Tree Planting – The Next Phase

Last year was the 20\textsuperscript{th} year that the Friends has planted trees at Lemoine to extend its forest cover and help preserve its natural environment. After many trials and much community support, it has become a very successful program as well as a regular community participatory event.

We are now about to enter a new phase. The two large fenced areas that we have been planting, one each at the North and South ends, will be filled up after one more planting event each, and we need to plan for what else remains to be done.

There are at least two more significant areas to be reforested, each requiring about three planting events. One is the extension of the South fenced area eastward to the existing stand of trees south of the Barn Swallow structure, which will not affect the large bobolink/meadowlark meadow that the CRCA and the Friends want to preserve. The other, at the North end, is the area north-west of the parking lot (i.e. the old baseball field) to extend the existing forest there. Both areas will have to be fenced in to avoid deer predation, and we plan to erect that in the next year or so.

There may be further options after that, but with the gradual slowing down of the planting program, we also are changing it from two community plantings per year to only one such planting event each year. And that planting will be in the fall, starting with no spring planting this year. That change will help to extend the schedule of planting events for now, and will also ease the workload of our Native Plant Nursery that grows the plant stock and is the critical component in this program, including not having to gear up for a spring planting event shortly after opening up for each new growing season.

\textbf{We will no longer have community tree planting events in the spring.}

Along with that change, we will also plan for more of a focus on smaller planting activities, such as small plantings of larger stock to infill existing forested areas using small teams of Friends volunteers and CRCA staff. That will also require the Nursery to transition from a focus on producing small potted stock to growing up to ten-foot-high caliper-size stock.
At our Annual Meeting last year, we enjoyed an interesting presentation on “Seed Collection”, especially because our Nursery volunteers do that at Lemoine for propagating stock for our tree planting events. Tim Gray of Forests Ontario gave us a mini-workshop on such issues as the fertilization of various trees, seed forecasting, and seed collection, including helpful tips, interesting samples of nuts and cones, and even including a butternut versus bitternut tasting test by a hardy volunteer.

This past winter, in early February, Nursery volunteers were again out gathering dormant cuttings in preparation for growing shrubs such as dogwoods, elderberry, spirea, and viburnums. Using cuttings rather than seeds means much faster initial growth of the shrubs. The resulting plants will eventually be used for Lemoine plantings or be available to the public at the Nursery as shrubs sought especially for having berries that wildlife love.

Financial Reviewer Wanted

With the retirement of our long-time volunteer “auditor” Jerry Zabel, we are hoping for another member to review and sign off on the financial records of the Friends’ relatively straightforward operation each October.

To volunteer or discuss, contact President John Diemer at diemer@sympatico.ca or 613-389-9451.

A reminder …

Protect yourself against blacklegged ticks and possible Lyme disease and consider taking the following precautions, especially during the warm months:

▪ Stay on the trails and avoid contact with tall grass and shrubbery;
▪ If you may contact such vegetation as you walk:
  ▪ Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks;
  ▪ Use insect repellent containing 30% DEET;
▪ After a walk with possible tick contact, check your clothes and body for ticks, which in spring may still be very small e.g. the size of a poppy seed or small freckle.

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Lemoine’s Friendly Little Birds

When walking along Lemoine’s wooded trails, you typically encounter many lively and inquisitive little birds and may even enjoy handfeeding them. They’re usually mainly Black-capped Chickadees, but people may not be aware that often some of them, though seeming somewhat similar in appearance and behaviour, are White-breasted Nuthatches, a quite different species.

Although both nuthatches and chickadees have dark caps, the latter’s is more distinctive, covering the entire top of its head including the eyes, while it also has a black bib on its throat that, along with the cap, sets off its white cheek. The nuthatch, on the other hand, though less dramatic looking, is unique in that you’ll see it walking head-first down tree trunks, i.e. upside down.

(Note - Lemoine does have another and less common nuthatch, the Red-breasted Nuthatch that has cinnamon-coloured underparts, but it prefers Lemoine’s conifer woods whereas the White-breasted and the Chickadee favour deciduous or mixed woodlands.)

The chickadees and nuthatches often forage together, and both are omnivorous and eat seeds and insects. They also both hide their food and have excellent memories for finding it again, and the nuthatch actually wedges hard-shelled nuts and seeds in tree crevices and chops them open with its pointy beak ... hence the name “nuthatch”.

Nuthatches are thought to forage with chickadees in order to benefit from their “chick-a-dee” call. That call is very complex in that it provides detailed information about their surroundings that the nuthatches are also able to understand and use; for example, it helps them in their foraging by providing information about the location of good food sources.

Probably an even more important advantage for them is that chickadees are highly attuned to nearby threats, such as from predators such as hawks and owls; when one is detected, the chickadees increase the number of “dee” sounds in their calls depending on the perceived level of threat, which also alerts the nuthatches and even reduces their need to be vigilant thus enabling better foraging.

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Last year, we had a family of Mute Swans living at Lemoine.

The adults had their nest at the north end of Collins Bay east of the marina, and had two cygnets. Then, for much of the summer and into late fall, the four of them could often be seen from our shoreline swimming in the Bay in all their grandeur.

Look for them to see if they return this spring.
Calendar of Events - 2019

Friends’ planned activities for Lemoine Point:

Saturday, April 28, 9 to 11
SPRING CLEAN-UP
Help clean up along Lemoine’s trails if you’re setting out for a walk from either the North or South parking lot. Garbage bags and gloves will be provided.

May - Note that we no longer have community tree planting events in the Spring.

Tuesday, May 14, 6:00pm
INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL
The start of our weekly meetings, first to remove Garlic Mustard. Meet at the North Parking Lot. If interested in helping, contact John Diemer at 613-389-9451.

Saturday, May 18, 9:00-3:00
SPRING PLANT SALE
At our Native Plant Nursery at the North end. Public sale of nursery stock – includes a wide selection of trees, shrubs and wildflowers, grown from Lemoine Point’s own plants. Limited numbers of some species.

The Nursery volunteer work group meets Wednesdays from spring to fall, starting mid-April. New volunteers welcome, e-mail jane.murphy@sympatico.ca.

Saturday, October 5, 9:00-11:00am
FALL TREE PLANTING
Our annual planting event to extend Lemoine Point’s forest cover. Meet at the North parking lot (off Coverdale Road). For information, contact Peter Butler at 613-389-4187.

Wednesday, November 13, 7:30pm
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The tentative date of our AGM (business meeting plus special presentation), held at the Ongwanada Centre.

New volunteers are always welcome to join us!
For info, contact our website or as above.