



## Chair's Message

Spring has unfolded exactly as hoped. RWLT's 25th year of operation proceeds. The purchase of the Warren property was completed and baseline science studies are underway. A collection of 25 stories about RWLT's accomplishments and hopes for the future have been compiled, with several printed in this issue. COVID-19 restrictions are easing. Our trails are open and busy. It's great when we can tick all the boxes!

Continue to be safe. We hope to see our supporters in person sometime soon.  
Peter Hannah

## We Did It! Warren Nature Reserve Acquired

The 30 ha (74 ac) property that is now becoming the Warren Nature Reserve was acquired by RWLT in April 2021 after a very compressed 10 week fundraising campaign.

Similar to the Rock Dunder campaign in 2006, the Warren project attracted a wide range of donors. Some donations were in recognition of Don Warren's work in preserving the heritage of the Rideau Canal, others had been Don's students at Rideau District High School. Some had studied biology, or want to support future studies, at the nearby Queen's University Biological Station. Others simply wanted to see a sensitive piece of Opinicon Lake frontage kept in its natural state for the benefit of future generations.

The COVID-19 pandemic also played a role. People slowed down, got outside for some safe exercise and appreciated the benefits that nature has to offer if we have the foresight to protect it. It didn't hurt to have travellers staying at home and considering other ways to spend that money!



*175 donors helped RWLT  
acquire a new nature reserve!*

It was anything but certain at the beginning but the pandemic seemed to help get this project done, raising the target of \$435,000 in record time. The community came through, again – thank you! A total of 175 donors contributed to the project. Major contributions were received from the Ontario Greenlands Conservation Partnership Program (thanks to local MPP Steve Clark for his support) and the Echo Foundation.

*Preserving special places in our community.*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Chair's Message

Land Acquired!

25 Stories Series

Trail News

Cottage Rental

Wetland Roles

Critters

Donate Today!

## Celebrating 25 Years

*RWLT works with:*

- American Friends of Canadian Conservation
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance

## 25 Stories Series

In celebrating RWLT's 25th anniversary, 25 stories about past milestones help focus us for the future. Selected ones appear in this newsletter, and all will be posted on the RWLT website.



*RWLT is celebrating 25 years of success*

### Support from our American Neighbours

**25 Stories Series:** Many Americans are drawn to the nearby Rideau corridor watershed for the relatively natural setting, a place to enjoy fishing, hunting, boating, and serenity. RWLT has received generous support from our American friends for many years now, including charitable gifts of money, securities and land.

Over 10 years ago one such land gift was made by the Van Niel family. The family had owned property on Cranberry Lake for over 60 years. With the intention of protecting a portion of their land in perpetuity, the Van Niels decided to donate 10 hectares (25 acres) to the Land Trust. As part of our land portfolio, the property is now known as the Van Niel Woodlands, and the family enjoys their adjacent summer cottages while taking satisfaction in having contributed to the protection of valuable habitat for distinctive flora and fauna.

Through a partnership RWLT has with American Friends of Canadian Conservation (AFCC), American donors can receive US tax credits for charitable gifts of money, securities, and real estate to Canadian land trusts. For a modest fee, AFCC guides the land donation process that integrates US and Canadian tax and legal aspects for a win-win-win (the last being for ecological conservation). Visit [www.conservecanada.org](http://www.conservecanada.org) for more information.



*AFCC can help American donors support RWLT*

### Edwards Properties

**25 Stories Series:** Gordon Cameron Edwards was an Ottawa valley lumber baron and a one time owner of 24 Sussex Drive. His son, Maxwell Edwards, and his wife

Mary Elizabeth Edwards had four daughters: Mary, Elizabeth, Janet and Ann. The efforts of Elizabeth and Janet resulted in RWLT owning two key properties in the Portland area.



*Ducks, owls and other birds have a permanent home at RWLT's Edwards property*

Janet White and Elizabeth Edwards developed their conservation ethic from their mother Mary, a botany graduate from McGill University. Janet was a founding member of the RWLT and served on the Board for several years.

Elizabeth was a life-long bird watcher and hiker. She was motivated to acquire several properties that she considered of vital importance to various bird species including ducks, other waterfowl and owls. One of the properties included a large pond that is still managed as waterfowl habitat by Ducks Unlimited Canada.

In the late 1990s, Elizabeth approached RWLT about protecting her properties forever. A two step process ensued. A conservation easement was entered into in 2003, prohibiting development or major tree removal. This was followed 10 years later by the donation of the fee simple title to the properties as a bequest in her will, making use of tax advantages under the federal Ecological Gifts Program. Visit [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/ecological-gifts-program](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding/ecological-gifts-program) for more information. Just as she wanted, the ducks and owls have a permanent home as RWLT continues to protect her properties.

*RWLT is a charity that has been conserving important natural lands and habitat in the Cataraqui and Rideau watersheds since 1996 to support our community into the future.*

## Managing Invasive Species

*25 Stories Series:* One of the main threats consistently found during monitoring visits to RWLT properties is a variety of invasive plant species. The most common ones include European Buckthorn, garlic mustard, dog-strangling vine, and wild

parsnip. Collectively, invasive plants reduce agricultural productivity, reduce forest regeneration, negatively impact human health, and pose a huge threat to native biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Dog strangling vine (DSV) is a close relative of the common milkweed, the only host plant for the monarch butterfly. Because of the close relationship between DSV and milkweed, monarchs are tricked into laying their eggs on the vine instead, where their caterpillars won't find the nutrition they need. DSV also grows in dense communities, creating shade and releasing chemicals to prevent other plants from growing.

Once possible problem species have been identified, management control plans are developed. Considerations include: risk to nature and humans, scale of invasion, methods options, timing to conduct, and person-power. Some species can be easily pulled – like garlic mustard. However, the plentiful seeds produced and the fact that they can lie dormant in the soil for years makes it likely that we will have to revisit the site again and again. More information is available at [www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca](http://www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca).



*Invasive species affect native species so control is needed*

Luckily, there are many in the community that enjoy getting their hands a little dirty for a good cause. With a little luck, post-COVID we hope to prevent the spread of invasive species and protect the health of our properties into the future. To indicate an interest to help, contact RWLT.

## Trail News

Trails at Rock Dunder and J H Fullard Nature Reserves are available **sunrise to sunset May 15<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>**. Outside of that period please let Nature renew at those properties.

At **Rock Dunder**: COVID-19 protocols will be in place (please wear a mask at check-in) Last admission one hour before sunset. **New in 2021**: day passes are \$5 per hiker; \$15 for groups of three to six hikers all arriving in the same vehicle. Season passes are \$60 -- valid for the season pass holder and up to five guests arriving with the season pass holder and in the same vehicle. Day and season passes for Rock Dunder can be purchased online at [www.rwlt.org](http://www.rwlt.org)

## Getaway Cottage Rental – booked for 2021!

Covington Cottage, RWLT's off-grid getaway, is 100% booked for 2021! Reservations for time slots in 2022 will be available 11 months in advance. Book online at [www.rwlt.org](http://www.rwlt.org)

## The RWLT Team

**Honourary Chair**  
Hon. Bob Rae

**Chair**  
Peter Hannah

**Secretary**  
Hunter McGill

**Vice Chair**  
John Grass

**Treasurer**  
Peter Walker

**Members**  
Buzz Boles  
Mike Freeman  
Erica Kendrick  
Steve Knechtel  
Jim MacLachlan

**Staff**  
Makayla Dewit  
Alyssa Fiedler  
Caroline Spang

## Wetlands – Many Natural Roles

Those 'big mud puddles' have many values. Wetlands are home to numerous species of plants and animals, and provide complementary habitat to the forests and meadows often surrounding them. Wetlands provide a place for flood waters to temporarily stay. And in some, humans can fish and boat.

As well, wetlands not only clean the air but also store carbon. Like all plants, those in wetlands undergo photosynthesis, during which they take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and store it in the green part of the plant. Even more gets stored in the organic matter — in the roots in the soil. And those roots stay there in this kind of ecosystem; they don't decompose very much because the soil is so wet and they just keep accumulating more and more soil over time.

So, not only are wetlands important for their natural heritage values like biodiversity, species at risk and habitat, but their natural functions contribute to safe, clean and resilient communities. Many wetlands have been lost in the past from human disturbance and destruction. Their values, or natural ecological services, are too great for this to continue. And that is why wetlands are a high-ranking criteria when assessing 'lands' to be protected by land trusts. (For example, wetlands are part of RWLT holdings on Brassils Creek and Big Rideau and Newboro Lakes). Federally, Canada is approaching 17% of land area, including wetlands, protected today, with a goal of 30% by 2030 (in keeping with targets identified by the United Nations). You can help – use the donation form insert or donate to RWLT online.



*Wetlands provide many benefits and rank high for protection by Land Trusts*

## Critters

### *Protect Yourself From Ticks/Lyme disease*

Ticks are commonly found in the Rideau Waterway area, especially in woods and long grass. While enjoying the outdoors include measures to protect yourself and loved ones -- stay on marked trails, cover up, consider using a repellent and check yourself after outings. Check local health unit websites for more details.



*Protect yourself and loved-ones from ticks*



*Expect to see lots of gypsy moth caterpillars eating tree leaves this year*

### *Gypsy Moths*

Scientists are warning that 2021 is shaping up to be a bumper year for the invasive species. The population of gypsy moths is cyclical, with large outbreaks every seven to 10 years. A gypsy moth caterpillar can eat about one square metre of leaves as it goes from a little tiny new caterpillar to a great big adult one that's ready to pupate, and isn't fussy about what it eats, either. When larger caterpillars are in a feeding frenzy, their "frass," or excrement, falls from above. The sound it makes hitting the ground has been compared to the pitter-patter of rain drops. Besides the defoliation of leaves and stress when they strip trees of foliage, bird nests become more visible to predators. Visit [www.ontario.ca/page/gypsy-moth](http://www.ontario.ca/page/gypsy-moth) for more information