



THE HERON

APRIL 2011

Newsletter of the York-Simcoe Naturalists
a member of Ontario Nature



Club News

Club Meetings

Date: **Tues. Apr. 12**, 7:30 p.m.
Bring-a-Friend Night
Speaker: Hazel Wheeler, Trent University
Topic: Chimney Swifts

Date: **Tues. May 10**, 7:30 p.m.
AGM and Elections
Speaker: Kathy Boles, Lotek Wireless
Topic: Brown Hyena Research in South Africa

Date: **Tues. June 14**, 7:30 p.m.
Bring-a-Family Night
Topic: Special outdoor meeting and hike
Place: TBA

Club meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every month. All are welcome to attend, and admission is free. Join us at the River Drive Park Community Centre, 20 Oak Avenue, off Queensville Sideroad.

YSN Executive Committee 2010/2011

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Paul Barker | President |
| • Lori McLean | Past President |
| • Julie and Ross Riley | Vice-Presidents/Website |
| • Catherine Preston | Recording Secretary |
| • Sharon Hamilton | Membership Secretary |
| • Linda Gilkes | Treasurer/Archivist |
| • Sylvia Bowman | Conservation Director |
| • Mike van den Tillaart | Speakers/Stewardship |
| • Valerie Liney | Publicity |
| • Jeanne Beneteau | Social Convenor |
| • Janet Thompson | Newsletter |

Presidential Address

By Paul Barker

Welcome to the April Newsletter. There's a lot going on over the next while. Sooooo, deep breath, here we go. I will be leading **bird walks** on Sundays in April and May, and Ron Fleming will be leading a walk on Apr. 30 as well as offering some evening hikes in May at the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve, if there is interest. Read more in the Outings section.

With the mentioning of May, I'd like to add it's almost election time. There is some concern about the candidates for the positions to be filled, namely selecting a new President. Oh sorry, not that election, the **YSN Executive Directors election**. We would like each of you to seriously think about joining the executive board in some form or another for the May election at next month's Annual General Meeting. It may be a volunteer position but don't let that fool you. The contribution that you can make is very rewarding. I've enjoyed my tenure as President of the York-Simcoe Naturalists. That being said, I wish to say thank you for letting me fill that position, but my schedule over the next year does not leave me any time to be of value to the club. That does not get me out of it though. I will then have the boots of the Past President to fill. It'll be difficult but maybe I can get the past Past President to help.

Why not now talk about that other election. PLEASE don't waste your vote! So many people, in this country, waste votes; approximately 70% of the eligible population. Each and every vote does count. I can't explain it but I do believe it. My vote never gets my choice in, but I still vote at each and every election. If the 70% did vote, I'm certain we'd have a much different representation across the board and maybe not so many elections at taxpayers' expense.

That's all I've got. I'm out of breath and I have to get up early so off to bed. Read on in the newsletter for the rest of the goings on. Happy Spring.

Birding

Birding Hike, Sun. Apr. 17

By Paul Barker

I will be leading bird walks on Sundays in April and May, starting Sun. Apr. 17, meeting at Roger's Reservoir for 6:55 a.m. It seems early but the birds will be up long before that, eaten, showered and ready for us to witness their show. It'll be over by 9:00 so we need to be there early.

We'll do the walks every Sunday morning until the birds have found their mates, made their nests and no longer want us around while trying to raise their young.

Suggestions for locations are welcome.

Birding Hike, Sat. Apr. 30

By Ron Fleming

Mike van den Tillaart and I will be leading a local birding hike at Seneca College in King City and a subsequent visit to the Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve on Sat. Apr. 30, open to all. Meeting place will be at the ORTA (Oak Ridges Trail Association) stile on Keele Street in north King City. There is a gravel shoulder which can accommodate about three cars on each side of the road. This is about 1 km north of the road entrance to Mary Lake. Time frame: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

I would also be interested in leading a few late afternoon hikes (e.g., 5:00-7:00 or 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.) at the Cawthra Mulock reserve in May, but only if there was sufficient interest.



Ron and Mike leading a hike at the reserve.
(We promise the snow will be gone by May.)

Photo by Linda Gilkes

Hawks Mating in My Yard

By Sylvia Bowman; photos by Allan Bowman

On Apr. 6, Sylvia and Al spotted this pair on their property on Second Concession in Holland Landing. The female waited at their bird feeder for three hours.



"Female Cooper's Hawks are markedly larger and heavier than males. Size dimorphism in raptors allows a mated pair to exploit a greater size-range of prey items."

– ROM Field Guide to Birds of Ontario



Finally a male came along.



His visit was brief but successful ... we think.

(Photo of mating in progress available but omitted here in the interests of discretion.)

Native Plant Gardening

“Native plants provide food and habitat for birds, butterflies and other desirable wildlife. They thrive without fertilizer, pesticides or supplemental watering. Add just a few or transform your whole yard into a bountiful wildlife oasis.” -- NANPS

North American Native Plant Society (NANPS) Wildflower Sale, Sat. May 7

Markham Civic Centre
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
www.nanps.org

Plant Sale

Wildflowers, shrubs, trees, ferns, vines, grasses, sedges – “great selection in one location”
Advance orders available online by Sun. Apr. 17

Book Sale

Books for sale on location and online

Free Presentations

11:00 a.m. Vicky Beard
“Making It Work: How to Create
Pollinator Habitat in Your City”
12:00 p.m. Colleen Cirillo
“Invasive Garden Plants”

Master Gardeners

Valerie Liney and other Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your questions



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

Photo by Valerie Liney

For photos of some native shrubs you might like to try, please see p. 8.

Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) Backyard Tree Planting Program

Native trees and shrubs delivered to your door!
www.yourleaf.org/backyard-tree-planting-program

Southern and Central York Region (including Aurora and Newmarket)

Full Service Backyard Tree Planting Program

- Native trees (5 to 8 feet) \$100-\$200 each
Price includes a site consultation in your yard with a certified arborist, delivery and full planting service. You first need to complete a questionnaire online, after which they will contact you to book a consultation.
- Native shrubs \$25 each
Price includes delivery and mulch; planting is \$20 extra per shrub. No site consultation is required, but one may be requested for an extra \$75. View their selection online and place an order. Spring deliveries begin in April and continue through May.

Northern York Region

(including East Gwillimbury and Georgina)

Do-It-Yourself Backyard Tree Planting Program

- You need to complete a workshop and questionnaire online, then LEAF will provide advice by e-mail on your order.
- Available for pick-up Sat. May 28
Newmarket Main Street Farmers' Market
corner of Timothy and Doug Duncan Drive
Native small trees (3 to 5 feet) \$25-\$35 each
Native shrubs \$20 each
- Available for delivery
Native large trees (5 to 8 feet) \$100-\$150 each
Native shrubs \$25 each
prices include delivery and mulch; planting n/a
minimum \$100 order

Native Garden Kit: Butterflies

Native Garden Kit: Songbirds

- Pre-selected assortment of native perennials and shrubs delivered right to your door, along with plans to assist you with garden design and planting.
- Available under both programs above.
- Small (18 perennials, 2 shrubs) \$125
- Large (36 perennials, 4 shrubs) \$235

Butterfly Garden at Clearmeadow Public School, Newmarket

By Julie Riley

The butterfly garden at Clearmeadow Public School was started in 2006 by Peter Wukasch, a member of York-Simcoe Naturalists and a teacher at Clearmeadow. David Tomlinson designed and planned the garden, and Sharon and Roy Hamilton rototilled the garden plot.

During our short interview last October, Peter said that the garden was not manicured as some people would like it, but that it was attracting birds and some butterflies; such as Sulphur, Painted Lady and an occasional Monarch. Plants in the garden are Goldenrod, Milkweed, Butterfly Bushes and Dogwood. The students were planting bulbs for next year.

The relatively rare Clay-colored Sparrow has been seen in the garden. There are also bird feeders and boxes in the school yard, and a Tree Swallow has made a nest at the front door of the school.

Peter said he had done an insect safari in the garden at the school with some students and the Earth Club has been mulching the gardens.

I asked Peter to forward any photos he had of the garden. He then had the idea that perhaps the photography club at the school would do that as a project.

It sounds as if our support of the butterfly garden is paying some good dividends.

Hiking

Town of East Gwillimbury Trails Committee

Walks held second Saturday of every month

Date: **Sat. Apr. 23**, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
 Place: **Easter Egg Hunt** – Nokiidaa Trail
 Meet: Green Lane parking lot
Admission is free for this event, but registration is a must. To register, visit www.eastgwillimbury.ca

Date: **Sat. May 14**, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
 Place: Metropolitan Radial Line
 Meet: Rogers Reservoir parking lot
 Green Lane east of Second Concession

York Regional Forest

Walks held monthly

Date: **Sat. Apr. 30**, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
 Place: North Tract, 17054 Hwy 48
 Theme: **“Spring Forest Festival”**

“Celebrate spring by planting trees. Learn how members of the York Regional Forest Advisory Team help us manage the forest. Identify tree species or understand how to manage your own woodlot. Hike with an expert Birder at 11 a.m. or 1 p.m. to learn about our feathered friends in the forest. Watch a horse logging demo and enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride through the forest. Take home a tree seedling to plant. Don’t forget to bring your work gloves and shovel!”

Date: **Sat. May 14**, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
 Place: Hollidge Tract, 16389 Hwy 48
 Theme: **“Aboriginal Ways of Knowing”**

“Western science is blended with First Nations’ cultural knowledge on this hike. Learn about Ontario Species at Risk, protection and restoration of natural areas and First Nations Traditional teachings.”



Unidentified flying object on Black-eyed Susan.

Photo by Janet Thompson

Cawthra Mulock Nature Reserve

Located at Bathurst Street and Miller's Sideroad, the reserve has been under the stewardship of YSN since February 2007. It is open to the public.

Cawthra Mulock Stream and Wetland Restoration Initiative

By Heather Lorimer, Ontario Streams



Excerpt from the Ontario Streams application for funds from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (continued from previous issue):

This project will involve a wetland evaluation component. With support from volunteers and wetland vegetation field guides, York-Simcoe Naturalists and Ontario Streams will conduct a **full vegetation inventory** of the historical wetland area turned agricultural field, to assess soil conditions and wettest locations of the area.

In addition, **four piezometers will be installed** in varying locations on the wetland site to record soil characteristics and moisture levels. Tile drains have already been taken out of the field and will provide a good start for assessing soil moisture levels.

Together, the vegetation inventory and piezometer data will present a basis for wetland regeneration in upcoming field seasons.

Future plans for regeneration following the evaluation of data collected include the **hand-construction of berms** that will help store water naturally and support the planting of wetland grasses, shrubs, and trees. Berms will improve habitat for wetland flora and fauna and restore pre-existing natural wetland conditions.

Conservation News

By Sylvia Bowman

March has been a very busy month with lots of activity on many fronts.

Oak Ridges Moraine

On Mar. 21 I attended an event held by Save the Oak Ridges Moraine (STORM) Coalition and Windfall Ecology Centre called "A Toast to the Oak Ridges Moraine" to celebrate Canadian Water Week and introduce STORM's "The Moraine for 2015 Campaign". In 2015 the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan will be up for review. To raise awareness of the need to further protect the moraine, they are asking people to sign a pledge to be part of the 2015 campaign. There will be sign-up cards at our April general meeting.

There is plenty of room for improvement in the plan to protect the source waters on the moraine. One of the most urgent threats is the issue of commercial fill operations. To raise awareness of this issue, I made a presentation to the East Gwillimbury council on Mar. 7. The Lakeridge Citizens for Clean Water, who are dealing with a contaminated fill issue near Port Perry, also made a presentation on the top 10 issues of commercial fill operations. Before revising their fill bylaw, the town plans to hold a workshop on this issue in which we will be able to participate. We are still awaiting answers to some of the questions we have asked the town about the fill operation in Holt.

To raise the awareness of Mount Albert-area citizens to this issue, YSN and STORM are holding a joint education and information meeting on Mon. Apr. 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the Mount Albert Community Centre at 53 Main St. in Mount Albert. We hope to see some of you there.

On Mar. 30 I attended a workshop on planning for the 2015 review of the moraine. Front and centre at the workshop were several groups with responsibility for different aspects of the Moraine. The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation was established by legislation when the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan was enacted. The Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA) looks after the trail system. The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust

aims to preserve land on the moraine through acquisition of land and easements. The groups who were active in lobbying for the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act have now become the STORM Coalition. Some of the environmental groups attending were Ontario Nature, as well as provincial government departments such as the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The plan is for the groups to work together to submit to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), the ministry responsible for the Act, suggestions for improvements to the plan.

Please visit www.stormcoalition.org

Holland Landing Conservation Area and Holland Landing Prairie Reserve

On Mar. 26, along with Janet Thompson and Lorrie Mackness from our club, I attended a workshop on the future of the Holland Landing Conservation Area, which is the first conservation area obtained by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA). This 20-acre (8 hectare) property is interesting because it borders on the town's Anchor Park on its west side and is close to the south boundary of the provincial Holland Landing Prairie Reserve. It is good to see that the town, the conservation authority and the provincial parks department are all working together. They have formed a steering committee to coordinate plans for all three areas.

The workshop was co-hosted by Bill Thompson and Brian Kemp of LSRCA. The public was able to give input on what they saw as priorities for the park, such as types of trails, dealing with the problems of motorized vehicles, off-leash dogs and dog waste, need to educate the public and signage. Whether to fence or not to fence was also discussed. Many people expressed the desire that there might be opportunities to enlarge the park by obtaining adjacent private lands.

An open house on the preliminary management plan for the Holland Landing Prairie Reserve will be held on Tues. Apr. 19 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the River Drive Park Community Centre. The plan

can be viewed at the town offices, at the Holland Landing Library and on the town's website.

Please visit www.eastwillimbury.ca

Ontario Nature Regional Meetings and AGM

The Huronia Regional Meeting will be held on Sat. May 14 in Bancroft. Ontario Nature has applied for a capacity-building grant to help local clubs. We wrote a letter supporting the grant application. How this grant can be used to help clubs will be one of the topics at the regional meeting. The outing for this meeting is a trip to a local fish hatchery.

Please consider joining me if you can. The regional meetings are a great way to learn more about how we as a local club connect to other clubs and the wider focus of our provincial parent, Ontario Nature.

Ontario Nature's AGM this year will be held on the weekend of June 10 to 12 at the Ganaraska Forest Centre. Please visit Ontario Nature's website for details and costs.

Please visit www.ontarionature.org

York Region Environmental Alliance (YREA)

I will also be attending Ontario Nature's Lake Ontario North Regional Meeting on Sat. Apr. 16 in Peterborough as the representative for YREA, as they are also a member of Ontario Nature. You are welcome to attend this regional meeting as well.

YREA held its AGM on Feb. 26. Plans for 2011 include initiating a large project, bringing industrial hemp to York Region. This would be a multi-year project. Hemp is a very sustainable crop with many uses that has a much smaller ecological footprint than cotton for instance. The Ontario Trillium Foundation is interested in funding the development phase of this project.

YREA is also working on a clean water project, reducing gas equipment use, attending community events to raise awareness of environmental issues and Year 2 of the "Shop Like the Planet's Watching" campaign.

Please visit www.yrea.org

Lake Huron Watershed

On Mar. 31 I attended a workshop in Barrie called “Connecting Land and Lake Conservation”, a Lake Huron Workshop hosted by the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. Included were several federal and provincial government departments as well as many non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

At the international level, a report has been produced called *The Sweetwater Sea: Strategies for Conserving Lake Huron Biodiversity*. It rated the health of many factors in the Lake Huron watershed. It outlined five broad strategy areas and the threats that need attention in each area. The Lake Simcoe watershed is but a small part of this larger one. Because Lake Simcoe has its own separate protection act, it was not the area of focus.

The focus of this workshop was the work done for the report *Lake Huron--Georgian Bay Watershed: A Canadian Framework for Community Action*. There were presentations about some of the projects that groups have done on the lake by Ducks Unlimited, the Community Stream Steward Program, and the Couchiching Conservancy on their work to save Scout Valley in Orillia. I have visited this area at one of Ontario Nature’s regional meetings. The rest of the day we broke into groups by regions around the lake and looked at what projects should have the highest priority.

There will be a few copies of the report at the general meeting and both reports will have links on our website.

For the international report, please visit
<http://lakehuron.on.ca>

For the Canadian report, please visit
www.lakehuroncommunityaction.ca

Our Water, Our Future

York Region finally released its report on the region’s Long-Term Water Conservation Strategy. It came out of two workshops I attended last fall. It was rather vague and disappointing. A lot of the things discussed at the workshops did not appear in this document. There is a website where it can be viewed and a place for comments.

Please visit www.openwater.ca

Scanlon Creek Revitalization Committee

There was a meeting on Mar. 23. Here are some upcoming events at the Scanlon Creek Conservation Area in Bradford.

- Sat. May 14: “Essence of Scanlon Creek” Art Contest, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is the Basic Digital Camera Workshop with Peter Burtch from LSRCA. You will need to pre-register and there will be charge of approximately \$30 including lunch. You can visit the LSRCA website closer to the date for more details.
- Sat. June 4: Mayor’s Hike for Health
- Sat. June 25: Target date for the grand opening of the Discovery Play Garden. More details later on this event.

Please visit

www.lsrca.on.ca/Foundation/events.html

Maskinonge River Revitalization Project (MRRP)

The second phase of the Lower Maskinonge River shoreline project has begun on several properties including a marina. Sat. Apr. 30 is the date for the community planting of the properties. Some of the plants to be used in the planting need to be dug up from an old nursery in Keswick on the two days before the planting, Thurs. Apr. 28 and Fri. Apr. 29. Volunteers are needed to do this work.

There are plans to do more work on the butterfly garden at Keswick High School as an Earth Day project. Weeds, particularly thistles, were a problem last year and the area needs to be heavily mulched this time.

Please visit

www.lsrca.on.ca/programs/maskinonge.php

Native Shrubs in Mike's Garden

Photos by Janet Thompson



Mike van den Tillaart lives in Newmarket, which has mainly clay soil. He has a large garden full of native shrubs. These photos were taken in August 2010.



Purple-flowering Raspberry -- planted 2008
(one plant!; pink blossoms at left)



Potentilla -- planted 2007



Red-osier Dogwood -- planted 2006



Red Elderberry -- planted 2010
(this has grown almost 2 m from roots only in 2009)



Ninebark -- planted pre-2005



Staghorn Sumac -- planted 2006