

the TaTTler

a newsletter of the

Thames Talbot Land Trust

Working together to leave a legacy of healthy landscapes

Partners for Land Protection 2008

Barry Marles and Shelley Kaufman

In October, TTLT was the local host for the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) and Carolinian Canada *Partners for Land Protection 2008* in London. The conference saw representatives of land trusts, conservation authorities and Provincial ministry staff gather with key partners and supporters of land and habitat conservancy to share their experiences, challenges and successes. TTLT had the opportunity to showcase its own Meadowlily Nature Preserve when a number of hardy individuals braved a wet forecast to participate in a field trip that included seed planting at the “Turf to Trees” test plots.

Presentations such as “Preparing Baseline Documentation Reports” and “Using Aerial Mapping/GIS”, provided information on current technologies and applications. In workshops such as “Starting a Conservation Action Plan” and “Building Partnerships”, facilitators and participants identified the need to develop projects with the broadest impact. By embracing a large scale strategy, or coordinating several smaller initiatives, individual concerns would be self-correcting. Adopting a ‘whole ecology’ approach would also reduce the load on weary volunteers.

Beyond partnering and conservation planning, workshops themed on land transactions and stewardship as well as fundraising, finance and legal addressed core issues central

to the prudent and long term successful implementation of land trust objectives.

Dr. John Howard of London provided the keynote address and spoke of the link between balancing health care and land care — a unique perspective on the value and importance of land health to human health.

A common conference theme was the reminder that trust is a cornerstone of relationship building. Good deeds breed good feelings. By identifying issues, acknowledging local values and needs, establishing strong partnerships, and meeting with and educating the public and landowners, land trusts gain success.



Hon. Donna Cansfield
Minister of Natural Resources

Donna Cansfield, provincial Minister of Natural Resources, underscored the value which governments have come to realize from the strength of the provincial land trust movement. She announced new funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to OLTA. The grant of \$300,800 will support OLTA to implement best practices and meet standards of excellence in the highly technical field of land securement and stewardship.

Partners for Land Protection 2008 provided a valuable opportunity for local individuals to see what TTLT brings to the table and to learn how things are done in other parts of the Province. Overall, the conference provided many sharing and learning opportunities.



Wayne Crowder, TTLT treasurer and magician
(Financial Wizard?)

Joany's Woods—Year in Review

Muriel Allingham

Well, it looks like winter has arrived a little early this year; regardless, it has been an extremely productive year in Joany's Woods. Some monumental tasks were undertaken and despite the rather wet season[s], the work was completed. With the assistance of the stewards, the committee has completed trail identification, boundary markers have been installed and concrete blocks strategically placed to discourage everyone's least favourite intruders—ATVs.



Stewards of Joany's Woods installing trail signs

Muriel Andreae, Don Gordon and Jane Bowles marked and mapped trails, resulting in the positive identification of both the Inch and Ivey trails; named appropriately for the two families paramount in the acquisition of Joany's Woods.

Enthusiastic stewards, including Pete Chapman, Robbie Bloomfield and Klaus Keunecke installed boundary markers at strategic locations throughout the year; thanks guys for your hard work and dedication. Shawn Vernon and Don Gordon worked diligently to install the concrete blocks—not an easy feat considering how wet this year has been.

Blazing trails was done in June and July, hot humid

weather reminiscent of tropical jungles brought out super-sized mosquitoes that gave the adventure an “Apocalypse Now” sensation. Using mud from the trails as repellent to discourage the bloodthirsty attackers, dedicated stewards and committee members forged onwards with loppers and paintbrushes to clear and identify the trails. We now have two loop trails that can be easily identified by visiting hikers, and in the

near future, a brochure will be available to detail points of interest along the trails.

In November, committee members, stewards and their children installed numbered signage to alert hikers of points of interest along the trails. The committee is currently finalizing the design for the new entrance sign, and it will be installed next spring.

To everyone that has endured mosquito bites, cold rain and tired muscles—thanks for your contribution. A better project to work on could not be found.

Best wishes for the New Year.

TTLT Board of Directors 2008 / 2009

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Committees seek Volunteers
You could be part of the solution
Contact “thamestalbot@ttl.ca” or
Call 519 858 3442

Contributors to this issue

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Practical Large Scale Restoration

Bonnie Bergsma

Ecological restoration is an intentional activity to assist in the recovery of an ecosystem for its health, integrity and sustainability. Usually an area to be restored has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed. Mary Gartshore has been practicing ecological restoration for over 20 years based from her native plant nursery, *Pterophylla Native Plant and Seed*, which she shares with her partner Peter Carson near Walsingham. At the annual Thames Talbot Talk she inspired an audience of 140 people with her knowledge, enthusiasm and lessons learned to help nature.

She began her presentation with a quote by Aldo Leopold: “The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces.” Where did she learn about large-scale ecological restoration? Years ago, Mary was involved in a project in South Africa, where 870 000 ha of land was cleared of exotic species by manual methods. Impressive and inspiring!

Many of us may remember planting shrubs and trees at the Meadowlily Nature Preserve to help the restoration process from meadow to forest. As quickly as they were put in the ground, they were consumed by hungry deer. Mary’s advice for successful and economical restoration is the minimalist approach of direct seeding using locally collected seed of native species appropriate for the location.



John Langan of Stantec congratulates Mary Gartshore

Mary presented seven steps to successful restoration:

1. Find an undisturbed reference site that approximates what you want to restore.
2. Develop a list of representative species of the reference site.
3. Establish biodiversity targets, goals and strategies for assisting the restoration process.
4. Describe the successional trajectory or pathway that the restoration will take over time, including biotic and abiotic elements.
5. Begin seed collection and establish protocols for management.
6. Implement the operational plan.
7. Monitor for success.

An eighth step would be to be patient and wait for results.

Restoration is accomplished over many years and we should not expect it to look good for the first 2 to 3 years. Mary showed us numerous examples of restoration successes. One was the Stead property that was an old tobacco farm, with bare ground in 1995. Twelve years later it supports Black Oak, Flowering Dogwood, Hognose Snake and Hooded Warblers. The Red Hill expressway in Hamilton was controversial because of the significant impacts on the valley, creek and forests. Mary was directly involved in the restoration of over 100 ha of land using local seed sources, and native plants collected and grown by the Six Nations.

The biggest experiment has been the restoration of their own Pterophylla Prairie, a 24 ha former tobacco field that began its transformation in 1991 when the first seeds were planted. The site has been burned many times, has had glyphosate applied to control quack grass, fescue and blue grass, and has a breeding bird grid to document species changes.

There are now over 35 species of native prairie plants that are regularly harvested for seed. The changes have positively influenced the diversity and evenness of bird species and increased the number of pollinators. The prairie restoration has led to the spontaneous arrival of rare species such as Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow Sparrow and Eastern Hognose Snake. With results like this, we should all be inspired to engage in ecological restoration at any scale.

A little bit of tinkering with the right ingredients has demonstrated the resilience of Mother Nature to regain structural and functional attributes that define a healthy ecosystem for “all people, all species, all habitat, for all time.”

A grant of \$106,500 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation over two years was announced that night. This grant will support the executive director, workshops and board and volunteer training. The organizational capacity of the trust will improve by providing strategic staff support to the volunteers in the Thames River watershed.



MPP Khalil Ramal and Ontario Trillium Foundation Volunteer Paul Willoughby present \$106,500 grant to TTLT's President, Muriel Andreae

TTLT Annual General Meeting

**Thursday April 2 2009 - 7:00 p.m.
Town & Country Room, Stoneridge Inn
6675 Burtwistle Lane, London Ontario**

Pat Donnelly, Urban Watershed Program Manager with the City of London, will speak on "Re-visiting the Thames River: Observations from a Canoe" On June 16, 2007 eight canoes set out from the Forks in London to recreate an



historic canoe trip undertaken originally by London artists Paul Peel and William Lees Judson 130 years earlier in 1877. Pat was among the 17 artists and environmentalists who took nine days and eight nights to paddle to the mouth of the Thames. Pat will provide his perspective on the river, its challenges and the surprises it provides.

1% Solution

Not a member of TTLT yet? Please consider joining today using the form in this issue. Membership is vital to the continued success of the Trust.

Did you know that less than 1% of all charitable giving by private Canadians goes to conservation, environment and wildlife?

Help us change that grim statistic and join us in creating natural legacies.

Endowed Funds Protect Properties in Perpetuity

During a recent appearance in front of a municipal council we explained that once Thames Talbot Land Trust acquires conservation lands it is forever. "Forever is a very long time" responded a councillor, "Just how do you manage that?" A big part of the answer lies in our endowed funds. Each time that TTLT secures a new property, a block of capital is set aside and invested in order that the income will meet the annual financial expenses of that property. The capital is preserved and only the income is used to manage the property. What this means is that we do not have to raise money year after year to manage the properties we already own and can instead concentrate on new projects. It also means that our properties are not at risk. Even if the TTLT ceased to grow, all of our existing properties would be fully funded.

We consider this to be a prudent and responsible approach to land management and we believe that it is among the main reasons that donors are prepared to trust us with their treasured lands.

As our endowed funds have accumulated we needed to find a better investment vehicle that would provide a reliable income and keep the capital secure. The Board of Directors recently authorized the creation of the Thames Talbot Land Trust Fund within the London Community Foundation (LCF) as the repository of our endowments.



**LONDON COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

London Community Foundation has a professionally managed portfolio of nearly \$40 million with excellent governance and financial oversight. Over the coming years we expect to see the Thames Talbot Land Trust Fund grow both through additional contributions from TTLT and from direct contributions from LCF donors. Forever truly is a very long time and although we cannot foresee every possibility we can be financially prepared.