



NOTTAWASAGA NEWS

May 2010/Volume 36

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NVCA celebrates

50 years!

About 5 dozen people gathered in the pouring rain on May 1st to celebrate 5 decades of NVCA work. It was a stormy day along Black Ash Creek in Collingwood, but the energy and enthusiasm of the volunteer tree planters and the crowd's appreciation for what the rain would do for the trees kept the event going.

Kind words and stories of NVCA and partner projects were shared by our guest speakers – Chris Carrier, NVCA member and Past Chair
(continued on page 2)



(left to right) Mayor Ellen Anderson, Town of the Blue Mountains; Mayor Chris Carrier, Town of Collingwood; MP Bruce Stanton, Simcoe North; Coun. Robert Walker, Clearview Twp; Wayne Wilson, NVCA; Mayor Gord Montgomery, Twp. of Mulmur; Fred Nix, Town of Mono; Cindy Hood, Ministry of Environment; Coun. Orville Brown, Clearview Twp; Coun. Mary Brett, Twp. of Adjala-Tosorontio; Joan Sutherland, Town of New Tecumseth; Dick Hibma, Chair, Conservation Ontario.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Executive Committee Meeting

Fri. May 28, 9 a.m. to noon
Tiffin Centre

Board of Directors Meeting

Fri. June 11, 9 a.m. to noon
Tiffin Centre

Nature at Night

Fri. June 18, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Tiffin Centre

Executive Committee Meeting

Fri. June 25, 9 a.m. to noon
Tiffin Centre

Trails Open @ Nottawasaga Bluffs

Sun. Aug. 15, 9:30 a.m. to noon
Nottawasaga Bluffs

NVCA 50th anniversary photo contest



*"How you doing?"
photo by Nathan Beaulne*

And the winning photo is...

(turn to page 3 for all the contest details)

(50th anniversary, continued from page 1)

and Mayor of Collingwood; Gord Montgomery, NVCA Vice-Chair and Mayor of Mulmur Township; Simcoe North MP Bruce Stanton; Cindy Hood, District Manager for Ministry of the Environment; Dick Hibma, Chair of Conservation Ontario; and Fred Dobbs, NVCA Manager of Stewardship Services. The event was emceed by Wayne Wilson, NVCA CAO/Secretary-Treasurer.

The Black Ash Creek floodway was chosen because it's the largest project the NVCA has ever undertaken and a great example of conservation through partnerships. Many groups worked with us to develop this flood control structure, including the Town of Collingwood, Ministry Of Natural Resources, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Blue Mountain Watershed Trust, local school groups and others. Through the collaborative efforts, the project became a provincial model for:

- Full regional storm protection
- Enhanced fisheries habitat and water quality
- Enhanced green space and recreational/ trail opportunities
- An environmental education demonstration site

Following the speeches, a ceremonial cedar tree was planted on the site to commemorate the occasion. In addition, 250 tree seedlings were planted along the creek banks throughout the morning by a team of volunteers, including staff from RJ Burnside and Canadian Mist, the Collingwood chapter of Katimavik and the Savill family.

Please visit www.nvca.on.ca to see a gallery of photos from the event.

Volunteers from Katimavik plant trees in the rain with NVCA's Sarah Campbell.



Third-party review of NVCA planning program underway

As per direction from the Board of Directors, the NVCA will hire a third party to review the NVCA planning program and customer service. An RFP has been posted on the NVCA web site and proposals will be accepted until May 21st. It is expected that the assignment will be completed by August 31, 2010 for presentation to the Board of Directors in September 2010.

Components of the planning program that will be reviewed include: plan input and review of development works/proposals/official plans as required by agreement; fees charged for services rendered; current practices and procedures in comparison with adjacent conservation authorities – specifically, customer service; human resource capacity; and client assessments and recommendations for improved effectiveness and efficiency.

IN BRIEF

2010 budget approved

The 2010 NVCA budget was approved by 76 per cent of our members' weighted vote. The budget totalled \$3,866,772.05. This represented an average 3 per cent general levy increase over the 2009 budget.

2010 tree planting

The NVCA is coordinating the planting of 114,000 trees throughout the watershed this spring. It is the largest number of trees the NVCA has ever planted.

The wheels on the bus lead to Tiffin

For the second consecutive year, Sinton Transportation and the Rotary Club of Barrie funded a program to reduce the cost of busing by half to encourage teachers and students to take part in environmental education at the Tiffin Centre during the winter months.

More than 1,700 students, from 31 area schools, visited the Centre through the assistance of the program, between November 30 and April 30.

Nature at Night

Come to the Tiffin Centre on **Friday, June 18th, from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.** to experience nature at night. Take a guided tour on the Tiffin trails and broaden your awareness of nocturnal life. Stargazing is weather permitted. **NO FLASHLIGHTS!** Cost is \$8/adult and \$5/child (children 4 and younger are free). Please pre-register by Friday June 18th by calling Holly at 705-424-1479, ext. 255 or emailing hbothwell@nvca.on.ca.

Photo Contest winners

The NVCA is pleased to announce the winners of its 50th anniversary photo contest. We asked our watershed residents and visitors to capture their favourite conservation lands, environmental projects, watershed wildlife and other images related to the work of the NVCA.



The third place photo is of a raccoon in a tree in Dunedin. It was taken by Georgi Denison from Clearview Township.



The second place photo is of the Pine River at Hornings Mills. It was taken by Jan Hunter from the Town of Mono.

Then NVCA staff chose the top 50 photos for the public to vote on at the annual Spring Tonic Maple Syrup Festival.

The winning photo is of a Goldfinch (on the front cover), taken by Nathan Beaulne of Barrie.

“My wife and I bought our first camera in August 2008 and became hooked on birds about 3 months later. We like to photograph birds, wildflowers, butterflies and nature in general,” says Beaulne.

The amateur photographer had been taking photos of local winter birds all through the season.

“This one stood out because of the interesting pose and the look the Goldfinch was giving me. This was taken from the third floor balcony of our condo building... who says you need a backyard!”

Please visit www.nvca.on.ca to see a gallery of photos from the contest.

NVCA begins E.coli monitoring for first time since 1990s

This year, the NVCA will begin monitoring ambient *Escherichia coli* (E.coli) levels in select rivers across the watershed. E.coli is a naturally occurring bacterium found in the lower intestine of warm-blooded animals and is deposited in fecal waste. It comes in many different types, the majority of which are not a human health concern; however, several pathogenic forms of E.coli do exist and can cause serious illness.

Sources of E.coli and fecal contamination in water are numerous, including (but not limited to) faulty septic systems, wildlife, livestock with creek access and spreading of incompletely composted manure.

NVCA staff has not undertaken E.coli monitoring since the mid-1990s when it was part of the CURB (Clean Up Rural Beaches) program. When provincial funding for CURB was cancelled, so was monitoring for the bacteria.

Now, as conservation authorities across the province are preparing watershed report cards, many of them are monitoring and reporting on E.coli. The NVCA included E.coli levels in its first set of

report cards in 2007, but had to use the old CURB data. The goal is to have new data for the next report card release, scheduled for 2012.

The NVCA thinks it is important to learn more about the distribution of E.coli in the rivers across the watershed, with a particular emphasis on understanding potential sources that could impact Wasaga Beach and its tourism base. This is a proactive approach since the beach hasn't had any E.coli contamination postings for a number of years; however, Tiny Beaches has had numerous postings in recent years. Staff are monitoring to understand if the Nottawasaga River contributes to the beach closings.

The testing will be conducted at 19 sites, 18 of which are part of the NVCA water chemistry monitoring program, with an additional site located near the mouth of the Nottawasaga River in Wasaga Beach.

Data collected will be used to focus stewardship activities both for reduction and remediation efforts.

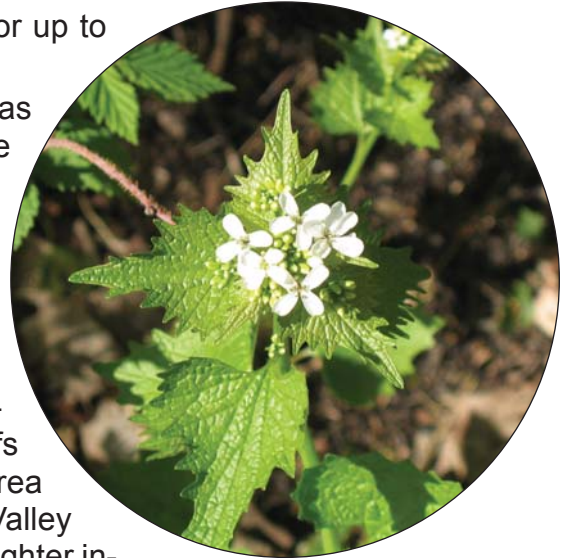
Garlic Mustard infestations being tracked along Bruce Trail

The extent of garlic mustard infestation along sections of the Bruce Trail in the NVCA watershed was documented during the summer of 2009 by NVCA staff (including an Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters Invasive Species Program student), Fred Nix (NVCA board member) and several volunteers.

Garlic mustard is an invasive plant species that can quickly invade and dominate the forest floor, limiting or eliminating the growth

of native species such as trilliums and violets. In North America, Garlic Mustard has a lack of natural predators. It also has a fast growth rate and can disperse 15,000 seeds per plant, which remain viable in the soil for up to five years.

Garlic mustard has begun to colonize the NVCA watershed. Heavy infestations were observed along some trail sections in the Hockley Valley, the Nottawasaga Bluffs Conservation Area and Pretty River Valley Provincial Park. Lighter infestations were observed at Petun Conservation Area.



Residents help protect municipal drinking water

As of February 2010, the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Region has the second highest number of drinking water protection projects completed in Ontario. Recognizing our initial success, the Ministry of the Environment has approved an additional \$700,000 for project grants to be delivered by the NVCA.

Hundreds of residents within the Nottawasaga Valley watersheds have taken action to protect the sources of their municipal drinking water. With the assistance of funding from the *Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program*, our landowners have completed 125 septic system and 11 well improvement projects, 5 businesses have undertaken pollution prevention reviews and 46 more projects are in progress.

The program continues until December 2010. So far staff have contacted 5,114 eligible property owners by letter informing them about the program. For more information on Source Water Protection, please visit www.ourwatershed.ca or call Shannon Stephens at 705-424-1479, ext. 239.

The Bruce Trail was selected for monitoring for the following reasons:

- portions of the trail run through three NVCA-owned lands
- some sections of the trail run through provincially and regionally significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs)
- there is evidence that garlic mustard seeds can be inadvertently spread by hikers, leading to further infestation.

The monitoring methodology consisted of hiking along the trail and recording various parameters when garlic mustard was encountered, including the shape of the garlic mustard patch (linear or polygon), the geographical location of the start and end of the patch and the estimated number of plants in the patch.

Many garlic mustard infestations were observed near parking areas and trail access points. This suggests that garlic mustard seeds are inadvertently being carried by hikers' footwear along the trail system and being introduced to previously unaffected areas.

The final report provides recommendations for garlic mustard control which will hopefully be implemented by agencies and volunteer groups to keep this invasive species at bay. The NVCA plans to continue working with the Bruce Trail Conservancy and the OFAH to monitor the Bruce Trail.

To read the full report, please visit www.nvca.on.ca.

www.nvca.on.ca

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