

the TaTTler

a newsletter of the

Thames Talbot Land Trust

Working together to leave a legacy of healthy landscapes

Seeds of Conservation

Karen Ashford

On September 23rd and 24th the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) and the Forest Gene Conservation Association (FGCA) hosted a two-day Certified Seed Collector Workshop at the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority Headquarters in Strathroy. The first day focused on theory and seed biology and the 16 participants learned about native tree seed collection and marketing from course leader Brian Swaile. On Sunday, braving ominous thunder clouds and threats of rain, participants toured the adjacent woods where they had hands on experience examining seeds of a variety of trees and shrubs and started to apply the knowledge acquired on day one.

The objectives of TTLT include to acquire, restore and conserve land in the Thames Talbot region, which includes London and the surrounding Counties of Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford and Perth. Another objective is to educate for conservation and stewardship. The members and volunteers who participated in the Certified Seed Collector Workshop are now trained in the correct techniques for seed collecting and have learned to identify native trees and shrubs which will contribute to TTLT restoration and naturalization projects.

The Meadowlily Nature Preserve (MNP) is an ongoing project of Thames Talbot Land Trust. Since the donation of the 5.8ha (14 acre) of land by Rick and Carol Richardson in 2002, TTLT has completed a number of projects which include fencing, signage, trail improvements, plantings and a footbridge on the property. With the help of the volunteers who have recently completed the Certified Seed Collector Workshop, TTLT hopes to begin restoring the 0.7 ha (1.7 acre) of meadow area at MNP. Recent advances in the understanding of ecological restoration have made Direct Seeding the preferred method of restoration, over the alternative of planting small trees and saplings. Direct Seeding is more cost effective, requires lower maintenance and more closely mimics natural processes of reforestation.

Volunteers will be able to help identify, collect, and plant seeds of native trees and shrub species commonly found on the MNP and in the surrounding area.



Brian Swaile demonstrates the acorn float test to workshop participants

Thames Talbot Land Trust thanks St. Clair Region Conservation Authority for making their headquarters available for the Certified Seed Collector Workshop, as well as Brian Swaile for making the course informative and fun. TTLT also thanks all the members and volunteers who participated in this exciting event.



Anyone interested in learning more about Certified Seed Collector Workshop should visit the Forest Gene Conservation Association website at “www.fgca.net/news”

A Conservation Plan for Land Protection

Stan Caveney

In 2005 the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), in conjunction with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), published a report called the Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Terrestrial Biodiversity that identifies high quality sites of conservation value on the Canadian side of the Great Lakes. This project is part of a binational conservation blueprint for the Great Lakes done in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) of the US. The study adopts a landscape-level and ecological region-based strategic approach to habitat conservation and securement in the Great Lakes basin.

Building on Carolinian Canada's Big Picture Project, which identified natural heritage core areas and connecting corridors in southern Ontario, the Conservation Blueprint combines the latest satellite imagery with ecological and physiographic data from the OMNR's Natural Heritage Information Centre in Peterborough and other sources to pinpoint and assess rare habitats that support local species at risk (animal and plant species threatened with local extirpation or even extinction). Many high quality sites supporting a broad range of natural biodiversity were identified in TTLT's area of interest within ecoregion 7E, the Carolinian Life Zone. Through the Conservation Blueprint exercise, NCC identified the western Lake Erie islands (particularly Pelee Island) and Skunks Misery as high priority areas of conservation value. Skunks Misery surrounds the Thames River and straddles four jurisdictions – Southwest Middlesex, West Elgin, Lambton and Chatham-Kent.

The second step of this conservation blueprint approach to conserving representative and rare ecosites in southern Ontario is to complete an on-the-ground verification of the landscape-level conclusions. This requires the completion of site-specific Natural Area Conservation Plans to identify the critical natural spaces and species in the site that require protection from a variety of threats, establish targets and budgets for land securement or protection, and design long-term management plans to protect them.

The NCC recently completed a Western Lake Erie Islands Natural Area Conservation Plan that documents the natural heritage features, species at risk and identifies conservation targets for the archipelago. The WLEI conservation plan identified Pelee Island as having the most unique, diverse and threatened landscapes, including rare alvars and a variety of coastal habitats. The conservation plan exercise was found to be useful in that it provided a succinct conservation vision for the WLEI and has been endorsed by the Township of Pelee Island and has attracted several major donors. NCC conservation plans have 10-year timelines and budgets for acquisition and management in the \$5-10 million range.



A Phasmatodean walking stick, found at Newport Forest. These insects mimic the shape and colour of twigs and leaves.

TTLT and NCC are now collaborating to produce a similar conservation plan for Skunks Misery area. This Greater Skunks Misery Natural Area Conservation Plan should take about six months to complete. The study area includes significant tracts of upland-, swamp- and riverine forest, as well as prairie remnants. TTLT will play an important role in helping develop the vision and strategy to identify prime target sites for securement and conservation. The Skunks Misery area is home to many endangered species of birds and reptiles. Many of the large tracts of Carolinian forest at the core of Skunks Misery are owned and managed by local counties and conservation authorities, and are reasonably secure. Other forest tracts in the area, such as those along the nearby Thames River are in private ownership. The TTLT has been contacting local landowners to alert them of the natural heritage features of their properties, and discuss with them their long term stewardship goals for their lands. Our goal is to partner with other environmental NGOs, such as the NCC, to protect the natural communities of the area through land securement.

Updates for this exciting project will be at “www.ttl.ca”.

Contributors to this issue

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Karen Ashford
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Stan Caveney
David Crockett
Bill DeYoung
Shelley Kaufman
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the TaTTLer
issue 7, November 2006

a newsletter of the
Thames Talbot Land Trust
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A MEDICINE WALK WITH TREES

An Evening With Diana Beresford-Kroeger

David Crockett

On October 20, 2006, London was treated to a very inspiring presentation by Diana Beresford-Kroeger on the subject of trees as part of the necessary blueprint for the rebuilding of the biosphere. Beresford-Kroeger is a noted scientist, author and passionate advocate of the value of trees to the global community.

A full house of over 300 people attended the presentation which was held at the Wolf Performance Hall of the London Public Library. Ten educational displays were set up by partner organizations interested in sustaining ecologically important lands.

TTLT President Muriel Andreae provided an excellent overview of the Thames Talbot Land Trust mission for the audience and introduced the guest speaker.

Beresford-Kroeger then used her botanical knowledge, research and personal experience to tell us how we might start. Using a series of slide photos taken by her husband, she highlighted the unique benefits that different tree species add to the specific health and biodiversity of this region.

For example, natives and early settlers used maple sap as a spring tonic providing diuretic action and a cleansing agent for skin. Birch trees and wintergreen both contain methyl salicylate that could be used as healing liniment. The hickory nut is a rich source of essential fatty acids. Hickory and oak are two of the finest natural sunscreens. The Catalpa is a beautiful specimen tree producing long bean pods that support bird populations. She proposed that the dry pod has pesticide properties and that it could be woven into small baskets and sold to city dwellers to reduce urban household pests – a potential garden industry.

The Hawthorn allows maples and other species to infill and prevents soil erosion in agricultural areas. The leaves and fruit produce chemicals important for migrating butterflies and birds.

The walnut produces chemicals that are prototypes of a new class of cancer preventing drugs, inhibitors of fungal growth and are pollution fighters. At the end of useful life, you have an extremely valuable source of lumber. She advised that we grow some for our grandchildren's retirement fund.

Diana Beresford-Kroeger set the stage reinforcing the objectives of the TTLT and putting the challenge to each person – “it all depends on you – not municipal council, not the provincial or federal government. Rather, it is about what each one of us can do to add to the forest inventory; one tree at a time. Start with your home, your neighbourhood, your work place, your community – but take responsibility to make a difference”.

Following the presentation, Beresford-Kroeger answered diverse questions from the audience, all clearly passionate about the subject, and committed to taking an active part in making a difference.

In my opinion, Diana Beresford-Kroeger proposed a very practical approach for addressing the current

forest gaps. She emphasized the need for us to stand firm to protect areas that need to be protected. She encouraged the planting of selected trees to increase the current tree complement and suggested that, rather than despairing about tree disease and damage we do our best with restorative efforts and, when necessary, replace the tree.



Diana and her photographer husband Christian at book-signing.

At the close of the evening, Beresford-Kroeger remained behind to speak to guests as she autographed copies of her two books: *Arboretum American - Philosophy of the Forest* and *A Garden for Life*. Her books are very informative and yet very readable, and setup in a short descriptive format for each tree species.

She inspired each one of us to do more and to pass this challenge on to family, friends, co-workers and neighbours. If you missed the opportunity of hearing Diana Beresford-Kroeger, read her books to learn more about bioplans.

Help the TTLT in its quest to acquire more protected property. Plant a tree – make a difference – that is the way it starts – with you and me.

Land Securement Planning

Muriel Andreae



The Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) held its annual Fall Gathering at the Kempenfelt Conference Centre on Lake Simcoe on November 2, 3 and 4, 2006.

Two Directors attended for the Thames Talbot Land Trust: Stan Caveney and myself.

Stan attended workshops on the importance of well crafted conservation easement agreements (CEA) for the federal EcoGift Program; preparing thorough Baseline Documentation Reports, especially on CEA lands, which must allow us to monitor changes in important features yet not be too restrictive to the landowner on less significant elements; the Beyond Islands of Green session about the Nature Conservancy of Canada top-down Conservation Blueprint and ground-up Conservation Plan approaches to identifying significant land in the Great Lakes watershed.

I attended sessions on the American experience in calculating a realistic cost for monitoring Conservation Easements; challenges for the Ontario Farmland Trust where they questioned whether you can protect the farming way of life when you protect the farm land, and how can a farmer receive fair tax consideration for donating farmland;

marketing a non-profit cause on a tight budget (since word of mouth is the best marketing for any cause and it is free, how do we spread the word about Land Trusts?); and working with volunteers, Directors and committees (use action-groups for each project, and organize carefully so volunteers will know how to help.)

Mealtime conversations were lively, as I met Land Trust people from Canada South in Essex, the Rideau Waterway Land Trust, Georgian Bay, Long Point Basin, Lambton, Oak Ridges, Couchiching, Ontario Nature, Environment Canada, Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Ontario Heritage Trust. It was an excellent opportunity to tap others' experience and to brainstorm ideas, while enjoying the daytime view of Lake Simcoe or the evening pleasure of live music.

Chris Baines, the incoming OLTA Chair, announced they have received grants from the province and the federal government, so they have over \$100,000 for land transfer costs of ecologically significant properties as they are acquired by OLTA members. The federal and provincial governments recognize the strength and value of the Land Trust movement. The annual OLTA gathering illustrates very well that there is province-wide volunteer commitment to leave a legacy of healthy landscapes.

TTLT Board of Directors

2006 / 2007

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Muriel Andreae, President
Stan Caveney, Vice-President
Quintin Lang, Secretary
Wayne Crowder, Treasurer

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Jane Bowles
David Crockett
Michelle Kanter
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Contact us at

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eMail: thamestalbot@ttl.t.ca
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If you love the future, Trust in the land.

The Opportunities Fund of the Thames Talbot Land Trust was established through a founding gift of \$1 million from Beryl and Richard Ivey. Your planned gift of cash or securities to the Opportunities Fund will support the acquisition of natural lands to be protected in perpetuity.

Nothing outlasts land.

The Thames Talbot Land Trust is a certified recipient of Ecological Gifts under the Income Tax Act and can accept gifts of natural, agricultural and cultural significance. To learn more about us, please call: **(519) 858-3442** or visit: www.ttl.t.ca



Thames Talbot Land Trust

Working together to leave a legacy of healthy landscapes

Property Management Committee Reports

Jane Bowles

Urban Pressures on Nature Preserve

Meadowlily Nature Preserve has a well-maintained trail and is open to the public during daylight hours for passive recreation. One of the regular tasks of the Property Management Committee is to monitor our property at the Meadowlily Nature Preserve (MNP). Usually this involves a pleasant walk along the trail and in the woods and perhaps picking up litter and removing graffiti from some of the signs.



Fire Pit at Meadowlily Nature Preserve

This summer a new problem emerged when the site began to be used as a party venue. A fire pit was regularly created and as regularly removed by volunteers. In the end it became necessary to ask

London City Police to include the site as part of their regular patrol, and the problem lessened with this increased vigilance. Earlier this summer the bridge also had to be repaired following damage by vandalism.



Graffiti and Bicyclist at Meadowlily Nature Preserve

On a positive note, the committee has drawn up a plan and has applied for funding to restore the upland meadow at MNP and to create butterfly habitat in the lower meadow. An article that describes the proposed project appeared this summer in the *Blazing Star*, the newsletter of the North American Native Plant Society. The article is reproduced on the TTLT website. TTLT hosted a Certified Seed Collector Workshop in September to help train volunteers and to prepare them for the upcoming project.

Newport Forest Work Day

On July 30, 2006 a TTLT volunteer work party gathered at Newport Forest, property of Kee and Pat Dewdney, on what must have been one of the hottest afternoons of the year. Under a conservation easement on the property, no gas engines are allowed off the track, so all the work had to be done by hand. Dave Pullen of McCully Hill Farms showed up with a giant 2-person saw with which it was possible to cut through a large hickory log that had fallen across a trail.

Elsewhere a small party used clippers and pruning saw to remove shrubs of invasive Autumn Olive and create brush piles with the debris, while Terry Keep renewed and repaired steps on the steepest part of a trail. Thelma and Louise, two orphan raccoons that were adopted by the Dewdneys earlier in the summer were more a distraction than a help, but they provided entertainment.



Volunteers enjoy a hard-earned break at Newport Forest work day

After about 3 hours of solid work a tired and sweaty group gathered for some relaxation and refreshment in the shade. Everyone recorded their work by signing stenciled leaf outlines painted on the trailer by the youngest members of the work party. Kee and Pat Dewdney, who bought and manage Newport Forest as a retirement project, are planning to donate the property to the Thames Talbot Land Trust.

**It's time to renew your membership for 2007.
New Members Welcome!
see back page**

Presidential Perspectives

Muriel Andreae

There is a palette of leaves in the Land Trust woodlands, and there is a palette of personalities in the Land Trust membership. In recent months of events and meetings, eMails and conversations I have gained a new appreciation for the diversity of our members and Directors and our staff.

We have people who are positive, skeptical, enthusiastic or reserved; members who sawed hickory logs in 30° weather, to help clear trails at Newport Forest and members who beamed with delight at learning the language of tree seeds and seed collecting at the Seed workshop; members who solicited funds so we could offer a free “Medicine

Walk with Trees”; members who know the ecology of our environment, and members who know the poetry of our environment.

The result? A lively membership, productive committees, successful events and an increased profile for the Land Trust.

Our progress is chronicled in this newsletter and at our web site “www.tlft.ca”. Please talk about us, to friends and co-workers. If you would like to be more involved, please contact me, or another Director or our staff member, Don Gordon. Augment our palette and add to our vision.

ReForest London Plants the Future Today

Julie Ryan

ReForest London was proud to be a sponsor of Diana Beresford-Kroeger’s “Medicine Walk with Trees”. Part of her message was if you want more trees in your city, just go plant them; and, that is what we do.



River Forks Neighbourhood Association, May 2006

ReForest London partners with community groups to plan and implement tree planting projects throughout London. Project locations are chosen with the group and projects are guided by the “StraTreegic Plan”, a model that literally maps our city’s greencover future. The plan was developed with input from the City of London, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Urban League of London, the Middlesex Stewardship Council, Trees for London, Trees for Tomorrow, and the Thames Talbot Land Trust. It combines studies such as Carolinian Canada’s Big Picture Project, the City of London Woodlands Master Plan, and environmental consultant reports.

ReForest London provides organizational support, expertise, and matching funds (up to \$2,000) to eligible community organizations. The group has completed 45 projects over the past two years, with the help of more than 1,200 volunteers. This year the group worked with organizations as varied as employee groups, business associations, school groups, neighbourhood associations, condominium corporations, youth organizations, and a punk rock band.

Keeping the forest in the Forest City is an ambition of ReForest London, an organization that formed as part of the City’s 150th birthday celebration. In the past two years, ReForest London has planted more than 2,300 native trees and 2,000 native shrubs throughout London. The organization is currently working with groups to plan projects for next year to sustain this momentum.

For more information, contact Julie Ryan by phone 519-936-9548 or by eMail: “julie@reforestlondon.ca” or visit “www.reforestlondon.ca”.

Managing for Biodiversity

Bill DeYoung

Acquisition of property is a cog in an unending chain of responsibility for the Land Trust. The vision and objectives of the Land Trust include managing for biodiversity.

According to the national Terrestrial Plants and Plant Pests Working Group (TPPWG) on Invasive Alien Species the spread of invasive alien species threatens the environment, the economy, and society, including human health. In Canada, invasive alien species cost the forestry and agriculture industries billions of dollars annually in increased costs of production, harvest losses and losses to international markets. Invasive alien species have severe and often irreversible impacts on native ecosystems and are considered the second most significant threat to biodiversity after habitat loss.

The Newport Forest is being managed for the control of Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) and the Meadowlily Nature Preserve is challenged by Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), European Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*). Early intervention is the best approach and at the Eberhardt Easement near Sebringville volunteers have begun removing buckthorn and will monitor for seedlings.



Give me a place to stand and I will move the world.

Terry Grawey removes a buckthorn at the Eberhardt property using a levering tool called the Weed Wrench.

Fundraising and Marketing Committee

Shelley Kaufman

The primary activity of the FMC over the past few months has been on the TTLT profile-raising event, "A Medicine Walk with Trees – An Evening with Diana Beresford-Kroeger". The Committee's goal to secure sufficient sponsorship to have a free community event for the existing TTLT community and to attract like-minded people to learn about the Land Trust was achieved. More than 300 people attended and the Land Trust raised several thousand dollars to further its conservation projects.

While the direct benefits to the Trust of such a program cannot always be traced, community events with excellent sponsorship and attendance in conjunction with media coverage of the evening, all help to build knowledge of and confidence in the abilities of the Thames Talbot Land Trust. The volunteer assistance of a group of students from Catholic Central High School was not only appreciated by the organizers, but helped bring awareness to a younger audience about civic participation for the environment. Partnering with a variety of like-minded groups assisted

in getting the message out and provided an opportunity for their own displays to be presented at the event. The timing also provided an excellent opportunity for our fall intern Karen Ashford, from the UWO Media, Information and Technoculture program, to apply her skills to bring this message out to London and the surrounding area. For the remainder of her term with TTLT, Karen will work on long-term fundraising and marketing ideas, in particular in relation to the Opportunities Fund. It is hoped that Karen's work will be carried on into the next term by a subsequent intern from Western's MIT program.

Committee and Board members are capitalizing on the TTLT display and power point presentations bringing the TTLT message to various groups by attending and speaking at forums such as the Outdoor Farm Show in Woodstock. The FMC is committed to building community awareness and confidence in the Land Trust so that we become known as a prudent organization that respects the wishes of its supporters over the long term. If your group would like a speaker from TTLT please contact us.

Membership in TTLT

*Charitable receipts are issued for all contributions
(#86745 7475 RR0001)*

Membership Donations

Youth/Student (under 18):	\$25
Individual Member (18 and older):	\$50
Affiliate/Group/Corporate:	\$100

Supporters' Circle

Advocate	\$240 (\$20/month)
Protector	\$480 (\$40/month)

Donations

Donation amount: \$ _____

Membership information

Name _____
Address _____
City/Postal Code _____
Telephone (____) _____
eMail _____

Payment Options

- Cheque payable to Thames Talbot Land Trust, or
- Direct bank debit (automatic monthly payments)

I(We) authorize the Thames Talbot Land Trust to process a debit, in paper, electronic or other form in the amount of \$ _____ on my(our) account on the first day of each month beginning 1, _____, 200____.

I(We) acknowledge that I(we) have read, understood and accepted all the provisions set out in the Terms and Conditions <www.ttlc.ca>

I(We) enclose a cheque made payable to Thames Talbot Land Trust marked "VOID"

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Thames Talbot Land Trust respects your privacy and will not share your personal information. From time to time we may contact you with information about the Land Trust and its activities which we believe are of interest to our members and supporters. For more information about our privacy policy visit www.ttlc.ca

SWOOPing Nature

Quintin Lang

The TTLT is partnering with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to develop a conservation plan for the Skunks Misery region in west Middlesex (see article p 2). The TTLT is now a registered member of the Ontario Geospatial Data Exchange. The OGDE allows TTLT direct access to provincial GIS data as well as those of other members, such as government departments, universities and conservation authorities. This information will be invaluable in our ability to analyze the landscape and other features of sites of interest to TTLT. Our Land Securement Committee has about twenty currently active files of conservation properties, scattered across the TTLT area, for which we may consider direct purchase or an interest in the land through a conservation easement agreement. We are presently running several of these properties through our natural values and agricultural values assessment

A new data source that we hope to begin using in January 2007 is SWOOP. Imagine that you could look at every property in Southwestern Ontario, SWOOPing in to take a close look at forests and wetlands. Imagine that you could combine those images with environmental and other information. Well, imagine no more: the SouthWestern Ontario Orthophotography Project (SWOOP) is here.

Aerial photography is a vital tool for identifying environmentally significant areas, and SWOOP will provide organizations like TTLT with consistent, reliable photographs. SWOOP covers areas from Manitoulin Island to Pelee Island and from Windsor to Haldimand County .

Since objects as small as 75cm wide may be visible, land trusts should find the aerial photography a valuable supplement to site visits for evaluating property. In wetlands and other sensitive areas, SWOOP will allow evaluation without having to disrupt the sites. Since the photos were taken as trees were just leafing out in spring 2006, it may be possible to identify tree species. False-colour near-infrared imagery will also be available, which can help identify species and soil moisture.

While the County of Lambton was the lead partner, more than 50 partners from the public and private sectors participated in the orthophotography project. Almost every municipality and conservation authority was involved, so the imagery may be available to the public at their websites. Land trusts may also have access through Land Information Ontario, SWOOP's largest financial partner.

Both the Ontario government and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario have awarded SWOOP for its work that saves Ontario taxpayers millions of dollars.