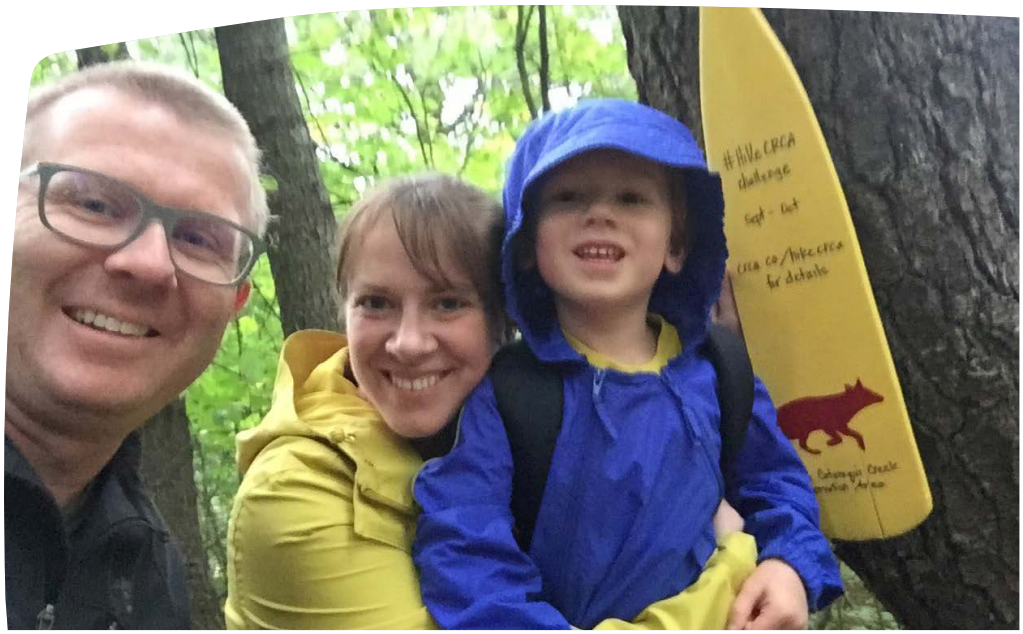
Cataraqui conservation

# Cat Tales

newsletter - fall 2020




## In This Issue:


- Learn about the resilient and adaptable Ring-billed Gull, see page 3.
- We want your views on Planning and Permiting Policies, see page 5.
- Additions made to the Barn Swallow habitat at Lemoine Point, see page 8.
- Forest Therapy Walks return with Covid-19 protocols in place, see page 10.
- Learn about Loyalist Township's Climate Action Plan, see page 13


## #HikeCRCA Challenge Returns

One of the best ways to help fend off the stress, frustration and sense of isolation created by the Covid-19 pandemic is to get outside in nature with your friends and family (socially distanced). And a little competitiveness doesn't hurt either, which is why Cataraqui Conservation brought back its popular #HikeCRCA challenge for another year. Head outside and step back into nature, reconnect, and revitalize your spirit in the midst of tough times.

In its fourth year, the hike challenge provides an opportunity for individuals, small groups, and families to spend some quality (physically distanced, and/or wearing masks when necessary) time together in nature, exploring the various trails at Cataraqui Conservation owned conservation areas, and possibly win some great prizes.

The #HikeCRCA challenge runs from 8:00 a.m., September. 1, 2020 to 8:00 p.m. October. 31, 2020 and participants can choose to do the full challenge - nine designated trails, or the family challenge where there are four trails to complete. A list of designated challenge trails and rules can be found at www.crca.ca/hike-crca. The hike challenge is based on a simple, three-step process.

First, hike the designated 'challenge trail' at each conservation area and at least one 'designated section' of the Cataraqui Trail (or four trails for the family version) and find the special yellow challenge canoe paddles with the animal silhouettes.

The second step is to take a photo or 'selfie' with each of the paddles and post it to social media – Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram – and include the hashtag #HikeCRCA.

If you don't have a social media account, upload your photos on the challenge submission form to be entered into the prize draws.

Finally, once you have hiked all the designated trails and posted your photos, fill out the challenge form on the Cataraqui Conservation website and enter our grand prize draw.

All eligible entries as of the closing of the contest will be put into a random draw for prizes.

Prizes include Cataraqui Conservation Annual Passes, family passes to Maple Madness at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, Cataraqui Trail merchandise and special prizes from the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation.

**Continued on Page 2**

Please stay safe on the trails. Cataraqui Conservation is asking that all recommendations from public health officials related to the Covid-19 pandemic be adhered to when visiting our properties. Help keep are trails safe and enjoyable for all users.

## Stay Safe Trail Reminders

**Before you leave:**
Plan ahead and be prepared. Cataraqui Conservation privies/washrooms are currently closed. For updates visit www.crca.ca/coronavirus. Bring a "clean trip kit" - sanitizer, face covering, etc.). Stay home if you are sick or have COVID-19 symptoms. Pack all you need for the trip including water and snacks.

**When you arrive:**
Verify the rules and regulations. Remember, your actions help to ensure our trails are safe for all users and stay open. If the trails are busy, adjust your plan and come back another time.

**On the trails:**
Keep two metres apart from others and avoid congested areas and gathering in groups. Allow others to pass on the trail safely. Respect public health guidelines and practice good respiratory etiquette and respect the environment by adopting the Leave No Trace principles - pack it in and pack it out. Dogs must be on a leash at all times for their protection (invasive species, skunks, porcupines etc.) and for the enjoyment of all users. Please remember to scoop the poop and dispose of it properly.

**When you return:**
Wash your hands with soap and water. Share you photos online with the hashtag #HikeCRCA. Challenge your friends and family!

A few photos from past Hike Challenges for inspiration. Happy Trails.

Photo: Mary Hindle

# Creature Feature
# Ring-billed Gull
(Larus delawarensis)

Sometimes we take for granted the animals and plants that we see around us all time, not bothering to learn more about them because of their ever-present ubiquity in our lives.

Such is the case for the sometimes maligned ring-billed gull, a bird that pretty much everyone in the Cataraqui Watershed and within 100 kilometres of the shore of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River will have encountered in their day to day lives, even if just as they're floating in the air currents from afar.

It is arguably the most populous of all gull species in North America due, not insignificantly, to the fact that it is an extremely adaptable bird that has perfected the art of opportunism and its remarkable ability to cohabitate in close quarters with humans. Its home could be a lovely island shoal, or a breakwater or even a waste disposal facility. Its nest can be made on natural surfaces such as soil, sand, driftwood, boulders, or concrete walls, building rubble – as long as there is water and food sources nearby, they will make anyplace home sweet home.

Generally speaking, ring-billed gulls are medium-sized gulls measuring approximately 45 cm from head to feathery tail, with a wingspan slightly larger at 50 cm. Considered to be of breeding age after three years, adult ring-billed gulls head, neck and undercarriage of the birds are white, and their distinctive bill is yellow with a dark ring, and is a bit shorter than most other gull species. The birds' backs and wings are a silvery grey while the legs are yellow. Their eyes are also a very distinctive yellow with red rims.

It's hard to believe that at one point in the Victorian era the birds were considered endangered because they were voraciously hunted for their plumage, which was used as decoration on hats and gowns for the fashion conscious of the day. Today, their population in North America is as large as its ever been.

Again, adaptability to their environment has played a considerable role in their thriving as a species as they are the breed of gulls most unafraid of moving inland from coastal regions to find food and shelter.

There are few other species of bird that are seen as often in urban areas as the ring-billed gull, which is because they are natural foragers and opportunists who have a very wide appetite – including

Continued on Page 4.

# Creature Feature Cont.

a predilection for human food. This is why you see them congregating in mall parking lots, near restaurants and fast food outlets – anywhere there is a waste container full of discarded or leftover burgers, chicken nuggets, fries, etc.
They also have more 'natural' sources of food, including bugs and worms which have been tilled up on newly-plowed soil, flying insects and roadkill.
Most ring-billed gulls return to breed within the colony where they themselves were hatched, although they don't always mate with the same partner each time they return. Three eggs are usually laid each season, which are incubated for a little over three weeks before hatching. Both parents participate in this process with the eggs unattended for less than one minute each hour.
The resilience of the species carries over to their young, as it has been proven that they have a much higher survival rate with at least 80 per cent of eggs hatching, and two thirds of the chicks reaching flying age.
As well, many migrate to the same wintering sites in warmer climes each winter. For migration, studies have shown that these birds have a built-in compass to help them navigate – which showed up in hatchings as young as two days old! They can also remember landmarks and the uniformity of high altitude winds to help them get to where they need to go.
With the general warming of the Great Lakes region due to climate change, more and more ring-billed gulls have actually been wintering at home near open water on Lakes Ontario and Erie, as well as in abundance around the Niagara River. The farthest north breeding has been witnessed us James Bay.
In Ontario and the rest of eastern North America, breeding takes place in ring-billed gull colonies in very late winter, around the end of February or early March depending on the temperature
Although this seabird's average life span is around 11 years, the oldest recorded individual was reported to be 27 years, six months old when found in New York State.

Sources: National Geographic, The Audubon Society, Hinterland Who's Who, Cornell Ornithology Lab

# Education Programs Adapt to COVID-19

The importance of outdoor learning is perhaps even more important considering the emotional and physical health benefits that spending time in nature can engender, especially during trying times such as the current Covid-19 pandemic.
With the relaxation of some of the restrictions wisely put in place by provincial and regional health officials to help mitigate the spread of the virus, Cataraqui Conservation, in consultation with local health units, has decided we can safely start to bring back some of our education programs.
Cataraqui Conservation offers a wide range of quality curriculum-enriched outdoor and environmental education programs for all ages at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area in Kingston. All of our programs foster a strong connection to nature by guiding students with their head, heart and hands. Our Conservation Educators have more than 40 years combined experience teaching pre-school to adult-age learners and enjoy passing on their love and extensive knowledge of nature and the outdoors.
The protocols and precautions put in place by local public health officials and the provincial government have meant Cataraqui Conservation's Education team have become even more innovative and adaptable in the new reality.
Students are not allowed to leave school properties to attend programs at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation area, nor are our staff allowed on school properties, therefore creativity and flexibility have become part of our program delivery mandate.
As the fall semester progresses, Cataraqui Conservation education staff are working diligently to come up with ways they can continue to partner with educators and schools within the Cataraqui Region to provide the needed conservation and outdoor education programs, within appropriate public health procedures.
Options being explored include various forms of online presentations, including virtual tours, online Q&A sessions, interactive online teaching sessions and more. Education staff are also crafting special learning modules and materials related to conservation and environmental education that teachers can use in their classrooms. Similar programs and online learning processes are being developed for home learners and early learners and for any other students being educated outside the traditional school environment.
Our education staff see themselves as partners in education, who want to continue to build a sense of community during these difficult times, as well as ensuring that everyone continues to learn about the importance and benefits of being outdoors, including how good it is for their own physical an emotional well being. Updates will be posted on our website, as well as social media.

# Planning & Permitting Policy Update - Public Consultation



One of the core mandates of Cataraqui Conservation is to protect people and property from natural hazards such as erosion and flooding, as well as preserving and improving the natural environment. One way we do this is though the implementation of Planning and Permitting Policies and guidelines.

As part of its current review and update of these policies, Cataraqui Conservation is asking for input from the general public, as well as representatives of stakeholder organizations.

This comprehensive review will include updating our Environmental Planning Policies, Guidelines for Implementing Ontario Regulation 146/06, as well as the Service Delivery Procedures.

The update took into consideration the introduction of new information, studies, statutes, policies, and provincial technical guidelines which influence or provide the overarching policy framework for our planning development review role.

To connect with the public and stakeholders in the most efficient and effective way, the public consultation process will be electronically based. A webpage (www.crca.ca/policy-update) on the Cataraqui Conservation site has been set up for this purpose. Input is welcome from September 14 through to October 2, 2020.

All comments, suggestions and anecdotes received will be collected by Cataraqui Conservation Planning and Permitting staff and considered by the Cataraqui Conservation Planning and Permitting Ad Hoc Committee and Full Authority Board prior to finalization of the policy update process.

**Background:**

Conservation Authorities such as Cataraqui Conservation were created by the Provincial Government beginning in the late 1950s with the mandate to develop and implement a comprehensive, watershed-based approach to preserving and conserving natural ecosystems, taking into account human activity, such as growth and development.

Conservation Authorities are to represent provincial interests in areas of flood mitigation and prevention, as well as other natural hazards by providing expert commentary and advice to municipalities. Conservation Authorities also have regulatory authority under Section 28 of the Conservation Authorities Act to regulate development and site alteration activities in certain areas through Ontario Regulation 148/06: Development Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses.

The main purpose of Ontario Regulation 148/06 is to ensure that proposed changes (e.g. development and site alteration) to a property are not affected by natural hazards, such as flooding and erosion, and that the changes do not put people and/or other properties at greater risk from these hazards.

Cataraqui Conservation has a set of policy and procedure documents that staff use when reviewing Planning Act and Ontario Regulation 148/06 development applications. These documents are the subject of the current policy update.

Environmental Planning Policies, which were updated in 2015, act as Cataraqui Conservation's guide to both individual landowner and municipal environmental planning matters, including providing input on Official Plans, Zoning By-laws, Development Permit By-laws as well as site-specific applications submitted to Cataraqui Conservation under the Planning Act and other provincial legislation.

Cataraqui Conservation's Service Delivery Procedures for Ontario Regulation 148/06 provides guidance on the administrative procedures involved in implementing the regulation.

Finally, Cataraqui Conservation's Guidelines for Implementing Ontario Regulation 148/06 provides a comprehensive set of guidelines that enable staff to issue a permit under the regulation.

The ultimate purpose of Cataraqui Conservation's role in planning and permitting is to protect people and property from natural hazards like flooding and erosion, as well as preserving and enhancing the natural environment, particularly the complex and fragile ecosystems of wetlands, watercourses and shorelines. Once again, to submit your views, questions, or for more information, please visit www.crca.ca/policy-update or contact the Cataraqui Conservation Administration office at info@crca.ca.

# Enjoy the Splendor of Autum As You Safely Explore One of Our Conservation Areas

Conservation areas serve a number of purposes, all of which benefit the residents and visitors of the communities in which they are located, as well as the broader ecosystem of the diverse and dynamic Cataraqui watershed.

For more than five decades, Cataraqui Conservation has created, developed and managed both environmentally sensitive lands for the overall betterment of the watershed, as well as purchasing properties throughout the Cataraqui Region for recreational as well as conservation purposes.

The fall season is one of the best times to get out and enjoy these properties. The weather is still warm enough to be comfortable, but there is that familiar crispness that only happens in autumn. The changing colour of the leaves creates a wonderful tableau for photography, painting or just a lovely walk.

Many of the properties are rough and undeveloped, but still accessible for outdoor adventure seekers and nature lovers. Seven of our Conservation Areas have be created for the express purpose of welcoming residents and visitors to explore. To differing degrees, trail systems have been constructed and are maintained at these Conservation Areas.

Of the seven, three are located within the borders of the City of Kingston: The Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area is located just a couple minutes north of Highway 401 on Perth Road (aka Division Street). It contains both our popular outdoor centre, many kilometres of trails, as well as the Cataraqui Conservation administration office. Please note, for admission to Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, contactless payment options have been devised to limit touchpoints for the self serve gate fee visit - crca.ca/gatefee for details.

The Lemoine Point Conservation Area is located along the shores of Lake Ontario beside the Kingston Airport. It features one of our more popular walking trails and is also the home of the Cataraqui Conservation and Friends of Lemoine Point tree nursery. The Marshlands Conservation Area is a more naturalized conservation area but does contain a portion of the popular Rideau Trail, please note the boardwalk is currently closed.

North of Kingston is Gould Lake Conservation Area, which is highlighted by a fun, historic trail as well as a lovely sandy beach. Formerly the site of an extensive mica mine, remnants of its former industrial past can still be seen carved into the lush forested landscape that surrounds the pristine waters of the lake itself. Wildlife and an impressive range of flora make this a perfect place for a nature walk, birdwatching, or perhaps glimpse some furry creatures in their natural habitant.

Parrott's Bay Conservation Area is 117 hectares (289 acres) of woods and wetlands with beautiful waterfront views. Parrott's Bay is a great place to get out and enjoy nature and is located in neighbouring Loyalist Township, just to the west of Kingston and east of Greater Napanee.

Immediately north of Brockville is the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area, which is a

Continued of Page 7.

# Conservation Areas Cont.



hub for outdoor education and four-seasons recreational activity in the eastern part of the Cataraqui Conservation coverage area. It plays home to a special Trumpeter Swan Restoration Program and is supported by a vibrant and active 'Friends' organization.

Lyn Valley Conservation Area is the Cataraqui Conservation's smallest and one of our busiest Conservation Areas. At just 11 hectares in size, it has a great swimming area and one short hiking trail. It was used as a gravel pit for many years and has been successfully changed into a community recreation area. Cataraqui Conservation purchased the Lyn Valley sand and gravel pit from Elizabethtown Township in 1973 for the token sum of $1. Since then, Cataraqui Conservation has added a number of amenities to the site to encourage more visitors to come enjoy the spring-fed small lake.

Fishing is permitted in Cataraqui Conservation Areas in accordance with current Ministry regulations.

Please note, as of the publishing of this online newsletter, the Province of Ontario and local health units still had safety measures in place to curtail the spread of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. For all of our conservation areas social distancing of at least two metres is required, and all facilities and privies are closed and off limits. For updates on COVID-19 restrictions please visit crca.ca/coronavirus.

Covid-19 protocols are also in place for users of the Cataraqui Trail, which is owned and managed by Cataraqui Conservation. From Smith Falls to Strathcona, there are more than 110 kilometres of trail to enjoy for walkers, joggers, cyclists, horseback riders and in the winter time, snowmobilers with a valid OFSC permit. Trails are maintained and monitored regularly by Cataraqui Conservation's Operations team and the Friends of the Cataraqui Trail to ensure they are always safe for use by residents and visitors. Autumn is a perfect time to get out on the trail to enjoy the crisp, cool air, as well as to revel in the colours of the changing leaves.

For further information about our Conservation Areas and Conservation Lands visit crca.ca/conservation-areas.

## Safety for All - Including Your Four-Legged Pal

**Dog walking is one of the many activities that Conservation Area users enjoy. Dogs are welcomed on the trails, but for the safety of visitors and your pet, they must always be kept on a leash.**

**This is not a punitive measure, as we understand dogs like to run and that the exercise and play is beneficial to them, as well as for their owners. The leash policy is in place as a protective measure for all users, as is the policy to stay on marked trails.**

**If dogs roam free on our conservation areas lands, they are disturbing the natural habitat for many plants and animals, some of which are deemed 'environmentally sensitive'. There are also natural risks to your pet from steep drops and encounters with wildlife.**

**The primary reason why dogs must be leashed is out of respect to all users of our trails. As friendly as your pooch may be, there are people that may not like dogs or may be afraid or uncomfortable around them. Please help keep our trails enjoyable for all users - please keep your dog on a leash. Also, please remember to scoop the poop. Pack it in and pack it out, leave no trace.**

## Administration Office Closed - Staff are still here to help

In mid-March, under instructions from the provincial government and local public health officials, as with many other businesses and organizations, Cataraqui Conservation closed its administration office and other buildings to the general public as a way to mitigate and curtail the spread of the Covid-19 virus, which has gripped the planet.

Although some of the restrictions put in place have been relaxed, Cataraqui Conservation's Administration Office and other buildings remain closed. Staff have been working remotely with a few physically distanced in the office during regular business hours, but no in-person meetings, appointments or contact with the public has been happening. Cataraqui Conservation Full Authority Board meetings continue on their monthly schedule and are taking place online.

We know that many development projects, inquiries from property owners and permitting continued through the 'lockdown' which is why Cataraqui Conservation's Planning and Permit staff were and continue to be available during regular business hours via email and phone. If you need to drop hard copy documents or permits at the office, please use the mail slot at the front door of the Administration office.

Cataraqui Conservation's administration building is located on the grounds of the Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area, 1641 Perth Road, (Division Street North), just north of Highway 401 in Kingston. Besides our Planning and Permitting Staff, all other departments that normally work out of the administration building, have been working remotely or in the office and are available by phone or email during normal office hours. For closure updates and news visit our website at www.crca.ca/coronavirus.

# Upgrades Made to Lemoine Point Barn Swallow Habitat to Help Attract Tenants

As with human real estate, sometimes you have to 'sweeten the deal' by adding some amenities to attract the right buyer. It's with a similar mindset that Cataraqui Conservation staff added some 'walls' to the barn swallow habitat structure at Lemoine Point Conservation Area over the summer, trying to make the facility more appealing to discriminating avian tenants.

The story began a little over two years ago when Cataraqui Conservation Lands staff created what may have seemed at the time to be a strange looking wooden-framed structure in an open area within the grounds of the Lemoine Point Conservation Area, near the Norman Rogers Airport.

The project, which was developed and brought to fruition in conjunction with a number of partners, including the Kingston Field Naturalists, The Friends of Lemoine Point, the City of Kingston, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, and private donations, was actually an attempt to create a welcoming habitat for a precious local bird species, the barn swallow, which is considered a Threatened Species.

Renovations to some of the big hangars at the airport, which had been in use for many decades, meant that barn swallows lost a significant nesting area. This type of avian inhabitant of Ontario seems to prefer living in man-made structures, such as barns (hence the name) because there is usually easy entrances and exits, and the nests themselves can be built in rafters and other high, inaccessible parts of the structure, without interfering with the human use of the buildings.

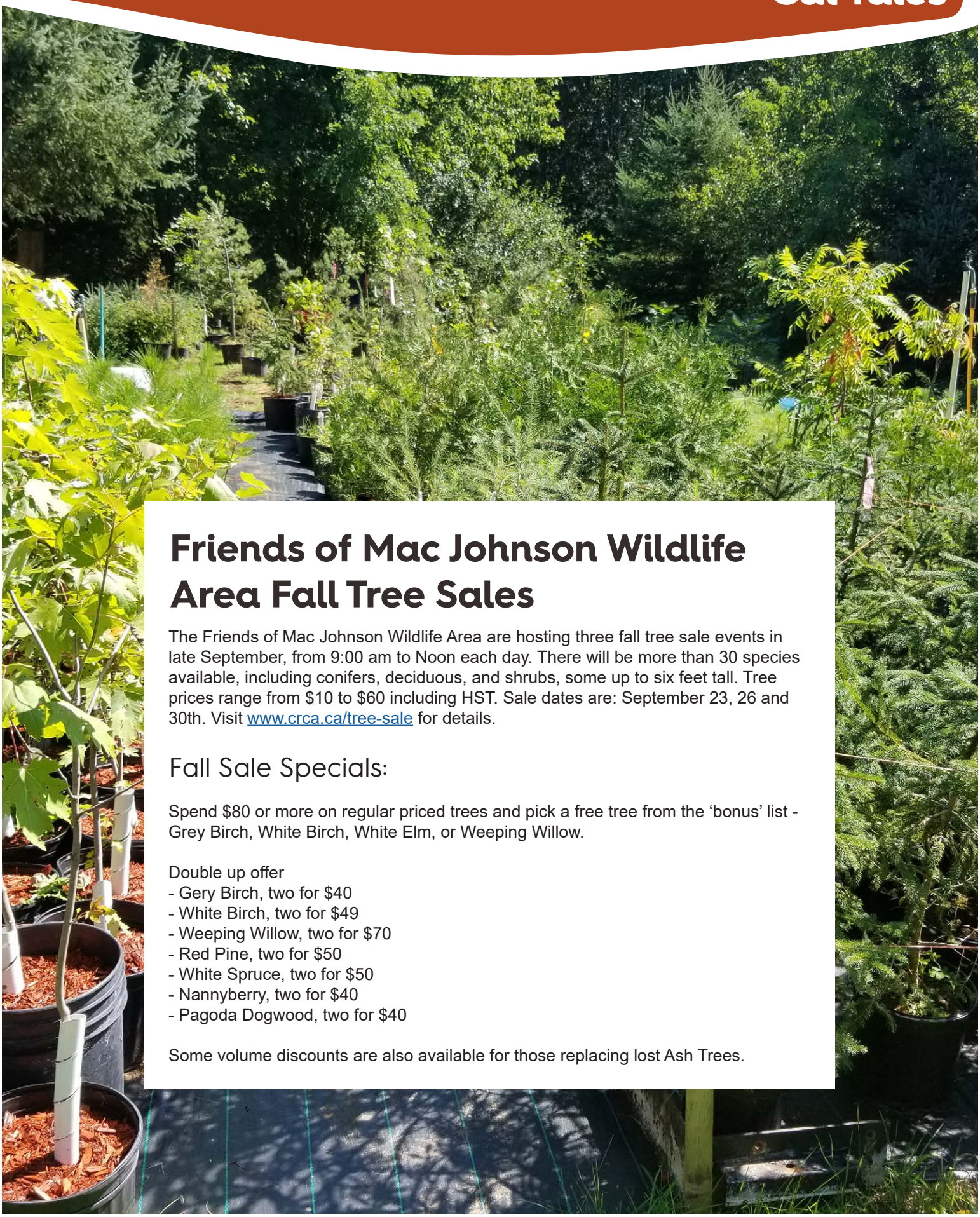
For the first couple of years, there didn't appear to be much in the way of activity underneath the roof of the barn swallow habitat, although many bird species, including barn swallows, used it as a rest stop or perch – especially when there was human activity afoot at Lemoine Point.

So, again in consultation with Cataraqui Conservation's partners, it was decided to add some makeshift partial walls to the sides of the structure to make it look more like, well, a barn. As well a patch of ground adjacent to the structure was also tilled up, allowing easier access for the mud/dirt used to build the nests.

"Creating that muddy patch was the first step to hopefully entice them" explained Rick Knapton, Cataraqui Conservation Forestry Co-ordinator. "We're saying, 'here's some nice fresh mud and here's a nice structure for you to build your nest in.' And I will till the soil up each spring moving forward. Secondary to that, we put partial sides on the structure to make it look more like a barn or a big shed. The idea of not bringing it all the way to the ground is so we can have the tin around the posts, which helps keep the squirrels from crawling up and getting into the nests."

"We put it up like a board and batten style using some rough cut pine. This wasn't part of the original plan. The original plan was what we initially put up, which was basically a roof, and the ceiling, and then the posts. But we decided we needed to do more because we weren't having much luck for the first two years after, other than having one potential nest in there. So the thought was to give them some mud close by, which we did, and if we put sides on it, it will be more like what they are used to because these birds are usually in barns or sheds, all of which have walls."

Cataraqui Conservation staff, as well as members of the partner organizations on this project will continue to monitor the situation to see if some barn swallow families decide to make their new homes in the revamped structure. For more information about the barn swallow habitat project, please call 613-546-4228, email info@crca.ca, visit www.crca.ca, or our follow our social media channels - Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



# Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area Fall Tree Sales

The Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area are hosting three fall tree sale events in late September, from 9:00 am to Noon each day. There will be more than 30 species available, including conifers, deciduous, and shrubs, some up to six feet tall. Tree prices range from $10 to $60 including HST. Sale dates are: September 23, 26 and 30th. Visit www.crca.ca/tree-sale for details.

## Fall Sale Specials:

Spend $80 or more on regular priced trees and pick a free tree from the 'bonus' list - Grey Birch, White Birch, White Elm, or Weeping Willow.

Double up offer
- Gery Birch, two for $40
- White Birch, two for $49
- Weeping Willow, two for $70
- Red Pine, two for $50
- White Spruce, two for $50
- Nannyberry, two for $40
- Pagoda Dogwood, two for $40

Some volume discounts are also available for those replacing lost Ash Trees.

# Safe, Physically Distanced Forest Therapy Walks Return



The tough, stressful times, such as the one we have been experiencing over the past several months, brings closer to home the importance of staying connected with nature in a meaningful and ongoing way.

This is why Cataraqui Conservation is bringing back a modified program of Forest Therapy Walks for the fall of 2020. They will incorporate all the appropriate safety precautions as mandated by the provincial government and regional public health officials, including contactless interactions, no use of Cataraqui Conservation buildings or amenities, as well as physical distancing. Participants are recommended to bring a mask, hand sanitizer, snacks, a water bottle, a small cup, something to sit on and layered, comfortable clothing.

It was felt by our leadership team and education staff that this program was something that could be of benefit to residents of our community as a way of dealing with the added pressure, anxiety, and sense of dislocation and isolation brought about by the Covid-19 issues. Forest Therapy Walks are a perfect tonic to these tumultuous times.

Cataraqui Conservation's innovative and immersive Forest Therapy Walks program was implemented three years ago as a way of encouraging area residents to reconnect with nature in a deeper, more meaningful way.

The practice of Forest Therapy was founded through the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides (ANFT), based in California. The founders of this mindful, healing and connective practice were inspired by the Japanese practice of "Shinrin-yoku" which translates as "forest bathing." The program has now spread throughout North America and globally.

Research has determined that spending time in nature not only strengthens the human immune response and reduces stress, but also makes us more creative, mindful, and content in our lives. It may also inspire an environmental ethic that leads to positive changes in our behaviour, and a decreasing personal impact.

Our Forest Therapy Walks will be guided by Cataraqui Conservation's Senior Conservation Educator, Stana Luxford Oddie who is certified by ANFT. Luxford Oddie has more than two decades of experience connecting people of all ages to nature.

A Forest Therapy Walk is a slow and mindful experience that invites participants to come into greater awareness of their senses which may include walking, sitting, standing, or laying down at the choice of the participant. Everything is an invitation, so participants are invited to do what feels most comfortable to them. Everyone can benefit from Forest Therapy Walks. A Forest Therapy Walk is of great avenue to anyone who is looking to de-stress, slow down, heal and deepen their relationship with themselves, others, and nature with nature.

For more information on Cataraqui Conservation's Forest Therapy Walks, visit crca.ca/foresttherapy.

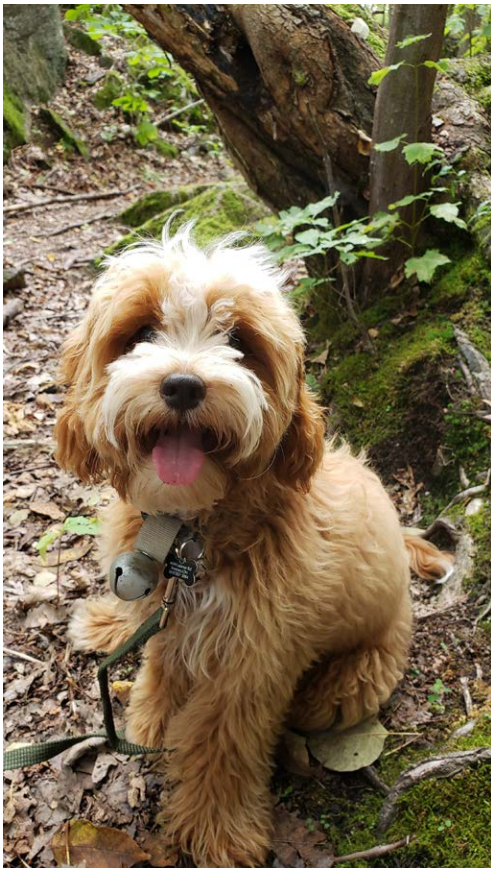
Cataraqui Conservation offers private group walks, one-on-one walks, and public sessions. Registration is required and dates or private walk bookings can be found on at the link above or at crca.ca/online-services.

## New - Try a Forest Therapy walk with Your Dog

Bring your dog along and join certified Forest Therapy Guide Stana Luxford Oddie and her puppy Theo (pictured right) on a forest therapy walk. Your time in the forest will be a chance to deepen your relationship with yourself, others, the more-than-human world, and your dog. Trained as a certified forest therapy guide with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs, Stana has been guiding forest therapy walks since 2016 and a trainer since 2018. Stana's mentor, Nadine Mazzola and her book on "Forest Bathing with Your Dog," and her new puppy Theo, have inspired Stana to incorporate the practice of forest therapy to include our four legged companions.

Cataraqui Conservation will be piloting forest therapy walks with your dog this fall. Please note that these walks are not a training course or a play group. Dogs taking part should have already been taken out for a walk so they arrive calm "or calmer" since a forest therapy walk is a slow and mindful way of being in your senses and present with all that is around you. This is an opportunity to engage with your dog's natural ways into the practice of forest therapy.

For more information about forest therapy walks with your dog and dates of upcoming walks visit www.crca.ca. Walks coming mid October.



# Operations Staff Busy with Trail Work & Upgrades

Cataraqui Conservation's Operations Staff spent parts of their summer working on a number of properties belonging to the organization, making needed repairs and improvements for the betterment of trail users and visitors to our conservation areas.

First off was long-needed work at Lemoine Point Conservation Area's shoreline, which had suffered not only significant damage from excessive flooding and wave uprush for the past three years, but also saw the depositing of tons of both natural and man-made debris which had washed ashore.

"Operations staff went in and cleaned up two dozen large trailer loads of woody debris and garbage; they cleaned that right up and did an amazing job. We had our full operations teams with tractors, RTVs, and all of our gear. It was probably a good week's effort involving everybody from start to finish, and we were trekking the swampy areas off the shoreline, getting all of the garbage out of there," explained Steve Knapton, Cataraqui Conservation's Operations and Maintenance Supervisor, who also mentioned that the conditions were so bad that it wasn't until this year that staff could safely navigate their way into the site.

"The water levels were so high for the first full year or more that we couldn't get in to the area at all, and then as it started to recede it was leaving more and more debris that was pretty dangerous; there was a lot of construction debris with nails and things like that so it was just not safe to bring any equipment there. To begin with, we actually went in on foot and picked out as much debris as we could by hand and that gave us the ability to drive our equipment in to do the heavy lifting. All of that was prep work for reinstating the trail through the waterfront section and moving it back from the shore; that's a future project that we haven't started yet. By the end of the year we will be doing another trail project at Lemoine improving trail surfaces," Knapton Added.

Another project involved two parking/entrance areas for the Cataraqui Trail that received significant upgrades, as did adjacent portions of the trail itself. A new parking area was created at Indian Lake Road - it's small but features a new improved surface and defined edges which is a lot more inviting for people now. The Highway 15 parking lot access point for the Trail was made a bit larger. Staff leveled it all out and put new material down, graded it all, and put parking curbs up. Leftover gravel from this project was able to be spread on the nearby trail surface, adding definition. Funding for this Cataraqui Trail project was provided by the Crabtree Foundation.

More recently, approximately three kilometres of trail at the Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville received significant work, for an area that has been consistently troublesome for the past few years as it would often be waterlogged and generally pretty soggy. The impassibility at times has made it hard for Cataraqui Conservation crews to get equipment through to do necessary brush clearing and mowing. To help mitigate this issue, culverts were installed, and a significant amount of new material was laid down on the trail to help solidify and define it to ensure it is user friendly for the thousands of area residents who enjoy the Mac Johnson property.

Trail maintenance is a continuous and significant part of the mandate of Cataraqui Conservation's Operations crew, with the regular need for brush removal, trimming of overgrown trees, removal of fallen trees on the trails and repairing washouts and similar occurrences. Over the past three years crews have been going property by property, as with the aforementioned work at Mac Johnson and Lemoine Point Conservation Area, making needed long-term capital improvements to the trails.

It must be pointed out that trail maintenance in just one part of Operations' job. The staff of four manages every aspect of the 4,000 or so hectares of land maintained by the Authority, including the trails, but there are also buildings, boardwalks, benches and other structures that need to be maintained and repaired. There are also special nature centre and tree nurseries to be maintained, as well as Authority-owned docks and boat launches throughout the Cataraqui Region.

Winter brings on a whole new set of responsibilities including trail maintenance and grooming for winter recreation activities and plowing of access roads. Operations staff are also a key component in helping organize and run the popular annual Maple Madness activities at Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

*Debris at Lemoine Point*

*Cataraqui Trail - Hwy 15 parking lot upgrade*

# Storm Blows Over Trees at Hay Bay Boat Launch

On June 2 a sudden and violent storm pounded the Greater Napanee area, hitting the shores of Hay Bay particularly hard. At the boat launch owned and managed by Cataraqui Conservation, the high winds felled some large trees, which toppled onto some vehicles that were parked at the site, located at 2401 South Shore Road.

Fortunately, no one was injured, but the damage was substantial. Thank you to staff from the Town of Greater Napanee who helped with the initial cleanout after the storm. On Sept. 24 and 25, contractors and Cataraqui Conservation staff were able to remove the remaining downed tree material. Eco Tree Care was retained to remove the large pieces of downed tree material, which took place on Sept. 24, with Cataraqui Conservation staff coming in to clear up remaining brush and ensure the parking area and ramp is clear and secure for used the following day. The boat ramp was closed to the public for the two days of work.

For future reference, there are other boat launches in the area for public use, including:

- Greater Napanee Launch at 753 Third Concession Road
- the Bayview Drive Boat Ramp at 110 Bayview Drive
- Cuthill Lane Boat Ramp at 124 Cuthill Lane

For more information about Cataraqui Conservation boat ramps and water access points visit our website at crca.ca/boat-ramps-and-water-access-points/, or contact info@crca.ca or 613-546-4228.

Please Remember: Cataraqui Conservation boat launches are for day use only. Please do not moor your boat to the docks overnight or for long periods of time. Some launches are small and doing so blocks access for emergency services and also for other users to safely enjoy the launch area.

# Loyalist Township is Building a Climate Action Plan

*Written by Dan Hendry, Climate Action Coordinator for Loyalist Township.*

Loyalist Township is building a Climate Action Plan!

**What is a Climate Action Plan?**
A Climate Action Plan is a set of strategies intended to guide community efforts for reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).
Projected Timeline:
• Summer 2020 – Research & initiate public feedback;
• Fall 2020 – More strategies for community involvement and public feedback;
• Winter 2020 – ResiLienT Loyalist Township Climate Action Plan complete & execution

**More on ResiLienT Loyalist Township Climate Action Plan:**
The Loyalist Township community is part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program. As part of this program, we are building a Community Climate Action Plan. The Loyalist Township Corporate GHG Reduction Target report went to Council in October of 2019 and Council chose to move forward with targeting a 49% reduction in GHG emissions below 2016 levels by 2031.
The next step of the (PCP) program is to build the community target. During the summer and fall of 2020 input will be needed from residents, businesses, and community groups.

**Local Climate Champion Social Media Campaign:**
Do you know a local community climate champion? Are you willing to share your climate action?
As part of building the ResiLienT Loyalist Township Climate Action Plan, a social media campaign will run showing early champions who are already doing relevant, good work in our community.
To do this we will need:
• Name of person, business, or community group.
• Name of climate action.
• Several photos.
• A short quote describing the impact.

Please reach out to climateaction@loyalist.ca to share your story and/or join the mailing list!

ResiLienT
LOYALIST TOWNSHIP

# Cataraqui Conservation Foundation News:

**The Foundation and COVID-19**
The COVID-19 pandemic has changed how we work, play, travel, and interact with one another in ways we could have never expected. With indoor spaces, like restaurants or concert venues, having limited access and capacity, and many of us working from home, more and more people are heading outdoors to enjoy the beauty and freedom of nature. For those of us at the Foundation, this has underlined the importance of protecting our green spaces, and highlighted the important role our supporters play in strengthening the work of Cataraqui Conservation.
Of course, our efforts have not been immune to the broader effects of COVID-19. We've had to cancel or postpone our in-person fundraising events planned for earlier this year, and it looks like the same may apply for the fall season. Our annual bake sale at Maple Madness and Forever Green Gala events may not have taken place this year, as the health and safety of our community are our top priorities, but our commitment to conservation and youth education remains steadfast. As Cataraqui Conservation and the Foundation adjust and adapt to the 'new normal' we hope we can count on your continued support, whether it be through donations or other means. Learn how you can get involved with the Foundation at www.cataraquiconservationfoundation.com/get-involved.

**Queen's PhD Project**
The Foundation board of directors offers its utmost gratitude to two teams of Queen's University PhD students that lent their wide-ranging expertise to provide insight and guidance on aspects of our organization's work. The teams, whose efforts also supported the students' academic requirements, conducted surveys that helped us to better understand our community of donors, and researched ways we can expand and hone our outreach efforts in the local region. The groups submitted their work back in April, but unfortunately the coronavirus outbreak intervened before students could meet with the board for final presentations. We send them our belated public thank you, and look forward to engaging future students from our local post-secondary institutions on future projects.

**Arbour-Wood Family Donation**
The Foundation board expresses its deepest condolences to the family of Raymond (Bud) Arbour, who passed away in his 100th year. Bud was born in Waubaushene and lived an extraordinary life. He served as a pilot in WWII as a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force, stationed in Yorkshire, England. Bud loved the outdoors and this passion developed into ownership of tree farms, including the establishment of Arbourwood Nursery in Shanty Bay. After planting and selling Christmas trees for over 40 years, Bud initiated the transformation of the nursery and surrounding land into Arbourwood Estates subdivision. Bud held a deep respect and enthusiasm for the environment and its protection. As a parting gift, Bud left a substantial bequest to the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation which will go toward strengthening important conservation, education, and outreach programs. This incredible gesture is deeply meaningful and demonstrates the power and passion citizens can bring to protecting nature in their own communities. The Foundation is profoundly thankful to Bud and his family for their meaningful gift. The Foundation looks forward to recognizing the Arbour-Wood family and this substantial donation in the future.
If you are considering including the Cataraqui Conservation Foundation in your estate planning, contact our Treasurer, Steve Dyer, at catconservationfoundation@gmail.com to discuss legacy gifts of property, funds, and more.

**Retirement and New Members**
Hilary Esdon has retired from our board of directors recently, and has moved on to new and exciting challenges. We wish Hilary the best and are delighted that she has volunteered to help us with future outreach events and remain active with the Foundation. She contributed valuable expertise and commitment to the Foundation and we are grateful she will continue to share her time and passion. The board has since welcomed Dave Rideout as its newest director. He is a communications professional currently working at Queen's University, and brings strategic insight and expertise to his role on the board. His first project at the Foundation was to refresh our website, which re-launched in July 2020. He is one of a number of new directors who joined in the past year including Nick Dinh and Joanna Ertel.

**Looking to Join the Foundation?**
We are always looking for new members to volunteer or join our Board of Directors. Do you have a passion for the environment? Are you a regular user of the Cataraqui Conservation properties? Do you have an interest in educating future generations about the importance of the environment and conservation? Do you want to assist in the acquisition of land for conservation purposes? Then please consider joining us and helping the Foundation grow and continue its valuable work. We need your time, ideas, and enthusiasm to help us in our mandate to support the activities of Cataraqui Conservation. For more information contact us at catconservationfoundation@gmail.com or through our website.

Cataraqui Conservation
Foundation

# Trust the Tap - Drinking Water Source Protection



Source Protection Authorities across the province have developed a campaign to acknowledge all the advancements in municipal water treatment and delivery that have taken place since the Walkerton tragedy. The 'Trust the Tap' campaign was developed to raise awareness of the safety measures now in place, protecting most of the municipal drinking water systems in the province.

It is hard to believe that 20 years have passed since the water supply in Walkerton, Ontario was contaminated with E. coli and Campylobacter jejuni bacteria, resulting in the death of seven people and severe illness affecting over 2,000 people.

Since May 2000, the Provincial government, Municipalities, Conservation Authorities and Source Protection Committees throughout much of Ontario have done excellent work to improve the quality of municipal drinking water by following recommendations of the Walkerton Inquiry which was led by Justice Dennis O'Connor.

"To date collectively we have done a thorough assessment of threats to municipal drinking water and implemented source protection plan policies to reduce the associated risks in much of Ontario. Municipal drinking water is regulated to a higher standard than bottled water in Ontario, so it is time to encourage trust," John Williamson, Source Protection Committee Chair commented. "However, there is still work to be done to consider all aspects of the drinking water system in Ontario. There are many hamlets, clusters of private wells, vulnerable populations in rural setting that are outside the current source protection framework."

Municipalities, Conservation Authorities and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks have played an integral part in developing a multi-barrier approach that has been adopted across much of the province. The multi-barrier approach ensures that municipal drinking water is protected and improved from the source to the tap. After 20 years, it is an appropriate time to recognize the work that has been done to make municipal drinking water safe.

"We want the 'Trust the Tap' campaign to raise awareness of all the efforts that have been done since the Walkerton tragedy and to help change people's attitudes toward municipal drinking water," said Holly Evans, Cataraqui Conservation Watershed Planning Coordinator.

A logo has been designed that is being promoted and used across the province on websites and social media. The idea of the campaign is to widely distribute the "Trust the Tap" logo as a clickable image linked to the Cataraqui Source Protection website, that provides information on the various accomplishments at each step of the multi-barrier approach http://cleanwatercataraqui.ca/resources/trust-the-tap/.

The "Trust the Tap" campaign is another step in promoting all the positive things that have happened since Walkerton. "We know that many people trust only bottled water but there are also issues caused because so much single use plastic is generated from that business. There is a safe alternative and we want people to know all the improvements that have taken place because of Walkerton," Evans added.

For more information about the Trust the Tap Campaign and the Cataraqui Source Protection Area visit:
www.cleanwatercataraqui.ca
or email info@crca.ca.

---

## Contactless Payment

Entrance fees are now online. Pay via mobile device or before your visit.

**crca.ca/gatefee**

Cataraqui conservation

## Eyes Only Scavenger Hunt

**How many can you find?**

- Turtle
- Green Leaf
- Dandelion
- Frog
- Brown Leaf
- Butterfly
- Spider Web
- Chickadee
- Pine Cone
- Snake
- Twig
- Canada Goose
- Round Rock
- Blue Heron
- Caterpillar
- Yellow Flower
- Bird House
- Animal Tracks

Cataraqui conservation

## Need a Trail Map?

Visit our kiosk by the warming huts or find our trails on Google Maps.

Launch the app and search for Little Cataraqui Creek Conservation Area.

**Download a brochure: tinyurl.com/ycakmde5**

Cataraqui conservation