



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2006 - March 2007

VICTORIA LAND AND WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am pleased to introduce our April 2006 to March 2007 Annual report. The Council - in collaboration with several local and provincial organizations - supports and initiates a wide range of water, forestry, agriculture, and wildlife projects. Almost all projects are implemented by working with partners who usually provide funding and / or staff support. Volunteers play a significant role in each of our major projects.

Highlights of the 2006 – 2007 report

Dave Pridham, the founding coordinator of the Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council, retired in 2006, triggering a chain of events that occupied much council time and energy. We were concerned about the continuity of our projects and the vision of our council; we had depended on Dave's experience, contacts, management skills, vision and personal charm. We wondered how we would get along without him.

Everything has turned out well, thanks to thoughtful commitment from council members and the Ministry of Natural Resources staff.

One of the most important decisions was made in 2005 – 2006 when John Snider agreed to serve an extra year as chair. As a result, when Peter Carter, an MNR biologist, was assigned as interim coordinator in September, 2006, he was helped through his initiation by a very experienced chair rather than me, with only 3 years council experience. Thanks, John. At one point we were faced with a scenario in which the coordinator position would not be replaced on a permanent basis and John wrote an important letter to the MNR pointing out the need for a full time coordinator in order to maintain the momentum of some of the important new initiatives the council was undertaking.

Similarly, long term members of our council, with more than ten years of experience, decided to stay on to provide continuity for our projects rather than retire from council in a time of upheaval. As the new chair starting in February, 2007, I relied heavily on Dave Simser, Ron Fevang, Paul Laver and, as mentioned, John Snider. And, thank you, to the whole council for your support.

Peter Carter proved to be a quick study; we trusted him and as our projects and workshops went forward as planned (predator concerns, the alternate energy symposium, the woodlot conference, the credit for product programme with Fleming college, the invasive species / rail trail project, decommissioning of wells and stream and fishery management zones issues) we began to hope that Peter could become our permanent coordinator.

The Ministry decided, wisely, to fill the coordinator position permanently and in March, 2007, 156 candidates, Peter Carter among them, applied for the position. I was invited, as the new chair, to be part of the selection team on equal standing with MNR staff and in April we chose Doug van Hemessen as the new, permanent, coordinator of the Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council.

It was difficult to say good-bye to Peter who had served us so well as temporary coordinator- and who would have made a wonderful permanent coordinator- but it was also very easy to welcome Doug van Hemessen. Doug's related work experience is rich and varied; his work with landowners as a Wetland Habitat Fund representative and his familiarity with the new Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide will serve our council well.

The annual tree sales at the end of April typified the whole year. Peter's temporary assignment had expired in March and Doug was not scheduled to begin his work until May. There was much concern about shepherding the details of this foundation project; this was where we put forward our public face, where we met landowners and collaborated with them on the future of our land and water. This was our brand. We could not fail. Or could we? New faces assigned by the MNR to help us came up with unfamiliar plans and confusing numbers and Dave Pridham was not around to explain them to us.

Nevertheless, volunteers put up their hands, schedules were made and on the appointed day I drove down to the cold storage unit to do my bit by packing seedling orders.

Dave Pridham was there. He had volunteered; his new position with the large woodland project at Trent University allowed him to do this. Dave did not take charge; he followed instructions like all the rest of us, there-by demonstrating faith in the new process and it was great to work with him again. In the end, despite a few glitches, many trees went into the ground through the hard work of landowners.

The council will always be successful if this spirit of cooperation and volunteerism prevails.

I am looking forward to next year.

Dan Bone, Council Chair

COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Having begun the position of Stewardship Coordinator only in May 2007 it's a challenge for me to reflect on the activities of 2006. However, I bring a great deal of land and water stewardship experience and a long term familiarity with the Ontario Stewardship program to the role. I'm impressed at the scope and level of the work this group has done and I look forward to working hard with this Council to continue with the activities described in this report and undertaking new endeavours to support good stewardship in the Victoria landscape.

Doug van Hemessen, Stewardship Coordinator

BACKGROUND

Ontario Stewardship is a program of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). Each southern Ontario County or municipality is provided with a Stewardship Coordinator, office support and annual project seed funding by MNR. Stewardship Councils are groups of community volunteers and agency representatives who develop the work program and oversee its implementation and other related activities. The **Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council** first met in February of 1996, and has operated since 1997 according to an Annual Work Plan.

COUNCIL VISION

The community¹, working together with collective resources, will implement a sustainable, effective and comprehensive environmental stewardship program.

¹ Community: The community means all agencies, associations, land interest groups, landowners, residents, and volunteers who work collaboratively.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council will provide a forum for developing working relations to improve environmental health and long term sustainability within the community. The Council will strive to connect otherwise unconnected groups, associations and individuals; enable community members to direct the focus of environmental efforts; and enhance the strength of the community.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Local stewardship priorities were determined during the first 2-3 years (1996 - 98), based on public questionnaires at the Lindsay Central Exhibition and Council Director discussions at regular meetings. The primary interest / concern of City of Kawartha Lakes residents is the maintenance and improvement of both surface and ground water quality. Tree planting and provision of forest management information to landowners through workshops and other means are high priorities, with invasive species becoming an emerging priority. The Stewardship Council's Strategic Plan of January 2004 defines Council priorities and provides a guide for addressing these priorities.

At the same time, we try to respond to emerging concerns. For example:

- Over 200 interested residents attended the Alternate Energy Symposium. This is a significant indication of the priority that the community puts on this topic.
- Rising awareness of the influence of private wells on groundwater quality has led to the Ministry of the Environment creating a Drinking Water Stewardship fund for implementation beginning 2007. We are hopeful that we can take advantage of this program to further progress in our proper decommissioning of abandoned and unused wells project.

Council Membership

Eleven Council Directors represent various agriculture, forestry, cottage and land interest (naturalists, hunters, fur harvesters) organizations. Resource agencies represented include Kawartha Conservation, Sir Sandford Fleming College, and the Ministry of Natural Resources. The local office of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food provides significant support to several projects and our Stewardship Coordinator.

Council Director Information - May, 2007

Name	Organizations Represented
Dan Bone – Council Chair Fenelon Township	Kawartha Field Naturalists, rural resident
Glenn Baxter – Vice Chair Fenelon Township	Farmer, Victoria Cattlemen’s Association
John Snider – Past Chair Fenelon Township	SSFC Soils Instructor, retired; Victoria County Sheep Producer, farmer
Dave Simser – Past-Chair Fenelon Township	Victoria Federation of Agriculture, Lindsay and District Fur Harvesters; farmer
Paul Laver – Past-Chair Carden Township	Cottage Association on Upper Lake Dalrymple; rural landowner / CKL, Ward 1
Ron Fevang Lindsay	Kawartha Chapter of the Ontario Woodlot Association, urban resident
Bruce McKeown Mariposa Township	Kawartha Haliburton Maple Syrup Producers, Victoria Dairy Producers, farmer
Laurel Whistance – Smith Manvers Township	Rural landowner, Manvers Township; MNR Biologist, retired
Terry Parker Mariposa Township	Farmer, Victoria Soil and Crop Improvement Association
Al MacPherson Lindsay	SSFC Parks / Recreation Coordinator, retired; Trent Univ. Professor; urban resident
Kristie Virgoe	Kawartha Conservation, Manager, Environmental Protection and Restoration
Doug van Hemessen Stewardship Coordinator	Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council, urban resident, Ministry of Natural Resources

PROJECT SUMMARIES – April 2006 – MARCH 2007

WATER / AQUATIC HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Kawartha Lakes Shoreline Management Initiative

Our Council continues to provide a total of \$5,000 each year, with \$2,000 dedicated to on-site activities, for this core program of **Kawartha Conservation**. Other partners include the Scugog Millennium Project, the City of Kawartha Lakes, schools, youths, volunteers, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Durham Stewardship Council.

The Stewardship Council is also involved with the development of a larger regional shoreline management initiative - the **Lakeland Alliance**. Is using a \$80,000 award from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to develop a Strategic Plan and pursue funding opportunities to sustain a regional shoreline management program.

Community Stream Steward Project

This program originated in the headwaters of the Pigeon River, in the City of Kawartha Lakes, and is based on the premise that more streams can be improved if an individual or community group takes the lead on individual streams. Using a collaborative approach and supporting volunteers, rather than randomly working on isolated restoration projects, is a most attractive solution to the various program partners. This is a natural fit for private citizens, with their local knowledge and a personal stake, with agencies offering support and a variety of tools to accomplish the job.

Program partners include the Ontario Wildlife Foundation as the lead partner. In 2003, the Ontario Trillium Foundation granted \$225,000 to get the program through the 3-year pilot period. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters administers the program and provides office space for the Project Coordinator at their head office in Peterborough. Other Steering Committee partners include the Durham, Peterborough, and Northumberland Stewardship Councils; Peterborough District of the Ministry of Natural Resources; Ontario Stewardship Rangers; Kawartha and Otonabee Conservation Authorities; Sir Sandford Fleming College; and the Watershed science Centre. Various other community members have all contributed to the program.

The Project also developed a "Stream Health Checklist" for landowners and other interested parties.

Agricultural Stewardship Projects

To provide information services, financial incentives and organize demonstration projects to assist farmers with farm and water stewardship practices.

- Advice is regularly provided to landowners by phone and while attending Stewardship displays at fairs, farm shows and other events.
- Occasional demonstration projects.
- Promotion of other relevant programs such as Ducks Unlimited, Wetland Habitat Fund. Support for the Environmental Farm Plan.

Decommissioning Abandoned Wells

The great number of unused / abandoned wells in the rural community not properly decommissioned is of great concern. There are several variables that affect susceptibility of abandoned wells with regard to groundwater contamination, e.g. distance from a source of contamination; whether uphill or downhill from a source of contamination; soil type. It is our hope that landowners can safely decommission lower risk abandoned wells in a less complex manner. Our Council took the lead on forming a committee of agencies and stakeholders that developed and recommended options to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and provided Environmental Bill of Rights Registry comments suggesting revisions to the current legislation. We hope that this will lead to a local pilot project that can be used as a trial for expanding such a program on a provincial basis.

Farm Pond Management Workshop

Approximately 25 participants, but it was determined afterwards that the *Voice of the Farmer*, which was the main form of advertising for the workshop, was distributed late by Canada Post and received by landowners the day after the event. Follow up inquiries indicated that there is considerable interest and similar workshop should be held again – will plan for spring 2008. Speaker topics included pond design considerations, herd health, and landowner experiences. The workshop was organized with the assistance from the Victoria Cattlemen's Association, Victoria Federation of Agriculture, and Durham Land Stewardship.

Recreational Pond Workshop

Sixty-five participants enjoyed presentations about the biology, construction, and maintenance of rural recreational ponds. Fleming College in Lindsay hosted. Organized in partnership with the Peterborough County Stewardship Council and a companion piece to "A Landowner's Guide to Constructing and Maintaining a Rural Pond" booklet.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Community Tree Plant, April / May 2006

This annual project is completed in partnership with Kawartha Conservation and volunteers from the Kawartha Field Naturalists and the Kawartha Chapter of the Ontario Woodlot Association. Trees are ordered by bulk tender and delivered from the Kemptville nursery to the cold storage facility in Newcastle. Trees for CKL were sorted for individual landowner orders and moved to Kawartha Conservation at Ken Reid Park, for distribution on last Friday/Saturday of April.

26,000 trees were sold and distributed to approximately 120 CKL landowners for planting on abandoned land, wildlife habitat enhancement, windbreaks, and for shoreline stabilization projects. Project costs include seedling purchase, shipping, cold storage and are recovered by tree sales.

Significant staff time providing information services to additional landowners with requests for tree planting information.

Annual Lindsay Woodlot Conference - Feb 2007

The theme of this event continues to be "Your Woodlot...Opportunities and Challenges". Partners include local community volunteers (a sawmiller, forest consultant), OMAFRA, Ontario Woodlot Association, Ontario Forestry Association, Maple Syrup Producers Assoc., and Stewardship Councils from Peterborough, Northumberland and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

Speakers featured presentations including forest genetics and tree seed collection; annual forest health update; small woodlots – declining tree health and species, declining songbird

populations and other concerns; Regenerating oaks, black cherry, basswood and other mast (fruit and nut species), Preventing rural crime; Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program Update; Invasive species in our natural areas; burls and woodturning.

25 commercial and educational displays.

160 landowners and forest industry personnel attended

It is estimated that the management of least 1200 hectares of woodland were influenced by this conference.

Invasive Species Education

Invasive plants such as Buckthorn, Dog-Strangling Vine and Garlic Mustard are now well established in our natural areas. They have the potential to drastically alter woodland ecosystems and have significant impacts on forest productivities and rural economies. A basic strategy to initiate control is to provide landowners with information on identification of these plants, the effects if these plants become established, and preferred control options. In December 2006, the draft forest extension note was finalized by the Victoria Land and Water Stewardship and submitted for peer review.

Large Woodlands Conservation Cooperative

This project is the continuation of a 5-6 year initiative, led by the Trent University Natural Science Department and concerned with the disappearance of large areas of upland hardwood and "forest interior habitat" in the GTA and surrounding areas. Partners include Trent University, Peterborough Field Naturalists, Conservation Authorities, Stewardship Councils of Peterborough, Northumberland and the City of Kawartha Lakes and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The Ontario Trillium Foundation has provided funding to hire and support a Project Coordinator for 3 days / week for three years.

2006 activities included a Kawartha Field Naturalist tour of Altberg Tract - west of Kinmount, a landowner and neighbours meeting in the Fleetwood Forest, demonstration marking for stand improvement the Fleetwood Forest (CKL), two tree planting workshops in Millbrook and Tyrone, demonstration marking for stand improvement in the Ganaraska Forest, and a forest health article in the Oak Ridges Moraine Stewardship newsletter.

Wildlife and Natural Heritage Management

Problem Wildlife

Following up on the very successful Predator Management Information Event held in March 2006 Glen Baxter Chaired special meetings of the Council that included guest representatives from the City of Kawartha Lakes, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Ontario Forestry Association, Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency, Ontario Cattlemen's Association, and the Environmental Farm Plan. Follow-up will be continued through 2007.

OTHER PROJECTS, INFORMATION SERVICES

“A Landowner’s Guide to Constructing and Maintaining a Rural Pond”

Peterborough County Stewardship Council facilitated the production of this landowner guide which covers a range of topics such as: applicable permits, site selection, design, management, and maintenance issues.

International Plowing Match

In 2006, The Stewardship Council participated in the “Natural Connections” tent at the International Plowing Match in Keene, Peterborough County. Local Stewardship Councils provided land stewardship information including services and funding sources for landowners to complete projects. A walking tour of an adjacent woodlot and mechanical tree planter demonstration were also included.

Solar and Wind Energy Symposium

This very successful event was developed with Sir Sanford Fleming College students through the “Credit for Product” partnership between the Stewardship Council and the College. On March 15, 2007, approximately 200 people enjoyed exhibits, speakers, and discussion about solar and wind energy technology for residences, farms, and businesses. Presenters were:

Blane Harvey, the principal of Fleming’s Frost Campus, gave a brief overview of some of the initiatives the campus is involved in.

Darlene Dove, a climate change researcher with the Ministry of Natural Resources and a graduate of the Ecosystem Management Technology program at Fleming, discussed climate change, with a special focus on what the ramifications of this global crisis might mean for the province of Ontario.

J.P Pawliw, from Generation Solar in Peterborough, outlined how using solar energy technology can shrink the homeowner’s monthly energy bills as well as their ecological footprint

Steve Eng, from Enviro-Energy Technologies, spoke about ways wind technology can help the home owner generate their own power, reducing their reliance on the provincial grid

(image on hard copy only)

the Exhibitor’s hallway, Solar and Wind Energy Symposium

Stewardship information and extension services

Telephone information services can involve up to 25% of staff time during peak periods.

Information provided includes:

how / where to access environmental services

searching for sources of information or which agency is responsible for certain concerns

information about working around water and which agency provides necessary permits

water well information

answering concerns re forest pests and health of individual shade trees

tree planting information (e.g. what species on what site), techniques and where to buy trees

forest harvest information

abundant wildlife problems

questions re environmental best management practices

The **Stewardship Council Display** is primarily a static display, but attended during high traffic periods by Council Directors and the Stewardship Coordinator at local fairs and other events - e.g. water well workshops, the woodlot conference, the Fenelon Fair, the Lindsay Central Exhibition, and the East Central Farm Show. It is often set up in conjunction with the Environmental Farm Plan display.

The **Stewardship Council Bulletin Board** - a considerable amount of resource materials is picked up by individuals due to its strategic location outside the OMAF office in the Ontario Government Building at 322 Kent Street West

Information products - "Extension Notes" published by the **Landowner Resource Centre** and other info products are distributed at fairs, trade shows, workshops, woodlot conference, and stewardship bulletin board, included as a part of our tree planting application package, and in response to information requests during telephone calls to the Stewardship Coordinator.

Dave Pridham Retirement

November 22, at the Bonfire BBQ Restaurant, Lindsay a VLWSC celebration was held to honour Dave Pridham, who retired as the original Stewardship Coordinator who held the position for twelve years out of his many years with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Nearly thirty past and present Stewardship Council members and spouses attended. Speakers included Dave Simser, John Snider and other former Council Members. Highlight included a VLWSC Certificate of Appreciation presented to Dave and a Homemade Buckthorn walking stick presented by Dave Simser.

The Ministry of Natural Resources held a celebration at the Peterborough Office, with about eighty people attending. Speeches and presentations came from Glen McLeod, Steve Wilkins, Les Selby, John Snider. Highlights included a Recognition Plaque from Ontario Stewardship and a gift certificate for a new crossbow and hunting supplies.

(image on hard copy only)

John Snider (left) presents a gift of appreciation to Dave Pridham

FINANCIAL REPORT

The total value of all VLWSC partner contributions (financial support, project supplies and staff / volunteer time) **exceeds \$270,000**. The Victoria Land and Water Stewardship Council would like to thank these partners for their contributions to local stewardship activities.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT - FISCAL YEAR 2006-07			
CHEQUING ACCOUNT - 65-02814			
ITEM	DEPOSITS	CHEQUES	BALANCE
Balance forward Apr. 1, 2006			\$11,996.68
Deposits	\$73,349.72		
Expenses		\$88,739.40	
Balance at March 31, 2007			(\$3,393.00)
CIBC TREASURY BILL FUND			
ITEM	DEPOSITS	CHEQUES	BALANCE
Balance forward April 1, 2006			\$45,919.10
Interest	\$918.55		
Redemptions		nil	
Purchases			
Balance at March 31, 2007			\$46,837.65
NON-GOVERNMENT FUNDS			
CHEQUING ACCOUNT 20-31035			
ITEM	DEPOSITS	CHEQUES	BALANCE
Opening Balance Apr. 1/06			\$178.27
Service Charges*	\$28.90		
Balance at March 31, 2007			\$149.37
*May 5 - Statutory Notice Charge \$17.50			
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