



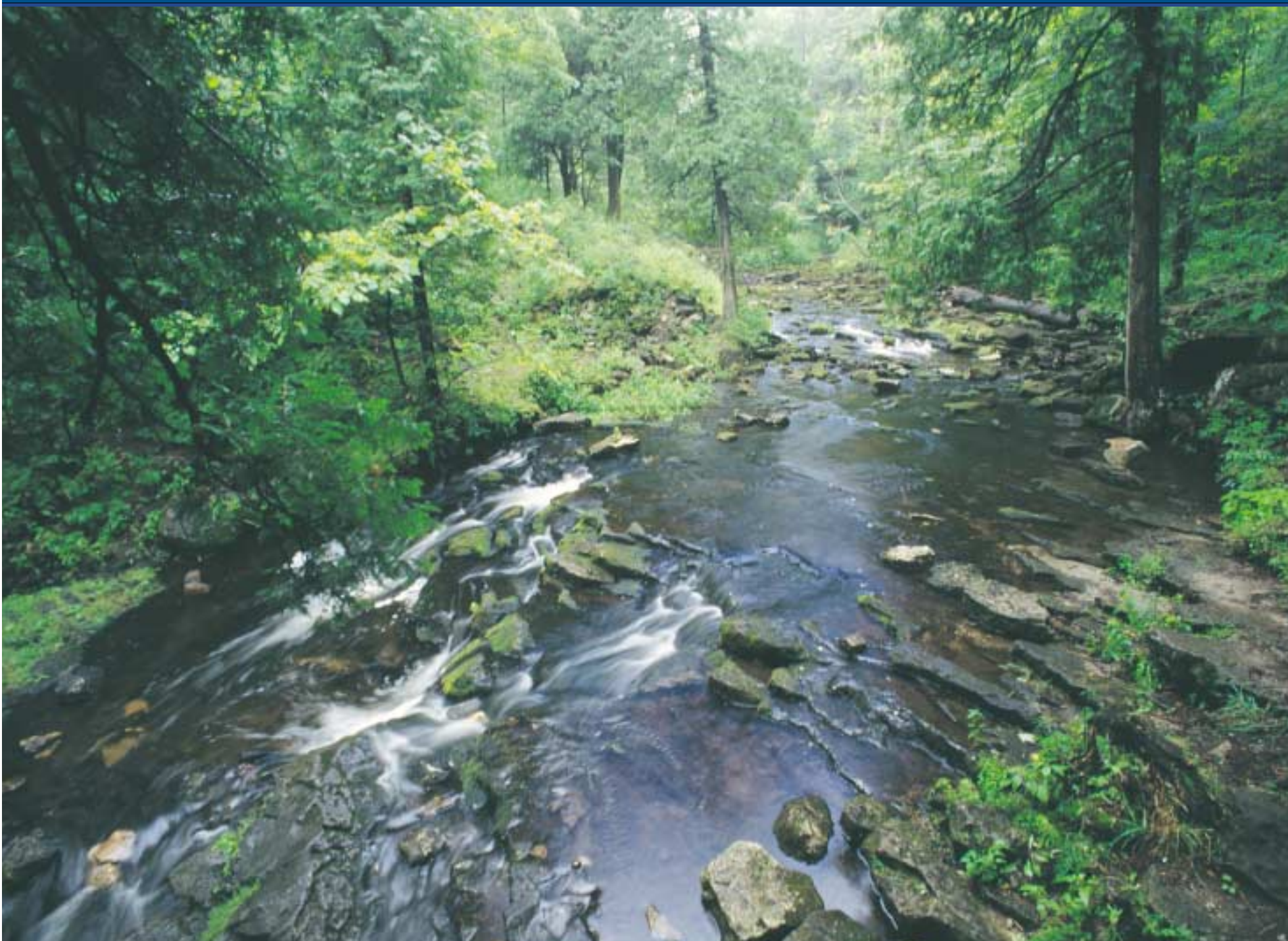
CONSERVATION



Fall/Winter 2003

R E V I E W

Volume VIII Issue II



Hamilton Conservation Authority

Healthy Streams...Healthy Communities!

www.conservationhamilton.ca

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Hamilton Conservation Authority

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Dundas Valley	905-627-1233
Fifty Point	905-525-2187
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2003 Members

of the Hamilton Conservation Authority

The Township of Puslinch and the City of Hamilton appoint representatives to the Board to oversee the budget and activities of the Conservation Authority. These appointed members speak on behalf of watershed residents.

City of Hamilton

Dave Braden, Chad Collins, Larry Di Ianni, Murray Ferguson, Chris Firth-Eagland, Jim Howlett Bill Kelly, Frank MacIntyre, Werner Plessl, Mark Shurvin

Township of Puslinch

Don McKay

Honourary Members

Thomas A. Beckett, Russ Powers, Alan Stacey



HCA Chief Administrative Officer, Scott Konkle.

Conservation Authority.

My message to staff during the weeks since I made that decision has been constant: there is still much to do — let's keep focused and get the job done.

I am pleased with the changes that have taken place during my tenure as CAO, including organizational restructuring, the partial implementation of our Conservation Strategy (which we report on in this edition), and preparation for Drinking Water Source Protection planning.

My leaving at the end of the year will not affect how well HCA continues its extremely important work on behalf of the community. One thing is

Conservation Strategy key to continued HCA success

As some of you may have heard by now, I am resigning my position as Chief Administrative Officer to move with my family to Nova Scotia after spending 14 years with the Hamilton

certain: HCA does not need a new strategy. Our path is clear and well marked.

HCA has a talented team in place whose job now is to implement our strategy and realize our objectives.

Our core businesses are watershed management and ecological rehabilitation, and the provision of outdoor recreation/environmental education. To effectively conduct our core businesses, we need human resources, marketing, community relations, finance, business development/loss prevention, administration and fundraising staff. It won't succeed without all of the parts working together. Everyone is important.

I believe we have a positive culture here at HCA — one based on truth, honesty and respect.

HCA will continue to provide the public with what watershed residents have come to expect from this organization — openness, honesty and a reputation for providing top-notch programs, services and environmental initiatives.

Until I leave and after I'm gone, I know HCA staff will have fun while continuing to "go the extra mile (1.6 kilometres)" as they work to implement our strategic vision for healthy streams and healthy communities.

Ounce of prevention worth pound of cure

Our position on conservation has always been that "conservation after the fact" is never as effective as practicing conservation on a daily basis. We believe the importance of conservation — from water and open space protection to reduced power and fossil fuel consumption — is best learned at an early age. HCA has accepted the challenge to make environmental education available as an everyday learning experience for Hamilton students.

We plan to augment our outdoor environmental education program in the Dundas Valley this fall with a second facility in Hamilton's east end. We are working closely with the Conservation Foundation of the Hamilton Region, which is committed to raising the necessary funds so that 12,000 students a year can take advantage of our program at either Dundas Valley or Mount Albion Conservation Area.

Like every other not-for-profit service provider, we

are under significant fiscal pressures that demand strong arguments for any kind of new program expenses. Helping to educate a new generation about the importance of conservation and the natural environment is, in our minds, a priority in light of serious environmental issues beginning to take shape in our new century.

All must understand the importance of spreading the message that every citizen, young and old, must develop responsible attitudes toward the environment. Too few people have embraced this concept for too long.



HCA Acting Chairman, Frank MacIntyre.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY REPORT

From increased water quality monitoring to acquiring more property under its land protection program, the Hamilton Conservation Authority met numerous strategic initiatives since it introduced its five-year action plan.

Water Management:

Water is the essential element necessary to sustaining all life. HCA has been awaiting provincial legislation that would give conservation authorities the lead in safeguarding drinking water sources after the Walkerton Inquiry recommended Ontario move quickly to protect water on a watershed basis.

Of the 188,000 homes in Hamilton, 128,000 draw water from Lake Ontario through the city's water system and the remaining 60,000 homes use well water. Lake Ontario is fed, in part, by surface water emptying into it from Hamilton watersheds.



HCA's Conservation Strategy considers it essential to enhance surface and groundwater quality monitoring and reporting programs in preparation for drinking water source protection planning. It started an 11-well monitoring network

and assessed 27 sample stations along Sulphur and Fletcher creeks, thereby increasing water quality reporting capabilities. Accumulated data over the next few years will allow HCA to scientifically determine if and where surface and groundwater is deteriorating or improving. Sample data is currently insufficient to project either situation.

Since a true measure of water quality is the aquatic life it sustains, HCA began a major fisheries management plan that will be instrumental in a number of strategic initiatives, including recommending where habitat improvements could be made, as well as how to enhance sport fishing at HCA reservoirs, such as Valens and Christie Lake.

Work to remove major fish migration barriers in Middle Spencer and Sulphur creeks was undertaken this past year and the Hamilton Area Fly Fishers and Tyers were partners in removing barriers in the Gore Road area of Fletcher Creek. HCA will continue to work with landowners in the Sulphur Creek area to improve stream habitat so that Brook Trout can be reintroduced, while the Lower Spencer has been targeted as an improvement area next year.

To continue to ensure our waters are protected against development and encroachment, HCA began watershed and watercourse improvements. To better assist in the municipal planning function, HCA started improving the accuracy of flood and fill line mapping.

Unveiled in January 2002, the plan's underlying goal is to continue major initiatives that encourage healthy streams and healthy communities, using a watershed approach to environmental management.

Open Space Protection:

Because public open space is such an important catalyst to a healthy community, a major HCA objective is to accelerate land acquisition over the next five years, increasing ownership of natural areas to at least 4,450 ha (11,000 acres). It acquired 64.5 ha (139 acres) of land in 2002.

In order to know which lands are considered environmentally significant, HCA continued to work with the city and the Hamilton Naturalists' Club to conduct an extensive biological inventory of all the significant natural areas in the watershed. Under the process, recommended lands are designated as Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and protected within the city's official plan.

Since the last Natural Areas Inventory was undertaken 10 years ago, a greater awareness of the program has been achieved so that more sites are being considered for protection. In general, municipal planners and developers have a greater understanding and appreciation of the concepts involved, so gaining support for ESA designations seems to be a smoother process.

HCA uses this inventory to determine which lands might be taken into public trust, and those that might benefit from its Watershed Stewardship Program. HCA continued to strengthen that program in 2002, expanding it to cover all watershed lands. The program, which will celebrate its 10th year of operation next May, encourages responsible action by landowners in the management of their land.

More than 3000 landowners in Hamilton and Halton have been contacted to promote watershed stewardship, the values of water conservation and management, as well as natural area protection, enhancement and restoration. Approximately 90 per cent of the landowners are rural, and 50 per cent of those are involved in farm operations. A total of 304 rehabilitation projects were undertaken and 450 verbal agreements have been received from landowners to participate in watershed stewardship. The program now covers 7,400 ha of land overall, including 180 km of stream habitat and 3,200 ha of significant wetlands.



The program was nationally recognized in July of this year for its contributions to exemplary stewardship programs through the presentation of the Countryside Canada Award at the Second National Stewardship Conference in Victoria B.C. Countryside Canada is an award program of Wildlife Habitat Canada, Agriculture and Agrifood Canada and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

Outdoor Recreation

In addition to offering exceptional summer and winter outdoor recreational opportunities that more than one million visitors took advantage of last year, HCA's natural areas and conservation lands add tremendous intrinsic value to the community.

Recreational spaces promote "healthy communities" by providing people of all ages a chance to be physically active. Studies have shown conclusively that increased physical activity results in reduced stress, greater resistance to disease, a sense of well-being and a longer, more satisfying life. A more active population dramatically reduces health care costs.

In the first year of its action plan, HCA successfully negotiated a commitment from the Ontario government to transfer a portion of the Eramosa Karst property to the Authority to be protected for generations to come. Karst is a geological formation that includes sinking streams, springs and caves created over time by the dissolving action of water on rock.

It redeveloped the former 4 km Confederation Park Breezeway as part of the Hamilton Beach Recreational Trail, now part of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail. The Conservation Foundation of the Hamilton Region secured funding for a 2 km boardwalk through the Vinemount Swamp as Phase 2 of the Dofasco Trail 2000 project.

Numerous improvements were made to existing conservation areas and trails, including parking lots and roadways, sewer and water system improvements and facility renovations.

Community Education & Awareness

With the support of the Conservation Foundation of the Hamilton Region, HCA began plans to have a second educational facility operating on a temporary basis in the Mount Albion Conservation Area this fall. Funding cuts in the mid-1990s halted the HCA's education program that saw more than 300,000 students take advantage of it over a 25-year period. By the end of 2002, however, more than 6,000 students participated in HCA's newly revived program after it was re-launched at the Dundas Valley Trail Centre in spring of 2001.

HCA's marketing and community relations department began website redevelopment to offer Internet visitors more information and more interactivity as a means of better communicating with the community at large. Visitors to our site at www.conservationhamilton.ca can now send friends electronic postcards, sign up for our e-news bulletin, let us know how you enjoyed your visit to our conservation areas, and find new and significant environmental information.



Hamilton Conservation Authority



Base mapping supplied by the City of Hamilton. 2002 Orthophotography.

Hi-tech fisheries database nears completion

The Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) is nearing completion of a major fisheries management database that will assist in creating healthier fish habitat and water quality in its watershed.

Since healthy fish habitat can be an indicator of good water quality, the database will allow HCA to readily identify these high quality areas. It will also help Authority staff in dealing with land development issues, such as fill and construction regulation applications, stream buffer and setback requirements and, ultimately, fish habitat protection and rehabilitation throughout the watershed.

Numerous studies conducted within the watershed describe fisheries, water quality, fish habitat, barriers to fish migration, and stream temperatures of the creeks within its jurisdiction. HCA will format all existing and future data in a central database linked to a computerized mapping Geographical Information System (GIS) that will allow staff to access it with a mere click of a mouse.

GIS functionality allows data to be linked to a point on a map that can show many different layers of information. This will allow HCA to make a fully informed decision about a fishery at a particular site.

The database accomplishes a number of goals, from summarizing fish species and fish habitat in all HCA's subwatersheds to recommending areas

where habitat enhancement can be undertaken and how to enhance sport fishing at HCA reservoirs — up to and including preferred approaches for the work. The database encompasses hundreds of kilometres of watershed streams.

"With this database, you can select a position on the map where we've monitored and it will tell you when monitoring was done, what fish were found there, the water quality and BioMAP score," says HCA Ecologist Shari Faulkenham. BioMAP is an analysis of insects found in the streambed to determine water quality. "It also tells us where we can plan future fisheries work in the watershed.

"The database is really handy. If we get an application for a subdivision, we will be able to find the development location and pull up all fisheries and water quality information that may be associated with a creek in that area. Based on that information, we can determine what considerations have to be made by the developer to appropriately protect that system."

The most important thing about the database is that it recommends where water habitat improvements can be made throughout the watershed and what types of restoration work HCA can do to improve the habitat.

HCA hopes to have the process completed by spring 2004.

Project will help create sport fishery

HCA granted funding for major Christie dam repairs

The province will pay half the cost of long-needed repairs to the Christie dam, Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) has learned.

HCA recently received notification that SuperBuild will provide \$370,000 toward major maintenance at the largest water management dam and reservoir in the watershed. This is 50% of the funding. HCA has requested the matching funding from the municipality in the 2004 budget.

The dam primarily reduces the effects of flooding in Dundas. The reservoir also acts as a water storage area, allowing low flow augmentation when Spencer Creek is at its lowest level during summer. Additionally, it allows outdoor recreation such as swimming, canoeing and — in the not-too-distant future — fishing.

Most of Ontario's dams are more than 30 years old and have received no significant upgrades or renovations since their construction. Christie dam is no different. Built in 1971, it is a concrete dam with two radial arm gate spillways.

The funding will allow HCA to repair cracked and chipped concrete, assist with gate maintenance, and provide emergency control of the spillway gates. The funding will also allow HCA to install stop logs that will enable HCA to increase the winter water operating elevation that will in turn create a larger, ponded area for wintering fish.

Stop logs are pieces of wood similar to railway ties that are installed in the bays in front of a dam's gates. "They help us establish the water levels for the reservoir by increasing the height at which the water spills out of the dam," says George Stojanovic, HCA Water Resources Engineer.

Higher water levels will also be the first step in creating a sport fishery in Christie Lake.

"Increased winter water levels will help us maintain a healthier ecosystem by allowing predators such as large mouth bass and pike to remain over winter in the reservoir, grow larger, and thus maintain a better ecological balance."



Westfield Heritage Village: *the magic continues*



Experience the magic of Westfield at night.

An exciting Haunted Historical Halloween that's suitable for the whole family is scheduled for tonight from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Westfield Heritage Village. Children will receive free popcorn (while quantities last) courtesy of the Kinsman Club of Burlington.

Enjoy a spooky good time as you explore the haunted train station and see the ghost train. Learn the history behind the superstitions and traditions of All Hallows Eve. This year's event will feature characters and scenes from J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings". Will you meet a Ring Wraith or an Orc in a dark corner? You never know!

Westfield Heritage Village, a living history museum with 35 historical buildings, offers special events year round, such as the American Civil War Re-enactment, Anne of Green Gables™ Day and the Sweet Taste of Spring Maple Syrup Festival. Be sure to visit Westfield for its popular holiday evening program, 'Twas The Night Before Christmas, Saturday evenings in December from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

In order to ensure that as many area children as possible can experience the magic of this program, Westfield is allowing children ages six to 12 into its popular 'Twas The Night Before Christmas program at no charge (children five and under are always admitted at no charge) with a special electronic admission coupon available at [\[hamilton.ca\]\(http://hamilton.ca\) or from \[www.attractionsontario.ca\]\(http://www.attractionsontario.ca\). Just follow the links from the home pages to the e-coupon.](http://www.conservation-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Westfield will be alight with lanterns and candles, creating a beautiful winter scene you won't soon forget. Experience Christmas traditions and childhood fantasies through theatre and food.

The wonders and excitement of this festive season are revealed through delightful self-guided lantern tours. Engage yourself in the picturesque setting of the historical farm and village. Visitors can travel through time, experiencing the evolution of the Yuletide season through the Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian, and First World War eras and enjoy the performance of short Christmas plays in historical buildings. Meet Father Christmas and savour the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of this unique holiday presentation. This event is sure to become a tradition in your family.

While there is no programming scheduled for January and February, visitors can explore Westfield's 324 acres of woodlands, trails and 35 historical buildings on its several well-marked trails year round. There is a self serve fee.

For more information on Westfield Heritage Village please call 519-621-8851 or HCA at 1-888-319-4722 or visit them on the Web at www.westfieldheritage.ca or www.conservationhamilton.ca.

Break the ice: chase the blahs away

Enthusiasts can't be shy, because they really do need to break the ice to enjoy their sport.

That sport is ice fishing. It's a lot of fun and an easy way to get over a case of Winter Blues — and the best place to do that is at Valens Conservation Area where some of the best ice fishing in the area can be found.

Proper equipment includes ice auger or spud bar, plus ice scoop to clear the hole of ice; ice fishing rod and reel, and bucket or seat to sit on as well as ice cleats so you can walk safely on ice. Always check with local authorities or ice hut operators for ice conditions before heading out. You'll need to dress warmly. Not enough can be said about this topic. If you go out on the ice inadequately prepared for ice fishing, you're probably not going to enjoy the experience.

The ice fishing season at Valens normally begins in late December or the first part of January and usually lasts as long as the ice is safe, until mid-March. You can call the Valens Fishing Information Line 24 hours a day at 905-525-2183 or 519-621-6029 ext. 8 to get ice conditions.

"Ice fishing at Valens has always been popular, but we've seen the interest in the sport growing in leaps and bounds over the past five years," says Valens Superintendent Gord Costie. "Some of that is the result of our excellent facilities and the other part is that ice fishing is a challenge and outdoor adventure that the entire family can enjoy."

Valens ice huts can be rented for \$19 per person. Kids 12 and under are free. Two persons minimum per hut on weekends. Regular vehicle entry of \$7 is extra. When available, bait minnows can be purchased for \$3 a dozen and maggots for \$5 a bag. Please note rates quoted are 2003 prices that may be modestly adjusted in 2004.



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Conservation Calendar of Events

PULL
OUT
SECTION

W I N T E R , S P R I N G , S U M M E R , F A L L 2 0 0 4

Still lots to do in 2003

As autumn quickly overtakes summer, don't hang up your outdoor gear just yet. The Hamilton Conservation Authority's conservation lands are open year-round for visitors to experience and enjoy in any season.



Fall Colours are spectacular in all of our conservation areas, but *Spencer Gorge/Webster's Falls* is one of the best spots in the area to see distant vistas of nature's palette. This area also offers two of the region's most easily accessible and notable waterfalls, Tews and Webster's Falls. Webster's is a magnificent tiered waterfall and Tews, which towers at 41 metres, is only a few metres shorter than Niagara Falls. Both offer spectacular vistas of the gorge.

History buffs have a choice of three wonderful spots in the Dundas area. *The Hermitage Ruins*, located just off Sulphur Springs Road in Ancaster, are all that remains of what was once a lavish mansion. The land was bought in 1855 by George Gordon Browne Leith, the second son of a Scottish baronet. The Hermitage was his legacy. By 1861, the various facilities of the Hermitage were home to eight people, plus five servants. Regrettably, The Hermitage burned almost completely in October 1934.

Griffin House, an excellent example of Ancaster's early history, is a simple 1.5-storey house just west of the Hermitage Ruins in the Dundas Valley Conservation Area. Eneals Griffin and his wife, Priscilla, moved to the area in 1829 to escape slavery in the United States, possibly making use of the Underground Railroad. In 1834, they purchased the house with 50 acres of land and their descendents farmed there for the next 150 years.

Attracted by potential waterpower offered by the Spencer Creek, many early settlers came to an area of Flamborough West called *Crooks Hollow*. A 1.5-kilometre self-guiding trail meanders past early homes, the ruins of barns, sawmills and water-control devices. The trail starts at Crooks' Hollow Conservation Area parking lot, just off Crooks' Hollow Road.

Winter visitors will find many ways to enjoy the Hamilton Conservation areas. The *Dundas Valley, Valens and Christie Lake Conservation Areas* offer many kilometers of trails for cross-country skiers when conditions are suitable.

(See events listings). Valens also offers ice fishing, ice skating and winter camping for true winter outdoors aficionados.

Though the summer heat is gone, the fun and excitement never stops at the Hamilton Conservation Authority!

Park Legend:

CL - Christie Lake
CP - Confederation Park
DV - Dundas Valley
FP - Fifty Point
SG/WF - Spencer Gorge/Webster's Falls
VA - Valens
WW - Wild Waterworks



Valens Camping All Season

No matter what the season, you'll find a near wilderness camping experience at Valens Conservation Area. Nestled within the splendid pine and spruce forest at Valens are 220 campsites - 61 sites with hydro and water. The campground is open eleven months out of the year, so visitors can experience nature in all seasons.

Sunday January 11 & 18, February 22

Family Ice Fishing Workshops - VA

Learn the basics of ice fishing. Staff will be on hand in the morning to talk about fishing techniques, equipment and ice safety. The rest of the day is yours to test out your new skills on the ice. Spaces are limited. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722. Note: A valid fishing licence is required for anyone 18 years of age or older. Fee applies.

Saturday January 24, 31

Owl Prowls - DV

Whooo goes there? Join us for an evening walk exploring the wilds of the Dundas Valley in search of owls. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight. Runs from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Spaces are limited. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722. Fee applies.

Sunday February 1

Animal Tracking Workshop - DV

Discover how to track down clues to the whereabouts of the valley's winter residents. Learn how to interpret the signs that animals leave behind. Limited spaces available. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722. Runs from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Meet at the Trail Centre. Fee applies.

Saturday February 7, 14

Owl Prowls - CL

Whooo goes there? Join us for an evening walk exploring the wilds of Christie Lake Conversation Area in search of owls. Dress warmly and bring a flashlight. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722. Runs from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Fee applies.

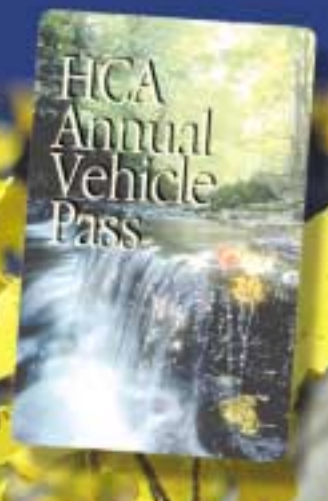
Life is Better Outdoors...

Get a 12-month pass at 2003 discount prices! Makes a great Christmas gift (vouchers available).

Use this discount coupon and you and your family can enjoy swimming, picnics, hiking, cross country skiing and pike, trout and ice fishing at all your local conservation areas.

- ◆ **Christie Lake**
Highway 5, Flamborough 905-628-3060
- ◆ **Spencer Gorge/Webster's Falls**
Harvest Road, Dundas 905-628-3060
- ◆ **Valens**
Regional Rd. 97, Flamborough 905-525-2183
- ◆ **Fifty Point**
Baseline Road, Stoney Creek 905-525-2187
- ◆ **Dundas Valley**
Governor's Road, Dundas 905-627-1233
- ◆ **Confederation Park**
Van Wagner's Beach Rd., Hamilton
1-800-555-8775
- ◆ **Westfield Heritage Village**
Regional Rd. 52, Flamborough 519-621-8851

 **Hamilton Conservation Authority**
Healthy Streams...Healthy Communities!



\$5.00 off

the 2003 price of an

Annual Vehicle Pass

from the Hamilton Conservation Authority

Buy an Annual Vehicle Pass for just \$80.00 with this coupon.

Get \$5.00 off the regular \$85.00 (includes taxes)

The pass gives you and everyone in the car unlimited entry, with exception of some special events, into all conservation areas for one full year from purchase date. Drop by today or contact the Hamilton Conservation Authority at 905-525-2181 and purchase your Annual Vehicle Pass. Offer valid until December 31, 2003.

Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer. Coupon has no cash value.



clip and save



For more information about the HCA's events and programs call 1-888-319-4722 or visit www.conservationhamilton.ca

Sunday February 15

Family Snowshoe Clinic - DV

Learn the basics of snowshoeing, then trek the snowy trails of the Dundas Valley in search of tracks and clues to the winter wildlife. Snowshoes are available for adults and children ages 6 and up. Weather permitting. Register for either the morning or afternoon session. Fee applies. Limited spaces available. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722.

March 7, 14, 21, 28, Special March Break Days:

March 17, 18

Sweet Taste of Spring Maple Syrup Festival - WHV

Join us at Westfield to discover one of Canada's most time honoured and delicious traditions. Explore the making of maple syrup from the tree to the table in three different time periods: the 18th century methods of Canada's First Nations, early 19th century pioneers and modern times. Families can also embark on an old-fashioned horse and wagon ride through time; stroll through a rural 1860's village and enjoy a wonderful pancake breakfast. The Sweet Taste of Spring runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee applies.

Sunday March 14

In Search of Tundra Swans - VA

Search out the illusive Tundra Swans. These migratory birds often stop by the Valens reservoir for a much-needed break before they continue their journey North. Dress warmly. Meet at the Powell Pavilion. Note: Park entry fee in effect. Program will run from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722. Fee applies.

April, May & June

Plantings and Rehabilitation Projects

Various planting and rehabilitation projects will take place during the spring and summer months. Check our website, www.conservationhamilton.ca regularly for opportunities to volunteer.

Thursday, April 1

Fishing at Valens Closes

Valens becomes a fish sanctuary until bass season opens June 26.

Thursday, April 1

Camping Season Opens - FP

Fifty Point's campground opens for the season today. For reservations, call Fifty Point at 905-525-2187.

Friday April 9

Good Friday Llama Trek - DV

Enjoy a Good Friday walk through the Dundas Valley with Garth Gourlay of Wyldewood Farms Llama Treks and his gentle llama guides: Cracker Jack, Kramer, Wally and Riche. Park admission fee also applies. Register for either the morning or afternoon session. Must call to pre-register 1-888-319-4722. Fee applies.



Friday, April 9

Get Fishy Friday - WHV

This Good Friday event features Victorian fishing games and seafood in addition to the Maple Syrup theme. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee applies.

Saturday April 24

Trout Season Opens - CL, FP

Fish for rainbow trout at any of Christie Lake's 9 stocked trout ponds or at Fifty Point's large pond. The ponds are stocked on a regular basis and bait is available. Provincial fishing licence is required at Christie Lake, but not at Fifty Point. Maximum of three trout per angler. Regular park admission applies.

Sunday April 25

Pitch In Day - DV, CL and VA

Pitch in and help give our conservation areas a spring tune-up. We'll be getting down and dirty so dress appropriately. Rain or shine. Volunteers and organized groups are invited to register by calling 1-888-319-4722. Runs from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Free.

May

Camping Season Opens - CP

Confederation Park's campground is open for the summer season and Valens is open for camping in any season. For reservations, call Confederation Park at 905-578-1644.

Sunday May 9

Waterfalls Walk - SG/WF

Put on your hiking boots, bring along a camera and get ready to view two of the area's most breathtaking waterfalls. Hike along the crest of Spencer Gorge from Tews Falls to Webster's Falls to descend a secret staircase into the gorge for a spectacular view of Webster's Falls. Level of ability is moderate to difficult. Hike begins at 10:00 a.m. Fee applies.

Saturday May 15

Greenville Optimist Club Fishing Derby - CL

Tagged fish will be worth \$50 each, and anglers will be given an opportunity to win a Hamilton Conservation Authority Family Prize Package. Runs from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. All fishermen must register at the park on the day of the event to participate. Price for children includes free hot dog at noon. Registration does not include regular park admission. Fee applies.

Conservation Works

The HCA will host Pitch In Days and various tree plantings and other rehabilitation projects throughout the year. Check the HCA website regularly for opportunities to volunteer for Conservation Works.

To find out more about our complete events calendar, or any of our conservation areas, please visit our website at www.conservationhamilton.ca or call our information line at 1-888-319-4722.

You may also e-mail your questions to nature@conservationhamilton.ca.



Sunday May 23

Victoria Weekend Sunday - WHV

Join American Revolutionary War Soldiers during a day of living history, fun and excitement. From 12:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Fee applies.



Saturday May 29

Christie Classic Antique Show - CL

Canada's favourite Antique Show with over 300 dealers. Browse or buy that special something from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., rain or shine. Food vendors provide lunch or a light snack. Admission fee applies. For show information, contact John Forbes 519-824-1842 or Jeff Gadsden 519-925-6606.

Saturday June 5 and Sunday June 6

Kid's Day - WW

Wild Waterworks Opens for the Season

Wild Waterworks hosts Big Brother Big Sisters of Hamilton barbecue. Plus free admission on a first come, first serve basis to the first 300 kids (between the ages of 4 - 10) who show up at the gate that day.

Saturday & Sunday, June 12 & 13

Christie Float Fly - CL

Watch the Burlington R/C Modelers challenge the skies over Christie Lake with their radio-controlled airplanes. Planes takeoff and land on the water and provide exciting aerial demonstrations from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weather permitting. Regular park admission applies.

Sunday June 13

Hamilton Corporate Challenge - CL

Put together a team of co-workers or friends and enter the Hamilton Corporate Challenge; a fun-filled day of friendly competition against other teams involving ten different events. For more information, contact the Hamilton Corporate Challenge at 905-520-8444 or visit www.hamilton.ja.ca

Sunday June 20

Father's Family Day - WHV

Join the United Empire Loyalists for this special Father's Day celebration. Runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee applies.

Saturday June 26

Bass Fishing Season Opens - VA, FP

For more information, please call Valens at 905-525-2183 or Fifty Point at 905-525-2187

Saturday & Sunday June 26 & 27

Family Fishing Workshop - VA

Participate in a half-day fishing workshop which includes: creating a basic fishing kit, tips on equipment & repairs, casting, as well as the safe handling and identification of fish. All fishing equipment and instruction are supplied. Call 1-888-319-4722 to register. Spaces are limited. Note: A valid fishing licence is required for anyone 18 years of age or older. Fee applies.





Sundays & Holidays -
Canada Day to Labour Day
Victorian Summer Festival - WHV

Join us Sundays and holidays for a leisurely afternoon enjoying tea and homemade tea biscuits on our Victorian Bandstand. Enjoy the fashions of different eras; Rediscover the lives and times of a bygone era. Step into our past and tour through some of Ontario's oldest buildings including the pioneer home, artisan workshop, church, school, train station and store dating from 1790 to 1925. Fee applies.

Thursday July 1

Greenville Optimists' Picnic in the Park - SG/WF
Join the Greenville Optimist Club as they celebrate their annual "Picnic in the Park" at Webster's Falls.

July 7 - 9 - VA

July 21 - 23 - CL

Hooked on Fishing Workshop: Level I

Girls and Boys ages 9 to 12 are invited to participate in these three day fishing workshops, which include tips on casting, line control, the safe handling and identification of fish and a complimentary tackle box. All fishing equipment and instruction is supplied. Cost: \$150 per session. Call 905-627-3104 to pre-register.

July 9-11

Licence Free Fishing Weekend - CL, VA, FP

For three days (12:01 a.m. Friday to 11:59 p.m. Sunday), Canadian residents can enjoy the fun of fishing in Ontario without a licence during the annual Ontario Family Fishing Weekend.

Saturday July 10

John Burns Memorial Fishing Derby - VA

Catch the Big One and win great prizes for children and adults. Prizes for the largest northern pike, largemouth bass and, for children, panfish. Bait and boat rentals are available. For more information call 905-525-2183. Fee applies.

July 13-15

Hooked on Fishing Workshop: Level II - VA

Experienced anglers between the ages of 12 and 14 are invited to participate in this new fishing adventure! Camp out under the stars at the VA. Swim, fish, camp, canoe and fish some more. Discover how to catch and land the big ones. Cost is \$300 per camper. Note: All participants must have completed Hooked On Fishing: Level I, in order to register. Spaces are limited. Call 905-627-3140 to register.

Saturday July 31

Valens Beach Party - VA

Games, sand sculpture contest, prizes and more. Call Valens at 905-659-1573 or 519-621-6029 for more information. Runs from 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Fee applies.



Saturday & Sunday, August 21 & 22

War and Peace: The American Civil War - WHV

Honouring more than 50,000 Canadians who fought in the American Civil War. Experience living history at its best and become part of military and civilian life during the Victorian era. Runs from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fee applies.

Saturday September 4

Valens Annual Corn Roast - VA

Celebrate the end of the summer season and the beginning of another great fall and winter camping season at Valens with a delicious ear of roasted corn. Call 905-525-2183 or 519-621-6029 for details. Runs from 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Fee applies.

Saturday September 11

Christie Classic Antique Show - CL

Canada's favourite Antique Show with over 300 dealers. Browse or buy that special something from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., rain or shine. Food vendors provide lunch or a light snack. Admission fee applies. For show information, contact John Forbes 519-824-1842 or Jeff Gadsden 519-925-6606.

Sunday September 19

Anne of Green Gables™ Day - WHV

Step into the pages of L.M. Montgomery's masterpiece and become part of Avonlea and the life of Canada's favourite literary character by enjoying a variety of entertaining activities for the whole family. Runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fee applies.

Thursday September 30

Trout Season Closes - CL, FP

Trout fishing season is closed until next April.

Autumn Hike Series:

Call 1-888-319-4722 to pre-register for each of these hikes. Start time 10:00 a.m. Fee applies.



Sunday September 26
Cascades and Waterfalls
of the Dundas Valley -
DV

Enjoy an autumn walk to view the hidden cascades and waterfalls of the Dundas Valley. Level of ability is moderate to difficult.

Sunday October 3

Spencer Gorge Hike - SG/WF

Hike along Spencer Creek through the gorge to the base of Webster's Falls. Level of ability is moderate to difficult.

Sunday October 17

Monarch Trail - DV

See the sights of the Dundas Valley, including a scenic lookout atop Groundhog Hill, the outdoor chapel at Maplewood, the old apple orchard and the mature deciduous forests, rolling hills and lush meadows of the area.

Sunday October 24

Lafarge 2000 Trail - Flamborough

Come and explore the Northern Section of this 22 km long trail, featuring an 800-foot boardwalk through the Fletcher Creek Swamp Forest. Level of ability is moderate.

Friday & Saturday, October 29 & 30

Haunted Historical Halloween - WHV

Bone up on your history and folklore and discover the origins and traditions of Halloween past. Plays and presentations are guaranteed to tantalize and enthrall the whole family. Runs from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Fee applies.



Saturday December 4, 11, 18

'Twas the Night Before Christmas - WHV

Celebrate Christmas past from the Georgian to the Modern eras and feel the warmth of the season through plays, food samples, fireworks, horse and wagon rides and a visit from Saint Nick. Runs from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Fee applies.

Saturday December 4, 11, 18

The Moveable Feast - WHV

Eat your way through a four course historical dinner and magical tour through Christmas traditions. Limited seating. Tickets go on sale starting in September.

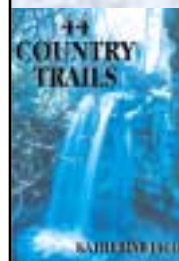
Sunday December 5, 12

Christmas Table - WHV

Eat your way through a four course historical dinner and magical tour through Christmas traditions. Limited seating. Tickets go on sale starting in September.

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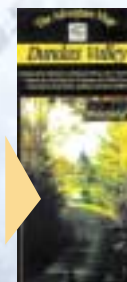
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Greenville Optimists take lead in new park development

Hamilton residents will soon be able to picnic and enjoy a picturesque community park in the Greenville area that will also provide hikers access to a trail linking to other conservation lands and the Bruce Trail.

The Greenville Optimist Community Park at Bullock's Corners in Greenville was initiated by the Greenville Optimist Club, which enlisted the help of the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) and residents of Greenville — a community northwest of Dundas on the upper edge of the Niagara Escarpment. The Optimist Club approached HCA with the concept in January 2002.

When complete, the community park will provide vehicle parking and an entry point to a trail that will eventually run upstream along Spencer Creek. A pedestrian bridge will eventually cross Spencer Creek just downstream of the Kirby Bridge on Brock Road. The trail will link the Bruce Trail in Spencer Gorge / Webster's Falls to Crooks Hollow and Christie Lake conservation areas.

Minimal remains of several old dams are found at



Optimist Club of Greenville members recently reviewed their work at the new park they helped create on Brock Road at Highway 8 in Greenville. On hand were, left to right, Brian Green, Christie Lake Conservation Area Superintendent Bill Fraser, John Clark, George Flosman and Woody Thompson. (HCA photo)

various points along Spencer Creek and are visible from the trail.

"This was the industrial heartland of Canada in the 1840s," says HCA Director of Land Management, Tony Horvat. "There were a series of mills on the creek from Crooks Hollow all the way to Webster's

Falls. There are also some old homes near the park at Bullock's Corners that date back over a century."

The remaining work also includes further restoration of the old mill dam and another stone foundation that will be featured as heritage structures and focal points of the park. A historical interpretation plaque will eventually be set up at the dam detailing its history.

Most funding for the \$120,000 Greenville Optimist Park project came from the Ontario Trillium Foundation as a \$75,000 grant. HCA and the Optimist Club are providing an additional \$14,000 each. The remaining \$17,000 has come from community donations.

Greenville Optimists have worked on several successful partnership ventures with HCA, including the restoration of

the cobblestone bridge that crosses Spencer Creek at Webster's Falls. The bridge was built in 1936 and slated for demolition because of costly repair estimates. The Optimists raised more than \$325,000 in six months, supervised the contractor and re-opened the bridge to the public July 1, 2000.

Blazing a path to safety

Orienteering club coordinates Dundas Valley map for easy search and rescue

Dundas Valley is now mapped with a detailed system of coordinates that will greatly assist search and rescue efforts within greater Hamilton's largest conservation area.

The Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club has developed a map of the area overlaid by a grid system. The grid features numbers and upper and lower case letters that correspond to trail posts already installed within the Valley. Two hundred and fifty posts on 40 trails are marked with these number-letter combinations. All posts also display arrows pointing towards the trail centre.

If a lost hiker calls the trail centre on a cell phone, or an injured person's companion runs to the centre for help, they can provide the co-ordinates on the nearest trail post so that their location can be more easily pinpointed.

"On occasion, people have serious accidents or get

lost," says Tony Horvat, HCA Director of Land Management. "This system will be extremely helpful in enabling people to know where they are in the valley."

"We have 3,000 acres with many loop style trails so it is a much needed system," says Paul Piett, Dundas Valley Conservation Area Superintendent.

The orienteering club will now train HCA staff, police and emergency workers to effectively use the system and educate the public.

The Golden Horseshoe club has practiced orienteering in the Hamilton area for more than 25 years. Among other things, the club organizes orienteering events that challenge participants to map their way through conservation lands and other areas with the use of a compass. The club took on the project at no cost to HCA and raised its own funds for mapping and other expenses.

"I think it's one of their ways of thanking us for



Golden Horseshoe Orienteering Club members Nina Wallace and Mike Waddington review mapping of new trail marker plates (inset photo) in Dundas Valley.

providing the use of this land," says Piett. "We enjoy having them. We can call on them for assistance when someone gets very lost and they're always glad to help us."



Hamilton Conservation Authority



HCA publishes new brochure featuring 12 of city's 26 waterfalls

The Niagara Escarpment is often referred to as Hamilton's crown. The many waterfalls that flow over this internationally renowned geological formation are the jewels in that tiara.

Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) released a new brochure about these treasures, just in time for this month's Road World Cycling Championships. A total of 20,000 copies of Cascades and Waterfalls of Hamilton were printed. Copies were distributed through Tourism Hamilton information centres for the weeklong event, as well as HCA conservation areas, city museums, parks, and information centres throughout central Ontario. Highlights of the brochure are featured at www.conservationhamilton.ca.

It is a free publication presented in a unique fold-out map format that combines interpretive information, photographs and directions with a map that pinpoints waterfall locations, parks, museums and trails.

"There has been a growing interest among the local environmental and tourism community to promote Hamilton as a 'City of Waterfalls'," says Joan Bell, HCA Manager of Marketing and Community Relations. "We felt it was important to create an introductory brochure to compliment recently produced guidebooks and posters.

Cascades and Waterfalls of Hamilton was a cooperative effort between HCA, the City of Hamilton and Tourism Hamilton. For information, call 1-888-319-4722 or e-mail nature@conservation-hamilton.ca.

Nature Counts

Report identifies ESAs and presents them for inclusion in Hamilton's Official Plan

The Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) has completed its latest "Nature Counts" inventory in cooperation with many local and provincial agencies and environmental groups.

The first Natural Areas Inventory (NAI) was conducted by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC) and its partners in 1991 and became the first complete inventory of natural areas in Hamilton-Wentworth. Nature Counts is the second such publication. Many experts helped to compile the two-volume report over the past two years. Through examination of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and potential ESAs, the report presents an updated checklist of plants, butterflies, fish, amphibians, reptiles, breeding birds and mammals. It also provides technical site summaries of ESAs and maps them.

"These reports give us a substantial amount of information on where each species occurs and whether it is locally common or uncommon, or provincially or nationally significant," says Bruce

Duncan, HCA Director of Watershed Planning and Engineering. "We now have updated lists with rarity status for all the species in Hamilton, and it assists us a great deal in identifying special occurrences. It tells us whether a particular area is especially deserving of environmental protection in the city's Official Plan. If so, they may be areas for HCA to acquire and endeavour to protect further.

Nature Counts also helps the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program in identifying ESAs that are privately owned. Program staff will then talk to the landowners to encourage and advise them about the best ways to protect their significant lands.

The first volume of Nature Counts is already in print and the second will be available later this month. Cost is \$75 for both volumes. They will be available through the Hamilton Naturalist Club. Contact Bruce Duncan for more information at 905-525-2181 or 905-648-4427.

New marina wall for Fifty Point

Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) initiated a four-phase project in 1999 to repair the deteriorating marina wall at Fifty Point Conservation Area. The marina is home to about 300 seasonal boaters. The boat ramp near the entrance of the marina is one of the busiest in this end of Lake Ontario.

The top two metres of the marina wall are constructed of gabion steel wire mesh baskets and filled with rocks. The galvanizing is a zinc coating that has dissolved into the water causing the steel core of the wire to rust. The boardwalk surrounding the marina sits on top of the gabion baskets. Together, they support the structures that hold three main docks in place. The baskets began to fail in 1995.

Repairs were done around the gas dock and Marina Centre, costing slightly more than \$500,000.

Repairs this winter will be made to a 135-metre-long portion of the south side of the marina wall. Steel



Project will repair deteriorating marina wall at Fifty Point.

for some of the construction was purchased last spring. This phase of the project will likely cost around \$250,000.

Eventually all of the gabion baskets will be replaced with sheet steel piling.

When the new wall is complete in early spring, HCA staff will rebuild the boardwalk along the south wall of the marina.



Quarry to become scenic wetland preserve

Filling Fletcher Creek quarry will create attractive wetland and eliminate safety hazard

The old abandoned quarry within the Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve was last mined in the 1930s. Since then, it has flooded and become a picturesque pond that is extensively used for swimming, diving and after-hours parties.

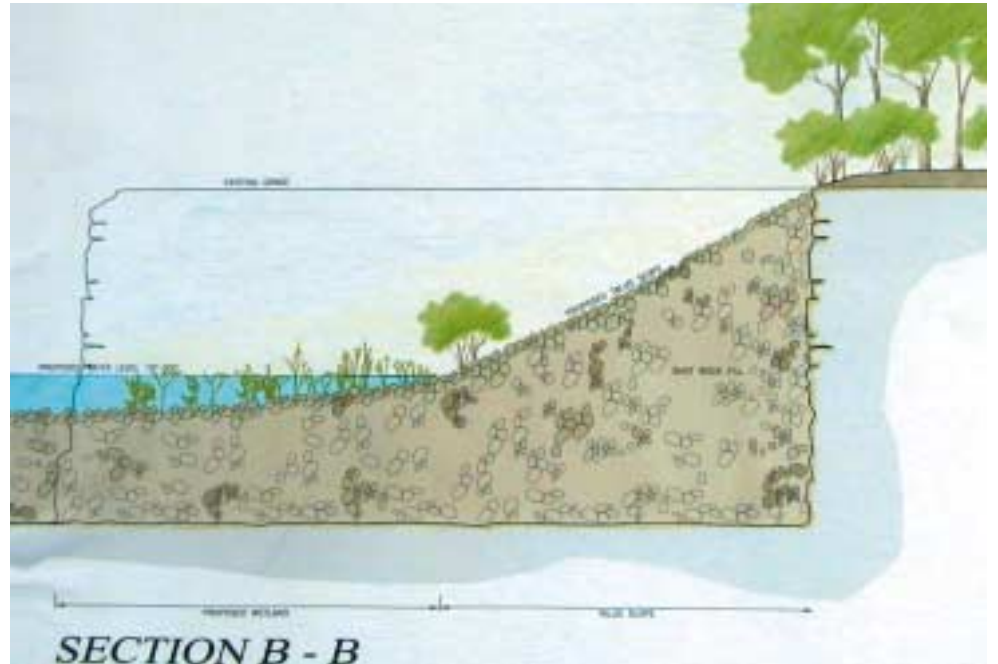
Unfortunately, because of the remote nature of the site and hazards of the cliffs, it represents a liability to the Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) and requires ongoing staff attention. The quarry itself has very limited ecological value, so HCA is in the process of turning it into a wetland. Creation of a wetland with sloping rock walls would provide additional habitat to enhance the Fletcher Creek Ecological Preserve which is home to groundwater springs and rare plant communities.

The restored site will provide good opportunities for wildlife viewing, hiking, and nature study in a safe environment, and should discourage the intensive uses which are inappropriate in an ecological pre-

serve. Nature trails for hiking and cross-country skiing in winter will exist around the quarry area when complete.

Filling in the quarry also has ecological benefits for the local water system. This will reduce

its deepest water point to one metre, making it no longer suitable for swimming and diving. This will eliminate the potential for groundwater pollution that swimming presented. The preserve is the headwaters of Fletcher Creek — a cold water creek and trout habitat. “It’s one of the few creeks that is good trout habitat in the Hamilton area,” says Bruce Duncan, Director of Watershed Planning and Engineering. “Trout habitat is an indicator of high quality water.”



Design concept shows quarry graded into gradual wetlands slope.

“We’ve developed a plan in partnership with MAAP (Management of Abandoned Aggregate Properties Program) that funds quarry reclamation,” says Duncan. “We’re also exploring a partnership with McMaster University and the University of Toronto which means they would provide funding and benefit from doing research and studies on the project. They’re very interested in how a man-made wetland can be created, how it will evolve, and long-term monitoring.”

HCA hosts watershed-focused RAP workshop

Enthusiastic turnout at RAP workshop for Hamilton Harbour

Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) co-hosted the first Remedial Action Plan (RAP) workshop for the Hamilton Harbour focused solely on its watershed — and it was widely attended. Conservation Halton and the a network of watershed planners joined HCA in hosting the September 26 event.

Hamilton Harbour is one of 42 identified Areas of Concern (AOC) within the Great Lakes basin. The harbour has a number of problems with water quality, contaminated sediment, and fish and wildlife habitat loss. A stakeholder group was formed in 1986 to develop a plan so that the AOC designation is removed by 2015. The plan itself was released in 1992 and updated late September 2003.

“The Spencer, Chedoke and Red Hill creeks in the HCA watershed all flow into Hamilton Harbour and there has been some concern about the quality of this incoming water,” says Bruce Duncan, HCA Director of Watershed Planning and Engineering.

HCA reported on its surface water and groundwater monitoring programs, fisheries management plan, BioMAP program and Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program.

BioMAP is the biological monitoring of streams using insects found in the streambeds. The water is continually flowing over these insects and many of them are highly intolerant to changes in their water quality. Erosion from agriculture or contamination from heavy metals or pesticides will result in residues

in the water, affecting insects on the bottom. By recording numbers and species found, HCA can determine whether the stream is healthy or impaired, and, if impaired, the degree and type of impairment. HCA has been collecting BioMAP samples since 1999.

The Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program encourages awareness among private landowners about conservation practices and assists them in rehabilitating streams and wildlife habitat on their property.

The workshop was open to specific organizations doing monitoring or research on the Hamilton Harbour watershed. Seventy people attended. “The level of interest has really surprised me,” says Duncan.



Hamilton Conservation Authority

Conservation Foundation AGM updates donors on success

On Sunday June 22, the Conservation Foundation of the Hamilton Region held its annual Strawberry Social/Annual General Meeting. This event recognizes donors and provides a chance for them to become educated about Foundation programs in the works.

"It was a delightful Sunday afternoon that recognized donors from the previous year," says Brenda Ritchie, Foundation Executive Director. "These donors make it possible for the Authority and the Foundation to fund projects that are valuable to the communities in the Hamilton area and to preserve Hamilton's natural lands for all to enjoy."

All donors to the Conservation Foundation and the Hamilton Conservation Authority are recognized by having their names placed on the donor wall at HCA headquarters main lobby.

The Foundation is a charitable fundraising organization dedicated to the preservation, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural lands and cultural heritage within the watershed of the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

Wally Zimmerman, principal owner of a successful Hamilton legal practice, Zimmerman and Associates, spoke at the Strawberry Social on the significance of

donating to conservation authorities. Zimmerman is a current board member with the Foundation and has supported it for several years.

Last year, the primary areas of fundraising were in completion of the Dofasco 2000 Trail Phase One, operating dollars in the Environmental Education program, and assisting HCA in the purchase of natural green space.



Environmental education — a key fundraising initiative.

About three years ago, the Foundation committed to a vision and strategic plan focusing on three target areas: land acquisition, trail development and outdoor environmental education.

"The outdoor education program has been a smashing success," says Ritchie. "It's currently held at the Dundas Valley Conservation Area where we

offer a half-day of hands-on environmental education to 6,000 area students from grades two, four, seven and 10. We're looking at doubling that to 12,000 over the next year. This is our main fundraising focus this year." The Foundation provides the funding for 200 of these classes annually.

Other initiatives the Foundation pursued in the past year include tree planting, bench installations on trails, and work on completing trail projects. Phase Two of the Dofasco 2000 Trail is in progress and the Lafarge 2000 Trail is now complete.



Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Coordinator Jo-Anne Rzakki receives the Countryside Canada award from federal Environment Canada Minister David Anderson. (Photo courtesy of the Countryside Canada program)

Program wins national award

It's been a good year for the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program (HHWSP). Staff received a National Award, offered a new program for landowners with wells on their properties, and coordinated a study in conjunction with Environment Canada on "Conservation and Economic Values of Watershed Stewardship Programs", while continuing rehabilitation projects and work to secure landowner agreements.

The program received Wildlife Habitat Canada's Countryside Canada Stewardship Award for 2003. The award recognized the program for its achievements in promoting exemplary stewardship programs in harmony with nature.

The Well Aware program is a pilot project funded by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment through Green Communities Association and the Ontario Groundwater Association (offered in partnership with Green Venture in the Hamilton area). The service consists of home visits, conducted by trained program staff that help well owners identify priorities to protect their drinking water source.

By the end of 2002, 304 landowners had become involved with rehabilitation projects such as establishing shoreline buffers along creeks and streams, enhancing wetland and upland habitat, fencing cattle from creeks, constructing manure storage facilities and controlling erosion. More than 13 kilometres of stream habitat and almost 58 hectares of upland and wetlands habitat have been rehabilitated since the program's beginning. Current projects under negotiation could result in another 9 kilometres of riparian habitat and 37 hectares of upland and wetland being restored.

For more information about stewardship initiatives and programs, visit www.conservationhamilton.ca or call stewardship staff at 905-525-2181.

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CEO leads the charge

Hamilton Utilities to encourage energy conservation

Hamilton Utilities Corporation has a responsibility to educate, and support customers in moving towards a sustainable future, according to company President and CEO, Art Leitch.

“We have to radically alter our way of thinking around the over-use of limited energy resources,” he says. “Conservation and the development of alternate sources of energy is the only possible answer to our current crisis of sustainability.”

Leitch is passionate about conservation. A civil engineer with a Master’s degree in Environmental Engineering and an MBA, Leitch’s environmental focus is well-grounded.

“Managing utilities is my job and I’ve done this for more than 20 years in both private and public sectors. At the same time, environmental engineering has been my vocation for more than 30 years,” he says. “At Hamilton Utilities I have the unique opportunity of combining both.

“Hamilton Utilities is a fascinating hybrid,” Leitch adds, “blending social responsibility with the successful operation of a complex multi-million-dollar business.”

A multi-utility company, Hamilton Utilities owns the electricity distribution company, Hamilton Hydro Inc.; FibreWired, a high speed data transmission company for business and institutional clients; and Hamilton Community Energy, which

designed and built the city’s first district heating system. One hundred per cent owned by the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Utilities was incorporated under the Business Corporations Act (Ontario) in July 2000. The company now has the top credit rating among all Ontario utilities by Standard & Poor’s Rating agency.

Hamilton Utilities is in The Business of Public Service™, Leitch says. “That means that our companies deliver essential public services but with the commercial discipline required of private corporations.”

So it is, that Hamilton Utilities acknowledges a deep responsibility to the community in which it operates. This year, the Corporation’s Board of Directors and management initiated a corporate social responsibility program focused on conservation and the development of alternative sources of energy.

A natural fit with Hamilton Utilities’ core business, the Think Conservation program also resonates with the company’s 350 employees. An employee contest held in 2002 to identify ways of enhancing customer service, generated more than 50 suggestions to do with educating customers about conservation.

The Think Conservation program commits the Corporation’s human and financial resources towards this goal.

“Effectively we must educate our customers



CEO of Hamilton Utilities, Art Leitch.

and help change their behaviours,” Leitch says. “As a leader in the industry, it falls on Hamilton Utilities Corporation to assume this responsibility.”



Elements of Hamilton Utilities program

1. Establishment of comprehensive plan to educate consumers and change behaviours of energy use including: seminars, presentations, brochures, advertising, special events and programs for children, homeowners and other key audiences;
2. Formation of partnerships with government, conservation-minded corporations and not-for-profit organizations;
3. Construction of a new Hamilton Hydro Website with strong focus on conservation;
4. Encourage full involvement by employees;
5. Development of an innovative program to raise awareness of conservation measures.
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