



## Niagara's New Salamander

By Kara L. Vlasman,  
Co-chair of the Dusky Salamander Recovery Team

The Niagara Area Species at Risk team has discovered a species of salamander new to Ontario - the Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander (*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*) - in the Niagara Gorge. Last summer, Species at Risk technicians Devin Mills and Rob Tervo of the Niagara Area office of the Ministry of Natural Resources were climbing the precarious habitat near Queenston, looking for the provincially endangered Northern Dusky Salamander (*Desmognathus fuscus*), when they happened upon its close relative. As it turns out, both salamanders call the escarpment of the Niagara Gorge home.

Confirmation that this was a new species was by no means immediate. Dusky salamanders (genus *Desmognathus*) are notoriously difficult to identify due to their highly varied patterns and coloration. Confusion between the Allegheny Mountain Dusky and Northern Dusky salamanders, in particular, can easily arise. Therefore, tail tip samples (this non-lethal sampling doesn't impair salamanders, as their tail tips grow back) were sent to McGill University for definitive genetic confirmation and, in late March 2005, the species was verified.

The Allegheny Mountain Dusky is nationally listed as threatened by COSEWIC. It was formerly documented only from Quebec where it is known from just two localities: a handful of streams in a restricted area near Covey Hill and a second occurrence 20 km away. Due to this recent finding, Ontario will be added to its range of jurisdiction. Genetic evidence indicates that the Niagara population of Allegheny Mountain Dusky is more closely related to populations in Western New York than to those in Southern Quebec.

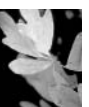
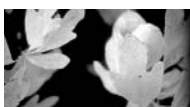
Protection of underground-source water quality and quantity will be important aspects to the recovery of this species at the Niagara Gorge site. A Dusky Salamander Recovery Team has been initiated to devise a strategy and corresponding action plans for the recovery of both salamander species, in order to ensure that this new discovery is not fleeting.



Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander plays it cool in the Niagara Gorge. (Photo by D. Mills and R. Tervo, Ministry of Natural Resources)

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# Walpole Island Plaque Dedication



THE ONTARIO  
TRILLIUM  
FOUNDATION

The Carolinian Canada Coalition acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, which receives annually \$100 million in government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.



Clint Jacobs (left), Chief Dean Jacobs (middle) and MP Rose-Marie Ur at the Walpole Island First Nation heritage plaque unveiling. The plaque is part of Carolinian Canada's multi-year Community Marking Project to commemorate the unique natural significance of the 38 critical sites identified by the Coalition in 1984. The Walpole Island First Nation plaque is located behind the arena, just past the bridge onto Walpole Island. Visitors wishing to explore Walpole's natural areas should request permission from the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, (519) 627-1475. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

At a sunny celebration in September 2004, members of Walpole Island First Nation joined with the Carolinian Canada Coalition to unveil a heritage plaque in recognition of the stunning diversity of this large island delta complex on the St. Clair River and in honour of the outstanding stewardship work of the Walpole Island First Nation.

"What we have here all around us is an abundance of natural heritage," said Chief Dean Jacobs at the ceremony. "It is unrivalled in these parts. We know that what sets our natural treasures apart from other areas is its diversity." Indeed, Walpole Island First Nation supports some of the most biologically diverse natural areas remaining in Canada. It has one of the largest tracts of forest cover in southwest Ontario, one of the largest wetland systems in the Great Lakes Basin and the most significant tallgrass prairie and oak savanna in Canada. These ecosystems provide habitat for more than 10% of the country's species at risk.

"I applaud our community's concern and advocacy in addressing species at risk and other environmental issues," said Chief Jacobs, noting in particular the work of the Walpole Island Heritage Centre and its staff. "They are working diligently not only on our behalf, but on behalf of all species."

Taking care of these gifts is a responsibility handed down from generation to generation. As David White, Acting Director of the Walpole Island Heritage Centre, said at the plaque unveiling, "We look forward to future partnerships in the conservation and recovery of our collective natural heritage."

## Wild in the City



Some of the many friends of Rouge Park help celebrate the official dedication of a Carolinian Canada heritage plaque at Rouge Park's Glen Eagles Vista in October 2004. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

By Maryam Nassar, Rouge Park

A Carolinian Canada heritage plaque was unveiled on October 19, 2004, at Rouge Park, an oasis of green that stretches from Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine through the eastern Greater Toronto Area. As the northeastern limit of the Carolinian zone in Canada, Rouge Park is one of North America's largest natural environment parks in an urban area.

"Exactly 20 years ago, the Rouge River valley in Toronto was identified as critical Carolinian habitat," observed Ron Christie, Chair of the Rouge Park Alliance, at the plaque unveiling. "Almost 10 years ago, people who were concerned about losing this critical habitat came together to demand that governments take action to protect the area, and so Rouge Park was created. A lot has changed since that time, but the need for natural areas close to the city, both for wildlife and people, is something that remains."

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For more information call 519-433-7077 or look us up on the web at [www.carolinian.org](http://www.carolinian.org)

# The Power of Landowners

The Carolinian Canada Conservation Awards ceremony in fall 2004 at Port Franks was a moving event, demonstrating the power of landowners to make a difference in every part of the zone. A farmer in Elgin, a woodlot owner in Oxford, a school in inner-city Toronto, a First Nations heritage centre, and concerned citizens in Sarnia were honoured for their tireless work and innovative stewardship. Each recipient cares for their land in a way that spreads through their community. Each from a different perspective, yet all working towards the same goal. Congratulations.

The five recipients are:

**Individual:** Tom Bird (Oxford County Woodlot Owners Association)

**Groups:**

**Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee**

**Natural Heritage Program of Walpole Island Heritage Centre,**

**Nin Da Waab Jig**

**Youth:** Branksome Green (Ravine Woodland Restoration School Project)

**Lifetime Achievement:** Bill Prieksaitis (West Elgin Field Nature Club)

Congratulations to all for their outstanding work protecting the natural habitat of the Carolinian zone.



**Tom Bird** accepts his award from Vicki McKay, Chair of the conservation awards committee. (Photo by John Bellar)

**Tom Bird** (Individual Category) manages his 30-acre woodlot as a demonstration site for good woodland stewardship. Identifying a need for more information and support for landowners, he founded the Oxford County Woodlot Owners' Association and chaired the Stewardship Council. "Tom's effective leadership enabled the new council to work together and agree to goals and objectives for the program that suited the needs of Oxford County landowners," says Jim Collins, Past Coordinator of Oxford County Stewardship Council.



The Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee works to protect and restore natural areas, and counts community outreach as a priority. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

**Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee** (Groups Category)

is a volunteer committee initiated by concerned citizens to protect wildlife from the effects of urbanization and to develop an urban ecosystem policy and program for Sarnia. It works with the City and private landowners to protect and restore natural areas such as Dennis Rupert Prairie Reserve and species at risk such as American Chestnut and Dwarf Sandcherry. "This committee has done extremely fine conservation work since its inception in 1994," says Gerry Clements of Lambton Wildlife.



Paul Smith, Past Chair of the Carolinian Canada Coalition, shakes hands with David White and presents an award to the Walpole Island Heritage Centre for their outstanding stewardship program. Left to right: Clint Jacobs, Paul Smith, Jane Bowles, David White, Roy Isaac, Naomi Williams, David White Jr., Karen Abel. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

**The Natural Heritage Program of Walpole Island Heritage Centre**

**(Nin Da Waab Jig)** (Groups Category) promotes stewardship of extensive tallgrass prairie habitats, Carolinian forests, coastal waters and one of the largest wetland systems in the Great Lakes. The program has protected 84 acres of significant habitat on the St. Clair River delta and engages in research and outreach. "This lively program is active in informing and educating the Walpole Island First Nations community about species at risk and promoting habitat stewardship. WIFN is home to 51 Species at Risk including several that have their Canadian stronghold here, or occur nowhere else in Canada," says Dr. Jane Bowles, ecological consultant.



Jane Moore, Chair of Branksome Green, accepts the award for the group's woodland restoration work with youths at Branksome Hall Girls School in Toronto. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

**Branksome Green** (Youth Category) is a Ravine Woodland Restoration Project initiated by Branksome Hall Girls School in Toronto. For the past decade, this project has been raising awareness and has been a catalyst for other ravine landowners in the Lower Don River Valley to restore their own properties. "The school is very rooted in the community and has its own extended family of students, parents, faculty and alumnae. It is in many ways the ideal group for a landscape restoration. It has a history and a future. The results are showing," says Tanny Wells, Past Chair, Bring Back the Don.



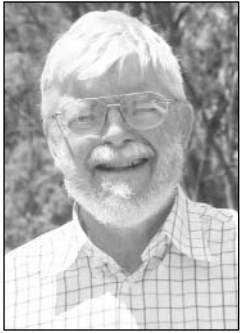
Bill Prieksaitis, with his wife Marjorie, was honoured at the conservation awards ceremony for his work motivating and inspiring the residents of Elgin County to care for nature. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

**Bill Prieksaitis** (Lifetime Achievement Category) has been the driving force of the West Elgin Nature Club for more than 30 years. A tireless volunteer, he has been instrumental in creative deals to protect natural areas such as the Dutton-Dunwich Prairie, which the club leases from its railway owner to implement specialized management. He has been a key player in numerous projects including a 306-page book, *Elgin Birds – a Century of Change*, and he gives away thousands of Carolinian trees that he grows from seed so future generations can know and admire these representative species of the Carolinian zone. "Bill's actions and activities are not just restricted to those of his own home club, the West Elgin Nature Club, but are widespread throughout Elgin County. He leads by example. He has done just about everything that can be done from the manual of stewardship actions and activities. You name it; he's done it," says Dave Martin, ecological consultant.

# Coalition News

Welcome to the new Carolinian Canada Coalition Management Committee Executive: Gordon Nelson, Chair; Jo-Anne Rzadki, Vice-chair; Peter Banks, Treasurer; Jim Oliver, Director at Large; Paul Smith, Past-chair.

This team will be taking the committee through significant changes in 2005, as the Coalition becomes an incorporated charity. The committee will develop a revised organizational structure to accommodate formal bylaws. Concurrently, the Coalition will develop a 5-year strategy.



**Dr. Gordon Nelson** has a wealth of experience in land-use, resource and environmental planning; management and decision-making; heritage and environmental education; and international environmental studies. He is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Waterloo where he heads the Parks Research Forum of Ontario (PRFO).

Vice-chair **Jo-Anne Rzadki** has coordinated the Hamilton Halton Watershed Stewardship Program (HHWSP) since 1994, and is now on a one-year secondment as Policy and Planning Specialist with Conservation Ontario. She has been a leading figure in landowner-contact and stewardship programs in Carolinian Canada for almost 20 years.



Treasurer **Peter Banks** has been with the Coalition since its beginnings and provides a critical link to Lambton Wildlife Incorporated, which handles the finances of the Coalition.

Director at Large **Jim Oliver** has been the General Manager of the Long Point Region Conservation Authority since 1980 and has represented Conservation Ontario on the Management Committee since 1988.



Past-chair **Paul Smith** has provided strong, dedicated leadership since 1999 and stepped aside in August 2004. He has been instrumental in developing core programs and directions for the Coalition.

## Carolinian Woodland Recovery Strategy



Kara Vlasman (left) and Rebecca Hay of the Carolinian Woodland Recovery Team at Spottiswood Lakes

Carolinian Canada Coalition in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources is coordinating a Carolinian Woodland Recovery Team to address woodland plant species at risk across the life zone. The strategy brings together experts and stakeholders to discuss a coordinated approach to protecting woodland species and ecosystems at risk. This project is the first of its kind to work on a zone-wide scale. The recovery team includes more than 25 organizations and individuals. A draft report is due in the fall of 2005. An initial public workshop was held at the 2005 Carolinian Canada AGM, and more workshops are planned. You or your organization can join the Carolinian Woodland Network to review, stay informed or participate in the strategy by sending an email to: [info@carolinian.org](mailto:info@carolinian.org).

Look for a feature article on the Carolinian Woodland Recovery Strategy in our next newsletter.

# Carolinian Canada Celebrates 20 Years of Wild Ideas

## Thinking Big, Wild Ideas: Conserving Carolinian Landscapes and Species at Risk

Carolinian Canada Coalition's 20th-anniversary conference in October 2004, hosted by Lambton Wildlife Incorporated (LWI) in Port Franks, was a great success.

More than 200 people attended to discuss past successes, current programs and ideas for the future in three theme areas. "Tools for Thinking Big" explored a wide variety of conservation tools for communities, landowners, farmers, researchers, planners and policy-makers. "Species, Ecosystems & Landscapes @ Risk" highlighted new policies, programs and strategies, and provided examples of on-ground action. "People Power for Conservation" showcased some of the most innovative projects developed at the local scale and explored common ground between landowners and conservationists.

Proceedings for this conference are now available and will be sent to all conference attendees. This event was generously sponsored by LWI, Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program, George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation and many other Carolinian Canada supporters. A dedicated team of volunteers headed by LWI made this a unique and memorable celebration.



A young conference attendee models the 20th-anniversary Carolinian Canada t-shirt, October 2004. Limited quantities of the t-shirt are available; email [info@carolinian.org](mailto:info@carolinian.org). (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

## What's Happening at Carolinian Canada?

Carolinian Canada Coalition has been busy. A report was presented at both the fall and spring conferences to update members on current activities. Many sponsors, supporters, volunteers, partner organizations, contract staff and management committee hours have contributed significantly to protecting our unique natural heritage through these accomplishments. A few of the highlights are:

- ◆ The Big Picture Roadshow has reached more than 6,000 people and 60 organizations.
- ◆ A media strategy to promote the Big Picture is resulting in wide-ranging coverage in agriculture, community and daily papers, radio and television.
- ◆ The Natural Heritage Planning Symposium drew more than 120 planners in 2004. Another is planned for this fall. "Restoration Ecology for the Big Picture" proceedings providing "Best Policy" guidelines is due out soon.
- ◆ Lead agencies in 9 Carolinian counties have requested Big Picture GIS data to incorporate into local strategies over the last year. Carolinian Canada is sitting on a number of advisory committees to assess how the Big Picture can best be implemented.
- ◆ New publications include 2 guides, 2 posters and a CD. See page 12 of this newsletter to order copies. In the coming year we will be working on a series of factsheets.



Field trip participants join leader Donald Kirk (middle, with binoculars) on a joint outing to the Grand River with Parks Research Forum of Ontario.

## Parks and Protected Areas and Species and Ecosystems at Risk: Research and Planning Challenges

Carolinian Canada Coalition teamed up with Parks Research Forum of Ontario (PRFO) for a joint spring conference in May 2005 at the University of Guelph. More than 120 people participated in sessions that highlighted the great variety of research happening across the zone by students, universities, parks, NGO's and community groups. A workshop provided the first public appearance of the draft Carolinian Woodland Recovery Strategy, presented by author John Ambrose, and participants brainstormed priorities for parks that will be fed into the strategy. Proceedings for this conference will be available later this year. Carolinian Canada Coalition would like to recognize the excellent and tireless work of PRFO in organizing this event.



Blanding's Turtle, a threatened species in Ontario, was observed on the Spottiswood Lakes field trip in May 2005. This is the first record in close to 20 years for Blanding's Turtle at this Carolinian Canada Signature Site. (Photo by Paul Armstrong)

## Forging Ahead: A New Structure for CCC

Carolinian Canada Coalition is reorganizing – we are entering a process to become incorporated, requiring a formal board structure, a proposal presented by chair Gordon Nelson at the 2005 AGM. For a copy of the proposal, contact our office. This process will be paralleled by the development of a 5-year strategy for the Coalition. Look for details of both in future newsletters. Any individuals or groups that would like input should contact the Carolinian Canada office at (519) 433-7077.

Welcome to Lorraine Johnson as the new Carolinian Canada Newsletter Editor. Lorraine is a well-known author of native plant gardening books and Carolinian Canada's new Signature Sites guide. Lorraine is currently working on a major book on Carolinian Canada due out in 2006. Please send ideas, photos and submissions for the newsletter to [newsletter@carolinian.org](mailto:newsletter@carolinian.org).

# Clear Creek Forest Success



Clear Creek Forest's largest American Beech is thought to be approximately 300 years old. (Photo courtesy NCC)

The "hole in the donut" has been secured, completing the Nature Conservancy of Canada's ambitious acquisitions strategy for the Clear Creek Forest Nature Reserve, located approximately 20 km east of Chatham. In March 2004, NCC purchased the last 150 acres of unprotected land in the heart of Clear Creek Forest, bringing the total to 1,000 acres and linking high-quality interior forest habitat with Lake Erie.

"Over the past 5 years we have managed to purchase 1,000 acres, creating the third largest protected area in southwestern Ontario and the largest site protecting and restoring deciduous forest," says James Duncan, NCC's Southwestern Ontario Program Manager. "We have pioneered 'pit and mound' restoration, found many new species of flora and fauna and rallied thousands of individuals in support of this project."

Clear Creek Forest Nature Reserve provides habitat for several species at risk, including the endangered Acadian Flycatcher, the Red-headed Woodpecker, the Southern Flying Squirrel, and what is believed to be Ontario's largest living American

Beech tree. Through partnership with organizations such as Ontario Parks and the federal government's Habitat Stewardship Program, NCC is able to plan a long-term conservation legacy for the forest. [See the article on page 9 for information about Ontario Parks' planning process for the site.]

To achieve this great conservation success in the Carolinian zone, NCC and partners have raised more than \$2.4 million for the Clear Creek Forest. Under NCC's long-term partnership with Ontario Parks, the forest will be managed as a proposed Nature Reserve Class Provincial Park, the highest level of protection in the parks system.

For information on NCC, visit [www.natureconservancy.ca](http://www.natureconservancy.ca).

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## Jackson Gunn Old-Growth Forest

By Long Point Basin Land Trust

The Long Point Basin Land Trust is pleased to announce that it has recently negotiated the purchase of one of the most spectacular old-growth forests remaining in southern Ontario.

The Jackson Gunn Old-Growth Forest is an American Beech/Sugar Maple community comprised of many trees that are older than 280 years. The site has never been cleared and only the dead fall has been removed. This amazing piece of history looks today as it did 600 years ago. The towering maples and beeches are scarred and crooked, the veterans of numerous icestorms and windstorms.

Situated in Norfolk County, the forest is recognized as the best piece of old-growth in Norfolk County. The forest is home to numerous birds and a diverse flora. Red-headed Woodpeckers search the lower branches of the canopy, Wood Ducks watch from their nest cavities and Bald Eagles nest in the forest. Many cavity-dwelling fauna over-winter in the giant tree hollows including Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, Big Brown and Eastern Pipistrelle bats.

The Long Point Basin Land Trust will manage the site to protect the magnificent trees and associated species. The Trust's advisory team, comprised of experts in the fields of biology, ecology, restoration ecology and botany, will develop a strategy to ensure the health and longevity of the site.

The overall cost to preserve this site is \$268,290 and fundraising has reached the \$205,000 mark. Tax receipts will be issued for all donations, and donors will be appropriately recognized. To donate or for more information, please contact LPBLT, P.O. Box 468, Port Rowan, Ontario N0E 1M0; 519-586-8309; [general@LPBLT.on.ca](mailto:general@LPBLT.on.ca).

# Ancient Cedars and Rock Climbers Coexist

By Hassaan Basit,  
Watershed Communications Specialist,  
Conservation Halton



Conservation Halton's parks along the Niagara Escarpment are home to some of the oldest trees in eastern North America and provide excellent opportunities for rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country and alpine skiing, boating, swimming and fishing. The challenge of balancing recreation with the protection of the natural environment has been met head on by Conservation Halton. Innovative policies and initiatives are helping to protect the fragile ecosystem of the Niagara Escarpment while allowing nature enthusiasts to discover and enjoy the beauty of this ancient landform.

The Niagara Escarpment is home to extensive Carolinian forests with truly remarkable species. Among those reported at Rattlesnake Point and the Nassagaweya Canyon are the Small-flowered Leafcup, Burning Bush and Yellow False-foxglove. In addition to Carolinian species, ancient gnarled Eastern White Cedars also grow on the scarp face. Despite their age (some can be up to 1,800 years old!), these ancient specimens are actually quite small—a 50-year-old tree may be only 1 cm in diameter. These mighty cedars are packed with crucial climatic and air-quality information about our environment, making them a valuable source of data on our environmental history.



Conservation Halton, a community-based environmental agency, works with rock-climbing groups to ensure that recreational activities don't harm the fragile cedar communities on the escarpment's cliff face.

(Photo courtesy of Conservation Halton)



The Niagara Escarpment is a dramatic landform that is home to many rare Carolinian species along with ancient gnarled Eastern White Cedars that grow on the cliff faces. The young cedar (above) was planted by Conservation Halton as part of its effort to rehabilitate the edge of the escarpment.  
(Photo courtesy of Conservation Halton)

The ancient Eastern White Cedars are found primarily at three Conservation Halton areas: Mount Nemo, Rattlesnake Point and Kelso Conservation Areas. All three parks offer challenging rock-climbing routes, with names such as Devil's Staircase, Butter Fingers, Bloody Mess and Creepy Crawly. As more people discover the joy and challenge of rock climbing, protection of the ancient cedars and other tree species is vital.

New cedars germinate in cliff ledges and crevices where soil accumulates. When climbers use these ledges and crevices, they disturb the seeds and seedlings, preventing future generations from becoming established. Repeated use of trees as hand- and footholds can also cause damage, sometimes resulting in the trees' demise.

It is for these reasons that Conservation Halton is engaging rock-climbing groups in its efforts to promote enjoyment of activities along the escarpment while practising responsible conservation. Among these groups is the Ontario Division of the Alpine Club of Canada. The Alpine Club recently helped plant 600 Eastern White Cedars along Mount Nemo's cliff face as part of a brow rehabilitation initiative funded by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Conservation Halton is in the process of investigating the possibility of installing anchors and bolts along the escarpment brow at designated climbing routes within Rattlesnake Point. "Our objective would be to eventually eliminate the use of trees altogether as anchors in this park," says Ron Kindt, park manager for Rattlesnake Point and Mount Nemo. No new routes will be developed or opened in any of the Conservation Halton parks. In addition, signage throughout the parks informs visitors of the significance and vulnerability of the flora and fauna, and clearly marked trails, boardwalks and cliff staircases provide controlled access to park features.

By having forest-friendly rock-climbing policies in place, and by educating park visitors about the historic and natural significance of these trees, Conservation Halton is removing the negative impact of intense climbing on the health of this unique and valuable cedar community—one of the oldest forests in eastern Ontario.

# Thunderbird Quilt Winner!



Cheryl McLean (right) receives the Thunderbird Quilt.

Cheryl McLean of Dorchester was the lucky winner of a Thunderbird Quilt generously donated by the Walpole Island Heritage Centre to the Carolinian Canada fundraising draw.

The Thunderbird Quilt was made in three days in spring 2004 by the creative team of Willie "Rennie" (Mii scut ta maa – Ojibwe for Storm Coming) and Cindy (Maan da qua – Ojibwe for Pretty Woman) Shipman from the Walpole Island First Nation. (They welcome orders for quilts and blankets including any specific design desired.)

The Thunderbird represents the message that we share each day with others. The quilt also includes four coloured ribbons that signify four traditional teachings. The white ribbon represents the north direction and healing; the yellow ribbon represents the east direction and vision; the red ribbon represents the south direction and strength; and the black ribbon represents the west direction and relationships.

Cheryl said that the quilt will take a very special place in her home and will also represent to her the importance of protecting our environment.

Thank-you to Walpole Island Heritage Centre and the many ticket buyers for your support!

# Carolinian Canada Has its Say



By Heather Webb, Chair, Public Policy Subcommittee

In May 2004, Carolinian Canada resurrected its public policy subcommittee and was promptly hit with a deluge of public consultations. The subcommittee's job is to monitor, analyse and comment on government initiatives that could impact the natural heritage of the Carolinian eco-region. And last year the Province went to town, holding one consultation after another.

It all started with the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt and a

# Pelee's Savanna Walk

By Julia Thomas,  
Senior Interpreter, Point Pelee National Park

Visitors to Point Pelee National Park can now explore red cedar savanna habitat while strolling along a paved walkway in front of the Visitor Centre. Interpretive signs along the path describe species at risk found in the park, emphasizing the fact that 25% of these depend on red cedar savanna habitat to survive. The endangered Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus is highlighted in the display, since Point Pelee is one of only two locations in Canada where it grows naturally.

The area in front of the Visitor Centre had previously been maintained as a manicured lawn but is now a showcase for a variety of native plants.

For more information about Point Pelee National Park, see [www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/on/pelee](http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-np/on/pelee).



(Photo courtesy of Point Pelee National Park)

discussion paper outlining a proposed approach to protecting a permanent greenbelt in the Golden Horseshoe area. Then there was the "Rural Plan" for protecting the character of southern Ontario's rural areas. Then amendments to the provincial Permit to Take Water Program, then new source water protection legislation, then a review of the Parks Act, Conservation Lands Act and Wilderness Areas Act. And then back to the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt, but this time commenting on legislation – a proposed Greenbelt Act.

Members of the public policy subcommittee have strategized, debated, wondered, puzzled and, when needed, sought and received help from others. We've attended meetings, taken notes and written letters. And we hope that our work will help improve the ecological prospects for this tiny sliver of Canada.

# Park Management Planning within the Carolinian Zone



By Tim Marchand,  
Assistant Park Planner, Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone

Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone, has begun park management planning for two protected areas within the Carolinian zone: Komoka Provincial Park and Clear Creek Forest. Komoka Provincial Park is located along the scenic shores of the Thames River and straddles the municipal boundaries of the Township of Middlesex-Centre and the City of London. The flora of this unique area consists of Carolinian forest, western prairie and northern boreal elements, which provide an important wildlife migration corridor. Komoka Provincial Park protects a large portion of the provincially significant Komoka Park Reserve and Adjacent Lands Life Science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) and the provincially significant Komoka Provincial Park Earth Science ANSI.

Clear Creek Forest is located in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, crossing Talbot Trail (Chatham-Kent Road 3, formerly Talbot Road) at Clearville. The site is comprised of primary hardwood forest communities, secondary upland forests, cultural meadows, cultural thicket and cropped fields, and is the largest woodland component of the provincially significant Kent-Elgin Shoreline Life Science ANSI. As part of the Ontario Parks Legacy 2000 program, Ontario Parks and The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) worked together to secure this significant natural area to then be regulated and managed as a provincial nature reserve.

For these two protected areas, the park management planning process has been divided into four stages: 1) Invitation to Participate/Terms of Reference; 2) Background Information;

3) Preliminary Park Management Plan; 4) Recommended Park Management Plan. Work is currently underway to prepare both the Komoka and Clear Creek Forest Preliminary Park Management Plans. It is anticipated that the preliminary plans will be available to the public for review and comment in the summer of 2005.

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Komoka Provincial Park is situated along the Thames River, which is designated as a Canadian Heritage River.  
(Photo by Tim Marchand)

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Public consultation is a very important component of the planning process. If you are not already on the project mailing list for Komoka and/or Clear Creek Forest, and wish to be, please

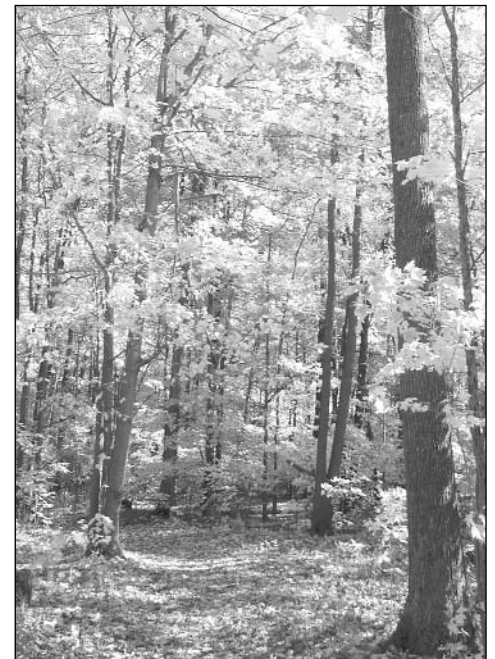
contact Tim Marchand, Assistant Park Planner, Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone, 659 Exeter Road, London, Ontario N6E 1L3; phone (519) 873-4618; fax (519) 873-4645; email: [tim.marchand@mnr.gov.on.ca](mailto:tim.marchand@mnr.gov.on.ca).

For additional information pertaining to the Clear Creek Forest management planning process, visit:  
[http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/clea\\_planning.html](http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/clea_planning.html).  
For additional information on the Komoka Provincial Park management planning process, visit:  
[http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/komo\\_planning.html](http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/komo_planning.html).

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Komoka Provincial Park protects a number of species at risk.  
(Photo courtesy of Ontario Parks)

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# Species @ Risk

By Heather Webb,  
Conservation & Science Coordinator, Ontario Nature

## Mudpuppy Mussel

*Simpsonaias ambigua*

Status: Endangered (COSEWIC)\*

It's not cute, it's not commercially valuable and at times it's even a parasite. But the Mudpuppy Mussel is an important indicator species, an aquatic "canary in the coal mine" if you will. Its filter-feeding habits make it highly sensitive to environmental change, and its Canadian range is very small – only a 50 km stretch of the Sydenham River.

The Mudpuppy Mussel belongs to the family Unionidae, which reproduces quite differently from other molluscs. Female Unionids brood their eggs in special gill pouches called marsupia (think of marsupials such as kangaroos and opossums). The eggs are fertilized with sperm brought by the current from males upstream. In the marsupia, fertilized eggs develop into embryos called glochidia (pronounced "glaw-KID-ee-ah"), which are then expelled by the female. Glochidia are parasitic and must find a host within 24 hours to survive.



Mudpuppy Mussels (right) grow to approximately 5 cm in length and have a thin, smooth, tan to brown, unmarked shell. On the left is a Snuffbox. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

Mudpuppy Mussel glochidia are unique: while other glochidia parasitize fish, those of the Mudpuppy Mussel parasitize – you guessed it – the Mudpuppy (*Necturus maculosus*), an amphibian. The Mudpuppy Mussel lives under rocks in clean, fast-flowing waters, favoured habitat of its Mudpuppy host. Glochidia use tiny hooks to attach to a Mudpuppy's gills, where they complete their development. After a period of hours to weeks depending on water temperature, the juvenile mussels drop off the host to continue growing.

Mudpuppy Mussels are disappearing. Possible threats to their survival include habitat loss and the invasive Zebra Mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*). Siltation, however, is thought by many

to be the primary cause of their decline. Siltation refers to the "muddying" of water and is caused by soil erosion. The mussel feeds with its gills – it uses them to sort through particles filtered from the current, keeping the food and rejecting the rest. Too much sediment in the water overwhelms the gills. They become clogged, making it more difficult for the mussel to find food and expel waste. The impact on feeding affects reproduction. This is why the Mudpuppy Mussel is a good indicator species: declining populations warn that water quality is deteriorating.

The Mudpuppy Mussel shares the Sydenham River with seven other endangered mussel species. So the Sydenham River Recovery Team is taking an ecosystem approach to recovery, working to restore all local species at risk by restoring their habitat.

To find out more about the Mudpuppy Mussel, check out the following links:

Sydenham River Recovery Team at [www.sydenhamriver.on.ca](http://www.sydenhamriver.on.ca) and Species at Risk (Environment Canada) at [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca).

\*Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada

## Mussel Lore

- ◆ The people of Nauru in Micronesia believed that "Ancient Spider" Areop-Enap formed the sky and earth from the two halves of a mussel shell.
- ◆ In the Strauss opera *The Egyptian Helen*, King Menelaus prepares to kill his wife Helen, for her adultery with Paris that caused the Trojan War. A "mysterious Mussel" informs the Egyptian sorceress Aithra of the plot. Aithra works her magic, and saves Helen's life.



Al Dextrase (left) and Shawn Staton are Co-chairs of the Sydenham River Recovery Team. (Photo by Michelle Kanter)

## News & Events

**Mathis Natvik's habitat-restoration tours** are always popular events, and this summer his offerings include rare Carolinian trees (June 18, 10am-5pm, \$10) and tallgrass prairie (July 23, 1pm-5pm and August 24, 1pm-5pm, \$10). All tours start at Natvik's nursery, Orford Ridges Native Plants, near Highgate. To sign up, call (519) 678-3866 or email: [mnatvik@netrover.com](mailto:mnatvik@netrover.com).

**Volunteer for Nature** is a partnership between Ontario Nature and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) which offers hands-on learning experiences in stewardship and restoration at various natural areas throughout Ontario. Events in the Carolinian zone this summer include:

- ◆ **Invasion at Turkey Point** (June 4), invasive species removal;
- ◆ **Into the Wild Blue** (June 24), enhancing habitat for rare savanna plants such as Wild Lupine at Turkey Point;
- ◆ **S.O.S. Savanna** (July 23-29), removing invasive species and exploring rare habitats on Pelee Island;
- ◆ **Jewels of the Sky** (July 29-31), participating in the Butterfly and Dragonfly Count on Pelee Island.

Have you ever wondered how to tell the difference between a Pimpleback and a Purple Wartyback? A Fat Mucket and a Mucket? **The Ontario Freshwater Mussel Identification Workshop**, being held at the Canadian Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington, June 21-22, will provide an introduction to Ontario's freshwater mussels.

For information, contact Todd Morris at: [morrist@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:morrist@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

**The Nature Conservancy of Canada has opened a Southwestern Ontario Program office** at Grosvenor Lodge in London. The new office enables NCC staff to work more closely with local conservation partners in the Carolinian zone and spend more time in the field. The new address is Grosvenor Lodge, 1017 Western Road, London, Ontario N6G 1G5; (519) 640-6816.

**Ontario Nature** recently hired a new **Executive Director, Babak Abbaszadeh**, to lead the organization and its numerous campaigns, including a protected network of woodlands and waterways across Ontario. Babak Abbaszadeh holds a masters of environmental studies from York University, has a background in business, municipal planning and community volunteerism, and worked most recently as senior policy advisor in the office of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Three new funding programs providing grants to community groups and municipalities working to restore public lands are available from Evergreen. **The Home Depot-Evergreen Rebuilding Nature Grant** offers \$5,000 grants for urban stewardship projects, including habitat restoration and community gardens. In partnership with Wal-Mart Canada, Evergreen also offers \$10,000 **Green Grants** to local groups working on urban naturalization projects. And the **Unilever-Evergreen Aquatic Stewardship Grant** provides between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to support a range of small-scale, community-driven partnership projects including wetland, riparian and littoral zone restoration. For more information, visit: [www.evergreen.ca/en/cg/cg-funding.html](http://www.evergreen.ca/en/cg/cg-funding.html).

## Saving Paradise

Mississauga-based textile artist Lorraine Roy, a life-long lover of trees, has knitted together her interest in science and nature with art, creating an exhibition of wallhangings and accompanying book that celebrate rare Carolinian trees.

"When I learned about the Living Gene Bank at the University of Guelph Arboretum, an ongoing program to preserve 17 rare and endangered Carolinian trees, I was motivated to develop an exhibition," says Roy. "It was the beginning of a four-year commitment that started with a year of research, including many hours at the Arboretum in all seasons recording twigs, leaves, flowers, seeds and fall colour. This was followed by another year to design and make the wallhangings."

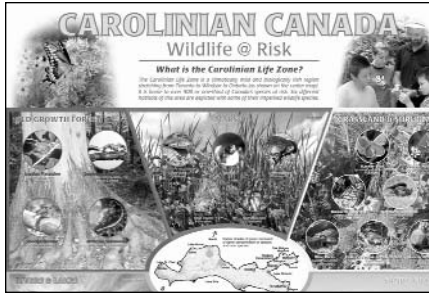
The resulting exhibition, *Saving Paradise*, toured to 10 locations in Ontario throughout 2003 and 2004. The entire *Saving Paradise* exhibition and the book can be viewed on Roy's website, [www.Lroytextileart.com](http://www.Lroytextileart.com).



Lorraine Roy's exhibition of wallhangings featuring trees such as the Sycamore (left) reached 2,500 people and raised awareness about Carolinian species.

### Thinking Big 2004 Digital Proceedings from our 20th Anniversary Conference.

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- ◆ Tools for Big Picture Thinking
- ◆ People Power for Conservation with Multi-media presentations
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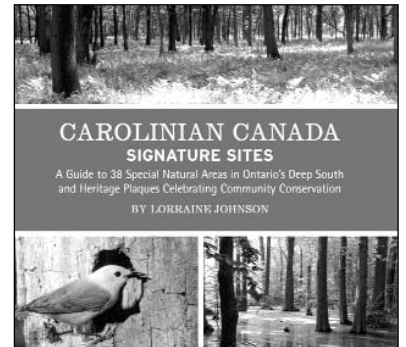


### Species @ Risk In Carolinian Canada & How to Help 47-page booklet & 2 Full Colour Posters

Introducing our most imperiled wild species and plant communities, these materials are packed with How-to-Help stewardship information for landowners, gardeners, planners, decision-makers, community groups, conservation programs, students and anyone interested in wildlife, plants and nature.

### Carolinian Canada Signature Sites

80-page full-colour guide to 38 Special Natural Areas in Ontario's Deep South and Heritage Plaques Celebrating Community Conservation, authored by Lorraine Johnson. Travel through the Carolinian life zone to explore our best remaining critical habitats and meet the people who are protecting this significant heritage.



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