



I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. ~Henry David Thoreau

*The
Couchiching
Conservancy*



Taking nature's path

2011

Annual
Report

President's Message

2011 has been a very exciting year for CC. We are in the 3rd year of our 5 Strategic Plan and have reached the following milestones:

- Surpassing 10,000 acres of property under our stewardship with the addition of almost 1,400 acres under management this year thanks in part to the tireless efforts of Ron Reid;
- Hosting another successful Carden Nature Festival with over 315 people in attendance;
- Launching a 3 year Strategic Plan for the 4,400 acre Copeland Forest with a well attended public meetings at Craighurst (over 200 enthusiastic forest users);
- Increasing our membership to 367 members (a 7% increase);
- Forming the Past President Council with a focus of establishing the Heartwood Endowment Fund that will ensure the ongoing operations of the Conservancy. To date we have \$245,000 in pledges;
- Between the Dragon Boat Race, One Wild Night and the Carden Bird Challenge we raised more than \$35,000 towards ongoing educational and stewardship programs and projects.

And, thanks to our hard working Executive Director, Mark Bisset, and his dedicated staff (Kyra, Gayle and Dorthea) we managed to do this in a fiscally responsible manner thus ending the year with a slightly positive balance sheet and more than \$46,000 in new reserves!

We could not have achieved all these successes however without the enthusiasm of all our members and volunteers, who continue to work tirelessly but with smiles on faces. I would like to give a special thanks to:

Jane Ball for doing such a great job on organizing our volunteers (180 at last count);
Gord Ball for leading the Heartwood Fund initiative;
David Kennedy for spearheading the Copeland Forest Advisory Committee;
Paul Russell and Rob Cutler for their sage financial advice.

I would also like to make notable mention of two board members who will be stepping down this year, Lou Probst and Kristi McKechnie. Lou has contributed a lot of his time and knowledge to some of our major property acquisitions and the ongoing stewardship of the Carden properties. He has provided the board with sage advice over his tenure on financial and operational policies and procedures. Kristi has shown a strong determination in her fund raising efforts and making us all more aware of the accessibility challenges that people of all ages face on a daily basis.

But we won't rest on this year's accomplishments; we must look to the ongoing challenges; the next property fund raising; the never-ending battle against invasive species and the continuous property stewardship duties that sustains the general health of our 37 properties; and most importantly, the passing of knowledge to the next generations on the importance and appreciation of the natural environment that surrounds us.

And why do we do all this? Perhaps it's a peaceful hike on one of our many trails or capturing a glimpse of an eastern loggerhead shrike on the Carden Alvar. Perhaps it's exchanging smiles and a friendly word with a passing hiker. Our properties are a connection to nature for so many and that is what makes it all worthwhile.

I challenge all of you to explore as many properties as you possibly can this year. They are all so diverse and there is so much to discover.

Jamie Powell, President



The Couchiching Conservancy Board 2011

Jamie Powell, President

David A. Homer, Vice-President

Peggy Foley, Treasurer

Ingrid VanderMarel, Secretary

Lou Probst

Bob Sullivan

Kristi McKechnie

David Hawke

Isabelle Thiess

Staff

Mark Bisset, Executive Director

Kyra Howes, Stewardship Coordinator

Gayle Carlyle, Outreach Coordinator

Dorthea Hangaard, Special Projects Coordinator

The Couchiching Conservancy is a non-profit organization, incorporated in 1993, and registered as Canadian charity No. 13972 5050 RR 0001

Highlights of 2011

Preserving Natural Lands

- Almost 1,400 acres was brought under protection in the region during a busy year of acquisition efforts by The Couchiching Conservancy and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Seeking to maximize matching funds available for acquisition in Carden from the Carden Acquisition Fund and the federal government, the two organizations worked together to identify and pursue high-priority habitat for conservation on the Carden Plain. Key properties were added elsewhere in the region.

Notable in 2011

- The purchase of Bluebird Ranch by The Couchiching Conservancy. The property is a 206-acre grassland directly adjacent to the south end of Windmill Ranch on the Carden Plain.
- The 700-acre North Bear Alvar was purchased by the Nature Conservancy of Canada. The property will help establish a crucial link between the Carden Alvars and Queen Elizabeth II Provincial Park in the north and will be stewarded by The Couchiching Conservancy.
- The acquisition of The Thomas C. Agnew Reserve, an 85-acre property which adjoins the Robert and Emily Fawcett Natural Area on The Trent-Severn Waterway. The purchase was made possible by a part-donation of the property by sisters Joan Berndt and Susan Campbell.
- The donation of a Conservation Easement Agreement on 100 acres in Carden by Lou and Judy Probst;
- The donation of a Conservation Easement Agreement on 300 acres in North Severn Township by Dr. Nancy Ironside.
- The acquisition of a small but significant strip of land to expand the trail system at Church Woods, donated by the Township of Oro-Medonte.

Stewarding Natural Lands

The Couchiching Conservancy took on an important new challenge in 2011 with the launch of the Copeland Forest Stewardship Initiative. At more than 4,000 acres, Copeland is one of the largest intact forests in Central Ontario. Located in Oro-Medonte Township on the edge of the Oro Moraine, it is public land managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Conservancy is partnering with the MNR to lead a three-year project to enable the community to help steward the forest. During that time we will complete a biological inventory of the property and help create a community network which will assist the MNR in caring for this precious natural landscape. With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we have been able to hire Dorthea Hangaard to coordinate the project and a key role is being played by Conservancy volunteers who make up the Copeland Advisory Committee.

At the same time, the Conservancy continues to focus on the Carden Plain, where numerous stewardship projects were completed in 2011, fencing cattle out of wetlands and creeks to improve water quality and enhancing habitat for Species at Risk. With assistance from The Gosling Foundation, the Conservancy introduced a new “ecological services” program in 2011 to help support the conservation efforts of private landowners in Carden. Called Landowner Payments for Loggerhead Shrikes on the Carden Plain, the program provides funds to landowners who provide nesting habitat for this endangered species. Four landowners took part in the program in 2011 and we hope to expand it over the next two years.

The fight against invasive species continued across our region as aliens such as Dog-Strangling Vine and Garlic Mustard continued to aggressively threaten local biodiversity. Hundreds of hours of staff and volunteer time went into battling these invaders on Conservancy properties.



Conservancy in the Community

- Community support and involvement is an essential part of our success. We are proud of all we have been able to accomplish with contributions from the local communities. Our outreach program this year included:
- Launch of a new website designed by staff from Downtown Computers. This restructured and updated website will help showcase our conservation efforts and allow us to reach a broader audience. Because the website is a content management system, we will be able to include new information from our office on a regular basis.
- Recruiting and training 20 Conservancy Ambassadors; special volunteers who represent the Conservancy at community functions.
- Re-structured volunteer database that will enhance volunteer opportunities.
- The fifth annual Carden Nature Festival, which featured over 100 field trips and workshop, and attracted more than 315 participants.
- Media partnerships with the Orillia Packet & Times and the Lindsay Post, which provided regular information 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. For the third year, a major fundraising initiative was participation in the Orillia Dragon Boat Festival held on September 24th. Our paddling team raised \$5,000 for the fund which was matched by Casino Rama.
- Delivery of "Nature in the Neighbourhood", a program designed to enhance nature learning opportunities for children in elementary school.
- Partnered with Parks Canada, Trent Severn Waterway to enhance habitat for turtles at the Washago Centennial Park. A new observation platform was also constructed with the assistance of volunteers.
- Attending meetings including those of the Orillia Naturalists Club, Carden Field Naturalists, service clubs and community groups. We also attended Washago Music Festival, Orillia Canada Day, Orillia Farmers Market, Orillia Fall Fair, Transition Town Orillia, and other events in the region.
- Attending and conducting presentations at the joint Canadian and Ontario Land Trust alliance Gathering in September.

Managing a strong sustainable organization

Ongoing signals that federal and provincial funding may not be as plentiful in the future as they have been in the past along with a desire to secure the future operations of the organization led to a remarkable response from Conservancy leaders in 2011. Following months of hard work, the Past Presidents Council -- made up of every past president, the current president and two former treasurers -- created the Heartwood Fund. An endowed fund intended to support the ongoing operations of the Conservancy, the fund will be built primarily through planned giving with an aggressive target of \$10-million by 2025.

Even before the information package has been delivered from the printers, the fund has \$245,000 in pledges. With such a dedicated group focused on the task, we will keep our promise to future generations.



But managing our current needs in an expanding organization remains today's priority:

A financial audit for our fiscal year (ending October 31) has been prepared by Hehn Trickey Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants and is available upon request;

Our overall revenues for 2011 were \$827,573 and our expenses were \$819,884, leaving us with a net excess of \$7,689.

By Board policy, some funds are held for special purposes. In 2011, we added \$36,668 to our Property Protection Fund and \$10,000 to our Stewardship Endowment Fund held by the Community Foundation of Orillia and Area. Our Acquisition Fund was depleted by \$22,500 to cover the purchase of the Thomas C. Agnew Reserve -- a sum which will be replenished in the coming months. Overall, the net increase to reserves was \$24,168.



Looking ahead to 2012



The red-headed woodpecker is shown in profile, facing left, as it climbs a tree trunk. Its head is a vibrant red, and its body is white with black wings and tail. The background is a solid blue color.

The Conservancy Board priorities for 2012 include:

- Completing at least one new property acquisition in Carden which is now underway;
- Completing Conservation Easement Agreements to secure close to 1,000 acres across the region;
- Seeing the Copeland Forest Stewardship Initiative through its second year successfully;
- Developing the next five-year strategic plan for the Conservancy;
- Continuing to implement the Integrated Carden Conservation Strategy to support and expand our gains on the Carden Plain;
- Seek new and diverse sources of funding to support our ongoing work.

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 support of The Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, which receives annually \$100 million in government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative.

We also received grants during 2011 from

- Environment Canada Natural Areas Conservation Program
- TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
- 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
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Ontario Job Connects
- Gosling Foundation
- 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
- Evergreen
- Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority
- CFWIP
- Canadian Heritage
- Canada Summer Jobs
- Dufferin South Simcoe Stewardship Council
- Kiwanis Club of Orillia

Other organizations are an important source of support for Conservancy operations and projects.

During 2010, we received contributions and volunteer support from:

- Sciensational Snakes
- 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
- Fleming College students
- Dufferin Aggregates
- Ferma Aggregates
- Lafarge Canada
- Bell Canada Employee Volunteer Program
- City of Kawartha Lakes
- Orillia District Chamber of Commerce
- Wildlife Preservation 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
- Brereton Field Naturalists
- Katimavik
- Ontario Stewardship Rangers
- YMCA Leadership Program
- United Way
- 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 during the past year. We sincerely appreciate their contributions. We would like to thank the members who were major supporters in 2011.

The Davey Tree Expert Co.	Orillia Chamber of Commerce	Ego's Nurseries Ltd.
Packet & Times	G.H. Stewart Const. Inc.	The Bird House Nature Co.
Microsoft (Tech Soup)	Ego's Nurseries Ltd.	Mundell Funeral Home Ltd.
Pelee Island Winery	Ontario Waterway Cruises Inc.	Sunshine Carpet & Flooring
Downtown Computers	C.T. Strongman Surveying Ltd.	Lakehead University
Casino Rama	Dalt's Honda	Georgian College
Scott Inc. Design & Build	Coldwater Rd. Animal Clinic	Muskoka Vitalizing
Orillia Power Corporation	The Water Market	Donald H. Worling Q.C.
Hehn Trickey Professional Corp.	Roy A Pearn Enterprises	Impression House

Other valuable corporate support was received from:

Inn The Woods B&B	Garfield Dunlop MPP	Scott's Garden Centre	KH Communications
Hinterland Design	Dr. R. Aggarwal	Office Links	BDO Canada LLP
Crawford McLean Anderson & Duncan LLP	The Marketing Group of Canada Ltd.	Birchmere Retirement Residence	Century 21 Sparkling Waters Realty Inc.
Mawdsley's Mobile Crane Rental Ltd	Dr. Anthony Reid	Snuggles Pooch & Kitty Holiday Camp	K McKechnie Architectural Design
D. Saulnier Auto Parts	Dr. Michael Gordon	Ellis Hearing Aid Service	Bayview Wildwood Resort
Russell Christie, LLP	Dr. Richard Johnston	Zwicker Evans Lewis	Champlain Manor
Julia A Bailey Barrister & Solicitor	Mid Ontario Disposal	Bruce Stanton MP	

The following individuals and groups The following individuals and groups contributed \$200 or more to the Conservancy and its projects during 2011. Support from all of our donors is great appreciated.

Ackert, Joy & John	Escott, Judith	Johnson, Shirley	Rosebush, Joan & John
Agnew, Sandy	Fallis, David	Jones, Linda	Russell, M. Lynn
Atwood, Harold L.	Fallis, John	Jones, Richard	Seigel, Jack & Connie Cochrane
Atwood, Margaret	Falls, Bruce	Kiff, Ray & Janet	Selby, Anne
Ball, Gordon and Jane	Fecht, Joe & Eileen Ford	Larsen, Ellen	Shackleton, K.R.
Ballantyne, Robert K.	Fletcher, Daniel	Laver, Frances	Shand, G.B.
Barnett, Donald W.	Fonseca, Joanna & David	Leadbeater, Dale	Sheppard, Margo
Beck, Gregor	Ford, Derek	Leask, Robert J.	Sinkewicz, Michael & Daniel
Bick, John & Janice	Fry, Cyril	Leitch, Lynn	Hyatt
Booth, John R.	Furniss, P. Herb	Lowry, Si & Wendy	Slinger, John E.
Bot, Steve	Gibson, Brian	McKechnie, Kristi	Spiers, Rosemary
Bradstreet, Michael	Gibson, Graeme	Merritt, Rachel	Stephen, Murray & Marcia
Brenner, Konrad & Jutta	Gilbreath, Stephanie & Jeff	Mugford, Don	Stewart, James K.
Brown, Lorraine J.	Gingrich, John A.	Murray, Laura	Sullivan, Robert & Wendy
Brown, Peter T.	Gordon, Michael	O'Grady, Jean	Swinimer, Susan & William
Callahan, Kathleen	Graham, James & Sheila	Owen-Keith, Miriam	Symmes, Ric & Sandy
Catto, John	Grand, Janet & Ron Reid	Page, Jeanne & George	Theiss, Isabelle
Catto, Margaret	Grant, William M.	Paul, Alison	Thomson, Adam & Shirley
Charters, Anderson	Grootveld, John	Paul, Peter & Donna	Thomson, Ken & Corinne
Christie, Douglas & Barbara	Guthrie, H. Donald	Perks, Donald	Wallace, Brant
Clarke, Richard M.	Hall, Marian	Peyton, Barry	Walton-Ball, Mary
Cook, Ian & Carol Phillips	Hand, Paul & Victoria	Pope, Don	Watt, Valerie
Crooks, Timothy	Harris, Nancy L.	Powell, Anne	Wellman, Eleanor
Cumming, Robert	Hejny, Vera	Probst, Lou & Judy	Wepler, April
Cummings, Harriet	Hewetson, Russ & Win	Purcell, Nancy	Westcott, Bill
Cutler, Robert & Judith	Holt, Margo	Robertson, Rocke & Barbara	Wiancko, Leanore
Dale, Peter	Homer, David	Robillard, Suzanne & Peter	Williams, Dan
Darker, William	Howard, Robert J.	Lamprey	Williams, Ivor C.
Doherty, Janice A.	Ironside, Nancy	Rockhill, Nathalie	Williams, J.R. (Mack)
Dunsmore, John & Rosemary	Jaski, Greg	Rohmann, Christine & Werner	
Elliott, Heather	Jenkins, John & Sharon	Rolland, Mark & Cecile	

Our Priceless volunteers

Once again our volunteers contributed boundless energy, enthusiasm, talent and dedication towards the conservation efforts of the Conservancy. Volunteers participate on property management teams, assist with creating and enhancing wildlife habitat, help with fundraising, sit on committees, and assist us in a hundred special ways—many are involved in more than one project throughout the year!

Our volunteer Coordinator, Jane Ball, has been busy updating and maintaining our extensive database as well as recruiting new volunteers. If you would like to lend a hand, please contact the Conservancy office at 705-326-1620 for more information.

At each annual meeting, we present pins to recognize special volunteer dedication. In 2011, gold pins were presented to Dr. Nancy Ironside and Jane Ball, while silver pins were presented to Lyn Russell, David A. Homer and John Rosebush.

Among our most active volunteers are our Board members, who dedicate many hours to overseeing Conservancy affairs as well as often being involved in projects. Many thanks to our 2011 volunteers (and our sincere apologies if we missed anyone):

Agnew, Sandy	Christie, Michael	Hatch, Mark & Kim	Michener, Gord	Smith, Hope
Anderson, Lorna	Clarke, Susan	Hathaway, Jeff	Mick, Omer & Mary	Smith, Ken & Judy
Antochin, Liz & Peter	Cleland, Murray	Hawke, John	Milligan, Josh	Stephen, Murray & Marcia
Appleyard, Yvonne	Cook, Ian	Hawke, Juliana & David	Moore, Ginny	Stephenson, Shannon
Armstrong, Greg	Cooney, Colleen	Hess, Julian & Sandra	Moore, Melanie	Stinnisen, Arni
Atwood, Harold	Cox, Will	Hodgson, Tony & Marg	Moores, Will	Storry, Noella
Babbineau, Rose	Coyle, Frank	Holt, Margo	Mould, Brian	Sullivan, Michael, Caroline, Jacqueline
Baker, Rob	Crooks, Tim	Homer, David	Munro, Judy	Sullivan, Robert & Wendy
Ball, Gord	Cutler, Rob	Hope-Smith, Rodger	Nixon, Catherine & Richard	Tang, Jennifer
Ball, Jane	Darker, Bill & Helenmaria	Howes, Warren	Oben, Miriam	Thiess, Gary & Isabelle
Bam, Homi	Darker, Dave & Amy	Hungate, John	Owen-Keith, Miriam	Thomson, Adam & Shirley
Bell, Tassia & John	DeBiase, Paul	Hunt, Katrina	Patterson, Cathie	Thomson, Ken
Bender, Ian	Deimling, Carol	Ironside, Nancy	Persaud, Elish	Thomson, Matt
Bisset, Claire	Drozda, Lori & Sheri	Jenkins, John & Sharon	Peters, Gary	Thornley, Glen
Bisset, Sandi	Duggan, Sean	Jones, Michael & Barb	Peyton, Barry	Tomlinson, Cindy & Neil
Blair, Gord & Bernice	Engeland, Linda	Junck, Ken	Pitts, John	Totten, Bev
Boehnert, Betty and Roy	Evans, Chris	Kennedy, Dave & Page	Pomeroy, Margaret	Tryon, Brett & Ken
Bone, Dan	Fell, Garry	Kennedy, David	Pomeroy, Meghan	Turnbull, Neil & Carolyn
Bowden, Lydia	Foley, Peggy	Kiff, Janet	Powell, Jamie & Valerie	Turner, Jan
Bowles, Bob & Adam	Forman, Ed	Kluger, Ron & Ronna	Presement, Harvey	VanderMarel, Ingrid
Bowman, Ken	Gamroth & Ed Konda, Mary	Lancaster, Marty	Probst, Lou & Judy	Voutour, Susan
Bray, Bob & Nancy	Sue, (Avery) & Ed Konda	Lauer, Ronda	Reid, Ron	Walker, Madeline
Brenner, Konrad	Gauldie, Heather	Lauer, Tim	Robillard, Suzanne	Wand, Kim
Brown, Ian	Gilchrist, Danny	Laver, Paul	Rockhill, Nathalie	Watt, Val
Brown, Jerry & Lorraine	Gill, Peter & Pat	Lowry, Wendy	Rose, Mike	Weel, Katelyn
Brown, Peter	Gillette, Lisa	Macdonald, Jim & Cathy	Rosebush, Joan & John	White, Randy & Cindy
Brown, Roy & Patsy	Gillette, Michael	MacNaughton, Ann Marie	Ross, Anne & Jamie	Whitman, Bill & Christie
Budge, Ann & Don	Glazer, Stan	Massig, Cathy	Rowell, David	Wiancko, Leanore
Bushell, Sandra	Grainger, Deborah	Massig & Greg Jaski, Joanne	Russell, Paul	Wilkins, Dave & Mary
Button, Ian	Grand, Janet	McCreath, Paul	Scott, Don	Wilson, Bruce & Jean
Byer, Reid	Grandine, Joan	McFadden, Steve	Shaw, Kelsey	Wilson, Emily
Campbell, Dave & Barb	Gray, Neil and Cameron	McGoverin, Adam	Shaw, Nigel	Wilson, Melanie
Carlyle, Gayle	Hadlington, Sid	McIntyre, Ross	Sinclair, Carol	Wilson, Tom & Judy
Challis, John	Hall, Harry	McKechnie, Kristi	Sinclair, Muriel & Alex	Winter, Jacqueline
Charles, Sandra	Hancock, Ron and Sharon	McSorley, Lois & Wayne	Sloley, Jane	Woodford, Jim & Pat
Christie, Douglas & Barbara	Harris, Nancy	McTavish, Susan	Smales, Alan	Wrenn, Oliver
Christie, Meaghan	Haskins, Joanne	Medeiros, Kassandra	Smith, Dennis	

The Conservancy would like to extend special thanks to our Volunteer Coordinator Jane Ball for all her hard work and creativity. Jane has contributed countless hours and her positive can-do approach to her challenging and rewarding role and we truly appreciate her efforts)

All Photography provided by: John Challis