



Minesing Reeds

The Friends of Minesing Wetlands Newsletter

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KEEPING YOU INFORMED



Saturday, October 21st is the date for our Annual General Gathering. The event, held this year at Tiffin Centre, will provide FOMW members and guests with a great opportunity to learn so much about what is going on in the Wetlands, from both natural and organizational points of view! The afternoon will include children's activities (*how DO you make a turtle out of a pumpkin?*), a barbecue, a presentation on the flora and fauna inventory recently undertaken in the Wetlands, and an evening Owl Prowl. Attendees will not want to miss the presentation by naturalist Bob Bowles. Events start at 3pm, and will run through until approximately 7pm. Current members of Friends of Minesing Wetlands are invited free of charge, with a fee of \$5 per person or \$10 per family for non-members.

Follow a path through Simcoe County history on Saturday, September 23rd! The City of Barrie, Township of Springwater and Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority are co-hosting the Nine Mile Portage Walk-In Festival, with opening ceremonies at Heritage Park from 10:00 to 11:00am. There will be an organized walk of about 15km along the recently re-established Nine Mile Portage, ending up at Historic Fort Willow. (Shuttle support is available.) The Fort will be open from 11:00am to 3:00pm with the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and other re-enactors, musical entertainment, and a native encampment. A barbecue and refreshments will be available. For more information, please contact the City of Barrie at barrie.ca, or (705)739-4285. Brochures are available at Barrie City Hall, Tourism Barrie, and Springwater Township.

On October 13th, a special presentation will take place at the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority Full Authority meeting. The Nature Conservancy of Canada and Ministry of Natural Resources will be presenting title to 1000 acres of lands recently acquired within Minesing Wetlands. These lands make up a large portion of the documented "Silver Maple Forest" within the wetland. The presentation will also mark the signing of the "Eastern Habitat Joint Venture agreement." This partnership includes NCC, MNR, NVCA, Environment Canada, Ducks Unlimited and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The agreement will seal an important link for funding, acquiring and managing this world class wetland. The public is welcome to attend on the 13th to help celebrate this important event.

NVCA Lands staff have recently initiated a project that includes the ground truthing of our lands within the Minesing Wetlands. Using a Geographical Positioning System, staff are slogging the property lines and marking them accordingly.

TURTLES NEED YOUR HELP

Why did the turtle cross the road? Well to lay her eggs, of course. Each year female turtles emerge from the protection of wetlands to lay their eggs. Areas comprised of sandy substrate are the ideal nesting locations for proper egg incubation. Unfortunately, due to loss of proper nesting sites, roadsides and recreational trails have become a common nesting location, but these locations are high risk mortality areas for the female and the hatchlings.

Eight turtle species are found in Ontario, six of which are considered species at risk by Environment Canada under SARA (Species At Risk Act). Unfortunately, one more species may be added to that list in the near future and that is the Snapping Turtle (*Chelydra serpentina*). Most people believe this species has high population numbers but due to trapping, road mortality, egg predation and loss of habitat, their numbers are dwindling fast.



The Mayer's Marsh area, located within the boundaries of Minesing Wetlands, is a known turtle viewing hotspot. During the peak period, turtle nesting locations were noted and counted. Later in the day or the next day, these areas were checked for predation. Each day predated nest sites were cleared away so as not to be recounted. This research was performed for Minesing Wetlands Biological Inventory, and revealed that at least 95% of Snapping Turtle nests were

being predated. Raccoons and skunks were identified as the main culprits. One incident of predation was actually observed, where a group of raccoons sat waiting while a turtle laid her eggs. Raccoon and skunk populations are typically high in areas of human densities due to their quick adaptations to their urban surroundings. Their typical habitat is in dense forest but with urbanization, raccoons and skunks are finding quick and easy food sources such as garbage, composts, turtle eggs and other items which would typically not be as accessible in the forest.



Bob Bowles, a well respected naturalist, is looking for help in forming local township groups in Simcoe County called **Kids for Turtles**. If you or someone you know are concerned about turtles, snakes, frogs, toads and salamanders and would like to help by raising public awareness, identifying areas of high road mortality, aid in purchasing turtle crossing signs and talking with councillors to install these signs, please contact Bob at 705-325-3149 or rbowles@rogers.com. Mature volunteers are also needed as supervisors.

UPCOMING MINESING WETLANDS EVENTS



- Saturday, September 23 Fort Willow Walk-In Festival
- Saturday, October 14 Fall Canoe Tour
- Saturday, October 21 Annual General Gathering, Tiffin Centre
- Saturday, February 10 Winter Walk to the Heronry
- Saturday, February 24 Winter Snowshoe Hike

Please call the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority 705-424-1479 for more information and to register for these events. Please be advised that the Minesing Wetlands complex is a wilderness area and outdoor experience is expected of participants for trekking-type excursions.

Minesing Unplugged

Among the many talented acts which performed at the June 10th Minesing Unplugged event in Grenfell were The Silver Hearts (right) and Sam Allison & Telihard Frost (below). *Photos: Jim Wilkins*



SPRAWL CRAWLS TO SIMCOE



Urban sprawl continues to encroach on Simcoe County, which lies just outside the northern boundary of the Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt. The county is the scene of an unprecedented land speculation rush that has led to numerous urban expansion applications, now the subject of appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board. Residents and local politicians are becoming increasingly concerned about Lake Simcoe's capacity to assimilate such growth without lake water quality being impaired further.

Many demands are made on Lake Simcoe, which include swimming, boating, fishing and other recreational activities. Approximately 350,000 permanent residents live by its shoreline, along with thousands of cottagers and campers during the summer. In recent years, the water quality in Lake Simcoe has deteriorated, the fishing is poor and weeds in the lake and along the shoreline are increasing. These symptoms are caused primarily by increased nutrients, especially phosphorus, entering the lake as a result of agricultural practices and development activities.

Tory MPP Garfield Dunlop has taken a strong position with respect to sprawl and its impacts. This spring, he introduced the Lake Simcoe Protection Act into the legislature. The proposed legislation will create a comprehensive protection program for the Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga River watersheds and natural heritage systems. As a member of Campaign Lake Simcoe, Ontario Nature expects that all political parties will support this legislation when it comes to a vote this fall.

More information on the bill and how you can help is available on the Campaign Lake Simcoe website, www.environmentaldefence.ca/campaignLakeSimcoe/home.php.

This article, written by Wendy Francis, appears in the Autumn 2006 issue of ON Nature magazine.

Are you interested in becoming a "Friend of Minesing Wetlands?" Do you frequently visit the Minesing Wetlands, or would someone you know appreciate the gift of a membership and annual pass? Funds raised are directed towards conservation, promotion, and future enhancement projects within the Wetlands. Members receive an annual pass and one year of mailings of "Minesing Reeds." Memberships are valid for the current calendar year.

Please check the appropriate box for your pass and membership category:

- \$20 for an individual
 \$30 for a family
 \$100 for a Club
 \$300 for a corporation

Please return this form, with a cheque payable to the Friends of Minesing Wetlands, to the N.V.C.A., 8195 Line 8, Utopia, ON, L0M 1T0.

Name _____

Address/Phone/email _____