

SUMMMER NEWSLETTER

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WHAT IS A CONSERVATION EASEMENT?

For many of you, the preservation of the natural features of your property is something you do day in and day out. You have become stewards of the land, safeguarding the natural pieces and processes during your tenure, until the land passes into other hands.

That passing on, however, has always caused great concern for private land stewards. A life's work could be undone by the careless or short-sighted actions of a future landholder.

The solution to this dilemma could be a "conservation easement." Though conservation easements have a century-long history in some areas of North America, we have only had enabling legislation in Ontario since 1996. In a few short years conservation easements have become a very important tool in the preservation of natural lands.

The easement is signed by the landowner, who is the easement donor, and an organization like the Rideau Waterway Land Trust, who is the party receiving the easement. The Land Trust accepts the easement with the understanding that they must enforce the terms of the easement in perpetuity. A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property while re-



taining private ownership of the land. With an easement, you as landowner, can restrict public access to it, and sell, give or pass your property to whomever you may wish. An easement helps you control future use and development on your land and enlists the Rideau Waterway Land Trust to help, even after the property changes hands. It is different than more familiar rights-of-ways or access easements that usually involve a narrow corridor across the property.

All conservation easements are not the same. The RWLT has a model easement, which it uses as a starting point. The easement agreement is then tailored to meet your needs, preserve the land's unique natural values, and the land preservation goals of the RWLT. These agreed upon restrictions could include

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COVER STORY CONTINUED...

such things as no subdividing of the property and no logging activity, thus ensuring your dream of preserving the natural features and wildlife habitat of your land. Conservation easements can apply to all or only a portion of your property.

An easement is written up in a legal agreement that records the agreed restrictions and ensures that they can be defended. Once it is signed and registered in the registry office, an easement will bind current and future owners to its terms. Changes can be made to the easement by mutual consent, but would likely occur only if the changes achieved the original intent or strengthen the easement's conservation value.

The Rideau Waterway Land Trust will take on the responsibility to occasionally monitor the property, usually through an annual, scheduled visit. If a present or future property owner or someone else violates the terms of the easement, the Trust will normally approach the person to correct the problem. The Trust has an obligation to protect the property to the extent of the terms of the legal agreement.

As well as the knowledge that the land you have stewarded so carefully will be protected in perpetuity, landowners donating conservation easements can receive a significant income tax benefit.

The tax receipt received is equivalent to the value of the conservation easement. The value of the conservation easement is determined by a qualified appraiser using the "before and after" method. Simply put, the appraiser assesses what the land was worth before the easement was granted, and what it was worth after – the difference is the value of the easement.

As a proportion of the value of the land, the value

of the conservation easement can vary tremendously. As an example, consider a piece of land where the fair market value is based largely on its potential to be developed into a cottage subdivision. Once the ability to subdivide and erect cottages has been removed, a significant portion of the land's fair market value is removed as well. The value of the easement, therefore, would equal a large percentage of the land value.

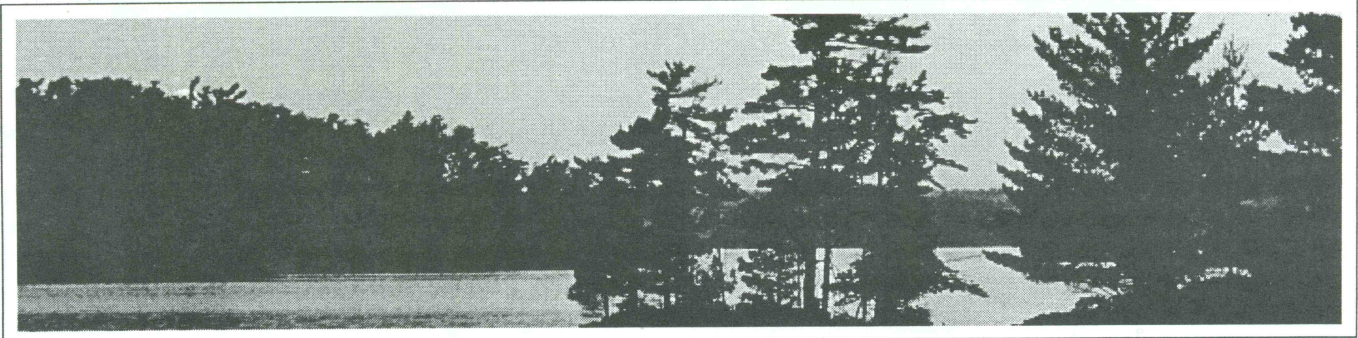
On areas or on lands where the development pressure isn't as strong, the same easement value would be much less.

In order to maximize the beneficial tax treatment of the donation, the gift should be certified by the Canadian Wildlife Service as a 'gift of ecologically sensitive land' under the Ecological Gifts Program.

If you would like to explore ways a conservation easement could be used to ensure that your dreams of preserving the natural features of your land are realized, give the Trust a call at 613-284-2010 or email info@rwt.org

DO YOU HAVE A SKILL YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

The Annual General Meeting is fast approaching. With several of our Board members retiring, the Trust is looking for a few experienced people to let their name stand for the Board of Directors. As a member of the Board, you will be contributing your skills, acting as advisors to the community committees, and volunteering as part of a team that works to preserve lands within the Rideau Corridor. The Board of Directors meets 5 times a year at 1 Jasper Ave. in Smiths Falls. If you would like to get involved as part of a team of volunteers from the Rideau community, call Sharon at the Trust office: 1-613-284-2010



KINGSTON WORKSHOPS

The Rideau Waterway Land Trust hosted three days of workshops at the Donald Gordon Centre in Kingston on March 20 – 22. March 20th was devoted to workshops for Eastern Ontario lawyers, accountants and financial planners. Presentations on conservation easements and the Ecogift program were presented to aid these professionals when working with their clients in estate planning issues. Friday, March 21, was set aside for an Ontario Land Trust Alliance policy day. The OLTA Board met to lay out OLTA's objectives and goals for the next year.

OLTA has seen tremendous growth over the past two years and now includes 38 member land trusts from Ontario as well as the Nature Trust of New Brunswick and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust. Together these groups own and manage over 600,000 acres of land for

the benefit of their local communities.

Saturday was set aside for volunteer training workshops. Forty-four land trust volunteers from across Eastern Ontario attended workshops on such topics as conservation easements, land sequestration techniques, U.N. Biosphere updates and fundraising.

The day was a tremendous success with several funders committing to sponsor the event next year. The Rideau Waterway Land Trust would like to thank the Trillium Foundation, the Metcalf Foundation, TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation and Parks Canada for their financial support.

MARK "AUGUST 2ND" ON YOUR CALENDAR!

Once again Vince Watters and his committee are organizing the 2003 Corn Roast set for August 2nd at Chaffey's Lockstation. This year marks the fifth anniversary of this popular event and important fundraiser which Parks Canada refers to as "the best event along the Rideau". Bill Diel will be returning as the headline entertainer. Last year Bill had Chaffey's (and surrounding area!) rocking with his tribute to **Jerry Lee Lewis**. Bill plays throughout North America and Europe and will be coming to Chaffey's following his 10 day show at the Calgary Stampede. He will be bringing along his friend, **Roy Orbison**, and together they promise a great show. Bill is looking forward to his return visit stating that "we are going to have a lot of fun; you people at Chaffey's have the best party of the summer!"

On a more serious note, the Trust considered cancelling this year's event because some of our key volunteers are getting a little older and therefore tire a little easier. Then we started to get telephone calls and e-mails from people asking the date because they didn't want to miss the show. Vince and I had one of those country meetings on the Davis Lock Road and after a little arm twisting he agreed "I just need a push to get started and we'll do it again". If you can help out with this event give Sharon a call at the office 613-284-2010. Once again we are indebted to Allen Greig and his team from Enbridge Gas who are returning to cook all the corn and hamburgers and Alec McKinney who once again will prepare the beef barbeque.

RWLT WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

The Rideau Waterway Land Trust would like to extend a warm to the following individuals who have joined the Trust since January 1 as new members and supporters.

John Adams, Robert Amalia, Harold Beam, William Beckett, Richard and Gwen Bunnell, Mark Chojnacki & Linda Nuttall, Geoffery Conacher, Avery Cox, Ron and Marlene Dobson, Wendy Ellis, David Fair, Donald Field, Robert Gardiner, Scott Garner, Stanley Gault, Thomas Geiger, William Hamlen, John Harwood, Charles Higgins, John Hurt, Jane Johnston, Leslie Jolliffe, James Kelly, Eileen Lindsay, Mary MacCallum, Susan MacTaggart, Oscar Malan, John Mark, Peter Newgard, Mark Phillips, Brian Saunders, John Smith, Roy and Judith Smith, Mark Spencer, Judith Sutcliffe, James & Doris Sutherland, David Taylor, William Teschke, Margaret Thompson, Peter and Virginia Van de Water, Zeev Vered, John Waddington, Donald Wallen, David Wisehaupt, and Suzanne Yeaton

RWLT MAKES PRESENTATION TO FOCA LAKE STEWARDS COMMITTEE

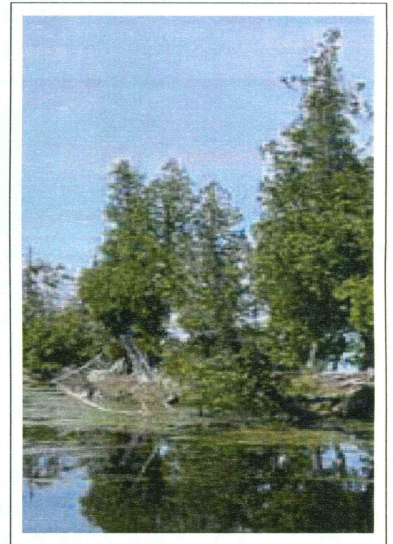
On Saturday, April 19, Dave and Sharon Walker were invited to speak to the FOCA (Federation of Ontario Cottage Associations) Lake Stewards Committee at their annual workshop held in Toronto. Dave was told to expect 40 lake stewards from across Ontario to be present. The room was filled to capacity with 70 people in attendance who wanted to know about the land trust movement, its successes and how to go about becoming involved. The subject of land trusts continues to generate interest from waterfront owners.

MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT CO-OP SHOWS THEIR SUPPORT

Once again Mountain Equipment Co-op has shown their support of the Trust and the land acquisition program by donating a 16' Prospector canoe as a raffle prize. The draw for this canoe will be held the evening of the Corn Roast, August 2nd. The tickets are \$5 each or three for \$10, a small price to pay for a chance to win this beautiful canoe and spend your weekends exploring the lakes and rivers. The Trust would like to thank Mark Van Kooy and his staff at the Ottawa Mountain Equipment Co-Op store for their continued support.

THE TRUST ANNOUNCES NEW PROJECT

The Trust has reached an agreement to acquire the remaining 12 islands in the area known as The Bog in Newboro Lake. The Bog is a Class 1 wetland located in the northeast corner of the lake. In addition to being a Class 1 wetland this area is also designated as a fish sanctuary, an ANSI (area of natural and scientific interest) and has been identified as a key area of interest within the UN Biosphere Reserve. RWLT members have expressed a keen interest in having the Trust acquire areas of high ecological significance and this property certainly meets the criteria. In order to complete the acquisition of these islands the Trust must raise \$30,000. The campaign is off to a good start with a \$10,000 donation from a long time supporter of The Trust. Although this donor would like to remain anonymous, they would like to challenge other Trust supporters to assist with this project. With acquisition of these 12 islands, all 34 islands in The Bog will be safeguarded and another important step will be accomplished to preserve this internationally recognized ecological site.



How Can You Help?

The Land Trust is extending an invitation to all property owners in the Bobs and Crow Lakes area to join with your friends and neighbours to become part of the land trust movement. Whether you want to become a member, make a donation, or talk to the Trust about your dreams of seeing your land preserved in its natural state, please contact us. I am sure you will agree that you owe it to future generations to work together to preserve some of the natural lands in the Bobs and Crow Lakes area.

Canadian tax receipts will be issued for all donations and membership fees.

THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO

The Rideau Waterway Land Trust gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, which receives annually \$100 million in government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.