



# Carolinian Canada

Summer/Fall 2009

## Species and Habitats at Risk Special Edition Newsletter

BRONWEN BUCK, Editor, Carolinian Canada Coalition newsletter

### Special Focus on Species and Habitats at Risk - 2nd Edition

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#### Carolinian Canada Coalition

Grosvenor Lodge  
1017 Western Rd.  
London, ON N6G 1G5  
Phone: 519-433-7077  
Fax: 519-913-2449  
Email: info@carolinian.org  
www.carolinian.org  
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It is great to be able to soak up summer's heat once again. Yet even while appreciating the sun's rays (or frequent warm rains!), there is always opportunity to be thankful for the cooler seasons. For example, during last year's time of hibernation, our tireless contributors reflected on their efforts to aid species and habitats at risk. These articles, which are the result of those recollections, remind me how often the themes of education and learning recur. They permeate the work of the community members as they collaboratively develop stewardship plans biodiversity hotspots. They are also evident in the efforts of volunteer researchers like Eva D'Amico who so easily combine ecological monitoring with a sense of adventure. The eye-opening awareness that learning can foster is present again in Bernie Solymar's report on the landowners who enthuse about "Caring for Nature" and in the heart-warming account

of hands-on contributions by high school students who helped out at Waynco Prairie in preparation for a multi-school environmental challenge.

As these longer warmer days energize us for greater activity, we hope these articles inspire you to learn more about the rare habitats and species in your area. This coming fall is an excellent time to turn that learning into action. Become involved with their recovery now and watch your awareness expand even more in the future.

When it comes to species and habitats at risk, there is much to tell. We plan to keep focusing on species and habitats at risk in forthcoming issues. Ideas for future topics are welcome, as are submissions related to habitat enhancement, research, youth involvement, education and land stewardship. For editorial guidelines, please contact: newsletter@carolinian.org

## Connecting our Community

### Almanac Mania is here!

CCC is embarking on a quest to develop an Almanac. This reference book and guide to the Carolinian Region will be filled with useful and interesting stewardship tips, tools, facts and seasonal recipes that inspire conservation action in urban and rural communities.

We know many of you have years of accumulated knowledge and experience working with rare species and habitats, exploring the region, gardening with native plants and even supporting the community by eating locally.

With your talent, creativity and humour, this expertise can be transformed into articles that will capture the attention of the thousands of people currently or potentially involved in improving habitat and the rare species found within the Carolinian Life Zone.

We have a list of ideas for over eighty articles ranging from best practice guidelines to gardening tips to eco-friendly day trips. If you have more ideas for us, or would like to learn more about how you can contribute, this is your chance!

Don't forget to sign up to our e-news to take part in our Almanac Challenges. Each month we invite responses to a different question. Through your free subscription,

you can also receive and post events, publications and program updates across the region. To become a subscriber, contact us at enews@carolinian.org.



## Ontario

Assistance for this project is provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

### Ode to the Pawpaw Tree

by KATHRYN BOOTHBY, Langton, ON

I think that there will never be  
A Carolinian species like the Pawpaw tree

With custard fruit and purple bloom  
Its diminutive size requires little room

Rare zebra swallowtail on the wing  
Prefer its leaves over anything

But alas the Pawpaw hides its best...  
For beneath the canopy it rests.

Submitted in response an e-news Almanac Challenge,  
"What is your favourite Carolinian Tree?"



# Collaboration and Tough Love: The Secrets of Conservation Action Planning (CAP) Success

## Greening the Future in Southwestern Ontario

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From Madagascar to New Zealand, Mozambique to Massachusetts and from China to Peru, Conservation Action Planning (CAP) benefits hundreds of landscapes and waterscapes. Globally CAP's positive results are inspiring conservation practitioners to create nearly three new projects each week.

Last fall, the Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC) added its own trio of new CAPs to this growing list. Working with local partners, staff initiated pilot CAPs in Southwest Essex County, the northern Ausable River (Kettle Point to Pinery) and the Upper Thames River Watershed all of which are highly biodiverse areas within the Carolinian Life Zone. These landscapes are known for their significant concentrations of species at risk such as Eastern Fox Snake, Dwarf Hackberry and the Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle.

What makes a CAP process successful? Certainly scientific and technical expertise is necessary for implementing any conservation-centric planning strategy. But CAP methodology with its emphasis on collaborative effort is a key component, as local partners quickly discovered during their first workshops, hosted by CCC in the fall of 2008.

In addition to the leadership provided by CCC's coach and ecologist, Jarmo Jalava, the US Nature Conservancy generously provided two CAP leaders,



*Text on a drum in the Band Office at the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation emphasizes the value of collaboration – a principle the CAP process upholds.*

Tina Hall and John Legge. These experts immediately fostered a collaborative spirit by emphasizing the need for a “boss-free” zone in which participants willingly shed their titles and treated each other as equals. Team members also practised remaining open to new ideas and participating in ongoing discussions without dominating them.

Adherence to these ground rules created an effective atmosphere in which to develop goals for the mosaics of ecosystems in CAP pilot areas. By the end of

the first workshop participants had established various targets for enhancing such ecosystems as deciduous forest, Tallgrass habitat or wetlands.

Where appropriate, partners also defined cultural or socio-economic goals. For example, some CAP teams incorporated sustainable tourism and agriculture into their plans. Similarly, First Nation groups chose to maintain native plant populations for traditional use. These goals reflect a unique aspect of CAP - its flexibility to include relevant cultural or social principles into conservation goal-setting. Thus local stakeholders with interests compatible with sustainable land need not be limited by a conservation-only approach.

Myeengun Henry of the Chippewas of the Thames graciously hosted the second CAP workshop at the First Nation band southwest of London. His warm welcome,



*The Carolinian Canada Coalition connects hundreds of groups and individuals across southwestern Ontario to protect and restore the unique nature and healthy landscapes of the Carolinian Life Zone, Ontario's most ecologically diverse region and home to 1/3 of Canada's Species at Risk.*

**We invite submissions of articles for the newsletter. For editorial guidelines, please contact: [newsletter@carolinian.org](mailto:newsletter@carolinian.org).**

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including a traditional Ojibway ceremony, set a positive tone for this two-day workshop. Following the lead of the CAP coaches, he emphasized to participants the importance of sharing their individual experiences and knowledge. This lasting good-will created an atmosphere for productive work and underscored the importance of partnership as a collective effort.

Throughout both workshops, groups presented their evolving ideas to peers for review. During these presentations, Hall and Legge encouraged participants to be kind but critical in reviewing each others' plans. This combination of a "tough love" attitude and cooperative effort, they believe, is paramount for creating rigorous strategies that can be realistically implemented in the long term.

Through the diligence of local partners involved in the CAP process, draft strategies for the three pilot areas reached completion by spring 2009.

In June 2009, CCC initiated three more pilot CAPs in the biodiversity hotspots of Niagara Region and Hamilton.

*This article is the second in a series about Conservation Action Planning in Carolinian Canada.*

*Thanks to Jarmo Jalava for his assistance with this article.*



*Assistance for this project is provided by the Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk and the Ministry of Natural Resources.*

## COALITION NEWS: Social Marketing Update

# Recovery Outreach Working Group: Invitation to Participate

by BRONWEN BUCK,  
Ecosystem Recovery Network Coordinator

Carolinian Canada Coalition is well on it's way to creating a joint social marketing strategy for Recovery of Species and Ecosystems at Risk across southwestern Ontario. If your group is interested in increasing the impact of your outreach programs in southwestern Ontario, your participation is encouraged at a variety of levels. For inquiries, or to indicate interest in participation, contact [woodland@carolinian.org](mailto:woodland@carolinian.org).

## Ontario's Only Marsupial a Star in Hit Game Show

### Carolinian Canada Coalition Celebrates Biodiversity at the Royal Winter Fair

by BRONWEN BUCK, Ecosystem Recovery Network Coordinator

Are you smarter than an opossum? This is what contestants attending Biodiversity Day at the Royal Winter Fair tried to find out. On November 15th, Carolinian Canada Coalition (CCC) staff and volunteers posed as marsupials and plied the crowd with questions about nature in southern Ontario. Children and their parents enjoyed the educational and interactive game. The Ministry of Natural Resources organized Biodiversity Day to help build a broad public understanding of and a commitment to biodiversity. We are eager to tailor this game for a diversity of audiences and take this show on the road.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Bronwen Buck, Ecosystem Recovery Network Coordinator at [woodland@carolinian.org](mailto:woodland@carolinian.org).



*Eager children tackle 'Mission Im'possible', the toughest category of questions in our game show.*

## HOW ARE YOU GREENING CAROLINIAN CANADA?

### Send Us Your Stories!

*Thousands of people across Carolinian Canada are facing similar conservation challenges. Your experience can inform and inspire others and sharing our stories makes our conservation community stronger. Send us notes and photos about your interesting project, conservation success, innovative idea, dedicated volunteers or favourite natural area to [newsletter@carolinian.org](mailto:newsletter@carolinian.org).*

# “Norfolk Caring for Nature Workshop”

*Increases Enthusiasm for Stewardship*

by BERNIE SOLYMÁR



BERNIE SOLYMÁR

*Landowners learn about rural property stewardship*

**B**iodiverse Norfolk County, located in the heart of the Carolinian Life Zone, is full of vibrant natural areas. Conservation professionals and knowledgeable volunteers maintain responsibility for the stewardship and management of many of these places, such as the publicly owned St. Williams Crown Reserve or the land-trust owned Spooky Hollow. But where do the county's rural landowners turn when they wish to steward and enhance biodiversity of their own properties? The first Norfolk Caring for Nature for Rural Landowners in Norfolk Workshop, hosted by the Carolinian Canada Coalition and partners near Simcoe last October helped provide them with answers.

The Caring for Nature workshop was a dynamic follow-up to the successful spring 2008 launch of the Caring for Nature in Norfolk factsheets. Over forty participants, including woodlot owners, rural non-farmers and farmers with large acreage participated. The day-long workshop provided them with an opportunity to learn about habitat stewardship projects in Norfolk, hear from experts about how to enhance natural habitat and

conserve biodiversity on their land, gather tips on sourcing financial incentives, and connect with local conservation professionals.

All attendees demonstrated enthusiasm, curiosity and a deep commitment for good land stewardship. They were particularly eager to learn about the best methods for enhancing wildlife habitat and conserving natural features on their land. Over 80% of participants indicated they were interested in a follow-up workshop specifically focused on helping species-at-risk on private property.

Representatives from the Carolinian Canada Coalition, the Norfolk Land Stewardship Council, Long Point Region Conservation Authority, Long Point Basin Land Trust, Norfolk County, Norfolk Woodlot Owners' Association, Acorus Restoration, Tallgrass Ontario and the Norfolk Field Naturalists helped answer any questions participants had and offered to consult with interested individuals to create follow-up plans.



# Youth Take Action at Waynco Prairie

by STEPHEN MAY, Stewardship Coordinator, Waterloo Stewardship Network

Over 30 students from the Grand River Envirothon program learned about tallgrass prairie habitat and helped in its recovery during a training day this past October. MNR Species at Risk Biologist Graham Buck, Tallgrass Ontario's Brian Titaro and the Waterloo Stewardship Network's Wayne Buck and Neil Taylor assisted students to explore and improve this expansive prairie remnant.

Located on the Galt Moraine south of Cambridge, the Waynco Prairie is one of Ontario's largest prairie remnants. A partnership that includes principal landowner, Waynco Gravel, along with Waterloo Stewardship Network, Brant Resource Stewardship Network, University of Waterloo and Tallgrass Ontario has greatly improved this site over the past few years.

The site's prairie grasses have responded well to two prescribed burns completed in 2006 and 2007. More prescribed burning and invasive species control are planned to support species like Upland White Aster, Butterfly Milkweed, Whorled Milkwort, Round-headed Bush-clover and Showy Tick Trefoil.

The Envirothon students from high schools in Waterloo, Wellington and Brant Counties helped the restoration efforts by collecting several kilograms of prairie grass seed to be used to enhance this site in the future.

These individuals are involved with a program that teaches them about their natural environment and provides enrichment opportunities that are especially valuable for students who will be come tomorrow's environmental leaders.

The Envirothon program is unique in that it involves friendly competition and the opportunity to compete in environmental subjects like aquatics, forestry, fish and wildlife and biodiversity and to compete against other keen environmentalists from throughout North America.

For more information about the Ontario Envirothon program in Ontario contact the Ontario Forestry Association's Kristina Quinlan at [kristinaq@oforest.on.ca](mailto:kristinaq@oforest.on.ca).



STEPHEN MAY

*Envirothon students collect native grass seed to enhance the Waynco Prairie*

## David Suzuki Foundation Takes Action

by RACHEL PLOTKIN, David Suzuki Foundation



The David Suzuki Foundation (DSF) is engaged in the implementation of Ontario's new Endangered Species Act, to ensure that the spirit and letter of the Act are met, and to facilitate habitat maintenance, protection and restoration. To this end, the Foundation is monitoring the identification of habitat in recovery strategies, and the development of habitat regulations. The DSF is also a member of the Species At Risk Panel Advisory Committee to the Minister, Donna Cansfield.

# Onondaga Farms

by NIKKI MAY for Carolinian Canada Coalition

Tim Horton's Onondaga Farms offers young Canadians a chance to experience their natural heritage first-hand. This place is a conservation hotspot in Brant County, working to preserve the area's Carolinian species. Onondaga Farms enables children from all over Canada to have the precious opportunity to live and play in a natural setting, but is unique among Tim Horton's camps, because it offers year-round environmental education programs.

Conservation programs at Onondaga Farms reflect the diversity of conservation challenges facing nature in Brant County and the Carolinian zone, including wetland restoration, tallgrass prairie restoration, reforestation and tree planting, the construction of bird nesting boxes, and the reintroduction of rare species. As well, Onondaga Farms is playing a central role as it attempts to reintroduce disease-resistant strains of the once mighty American Chestnut tree. Conservation efforts like those at Onondaga Farms offer us real hope that species like the American chestnut will not only be remembered, but will once again thrive in the Carolinian zone.



*Naturalization around a pond at Onondaga Farms*

## Reptile Sightings Wanted!

### Land Trust Encourages Participation in "Conserving Carolinian Reptiles" project

by GREGOR BECK, LONG POINT BASIN LAND TRUST

Long Point Basin Land Trust encourages conservation partners and the public to participate in their new "Conserving Carolinian Reptiles" project. This multi-year initiative includes several major components, including: public awareness and landowner outreach; on-the-ground reptile habitat enhancements (e.g. creation of turtle nesting habitat, snake wintering habitat, etc.); and documentation of snake and turtle distributions/ populations through special surveys and a new regional reptile atlas.

The Land Trust requests landowners, wildlife enthusiasts, nature groups and conservation partners to report sightings of all turtles and snakes in the Long Point Basin area – from Port Stanley in the west through Norfolk County and Long Point, and east toward Dunnville. You may report sightings from coastal areas as well as inland regions, such as St. Thomas, Tillsonburg, Simcoe and Jarvis.

While the central Lake Erie region was once a stronghold for reptiles, many populations are dwindling. Twelve of 19 native species are now listed as "at risk," including Blanding's, Map and Spotted Turtles, and Foxsnake, Queensnake and Eastern Hog-nosed Snake. The "Conserving Carolinian Reptiles" project will create habitat for turtles and snakes, and information from the reptile atlas and surveys will help inform conservation efforts now and in the future.

To encourage public participation in the project, the Land Trust recently developed a special online reptile reporting system on their website: [www.longpointlandtrust.ca](http://www.longpointlandtrust.ca). There are also "hot-off-the-presses" turtle and snake factsheets on the website to help with reptile identification.

One may report species online (preferred), but there are also options to print and mail the reporting form, email ([nature@longpointlandtrust.ca](mailto:nature@longpointlandtrust.ca)) or phone in sightings (519-586-8309). The Land Trust's new newsletter, "ViewPoint," contains more information about reptiles, the project and the organization.

For more information, or to learn how to participate, visit: [www.longpointlandtrust.ca](http://www.longpointlandtrust.ca).



*Blanding's Turtle and Painted Turtle*



# Through the Eyes of a Volunteer

## An Amateur Botanist Explores a Unique Haven on Pelee Island

by EVA D'AMICO



*My adventure on Pelee Island included completing volunteer work on the Stone Road Alvar*

Most naturalists describe their wonder at being on Pelee Island during the height of migration season. It is a well-known birding destination because it provides a stopover for thousands of migrating birds annually. But what does Pelee offer if you are a plant and invertebrate enthusiast like me? I decided to find out by volunteering with Ontario Nature last July. Our destination was the Island's Stone Road Alvar, where we braved heat and insect bites to monitor butterflies and view wildflowers at their finest.

Alvars are limestone plains that have such harsh environmental conditions and so little soil it is tough for most trees to survive. Many of the plants that thrive on alvars are rare species specially adapted to the spring flooding, summer droughts and winter ice particles constantly threatening to erode the shallow soil. Alvars are so unique scientists classify these habitats as globally rare.

Pelee Island has the only Chinquapin Oak, Nodding Wild Onion and Alvar Savannas in the world. Stone Road Alvar, the largest and most diverse in the Carolinian Life Zone, is an Environmentally Significant Area, an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest and a Carolinian Canada Site. A number of conservation organizations were able to purchase the 220 ha Stone Road Alvar section. The Essex County Field Naturalists now steward it.

Walking through the alvar, I was awestruck by the masses of flowers. The large expanses of slender Gray-headed Coneflower, delicate white Whorled Milkweed and drooping blooms of Nodding Wild Onion were delightful. Monet would have loved to be able to paint here! In the shade

of tall Blue Ash, it struck me how different this grassy alvar is to the others I am familiar with, such as the shrublands of the Carden Alvar near Lake Simcoe or the bare limestone pavement alvars on the Bruce Peninsula.

Our butterfly monitoring revealed colourful favourites such as the giant swallowtail, tawny emperor, Acadian hairstreak and the hackberry emperor. Though our leaders Bob Bowles and Chris Evans helped us search for the rare Sachern Skipper, it did not reveal itself that day. However, butterflies such as the Viceroy, Red-spotted Purple and rare Monarch were abundant.

In addition to wildflowers and butterflies, my visit to Stone Road Alvar gave me the opportunity to note many of the 44 provincially rare and 33 regionally rare plant species found here. These included common Hop tree, Dwarf Hackberry, Climbing Prairie Rose and Blue ash. While it was a treat to learn about the area's biodiversity and find out what Pelee could offer me, it was also good to know I could give back by taking part in an inventory project essential to tracking ecosystem health. I'm thankful that the area is protected. The populations of rare plants here remain because pesticide use, human development and invasion by exotic species are controlled through good stewardship. By monitoring, studying and conserving this area, we are ensuring future generations will be able to wonder at nature at its best.

*Eva D'Amico is an amateur botanist and dedicated conservation volunteer. She recently moved from the Greater Toronto Area to Alvinston in the heart of the Carolinian Life Zone and looks forward to exploring the region.*



# CAROLINIAN CANADA COALITION FORUM 2009 CARING FOR OUR COAST

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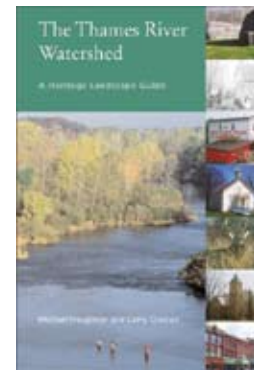
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