

Annual report 2010



"We do not see nature with our eyes, but with our understandings and our hearts." William Hazlitt

"Into the next decade"

President's Message

The Couchiching Conservancy is all about people as we work together to protect the natural features of the Couchiching region for future generations to enjoy. Our membership of 300-plus includes individuals and families with wide age ranges and interests.

A kaleidoscope of images unfolds: a local school group exiting the woods as a young lad exclaims that he thinks he saw a bear; our two grandsons, aged six and three, arriving from Toronto wanting to know how soon we can go for a walk in the woods; a busload from a local retirement home enjoying a walk at the height of the fall colours. Each season holds its unique fascination. Just this fall I met folks from Wisconsin who had spent the night in the area and were impressed with the upkeep of our trail system and the natural features within the woods.

Our volunteers — over 300 of you — are critical in maintaining the properties so that trails are safe for traversing in all seasons of the year or as appropriate for specific conditions. Our property teams do an outstanding job of keeping the properties under surveillance and providing upkeep as needed. The Board and staff thank each of you for your ongoing support.

Carden Nature Festival, held each year in June, is a huge event that involves large numbers of volunteers and attracts attendees from all over the province. We have been fortunate in having good weather bring the same folks back year after year.

Fundraisers this year brought staff, Board members and members from near and far together as we saw the fall Cycling Adventure and the first fall dinner event unfold. Intuitive planning by staff and committees helped these events draw folks from within and beyond our usual catchment area. The dinner event and silent auction was obviously enjoyed by those in attendance, and those of us who hosted look forward to a repeat in 2011.

My thanks to our dedicated staff — Mark Bisset, Gayle Carlyle, Sarah Hodgkiss, Kyra Howes, Ron Reid and Mallory Everson — and Board members Jamie Powell as Vice President, Peggy Foley as Treasurer, Ingrid Vander-Marel as Secretary, and Directors David Hawke, David Homer, Kristi McKechnie, Lou Probst and Bob Sullivan for another successful year.

Isabelle Thiess, President



Highlights of 2010

Preserving natural lands

When The Couchiching Conservancy crafted its five-year Strategic Plan in 2008, it envisioned 10,000 acres under protection in key areas by 2013. We were on the verge of attaining that goal at the end of 2010.

Spurred by the creation of a special fund for acquisition in Carden and the generosity of landowners, The Conservancy protected 300 acres of high-priority habitat and negotiated conservation easement agreements that will ensure the protection of an additional 485 acres. When those agreements are finalized, it will push us over the 10,000-acre threshold.

Notable in 2010 were:

- The creation of the Carden Acquisition Fund by an anonymous donor. This fund puts \$400,000 in matching funds at the disposal of The Couchiching Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy of Canada over two years, and puts both organizations in a position to ramp up land-acquisition activity in Carden.
- The purchase by The Couchiching Conservancy of Wolf Run Alvar, a 300-acre property in Carden, which will help us create a natural link between other Carden conservation lands and Queen Elizabeth II Provincial Park.
- Negotiation of a conservation easement on 85 acres of wetland owned by Lyn Russell in Carden, with final details expected to be concluded in 2011.
- Negotiation of a conservation easement south of Cameron Ranch on 100 acres of mixed forest and wetland owned by Judy and Lou

Probst, with final details expected to be completed in 2011.

Negotiation of a conservation easement in north Severn Township on 300 acres of mixed forest, granite ridges and wetland owned by Dr. Nancy Ironside, with final details expected to be completed in 2011.

Stewarding natural lands

The Carden Plain remained a focus for the Conservancy in 2010, and partnerships played a key role in accomplishing our goals. Funding for the clean-up of Lake Simcoe, federal and provincial funding, and contributions by several partnering organizations allowed us to undertake more than a dozen stewardship projects in the Carden region. In partnership with landowners and ranchers, many of these projects involved fencing off wetlands and watercourses and creating alternate water sources for cattle, which are used to manage alvar and grassland habitats. Our efforts at reducing nutrients flowing into Lake Simcoe earned the Conservancy a Watershed Hero Award from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Battling invasive species was also a major feature of our stewardship

work in 2010. Working from a list of 21 priority hotspots, staff and volunteers toiled to reclaim ground for native species and biodiversity on numerous properties. Garlic mustard, phragmites, dog-strangling vine and giant hogweed were among the top competitors for our attention.

With the addition of four more properties to our portfolio in 2010, the role our volunteer property teams play is crucial in stewarding these important natural lands. To date the Conservancy has 17 properties. Once the 2010 agreements are finalized, we will be responsible for nine conservation easements. We will also look after another 11 properties and one easement through partnership agreements with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Parks, and Ontario Heritage Trust.

Managing a strong and sustainable organization

Continued rapid growth, increasing complexity of operations and an unstable North American economy challenged the Conservancy Board and staff in 2010. We rose to the occasion with a strong response:

We stayed tightly focused on our continued over

In the spotlight

- Another 300 acres protected with an additional 485 acres pending through conservation easements.
- The creation of the \$400,000 Carden Acquisition Fund, which is providing matching dollars for property purchases by the Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy of Canada on the Carden Plain.
- Janet Grand and Ron Reid's Big Year raising more than \$34,000 to help fund the purchase of Wolf Run Alvar.
- A new fundraising dinner event, which raised more than \$7,000.
- The creation of a new stewardship endowment fund.
- A water-conservation award from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation
 Authority for our work through the Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund in Carden.

five-year strategic plan, reaching (in fact, exceeding) our goal for land acquisition ahead of schedule.

- A financial audit for our fiscal year (ending October 31) has been prepared by Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants and is available on request.
- Accountant J.R. Booth was retained to provide accounting support.
- Our overall revenues of \$888,715 for 2010 reflected acquisitions and the number of stewardship projects being undertaken in Carden and elsewhere. Our operating costs, which include acquisitions and capital, went up accordingly to \$868,958. At year end, our operating revenues generated a net excess of \$8,792.
- By board policy, some funds are held for special purposes. These funds were maintained at 2009 levels: the Acquisition Fund, used to assist with acquisition, \$56,325; the Property Protection Fund, used to provide ongoing income to maintain our properties, \$164,704; the Carden Conservation Fund, designed to help private landowners with stewardship projects, \$25,000; the President's Reserve, held as a buffer for future operating expenses, \$94,773.
- Looking to the future, The Couchiching Conservancy Stewardship Endowment Fund has been created with the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area. This new fund currently stands at \$13,400.
- A group of the Conservancy's past presidents and treasurers has been formed under the leadership of Gord Ball. The group will develop a plan to create an operations endowment fund. During the initial stages they are talking to Conservancy supporters to help shape the initiative and are welcoming advice from the membership.

Looking ahead to 2011

The Conservancy Board priorities for 2011 include:

- Completing at least two new property acquisitions in Carden, as well as finalizing management plans for existing properties.
- Completing one new property acquisition in the Severn region.
- Working through the final steps to register conservation easements on the Ironside, Probst and Russell properties.
- Securing one additional conser-

vation easement in Carden.

- Implementing a proposed stewardship project in the Copeland Forest.
- Unveiling a new website, which will improve our online capabilities.
- Continuing to implement the Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy to build bridges through partnerships, advance the cause of conservation and further enhance the Carden Nature Festival.
- Seek new and diverse sources of funding for our core operations.

Reaching out to the Community

Community support and involvement is crucial to our success. We are proud of all we have accomplished with the contributions from the local communities. Our outreach program this year included:

- The fourth annual Carden Nature Festival, which featured over 100 field trips and workshops and attracted more than 325 participants.
- Our second Conservancy Cycling Adventure on October 3, which attracted dozens of participants who pedaled their way around the Washago area to visit three Conservancy properties. There was excellent media coverage, including reporting from four local newspapers and local television.
- Media partnerships with the Orillia *Packet & Times* and the *Lindsay Post*, which provided regular exposure about the Conservancy's activities to a wide audience.
- Partnership with the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area to raise money for an endowment fund. Our first project of the year was a donor tour of the Carden Alvar. For the second year, a major fundraising initiative was participation in the Orillia Dragon Boat Festival held on September 25. Our paddling team raised \$5,000 for the fund, which was matched by Meridian Credit Union.
- Recruiting 40 volunteers to participate in three bio-blitzes on private properties in Ramara Township.
- Recruiting more than 45 volunteers for a two-day turtle-habitat restoration project in Washago. Media covered the event on local television.
- Attending meetings, including those of the Orillia Naturalists Club, Carden Field Naturalists, service clubs and community groups. We also attended the Victoria Stewardship Forestry Workshop, Sciensational Sssnakes March Break event, Georgian College Volunteer Fair, Wye Marsh Hummingbird Festival, Lindsay Lilac Festival and Kids For Turtles Dragonfly Festival with a display booth, and recruited volunteers to staff a booth at the Orillia Farmer's Market.
- Attending the Ontario Land Trust Alliance Gathering in October.
- A volunteer-appreciation bus tour of Oro-Medonte properties in August. 🍑

The following individuals and groups contributed \$100 or more to the Conservancy and its projects during 2010. Support from all of our donors is greatly appreciated.

Ackert, Brenan, Joy & John Agnew, Sandy & Lynne Melnyk Alley, Daphne Allison, Bill & Myrna Andrew, Thomson & Associates Ltd. Anixer Canada Inc. Ball, Gordon & Jane Bam, Homi & Linda Bednarz, Evelyn Brenner, Konrad Brooks, Elaine Brown, Marilyn Brown, Peter T. Buchanan, Anne & the late Terry Bunn, Walter & Andrea Byer, William (Reid) Carlyle, Gayle Charlebois, J. Paul Charles Fell Charitable Trust Christie, Douglas & Barbara Clarke, Richard M. Cohen, Ellen Cutler, Rob & Judy Darker, Bill & Helenmaria Darker, Dave & Amy Drew, Gwendolyn Drozda, Sheree Dunlop, Garfield Elend, Barbara Elliott, Heather Fallis, John Fallis, David Fletcher, Richard & Diane Gavine, Kim Gillette, Lisa & Gary Peters Gingrich, John A. Gordon, Michael Graham, Sheila & Jim Grand, Janet & Ron Reid Green, J.G. Hadlington, Sid & Dorothy Hall, Harry & Marian Hancock, Ron & Sharon Hand, Paul & Victoria Hansen, Robert & Linda Harris, Nancy L. Hawke, John & Gwen Hawke, David & Juliana Hejny, Vera Holdsworth, William Homer, David & Bonnie

Howard, Robert J.

Donors

Ilyniak, Morris Ironside, Nancy J.R. Booth, Chartered Accountant Jeffries, Sheryn Jenkins, John & Sharon Johnson, Harvie & Shirley Johnston, Richard & Wendy Jones, Michael & Barbara Kennedy, David & Margaret Kiff, Janet & Ray Kruger, Helmut Laver, Frances & Paul Leadbeater, Dale Leask, Robert J. Lowry, Si & Wendy Maltby, Cam & Mary McCall, Beth McCulloch, John & Jane Hunter McKechnie, Sue McSorley, Lois & Wayne Mick, W.O. & M.E. Mitchell-Wilson, Judy Mugford, Don Nesbitt, David A. Oakes, Patricia & Edward Orillia Naturalists Club Page, Jeanne & George Paul, Peter & Donna Penetang Horticultural Society Pitts, John & Kathleen Milligan Pomeroy, Margaret Powell, Valerie & Jamie Probst, Lou Rapson, Judith & David Reid, William Robertson, Barbara Robillard, Suzanne Rockhill, Nathalie

Rose, Mary Rosebush, Joan & John Ross, Jamie & Anne Russell, Lynn Russell, Paul Sarjeant, Jean & Dave Selby, Anne Sheppard, Margo Smale, Alan R. Smith, Dennis Smith, Richard & Beverley Sockett, Catherine B. Sprager, Fred St. Paul's United Church Stephen, Murray & Marcia Stewart, James K. Stinnissen, Arnold Stokreef, John Stripp, Allan & Dorothy Sullivan, Robert Symmes, L.R.L. Teubner, Marianne Thiess, Isabelle & Gary Thomson, Adam Thomson, Ken & Corinne Titcombe, Clarence Trombly, Joe True, Barbara & James Turnbull, Carolyn & Neil Valk, Matthew & Jane VanderMarel, Ingrid Watt, Valerie Waite, Susan & Bruce Washago Lions Club Watt, Valerie West Humber Naturalists Wiancko, Leanore Williams, J.R. (Mack) Wilson, Ivan Wolfson, Dorothy

Smiles all around

Rolland, Mark & Cecile

The folks on board for the volunteer-appreciation bus trip this August were all smiles. *Photo: Cynthia MacDougall*



Wood, Louise 🔊

Our Volunteers are priceless

Once again our volunteers brought their boundless energy, talents and dedication to the work of the Conservancy. Volunteers participate on property management teams, build and maintain trails at various properties, staff special events, help with fundraising, sit on committees and assist us in a hundred special ways.

Our volunteer coordinator, Betty Forward, has been busy updating our database and contacting everyone on the list. She welcomes enquiries from anyone with time, talent and enthusiasm to spare. Please contact the Couchiching Conservancy office at 705 326-1620 and Betty will get in touch with you.

Among our most active volunteers are our Board members, who dedicate many hours to oversee Conservancy affairs as well as be involved in projects. Our thanks to our 2010 volunteers, and our sincere apologies if we missed anyone.

Ackert, Brenan Allison, Bill Anderson, Lorna Antochin, Liz & Peter Appleyard, Yvonne Armstrong, Greg Atwood, Harold Babbineau, Rose Ball, Gord & Jane Ballantyne, Robert Bam, Homi Bandarra, Alex Bisset, Mark Bisset, Sam Bell, Tassia & John Blanchard, Bob Blanchard, Lynn Blair, Gord & Bernice Blogg, Winston Boehnert, Betty & Roy Bone, Dan Bowden, Lydia Bowles, Bob & Adam Bowman, Ken Bray, Bob & Nancy Brenner, Konrad Brown, Jerry & Lorraine Buchanan, Terry & Anne Budge, Ann & Don Bunn, Walter

Bushell, Sandra

Carlyle, Gayle

Cayley, Julie

Challis, John

Charles, Sandra

Campbell, Dave & Barb

Christie, Douglas & Barbara

Bver, Reid

Christie, Michael Cleland, Murray Cook, Ian Cooney, Colleen Cox, Will Coyle, Frank Crooks, Tim Cutler, Rob Darker, Bill & Helenmaria Darker, Dave & Amy Dasko, Josephine L. Davis, Shannon DeBiase, Paul De Boer, David Deimling, Carol Duncan, Ted Dyment, Leslie Engeland, Linda Evans, Chris Fecht, Aaron Fell, Garry Finley, Elaine Fleming, Kyle Foley, Peggy Forman, Ed Fulford, Pam Gamroth, Mary Sue Gauldie, Heather Gavine, Kim Gigliotti, Giuseppe Gill, Peter & Pat Gillette, Lisa & Gary Peters Gillette, Michael Glazer, Stan

Gordon, Michael

Goodyear, David

Goodyear, Regan

Goodyear, Mara

Grand, Janet Gray, Neil and Cameron Hadlington, Sid Hall, Harry Hancock, Ron and Sharon Handley, Luke Handley, Tim Harris, Nancy Harth, Mary Haskins, Joanne Hatch, Mark & Kim Hathaway, Jeff Hawke, Juliana Hawke, John Hess, Julian & Sandra Hodgson, Tony Holt, Margo Hope-Smith, Rodger House, Janice Hungate, John Hunt, Katrina Hutchings, Wendy Ilyniak, Morris Ironside, Nancy Jaski, Greg Jenkins, John & Sharon Junck, Ken Kee Wellman, Eleanor Kelk, Al Kelly, Suzette Kennedy, Dave & Page Kennedy, David Kiff, Janet Kirby, Mary Lou Knight, Fredrick Konda, Ed Lancaster, Marty Lanos, Emily

Lauer, Ronda Louis, James Lutick, Greg MacDonald, Keith Macdonald, Jim & Cathy MacNaughton, Ann Marie Madden, John & Melody Massig, Cathy Massig, Joanne McCreath, Paul McFadden, Steve McKechnie, Kristi McSorley, Lois & Wayne McTavish, Susan Michener, Gord Mick, Omer & Mary Miller, Stephanie Mills, Alex Milsom, David Moore, Melanie Mould, Brian Munro, Judy Nixon, Catherine & Richard Oben, Miriam Oeffling, Carole Oliver, Wrenn Owen-Keith, Miriam Page, George Pajor, Brett Patterson, Cathie Peters, Gary Peterson, Pat Peyton, Barry Pitts, John Pomeroy, Margaret Pomeroy, Meghan Powell, Jamie & Valerie Probst, Lou & Judy Quinn, Llew Reid, Jack Reid, Ron Riley, Patrick Rinaldi, Richard Robillard, Suzanne Robinson, Paul Rockhill, Nathalie Roest, Jenna Rose, Mike Rosebush, Joan & John Ross, Anne & Jamie Rowell, David Ruegg, Lynda Russell, Paul Schmelefske, John

Lanos, Mary Lynn

Shackleton, Kevin Schofield, Ron Sharpe, Ty Shaw, Nigel Scott, Don Shook, Mary-Diane Sinclair, Muriel & Alex Sinclair, Carol

Sinclair, Carol Sloley, Jane Smith, Ken & Judy Smith, Dennis Smith, Douglas Smith, Katie

Smith, Richard & Beverley Smith, Hope

Sova, Iva

Stanton, Jim & Mary Lou Stephen, Murray & Marcia

Stephens, Tara

Stephenson, Shannon

Stinnissen, Arni Stinnissen, Dianne

Stinson, David Storry, Noella

Sullivan, Robert & Wendy Sullivan, Michael, Caroline,

Jacqueline Symmes, Ric Szijarto, Ken Taylor, John

Thiess, Gary & Isabelle

Thompson, Bill

Thomson, Adam & Shirley

Thomson, Ken Thomson, Matt Thornley, Glen

Tomlinson, Cindy & Neil Tryon, Brett & Ken

Tucker, Kelly

Turnbull, Neil & Carolyn Vallender, Rachel VanderMarel, Ingrid Vickers, Merrin

Walsh, Ann Wand, Kim

Waterhouse, James Waterhouse, Samantha

Watt, Val

Wells, Linda

White, Randy & Cindy Whitman, Bill & Christie Wiancko, Leanore

Wilkins, Dave & Mary

Wilson, Bruce Wilson, Paula Wilson, Melanie Winn, Caryl

Winters, Jacqueline

Wood, Bill

Woodford, Jim & Pat

Wrenn, Oliver Younger, John

Thanks to our Supporters

The Conservancy's success would not be possible without the support of the community and of many individuals and agencies. In particular, we would like to gratefully acknowledge The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, which receives \$100 million annually in government funding through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

We also received 2010 grants from:

- The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
- The Heritage Canada Foundation
- Summer Job Service
- Environmental Damages Fund
- Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network
- Ontario Heritage Trust
- EcoAction Program, Environment Canada
- Tides Canada Foundation
- Orillia Area Community Development Corp.
- Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters
- Community Foundation of Orillia & Area
- ELJB Foundation
- Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Shell Environmental Fund
- Meridian Credit Union
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Ontario Job Connects

- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
- Community Wellness Fund Casino Rama
- Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program
- Habitat Stewardship Program, Environment Canada
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Wildlife Preservation Canada
- RBC Bluewater Fund
- Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund
- Agriculture Agri Foods Canada
- Evergreen
- Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority
- CFWIP
- Canadian Heritage
- Canada Summer Jobs

Other organizations are an important source of support for Conservancy operations and projects. During 2010, we received contributions and volunteer support from:

- Sciensational Ssnakes
- Kids for Turtles
- Orillia Naturalists Club
- Carden Field Naturalists
- Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
- Kawartha Naturalists Club
- Durham Region Field Naturalists
- Twin Lakes Conservation Club
- Township of Oro-Medonte
- · City of Orillia
- Township of Severn

- Sir Sanford Fleming College students
- Dufferin Aggregates
- Bell Canada Employee Volunteer Program
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- Orillia District Chamber of Commerce
- Wildlife Preservation Canada
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Canadian Cattlemen's Association
- Ontario Nature
- Ontario Land Trust Alliance
- Toronto Ornithological Club
- Ontario Stone Sand & Gravel Association
- Ontario Field Ornithologists
- Bruce Stanton Constituency Office
- Garfield Dunlop Constituency Office
- Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
- Victoria Stewardship Council
- R.W. Tomlinson Aggregates
- · The Miller Group
- PFRA
- Brereton Field Naturalists
- Katimavik
- Ontario Stewardship Rangers
- YMCA Leadership Program
- United Way
- Dufferin South Simcoe Land Stewardship Network
- St. Paul's United Church
- Washago Lions Club
- · Peel Birding Club
- Regent Park Public School
- Walker Industries 🍑

Corporate Support

Many companies across the region have provided services, products, sponsorships or other assistance to the Conservancy in 2010. We sincerely appreciate these contributions. We would like to thank the members who were major supporters.

- · Packet & Times
- Meridian Credit Union
- Pelee Island Winery
- · Casino Rama
- JR Booth Chartered Accountant Pro. Corp.
- · Scott Inc. Design & Build
- Orillia Power Corporation
- The Davey Tree Expert Co.
- · Orillia Chamber of Commerce
- G.H. Stewart Const. Inc.
- Home Depot
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- Ontario Waterway Cruises Inc.
- Unison Engine Components
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- · Dalt's Honda

- · Coldwater Rd. Animal Clinic
- Hinterland Design
- · Walker Industries
- Roy A Pearn Enterprises
- The Bird House Nature Co.
- Mundell Funeral Home Ltd.

Other valuable corporate support was received from:

- McLean & Dickey Ltd.
- Sunshine Carpet & Flooring
- Northern Sanitation
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- Liz Antochin
- Think Communications
- Crawford McLean Anderson & Duncan
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- · Mawdsley's Mobile Crane Rental Ltd
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- D. Saulnier Auto Parts
- · Russell Christie, LLP
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- The Marketing Group of Canada Ltd.
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- Snuggles Pooch & Kitty Holiday Camp
- Ellis Hearing Aid Service
- Zwicker Evans Lewis
- Bruce Stanton MP
- KH Communications
- BDO Canada LLP
- Century 21 Sparkling Waters Realty Inc.
- K McKechnie Architectural Design
- Bayview Wildwood Resort
- Champlain Manor
- · Muskoka Vitalizing
- Orillia Mazda 🦠

CNF Spider Watch

One particular arachnid was the star of the show as a rapt audience was able to get up close during the CNF Spider Watch at the 2010 Carden Nature Festival. The festival is one of several events The Couchiching Conservancy holds annually. *Photo: Nathalie Rockhill.*

