

Corridor Park Rambler

Spring 2010

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This publication can also be viewed online at www.trca.on.ca



Member of Conservation Ontario

You're Invited to an Open House and Presentation!

Tuesday, May 4, 2010 • 7 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Lake Wilcox Community Centre • 81 Wildwood Avenue, Oak Ridges

Oak Ridges Corridor Park East Management Plan (Jefferson's Forest)

- This is your chance to have your say about the future management of Jefferson's Forest – including the planning of the trail system
- Healthy Yards display – learn about native plants and get great gardening tips!
- Learn about 2010 plans for the Oak Ridges Corridor Park
- Formal presentation begins at 7:10 p.m., with the opportunity for informal discussion afterward

Notes from Nature Lovers

By Jim and Sharon Bradley

The East Lands are a wonderful place to visit. It is hard to find such diverse habitat packed into such a relatively small area. Yet it is big enough to get lost and feel like you are in a true wilderness. Each season has its own special treats. Spring brings the migrating birds full of song along with the early woodland flowers. In summer, the breeding birds are raising their young and the forest is its verdant best. In fall, you have the migrating birds again and the autumn colourful trees. Bare trees in winter allow spectacular views along with the wonderful tree architecture. It is wise to remember, however, in all seasons there are steep grades – slippery when wet!

At the south end, you are immediately immersed in the forest. Indeed, people refer to the extreme south end as the “hemlock cathedral” where towering trees shade out the understory. As you move north and onto higher ground, the hemlocks give way to maple, birch and of course red oak, namesake of this moraine. Here you find an abundance of woodland flowers in spring. In some areas, there are carpets of trilliums. Later in the season, there is a variety of ferns, including the evergreen Christmas Fern. Of course, in fall the colours are brilliant. Farther north, you encounter the wetlands on the east with fabulous views from the ridges, and the canopy opens up to the west where the land descends to the sandy bottom of the dry kettle lake. Here you will find a variety of scrub trees, shrubs, and grasses that provide a completely new habitat.

Naturally, the wildlife varies with the different types of environment. Deep in the forest, you find birds that rely upon extensive tree cover for breeding and thus survival. These include the Scarlet Tanager, Pileated Woodpecker, Broad-winged Hawk, and Barred Owl. Of course, there are lots of other forest birds too like chickadees, nuthatches, and other woodpeckers and in the warm weather a variety of warblers. The trees also provide habitat for many small creatures like grey and red squirrels and chipmunks. At the forest edge, you can see other intriguing birds such as the Indigo Bunting and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The wetlands support birds such as the Swamp Sparrow and Wood Duck, and are home to a variety of frogs. The combination of wetland and forest make this area especially welcoming for salamanders. The fields and scrub welcome a different set of birds including the melodious Field Sparrow as well as Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Kingbird and Gray Catbird. For more information on any of these birds visit <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search> and search on the name. Throughout the park, numerous other wildlife roam the area including deer, coyotes, raccoons, foxes, and rabbits. The best way to identify their presence and travels is to find their tracks or other signs like scat (poop) in the soft earth or snow.

When you get the opportunity, enjoy your visit but please remember that you are the visitor. Please respect the habitat and the creatures that live there.

Trails in Jefferson's Forest

Do you hike, bike, or walk your dog in Jefferson's Forest? If so, you'll want to learn more about the plans for formalizing and improving the trail system.

A trail plan is being created for this area as part of the management plan that TRCA is developing for the lands we refer to as the Oak Ridges Corridor Park East lands (locally referred to as Jefferson's Forest). Over 200 hectares of conservation lands, this property boasts wetlands, forests, meadows, and fields. In addition to being home to a multitude of wildlife species, it also offers stunning scenery for hiking and walking.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on the draft trail plan that has been developed. What are your favourite places in the woods? What access points do you use? Do you take a short stroll, or a long hike? We look forward to hearing from you at the upcoming public meeting on Tuesday, May 4th – see the notice on the front cover of this newsletter for more information.



Scarlet Tanager

Garden Transformations



2005



2007

Contribute to a healthy community with your beautiful garden and be the envy of all your neighbours. Toronto and Region Conservation is committed to assist gardeners with the creation of beautiful landscapes that respect your community's natural heritage. Read the Garden Transformation story below and get inspired to learn more about nature, gardening, and landscape design.

A Family Affair

Soon after moving into their home in 2003, Kate and David converted much of their lawn to a more natural landscape. With the help of local environmental organizations and native plant gardening books, they created a unique garden that welcomes both wildlife and people.

Kate, David and their two young sons enjoy watching the many interactions taking place in this garden on a daily basis. A variety of birds frequent the garden, while snakes, rabbits, and toads stop by for the occasional visit. Kate is most interested however in the great diversity of insects that call this place home. She and her boys quietly approach bees, wasps, and butterflies, stopping just centimeters away, to watch them feed on flowers.

Motivation

A number of factors motivated Kate and David to create a more natural landscape in their yard. To begin with, their yard's compacted clay soil and heavy shade did not support a lush lawn. Instead of investing a lot of time and money on soil amendment and tree-trimming, they replaced a large proportion of their lawn with garden plots. Kate and David also wanted to share their love of nature with their sons. The boys plant and tend to wildflowers and shrubs as well as vegetables and herbs in a small raised bed. This past summer they were thrilled to discover monarch caterpillars in the garden.

Inspiration

Kate and David are inspired by Toronto's remnant natural areas as well as the Haliburton area where their family vacations. They carefully observe ecological interactions in these areas and attempt to replicate some of them in their garden. Books and the internet are helpful but nature and experimentation are the best teachers.

Gardening together in an organic manner with native plants keeps this family connected to one another and to nature. If your family is interested in taking on a similar project, have a look at our website at www.trca.on.ca or visit www.wildaboutgardening.org



Doors Open at Lake St. George

Immediately north of Oak Ridges Corridor Park East (Jefferson's Forest) is Lake St. George Field Centre, an outdoor environmental education centre owned and operated by Toronto and Region Conservation. It is used primarily by school classes on weekdays, by adult or youth groups on weekends, and by youth camps during the summer. For the security of all children living and learning on the 340-acre site, the property is not open to the public.

Lake St. George will be open on Saturday, June 12, as part of the "Doors Open Richmond Hill" event, when select heritage properties in the Town welcome visitors for one day.

You'll enjoy a variety of interesting experiences at picturesque Lake St. George. Explore Davies Hall, the 1908 estate house of the Davies and Snively families. Climb servants' stairs to the second storey, then descend into a basement that was part of the foundation of an 1856 log chateau of Henri Quetton St. George. Henri was son of Laurent, one of the original French royalist colonists of north Richmond Hill in 1800.

Step deeper back into history and view artifacts uncovered by archaeologists, who will be on hand to describe a 600-year old longhouse village and 9000-year old caribou hunting camp found here. Perhaps you'll even hear a ghost story or two!

Walk the property to discover historic buildings, remnants of orchards and gardens, and forests and wetlands.

Boat tours of the lake's beauty and wildlife will be a special highlight. Board a solar-powered, 23-passenger pontoon boat to cruise the natural shoreline of one of the Oak Ridges Moraine's deep kettle lakes.

Admission and tours are free of charge. Drop in between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., at 950 Bethesda Side Road, 400 metres east of Bayview Avenue. Bethesda Side Road is two kilometres north of Stouffville Road, or two kilometres south of Bloomington Road.

Upcoming Events

Oak Ridges Community Clean Up Saturday, April 24, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Come put the green back into our green spaces!

Location: check in to the Clean Up operation centre at the Connor Room in the Parks and Recreation building at the south west corner of Yonge St. and King Rd. (39 King Rd.)

For information and to pre-register contact us at:
orfe@oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca or call 905-773-7415

Trillium Trek in Jefferson Forest Saturday, May 15, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

An 8-kilometre loop with some steep hills. Meet in parking lot for Lake Wilcox's Sunset Beach Park, on north side of Bethesda Sideroad between Bayview and Olde Bayview Avenues. Bethesda Sideroad is 2 km north of Stouffville Road, or 2 km south of Bloomington Road. Leader Peter Attfield 905-773-3935.

Guided Bike Tour of Oak Ridges Corridor Park Sunday, May 30, 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.

It's a trip of five kilometres each way on a wide, smooth trail through gently rolling terrain. There are two steep hills you can walk up or down. Helmets are required. No dogs please. Cancelled if raining.

Meet at the spruce trees near the clubhouse of Bathurst Glen Golf Course, 12481 Bathurst Street. (North end of Richmond Hill, 1 kilometre north of Jefferson Sideroad or 1.4 kilometres south of King Road)

Reservations are preferred, but not essential:
Peter Attfield, 905-773-3935.

Hike Oak Ridges Corridor Park Sunday, June 6, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

A 5-kilometre hike at a slow to moderate pace. Meet in the parking lot of Bathurst Glen Golf Course, 12481 Bathurst Street, 1 km south of King Road, 1 km north of Jefferson Sideroad. We'll all drive in some cars to Catfish Pond near Lake Wilcox, then walk the trail back to Bathurst. Leader Ken Kishibe 647-866-7834.

Moraine Adventure Relay Saturday & Sunday June 19 -20

Enter a team for this 24 hour challenge event, and help support the Oak Ridges Trail Association. You paddle, run and hike your way from Gore's Landing on Rice Lake to the King Campus of Seneca College in teams of up to 15 participants.

For more information and to register go to
<http://moraineadventure.com>

Bike Oak Ridges Corridor Park Tuesday evening, June 22, 7 to 8:45 p.m.

A leisurely 10-kilometre ride from Bayview to Bathurst and back, on a smooth, rolling trail through former farmland, past pretty kettle lakes and wetlands. Meet at trail's small parking lot on the south side of Old Colony Road, 500 metres west of Bayview Avenue or 1.5 km east of Yonge Street. No dogs please. Cancelled if raining. Leader Peter Attfield 905-773-3935.

For dozens of hikes exploring other highlights of the Oak Ridges Moraine, visit www.oakridgestrail.org

A Busy Year at the Oak Ridges Corridor Park

The Oak Ridges Corridor Park is the last remaining natural link between the eastern and western parts of the Oak Ridges Moraine in the Town of Richmond Hill. It includes two kettle lakes, wetlands and forest: diverse habitats which are home to many wildlife and plant species. The Corridor Park is located between Bathurst Street and Bayview Avenue, approximately south of the community of Oak Ridges to Jefferson Sideroad and Stouffville Road. The property includes the Bathurst Glen Golf Course.

2009 marks the completion of Phase 2 of The Oak Ridges Corridor Park Initiative. This is a partnership between Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (ORMF), the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund – Environment Canada and the Town of Richmond Hill. This project implements a series of recommendations set forth in the Oak Ridges Corridor Park Management Plan (2006), a visionary document that establishes the principles, goals and objectives for the protection, restoration, public use, operation and maintenance of this sensitive area on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Accomplishments for 2009 include:

- 44 hectares of reforestation (66,100 seedlings of mixed variety);
- 2 hectares of buffer plantings (250 caliper trees);
- Three trail head signs, along with wayfinding signage installed along the 5 km pedestrian trail;
- 1.5 hectare wetland design;
- Native plant garden demonstration;
- One Yellow Fish Road event at two local schools regarding hazardous waste disposal; one community planting, two nature hikes; and one clean up; and
- Terrestrial and aquatic baseline data collection.

Contact Information

For information on the Oak Ridges Corridor Park East Lands Management Plan, or to sign up to receive the Rambler newsletter, contact:

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