



# NOTTAWASAGA NEWS

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## NVCA will help deliver new *Ontario Wetland Care* program

Thanks to another agreement with Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), the NVCA will be able to offer a greater number and variety of stewardship grants for wetland protection and restoration.

The NVCA will work with DUC staff to deliver knowledge, tools and incentives to landowners who have wetland habitat on their property. Some projects partners may engage in include the installation of wood duck nest boxes, livestock exclusion fencing, tree planting for wetland buffers and wildlife corridor planting.

Minister of Natural Resources

Donna Cansfield visited the internationally-significant Minesing Wetlands on October 10th to announce \$1 million in funding for this province-wide program through a MNR and DUC partnership.

The announcement took place at the property of former NVCA Chair Harold Parker. Minister Cansfield said the success of this program depends on the dedication of stewards of the land such as Mr. Parker.

For more information on the Ontario Wetland Care program, please contact Sarah Campbell at [scampbell@nvca.on.ca](mailto:scampbell@nvca.on.ca).



*From left to right: Harold Parker; MNR Minister Donna Cansfield; Ray Bonenberg, MNR Regional Director Southern Ontario; Jamie Fortune, DUC Director of Operations, Eastern Region; Wayne Wilson, NVCA CAO/Secretary-Treasurer.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### **Conservation Champions Evening of Thanks**

Evening of Wed. Nov. 12

Tiffin Centre

### **NVCA Planning Roles & Responsibilities Workshop**

Thurs. Nov. 13, 8:30 a.m. to noon

Tiffin Centre

### **15th Annual A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium**

Wed. Nov. 19 to Fri. Nov. 21

Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston

### **Executive Committee meeting 12/08 & Board of Directors meeting 10/08 (2009 draft budget development)**

Fri. Nov. 28, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and 9:30 to noon

Tiffin Centre

## Looking down on Minesing Wetlands

Located 12 feet above the Minesing Wetlands, the new Waterfowl Viewing Window is a tower that gives one a bird's eye view of this internationally significant wetland. This perspective will allow people to witness the great migration and nesting habits of more than 200 bird species, especially in early spring time when the water level rises.

The Waterfowl Viewing Window is one of many access points the NVCA owns and manages to allow the public to  
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# ENGINEERING & TECHNICAL SERVICES

## Evaluating Bass Lake

Throughout the summer and fall, NVCA monitoring staff completed a shoreline evaluation of Bass Lake in the Township of Oro-Medonte. Staff recorded indicators such as manicured or un-manicured lawns, the amount of concrete along the shoreline and the presence of overhanging trees to determine the amount of natural versus unnatural shoreline space. Natural shorelines provide more habitat for fish and wildlife and also reduce the risk of contaminants affecting water quality.

A water temperature/dissolved oxygen profile was also taken to see if conditions in the lake have changed since it was last evaluated in 2001. This profile would indicate if the lake were over-enriched with nutrients. Results were good and showed that Bass Lake remains a healthy lake system.

In addition, monitoring staff evaluated the health of tributary streams that empty into Bass Lake and scouted out potential sites for loon nesting platforms. The NVCA stewardship team is seeking a demonstration site on Bass Lake to showcase best land management practices.

The results of the evaluation will be compiled into a Bass Lake watershed report card, which will be developed by the NVCA, in conjunction with the Bass Lake Ratepayers Association and other partners. It will have a strong stewardship focus and will be valuable information to any landowner in the Bass Lake catchment area.



## Common Reed becoming a little too common

Common Reed, also known as Phragmites, is a tall, wetland grass. It comes in two forms – native and non-native – which are not easily distinguishable. The native version does not dominate the growth of other species but the non-native version is invasive.

Infestations of Common Reed have become an increasing problem in the last few years along the Lake Huron shoreline. It spreads through seed and root systems into adjacent areas, making it necessary, but difficult, to track.

This summer, NVCA monitoring staff completed a three-part mapping exercise of both types of Common Reed in targeted areas of the watershed. We hope to use the data collected in the future, if funding becomes available, to develop management plans for the invasive Common Reed.



The first part of the exercise was to map infestations in the Wasaga Beach area in partnership with Wasaga Beach Provincial Park. Common Reed has colonized wetter areas along the beach and may also be moving into drier dunes which support provincially-rare vegetation communities.

The second was to map the species in the Minesing Wetlands. Samples were taken and sent to the University of Guelph for genetic analysis. Results showed that those samples from within the wetland were native but one sample taken from the roadside on the periphery of the wetland was non-native.

Finally, Common Reed was mapped along the Collingwood shoreline. The presence of the non-native species here is of concern since the shoreline has globally-rare habitat which is home to many plant species that have adapted to the conditions provided by the shallow sloping bedrock along the shoreline edge.

## PLANNING

### NVCA Planning Workshop on November 13th

The NVCA is hosting a workshop for municipal planning staff from its 18 member municipalities to discuss NVCA planning roles and responsibilities. The NVCA is in constant contact with municipal planning and development review staff and always looks for ways to strengthen communications.

The workshop will include presentations on the NVCA's Draft Plan Input/Review and Regulations Programs Implementation Guidelines and our Regulation and Enforcement Program.

Bonnie Fox, Policy and Planning Specialist for Conservation Ontario, will also present a provincial perspective on Conservation Authority planning roles.

The workshop takes place on November 13th, from 8:30 a.m. until noon, at the Tiffin Centre. Any questions regarding the workshop should be directed to Chris Hibberd, Acting Director of Planning, at [chibberd@nvca.on.ca](mailto:chibberd@nvca.on.ca).

# LAND & WATER STEWARDSHIP

## Festivities at Fort Willow

On September 20th, dozens of soldiers, blacksmiths, carpenters, medics and fur traders flooded through the palisade walls at Fort Willow for the 4th Annual Nine Mile Portage Heritage Festival. They recreated life during the War of 1812, when the Fort served as an important supply depot, with sounds of muskets firing, tastes of pan bread and smells of sage burning for Native smudging ceremonies.

About 1,000 people visited the Fort. From the 50-plus re-enactors they learned how to march in line, how medics would have treated war injuries, how to make candles and how many beaver pelts Natives would trade for one pound of wild rice.

In addition to the festival on the Saturday, about 800 students explored the Fort the day before to learn about Canada's War of 1812 history.

The NVCA and the Fort Willow Improvement Group manage Fort Willow year round for all to learn about our history and natural heritage. The Rotary Club of Barrie raised \$1,000 at its concession stand during the festivities and donated the money to the Fort Willow Improvement Group to continue site maintenance and upgrade work.



*A family learns the techniques that doctors would have used to treat war injuries in the early 19th century.*

## Essa Salmon Festival

The 5th Annual Essa Salmon Festival and Riverbank Derby brought out 250 anglers on September 20th. While promoting sport fishery and recreation, the festival also raises money for stream restoration in Essa Township. The Essa Salmon Derby Committee has partnered with the NVCA to identify sites where it can improve habitat to support Chinook salmon and rainbow trout.

With the funds raised from this year's festival, a potential site has been selected for a community tree plant in the spring of 2009 to enhance forest cover. This site along Bear Creek is close to where the festival takes place.

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experience and explore the Minesing Wetlands. This project would not have been possible without generous donations from the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Rotary Club of Barrie, the Nature League, Barrie Chiropractic & Health Services Centre and the Friends of Minesing Wetlands.

To visit the Waterfowl Viewing Window, go west on Hwy 90 towards Angus, turn right on McKinnon Road then take a left on to Concession 2 Sunnidale. The tower will be on your right.



*Greg Bray of the NVCA (left) receives a \$3,000 donation from Nature League directors Carole Hill and Gary Cauthers.*

## New Streams Network receives Trillium funding

The NVCA is one of five partners who will take part in the new South Simcoe Streams Network to improve the health of area streams.

The collaborative group, lead by Nottawasaga Futures, and including the NVCA, New Tecumseth Streams Committee, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and Dufferin South Simcoe Land Stewardship Network, has received \$157,100 over three years from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The Network is based on the model of the New Tecumseth Streams Committee, which over the past three years has proven to be a huge success. The committee was able to restore more than two kilometres of stream habitat in New Tecumseth through community engagement. This was done through more than 40 field activities including flood plain creation, bank stabilization and tree planting projects, with about 1,600 volunteers involved.

The Network will expand stream improvement projects beyond New Tecumseth into Adjala-Tosorontio, Essa Township, Innisfil and Bradford West Gwillimbury. The partners will be able to improve more bodies of water and contact more landowners.

Any member of the public who is interested in becoming part of the committee for the South Simcoe Streams Network is encouraged to contact Fred Dobbs, Manager of Stewardship Services at the NVCA, at (705) 424-1479, ext. 237, or [fdobbs@nvca.on.ca](mailto:fdobbs@nvca.on.ca).

# CORPORATE SERVICES

## Former member George Sheffer remembered

By: Fred Nix, NVCA Chair

Former NVCA Board member George Sheffer passed away on August 22nd and he will be sadly missed. We owe to him the continuing existence of our Healthy Waters program.

George joined the Board in 1998 and served until 2006. He sat on the Executive Committee for his last six years. Living at the mouth of the Nottawasaga River before it empties into Georgian Bay, George knew that anything that happened upstream would some day float by him.

He left his legacy during a particularly difficult time for the NVCA. We had run deficits for several years; the province had slashed funding; and we were facing opposition in efforts to raise the municipal levy. OMAFRA was also about to pull financial support from our land stewardship grant program - a program OMAFRA had initiated.

During budget talks in 2000, some board members wanted to chop programs – in particular our land stewardship grant program. They didn't think it was fair to ask their taxpayers to pick up the slack when the province was downloading. They were already asking them to pick up the tab for a \$160,000 deficit. At a key point in the debate, George rose to speak. He came prepared with two bottles of water – one showing clean, clear water; the other drawn from the river in front of his house, showing dirty, dark water. In his practical, down-to-earth style, he challenged us to think about our responsibilities to future generations. The issue of improving water quality was so pressing, he argued, that we had no choice but to continue our grant program. That was a turning point in the debate. A motion to continue the program and add \$75,000 to the municipal levy easily passed.

Today, we continue to deliver our Healthy Waters program for landowners willing to improve their use of the land to benefit us all.

Thank you George.



## Staff recognized for service

At the August 22nd Board of Directors meeting, those staff who have reached milestones in their service at the NVCA were recognized, including the NVCA's longest-serving staff member.

From left to right: Dave Featherstone, Manager of Watershed Monitoring, 5 years; Barb Perreault, Environmental Officer, 10 years; Tina DesRoches, GIS Analyst, 5 years; and Tim Salkeld, Resource Planner, 20 years.



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## IN BRIEF

### Strong SWP grant uptake

The NVCA was recognized by Lynn Dollin, Chair of the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Committee, as being one of the most successful Conservation Authorities in the province for engaging landowners in Source Water Protection stewardship initiatives. Our region has a total of 66 improvement projects underway including wells, septic systems, runoff protection and pollution prevention reviews.

### NVCA receives land donation in Dufferin

The NVCA has acquired its first piece of property in Dufferin County. The Bruce Trail Conservancy donated the 76-acre Boyne Valley Springs property as part of its efforts to realize the trail's optimum route. The NVCA will manage the property as per its Land Management Strategy, conserving it for future generations to use.

### Funding for alternative energy program

TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment has given the NVCA \$3,500 to initiate an alternative energy program. This program will complement the Tiffin Education Program, which offers more than 30 programs for elementary and high school students.

### NVCA offers more e-business options

The NVCA launched a members-only section on its web site in August to further promote electronic business. Board members now have the capability to access agendas, minutes, special reports and news in one convenient location.