding predators. I have witnessed tailless Two-Lined Salamanders in the wild. According to Ontario Nature, information about the abundance and distribution of northern two-lined salamanders in Ontario is generally lacking. Therefore, I was excited when I recorded observations of this species last summer on CRCA lands!

Although some of these salamanders were found under small rocks within the stream itself, most were encountered on the neighboring terrestrial areas. Here they were found hiding in moist areas under various forms of cover – mostly rocks or wooden debris.

Due to their small size, veiled lifestyles, and often isolated habitats, the Northern Two-Lined Salamander is not an animal that most residents of Ontario will encounter. However, despite this these salamanders make for a fascinating and beautiful addition to the province’s flora and fauna. Especially since they are the sole representative of their genus here.

To learn more about Matt and his work with salamanders and conservation education visit savethesalamanders.com.

CRCA’s Nature Explorers Summer Camp

Explore the wild spaces of Little Cataraqui Creek and Gould Lake Conservation Areas at our Nature Explorers Summer Camp. Campers experience the great outdoors through fun nature-inspired theme weeks, hands-on exploration and outdoor activities. For two days a week, campers get loads of time to swim, play on the beach and explore Gould Lake Conservation Area. Each day will be filled with adventures, knowledge, games & fun.

Nature Explorers Camps is for children 6 to 11 years old and is $195.00 per week. Regular hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday with before and after care available from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for an additional charge of $25.00 per week. For further details visit our website at www.crca.ca/summer-camps. Registration is available online at www.crca.ca/online-services.
The Cataraqui Conservation Foundation participated in several successful fundraising efforts over the past few months and we would like to thank everyone who contributed in so many ways. We are deeply appreciative to those who responded to our 2016 No Carbon Gala invitation and sent in a generous donation. Our plan this year is to again host the Forever Green Gala in late October or mid November. We will keep you posted with all the exciting details once they are finalized. For this fun evening, we look forward to socializing over a delicious three course dinner, a live and silent auction and of course, presentation of our 2017 Conservation Awards. We hope that you can join us. If you would like to donate an item for our auction, volunteer or purchase tickets please contact us by phone or email.

We would also like to thank our sponsors who made the Maple Madness Bake Sale such a huge success this year. With perfect weather conditions after a snowy March Break we enjoyed record numbers. Thank you to those who purchased baked goods, donated baked goods, entered in our draw or who visited us at our location in the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area Outdoor Centre. We would like to especially acknowledge the generous and delicious baked goods donated by Bread and Butter Bakery, COBS, Panera Bread, Sassy Sweets and Sydenham Sweet Bakery, without whom this annual bake sale could not take place. We would also like to thank Swiss Chalet, Pizza Hut and Boston Pizza for donating prizes for our draw. There were also many volunteers who we offer heartfelt thank for their time and efforts as well.

The Foundation, with the continued and generous support of Camera Kingston, once again held its annual Photography Contest. The theme for this year was “Getting Close to Nature”. Entries will be judged on: 1) artistic impression 2) technical composition and 3) depiction of the theme. The prizes will be awarded as follows:

- **First Place**: One-year complimentary CRCA Annual Pass worth $80 and a $100 gift certificate from Camera Kingston.
- **Second Place**: One-year complimentary CRCA Annual Pass worth $80 and a $75 gift certificate from Camera Kingston.
- **Third Place**: A $50 gift certificate from Camera Kingston.
- **Fourth Place**: A $25 gift certificate from Camera Kingston

If last year’s entries were any indication, it will once again be a difficult job for the judges. Please check out our website to view last year’s winners.

www.cataraquiconservationfoundation.org/Photo-Contest.

The Partners in Education mailing has also recently been sent out and we thank you for supporting the CRCA’s Conservation & Outdoor Education Programs with your donation. The success of this program is a testament to your continued commitment to providing the quality programs which the children from our area enjoy every year.

We would also like to remind everyone that our Board is always looking for keen and enthusiastic people to join. We welcome new members or inquiries and would be happy to speak to you about the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation Board and our initiatives. For further information please visit our website at www.cataraquiconservationfoundation.org.
CRCA Staff Facilitate Important Forum on Groundwater

In early May, CRCA staff led by Environmental Technician Holly Evans and Source Protection Assistant Katrina Furlanetto, helped to facilitate a special Groundwater Vulnerability Forum, to bring together various stakeholders from the community to help tackle this important issue. More than four dozen people attended the event, representing an excellent cross-section of groups and organizations including community interest groups, individual concerned citizens, municipal officials, members of the academic community, area public health units, Public Health Ontario, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, neighbouring Conservation Authorities, environmental consultants and representatives from the Cataraqui Source Protection Committee.

The reason for the event was that research and ongoing testing has proved the majority of the groundwater in the Cataraqui Watershed is ‘sensitive’ and that there is a concern about possible future – if not already existing – contamination. A related concern is that in some of the areas under discussion, there is a dearth of assessment/management tools to adequately and comprehensively address this challenging hydrological state of affairs.

During the program, there were informative presentations (which are available at http://cleanwater-catarqui.ca/resources/implementing-the-spp/crca-workshop-and-presentations-for-municipalities) then a facilitated discussion, followed by a ‘dotocracy’ exercise to identify priority actions to improve protection of regionally sensitive groundwater. What follows are the top actions (not in order of priority):

- Explore the possibility of hosting a well and septic workshop with Lennox & Addington Stewardship Council and Friends of the Napanee River.
- Meet with Public Health Ontario and others to explore potential project partnership and data sharing collaboration.
- Encourage the Province of Ontario to expedite its review and update of the regulations and standards that help people to protect groundwater resources.
- Develop a discussion paper including Groundwater Vulnerability Forum outcomes, a literature review of supportive groundwater research in vulnerable areas, consultation with staff from other highly vulnerable areas in Ontario (i.e. Niagara and Bruce Peninsula) to collaborate on management priorities, research initiatives, and best practices for improved groundwater management.

As of the publication of this edition of Cat Tales, a number of volunteers have already stepped up to help advance each of the priorities. The CRCA will help co-ordinate this work by connecting interested parties, hosting meetings/teleconferences, circulating materials and whatever other support may be required. For further information about source water protection please visit www.cleanwatercatarqui.ca

Working Near Water? You may require a permit from the CRCA

Do you have a building project or doing some work along your shoreline? If you are planning to build or alter land (excavation, filling) near a wetland, watercourse or along a shoreline, you may require a permit or planning approval from the CRCA. Planning and development staff would like to remind residents, developers and others that shorelines, floodplains, wetlands and lands adjacent to them pose natural hazards, including flooding and erosion. Development projects, including decks, boathouses, docks and alterations to watercourses, may require planning approval from your municipality. These works may also be covered under the CRCA’s regulations. Before formally submitting your application to your municipality, we recommend that you consult with a CRCA planner in order to make the process as smooth as possible. The CRCA planning staff is accessible, easy to talk to and can help guide you through the permit process. So if you are planning an addition to your lakeshore home, changes to your dock or any other projects that may be within 50 metres of water please give them a call. Assistance from the CRCA planning staff can save you time and money.

The CRCA is implementing an Interim Procedure to exempt certain activities from the normal permit requirements specific to the installation of temporary docks on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River due to high water levels. Temporary docks mean structures that will be removed by August 15, 2017. For details on the Interim Procedure or for information on planning applications, regulation permits or development inquiries please call: 613-546-4228 or visit www.crca.ca/planning-permits.
Comprehensive Lake Reports Now Available on CRCA Website

The CRCA has published its first ever Regional Lake Assessment Report and Lake Fact Sheets for 45 lakes within the Cataraqui Region Watershed. The Report is available on our website at www.crca.ca/lake-reports, and is broken down into sub-sections representing the four primary watersheds within the CRCA jurisdiction (Cataraqui River, Gananoque River, Millhaven Creek and Collins Creek). Within each of those categories there are fact sheets for the individual lakes within those watersheds which come up in PDF format that can be read online, printed or downloaded. The Regional Lake Assessment Report and fact sheets were launched at a special Lake Event on May 28, which was held at the Outdoor Centre at the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area. The Report was created to outline the importance, methods, and results of lake monitoring in the Cataraqui Region. As part of this work, Lake Fact Sheets were produced for 45 lakes within the region to provide maps, note physical features, assess water quality, identify invasive species and outline aquatic diversity.

There are many factors that influence our lakes including nutrient loading, invasive species and development pressure. By collecting information through lake monitoring programs, it is possible to accumulate enough data to be able to identify concerns, issues or special features. This information is crucial for effective lake management for not only the CRCA, but also for municipalities, provincial ministries and property owners with frontage on lakes or lake users in general.

There is a ‘button’ on the web page called ‘Assessment Report’ that offers general information about aspects of our lakes, as well as instructions on how to read the Fact Sheets, a glossary of terms and contact information for local lake associations.

WANTED - CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

Will you be on the water this summer? The CRCA is looking for interested lake volunteers to help collect information about our region’s beautiful lakes.

We are especially interested in volunteers for the Lake Partner Program, Invading Species Watch Program and lake ice on and off dates. Please consider signing up for the above programs or sharing your observations though Nature Watch’s Ice Watch program or with the CRCA directly. For further information please contact Holly Evans at 613-546-4228 ext. 233 or hevans@crca.ca