

CAT TALES

WINTER 2006 ISSUE

In This Issue

Cat Tales brings you up to date on the activities of the CRCA during fall 2005 and our plans for winter and spring 2006.

A new master plan is in the works for Mac Johnson Wildlife Area in Brockville. Find out more on page 1.

More about other activities at Mac Johnson Wildlife Area on page 12.

Find out What's Happening on our winter-spring calendar of events on pages 6 and 7. Gaze at the stars. Skate on the rink. Strap on some snowshoes or enjoy the sweet taste of maple syrup in the sugar bush.

What's blue, noisy and flies around all over the place? Check out our Creature Feature on page 2.

The Clean Water Act is in the works. What does it mean and what will it do? See page 3. Also on page 3, the drought is over.

Conservation Authorities are in the process of updating our floodplain regulations. More about that on page 5.

The CRCA is back helping farmers to keep it green. Read about the Greencover Canada program on page 4.

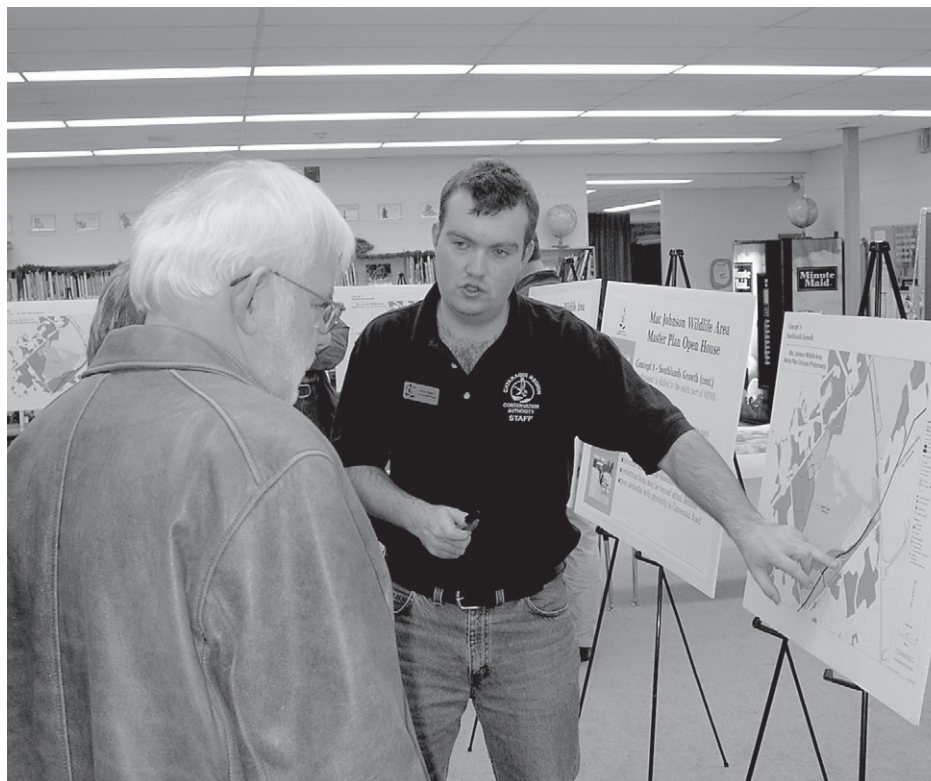
An update on the natural heritage study and a new watershed perspective can be found on page 8.

Nuts are gathered together at Lemoine Point Conservation Area. More on page 9.

Sydenham dam sinks no more! Details on page 10.

The Cataraqui Conservation Foundation has had a busy fall. See page 11. Also on page 11, the CRCA is ready to assemble a new nature reserve at the Bayview Wetland.

Plus... meet our new staff, measuring water flows, bat man and more!



CRCA Environmental Planner Kyle Munro discusses the concepts with a visitor to the December 1 open house.

A brief summary follows of the three concepts

Concept 1 - Status Quo/Maintenance; maintain existing resources and developed features as they are.

Concept 2 - Northlands Growth; education, stewardship, interpretation and passive recreation-based development activities are updated and expanded on north side.

Concept 3 - Southlands Growth; new development is focused on establishing facilities and infrastructure supporting environmental education, stewardship, interpretation and passive recreation-based activity at the south end of property. (Concept maps and descriptions are also available on the CRCA web site.)

Public reads to new Mac Johnson concepts

Public response has been positive and comprehensive to a Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) invitation to comment on new planning concepts for Brockville's Mac Johnson Wildlife Area.

CRCA staff presented three master plan concepts at a December 1 open house called to elicit public comment.

"A master plan is a long-term plan that guides protection, improvement and use of the property for 20 years and beyond," explains CRCA General Manager Steve Knechtel who attended the event.

One concept ultimately will be modified to reflect public input and a new master plan will follow. The existing plan for the 526 ha site was prepared in 1983.

"Typical of many protected areas, Mac Johnson is stressed by adjacent land use and population growth," says Mr. Knechtel. "Demands on the property have changed greatly since the original plan was implemented."

Mac Johnson, known locally as the *Back Pond*, is located on the Brockville and Elizabethtown-Kitley Township boundary.

Because of its popularity, it is important for the public to help shape its future, says Mr. Knechtel.

Kyle Munro is the CRCA environmental planner who is developing the new plan.

"The next step in the process is to take all the comments and feedback and tabulate them so we can recognize what sort of items are repeated or identified," he says.

For the next step, municipal councils will be consulted.

"Hopefully by that point we'll have one or two very clear and distinct concepts," says Mr. Munro.

To date, more than 50 individuals or groups accepted the CRCA invitation to comment on the planning concepts.

"Eventually, what will emerge are specific projects to which we will attach a priority so when we get to that stage people will see clear planning on how we would like to proceed," says Mr. Munro.

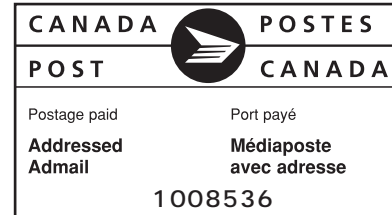
He says he expects to have the public responses tabulated early in January. Meetings with municipal staff and municipal councils will follow.

Other stakeholders include: local pedestrians, snowmobilers, the humane society, utility companies with easements on the property and the CRCA operational staff.

Funding for the MJA Master Plan was provided by the 1000 Islands Community Development Corporation, the Friends of Mac Johnson Wildlife Area and the CRCA.



Cataraqui Region
Conservation Authority
P.O. Box 160,
Glenburnie, Ontario
K0H 1S0



Creature Feature

Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

This boldly coloured bird is a showoff. What other conclusion can you draw about a blue jay vocalizing to draw attention with its harsh voice and aggressive manner.

Jays belong to the same family, *Corvidae*, as crows, ravens and magpies and as many as 100 related species. They are capable of a wide variety of calls, but their noisy "Jay! Jay Jay!" announces to all within earshot that a blue jay is present and is disturbed. Jays are capable of many vocalizations including one that is a musical bell-like note.

Blue jays have three distinct features that readily identify them. First is their colour; second is their crest and the third is their raucous cry. Blue jays have black barring and white

patches on their blue wings and tail. Also they sport a black necklace on whitish under parts.

The scientific name, *Cyanocitta cristata*, is derived from Greek and Latin words and translates as crested, blue chattering bird. Males and females appear to be nearly alike. Both sport the characteristic crest that is raised or lowered to reflect the bird's mood. Excitement or aggression cause the crest to be raised. In this condition, the crest is emphasized by a black band that crosses over the back of the head.

Although they have a reputation for destroying eggs and nestlings, their diet more commonly includes acorns, beech nuts and seeds as well as a variety of animal foods.

These include grasshoppers, beetles, caterpillars and small vertebrates. Blue jays are frequent bird feeder visitors where they may bully smaller birds out of the way. They measure about 11 inches, or almost 28 cm in length.

Jays are adaptable and will take advantage of any opportunity to find food. One blue jay was observed following a squirrel. As the mammal buried his finds, the jay swooped down and scratched the soil until the earth yielded up a prize. The nut was hastily cached in the bark of a tree and the jay returned to pursue the squirrel on its rounds.

Blue jays usually nests in coniferous trees less than 20 feet above the ground. Sometimes they will appropriate the nests of other birds. Four to five eggs are incubated for 17 or 18 days. Some 17 days after birth the young are feathered and ready to leave the nest although this may take as long as 21 days. The young jays follow their parents for from one to four months.



Their range is extensive: from Newfoundland to Alberta south to Florida and Texas.

Blue jays nest between 10 and 20 feet above ground and are not above appropriating the nests of other birds. The female handles most of the incubating work and she may be fed by the male. Both parents feed the hatchlings who set up an immediate and unceasing racket until they can feed themselves.

Cat Tales is published three times per year by the



Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority

Editor

Karla Maki-Esdon

Layout and Printing

Kingston This Week

Contributors

Pat Chamberlain, Jean Churchill-Wilson, Holly Evans, Stana Luxford, Karla Maki-Esdon, Doug Mather, Michael Sykes

Member of



Conservation
ONTARIO
Natural Champions



Send mail to:
Editor

c/o Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority
P.O. Box 160 Glenburnie ON K0H 1S0
E-mail: kmakiesd@cataraquiregion.on.ca
Phone: (613) 546-4228
Fax: (613) 547-6474

Established in 1972

Hours of
Operation

Mon.-Thurs. - 9-6
Fri - 9-8
Sat. - 9-5:30
Sun. - Closed

TARA
NATURAL
FOODS

Over
1,200
Food
Items
in Bulk

81 Princess Street, Kingston • 546-4439

SOCIALY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING



RBC
Dominion
Securities

NANCY FOSTER FCSI
Portfolio Manager
(613) 549-6484
nancy.foster@rbc.com

Integrate your
personal values
with your
investment decisions.

RBC Dominion Securities Inc.* and Royal Bank of Canada are separate corporate entities which are affiliated. *Members CIPE. ©Registered trademark of Royal Bank of Canada. Used under licence. RBC Dominion Securities is a registered trademark of Royal Bank of Canada. Used under licence. ©Copyright 2005. All rights reserved.

New Clean Water Act to provide for Source Water Protection Planning

After a long wait, the new proposed *Clean Water Act* was introduced at Queen's Park on December 5.

This legislation and its accompanying regulations set out the process for Conservation Authorities to undertake source water protection plans.

The expected process and time table for the passage of the *Clean Water Act* (CWA) is as follows:

- 1st reading - December 5, 2005
- Posting on the *Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR)* web site - deadline for comments February 3, 2006
- 2nd reading - Winter 2006
- Regulations made under the CWA to be posted on the EBR web site for comments - Winter 2006
- 3rd reading - Spring 2006
- Royal Assent and release of regulations - May/June

2006.

To view a copy of the *Clean Water Act*, please go to the EBR web site at www.ene.gov.on.ca/envregistry/O26807ea.htm. A copy is also provided on the CRCA web site.

In order to make sure that our municipal and local health unit partners have a chance to review and understand the proposed legislation, CRCA staff hosted a short workshop on January 12. This provided our partners with a summary of the legislation to help them prepare comments for the February 3 deadline.

Even though the legislation has progressed much more slowly than originally expected, CRCA staff have continued to work on many different aspects of source water protection. Our efforts have been focused on the collection and analysis of watershed data, preparation

of water budgets, and meeting with our local municipal councils. Our first round of municipal council meetings is now complete.

In addition to our 11 member municipalities, the provincial government has requested that the Township of Frontenac Islands be added to the Cataraqui Source Protection Region. The Township of Frontenac Islands has agreed to participate with us.

This winter our main priority is to meet with agricultural groups. Beginning in the spring we plan to meet with lake and cottage associations and other stakeholders.

This will be an ongoing initiative over the next several years. Be sure to watch for more information on the CRCA web site and in upcoming issues of *Cat Tales*.



Water levels were restored by fall rains, as shown by the gauge at the Millhaven Reservoir near Odessa.

Drought declaration lifted

The front page headline in the last issue of *Cat Tales* proclaimed **watershed swelters; drought declared**. The drought officially ended December 1 after a wet autumn replenished water levels throughout the watershed.

"Although this summer was marked by localized storms dry conditions persisted through the month of September, particularly in the western half of the Cataraqui Region," says Mara Shaw, reviewing events.

As Watershed Management Coordinator for the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA), she convened a Water Response Team (WRT) to advocate for water conservation. WRT membership included municipal, provincial and federal water managers coordinated by the CRCA.

In Ontario, drought triggers a series of increasingly severe low water declarations. Level I reflects concern. Level II indicates a potentially serious problem. Level III indicates failure of the water supply to meet demand. This past summer's drought rated a Level I declaration. However parts of the CRCA watershed were technically in undeclared Level II or even Level III conditions.

"Levels I and II focus on voluntary conservation techniques that we anticipate the public will enact for the good of the watershed," explains Ms. Shaw.

The WRT issued a June 27 appeal for the public to cut water usage by 10 per cent. A media blitz resulted in

print and electronic news stories about a need for water conservation. As the hot, dry summer progressed, municipalities, lake and cottage associations and others published WRT-provided water conservation tips to residents and members.

The WRT had planned to meet August 31 to consider a Level II declaration. However, events overtook plans when Hurricane Katrina caused the meeting to be cancelled. Despite the drought, a flood advisory was issued reflecting concern for Katrina's 60 mm of rainfall dumped in the watershed's southern portion.

The flood advisory was lifted September 1 but the weather seesaw continued. On September 12 Ontario's natural resources ministry confirmed their data was close to that gathered by CRCA. Stream flows in the western end of the watershed fluctuated between Level I and Level III conditions while those in the eastern portion remained at Level I.

The watershed was divided.

"Then October and November saw a return to normal stream flows, normal precipitation levels and inland lakes were at or above seasonal levels," Ms. Shaw recalls.

A wet autumn restored water levels and stream flows so the low water level warning was lifted December 1.



