



MINESING REEDS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF MINESING WETLANDS

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The Huronia Lookout

High atop a promontory in the heart of Simcoe County, the Huronia Lookout boasts views over 40 kilometres upon some of Ontario's most celebrated terrain: the Minesing Wetlands, the Oro Moraine, Georgian Bay, and the Niagara Escarpment.

Located on the west side of George Johnston Road just south of Snow Valley Road, the Huronia Lookout will not only serve to educate visitors about the vivid natural and cultural history of the region, but as the regenerated site of a former landfill, provides a reminder of our duty to care for our environment in a responsible

manner.

Partners in the development of the Huronia Lookout include the NVCA; FOMW; County of Simcoe; Simcoe County Museum; Township of Springwater; First Nations Chippewa Tri-Council of Rama, Christian/Beausoleil Island and Georgiana Island; the Rotary Clubs of Barrie, Huronia, and Kempenfelt; Friends of Historic Fort Willow, and key local residents.

An exciting aspect of the site is the icon which will be installed. Hillsdale artist Marlene Hilton Moore will create the piece that celebrates the region's history by featuring a life-sized Ojibway and

an explorer portaging with a birch bark canoe, circa 1750. Hilton Moore's work is displayed across the country, including a bust of Lt.-Gov. John Graves Simcoe at the Simcoe County Museum.

To further enhance the visitor's experience, paved parking, signage, trails, and a possible welcome centre and amphitheatre are planned.

There has been an incredible amount of legwork completed by the partners, and many tasks remain. It is expected that the grand opening of the Huronia Lookout will take place in early summer 2011.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

☞ Conservation Ontario, with its 36 member conservation authorities, will be hosting a booth at the Great Outdoor Adventure Show at Toronto's International Centre Feb. 26, 27, 28. CO will be presenting three seminars as part of the Seminar Series, including "Significantly Rare, Significantly Fun: Canoeing through the Minesing Wetlands" being delivered by Byron Wesson on the Friday from 7:00 to 7:45 pm. Visit this link for a coupon to the Great Outdoor Adventure Show: www.outdooradventureshow.ca/toronto/coupon.html.



☞ Friends of Minesing Wetlands is holding an exciting raffle, to be drawn September 18, 2010 at the 9 Mile Portage event at Fort Willow. Sponsored by Sojourn, first prize is a Sojourn Muskoka Prospector 14' canoe (retail value \$1300), two Salus PFDs and two Grey Owl Guide paddles. Second prize is a Eureka MtnPass 3-person tent (retail \$289.99), and third prize is a QOR Adventure 60L Backpack (Retail \$169.99). Tickets are \$2 each or three for \$5, and are available at various locations and the NVCA.



Inside this issue:

Ramsar Recognition	2
Good Ol' Country Comforts	3
Drama at Fort Willow	3
Who might you find in your mitten?	3
2010: International Year of Biodiversity	4
Membership Information	4

For more information on the Minesing Wetlands or for Friends of Minesing Wetlands membership information, please contact the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority 8195 Line 8, Utopia, ON, L0M 1T0, (705) 424-1479

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A common question asked by many who have visited the Minesing Wetlands over the years has been “what is a Ramsar Wetland?” Indeed, prior to Minesing being

nominated as an Internationally Recognized wetland, few of us had heard of Ramsar. Given the promotion of the Ramsar designation and logo in presentations, brochures, reports and signage, it seems relevant to provide the background. Here is a small clipping from the Ramsar website, www.ramsar.org:

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Negotiated through the 1960s by countries and non-governmental organizations that were concerned at the increasing loss and degradation of wetland habitat for migratory waterbirds, the treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. It is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem, and the Convention's member countries cover all geographic regions of the planet.

As of November 2009 there were 1847 Ramsar sites at the global level, of which 322 (17% of the Ramsar global sites network) are in the Americas.

Canada joined the Convention in 1982 and up to December 2009 had 37 Ramsar-designated sites covering over 13 million hectares (32 million acres) of wetlands and associated habitats. The addition of a site to the Ramsar List confers upon it the prestige of international recognition and expresses the nation's commitment to take all steps necessary to ensure the maintenance of the ecological character of the site.

The Minesing Wetlands Natural Area was designated (as “Minesing Swamp”) as Ramsar Site No. 865 in October 1996. As the third largest wetland in the southern portion of the province, Minesing Wetlands encompasses 6000 hectares (15,000 acres) in the Townships of Clearview, Springwater and Essa in Simcoe County in southern Ontario. Consisting of boreal wetland and deciduous bottomland vegetation complexes, the Area is one of the most significant wetland systems in southern Ontario. The Minesing's hydrology provides for an interconnected network of swamps, fens, and marshes. It supports extremely high biodiversity values, and it is home to hundreds of species of plants and animals. This includes globally rare vegetation communities, regionally rare wetland types, and many provincially and/or globally rare species.

Serving as a major waterfowl staging area and white-tailed deer wintering yard, this wetland is also home to the oldest and fifth-largest Blue Heron colony in Ontario. The Area includes the largest pure stand of silver maple in the Province of Ontario.

In early 2009, an invitation to attend the first-ever Canadian Ramsar Site Manager Training Course was sent to all those in Canada that manage Ramsar Wetlands. The NVCA recognized the importance of this training course, and Byron Wesson, Director of Land, Operations & Stewardship, attended. The course was held in Creston, British Columbia at the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Centre in October 2009. Twenty seven attendees from across Canada, the United States and Switzerland gathered for four days and poured over an impressive agenda of objectives and expected outcomes. Some of the specified outcomes included:

- Assist site managers to best fulfill their responsibilities;
- Address capacity gaps identified in the 2007 Survey (completed by site managers);
- Facilitate further opportunities to identify and address management issues;
- Identify the most effective and efficient use of existing resources to better manage Canada's Ramsar sites;
- Explore common needs and opportunities for advancing a network of Ramsar site managers;
- Develop a Ramsar National Committee.

The end result was considered a success with many new ideas being shared, invaluable networking and the establishment of both a Canadian Site Managers Network and a National Ramsar Committee. It is anticipated that this first-ever gathering of representatives from federal, provincial, and territorial governments and many individual NGOs will result in productive and efficient partnerships as we all work towards similar goals.



Good Ol' Country Comforts

This coming spring will see rise to a much needed addition to the Willow Creek Canoe Corral on George Johnston Road. A comfort station for canoeists and hikers alike will be installed at this popular site. A gracious donation from Beacon Environmental kick-started this initiative, with the Friends of Minesing Wetlands and the NVCA adding their support. An incredible gesture from the Fort Willow Improvement Group (who are retired from working at the Fort for the most part but are still eager to stay busy) has them doing the actual building of the structure. Ideally ready for service in late spring, this building will no doubt bring comfort to the many that frequent the area to explore the Minesing Wetlands. Many thanks to Geri Poisson of Beacon Environmental, FOMW Directors, the NVCA, and Jim Scott, Harold McMaster, Bernie Longson and Frank Ford for making this project a reality.

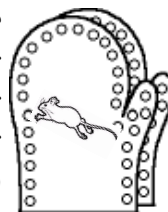


At this past fall's Annual General Gathering, Friends of Minesing Wetlands were pleased to play host as "History Comes Alive," with David Morris acting out a dramatic interpretation of Tecumseh and the War of 1812. Attendees received a unique glimpse of First Nations perspective during that time. The presentation was sponsored by Azimuth Environmental Consulting Inc.

Hey Kids!

Find out more about our forest friends as you re-enact a traditional Ukrainian folk tale. Many of us are familiar with children's author Jan Brett's retelling of "The Mitten," the story of a little boy who lost his mitten in the woods. Many different animals find shelter and warmth from the cold in his mitten - the mole, the rabbit, the hedgehog, an owl, a badger, a fox, and a bear. Of course they can't all fit in the little boy's mitten, and when a tiny mouse follows the bear, it's too much and everyone falls out! Needless to say, the little boy's grandmother had to knit him a new mitten.

Cut out two sides of a hand-sized paper mitten like the one pictured here, and staple, glue, tape or string the sides together. Of course you can colour the mitten in any design you like! Draw, print or use magazines to cut out pictures of the animals in the story - or any animals you would like to include - and see how they can fit in your mitten. Use books or the internet to find out more about the animals you are using to retell the story.



Idea inspired by www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts

Spring Canoe Tour

There are two dates for this year's spring canoe tour: Saturday April 3 and Saturday April 10. The event fee is \$15 per person for members, and an extra \$5 extra for non-pass holders. Participants are expected to supply their own boating and safety equipment (rentals are available at Sojourn in Barrie) and have experience with outdoor activities.

Please call 705-424-1479 to register and receive full details:
ext. 259 for April 3,
ext. 241 for April 10.





The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity (IYB) is a special year declared by the United Nations to help raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity all over the world. It is an opportunity to:

- *stress the importance of biodiversity for our well-being;*
- *reflect on our achievements to safeguard biodiversity;*
- *encourage a redoubling of our efforts to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss.*

Please visit www.unep.org/iyb for more information about The 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, including “Species of the Day,” “Tip of the Day,” “Technology of the Day,” and “Theme of the Week.”



In recognition of 2010 IYB, Ontario Nature will be hosting a two-day Summit for 100 high school-aged students from June 4th to June 6th. The 2010 Youth Summit for Biodiversity will bring youth together from across the province to learn about biodiversity and taking action to ensure a healthy planet for generations to come. The Summit will also provide a variety of learning opportunities, networking opportunities, hands-on activities, and fun. Registration details are yet to come, but you can find out more by viewing the flyer at www.ontarionature.org/eblast/Youth_Summit_Flyer.pdf or calling Gabe Camozzi at Ontario Nature at 416-444-8419 x 241.

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 to the Conservation Lands Reserve. Members receive an annual pass for all Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority lands, and receive “Minesing Reeds” (by post or by email). Memberships are valid for the current calendar year.

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

\$20 for an individual \$50 for a family \$200 for a Club \$400 for a corporation

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

Name _____

Address/Phone/email _____
