

News & Views

February 2017

Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust
Preserving the land  Protecting the future



FUNGI EXPERT PRESENTS AT AGM, MARCH 29

Our 2017 Annual General Meeting has been scheduled for March 29th at the Mississippi Valley Conservation Centre in Carleton Place. For us it's an opportunity not only to conduct required annual business, but also a chance to get together with like-minded friends and listen to a fascinating talk.

This year's guest speaker is Myron Smith who will speak on the topic *Mysteries about Fungi*. Myron is Associate Professor of Biology at Carleton University where he teaches courses and does research in molecular genetics, biotechnology, mycology and molecular ecology. He was Chair of the Biology Dept. from 2012 to 2016. His talk will highlight some of the mysterious aspects of fungi biology, genetics and behaviour.

Early in his studies, Myron was part of a team that discovered the tree-killing fungus called *Armillaria solidipes* (formerly *Armillaria ostoyae*), nicknamed the Humongous Fungus. Believe it or not, this mushroom is the biggest living thing in the world, bigger than the Blue Whale. What you see above the ground is only a tiny part of this organism which has a vast underground mycelium network. The one Myron discovered in eastern Oregon was estimated to be 30 hectares in size and at least 2,400 years old, but it could be up to 8,650 years old, making it the oldest living organism as well.

The AGM will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29th at the MVC Centre, 10970 Highway #7 in Carleton Place. The public is also welcome to join us for snacks at 7:00, followed by the presentation at 7:30. Entrance fee is \$10 (MMLT members free).



Armillaria are among earth's oldest and largest organisms

ED LAWRENCE'S NATURE LEGACY

Of the many friends of the MMLT, there are a few who stand out for their "stubborn particulars of grace". Ed Lawrence is one such gracious supporter. Ed brings an encyclopaedic knowledge of gardening and remedies for plant ailments to the gardening segment on CBC's Radio's Ontario Today program. His practical, engaging, and friendly responses to horticultural questions, over the air and in print in "Gardening Grief and Glory" have earned him great respect and a wide and devoted audience.

CBC's Michael Enright, who eschews gardening, recently broadcast an admiring tribute to Ed. "I've always liked listening to experts who are thoroughly engaged in their field and know how to talk about it" he said. "Young, old, men, women, jam the phone lines when he's on Ontario Today. They should put the guy on a stamp."

As you might expect, there are more sides to Ed than that for which he is usually celebrated. Ed allows that he has a corresponding curiosity and fondness for nature and wilderness. Nature on its own is full of beauty and spectacular designs. Humans naturally turn to nature as a source of inspiration for their gardening quests. Even the formalism of a Japanese temple garden is inspired by what we see and discover in wilder nature. Ed believes we must take



care to protect and preserve nature and wilderness for its own sake, because it is both varied and unique, and because it is an irreplaceable gift of inspiration to us. "If we don't preserve natural spaces, we won't have them to go back to" he says.

Ed admits to having grown up with what we now term ADD, attention deficit disorder. "Listen to me going on" he says with a grin. "Can't you tell?" Folks with ADD can be inattentive and have difficulty following instructions, he goes on to explain. But some can concentrate, even hyper focus, on activities they enjoy and deem important, possibly providing a clue to his astonishing and intimate knowledge about plants and the horticultural world. As a youngster Ed says he discovered relief and found a natural therapy

wandering in the wilder places near his home in Toronto, such as the Balfour Ravine.

This realization stayed with him subconsciously over the years and undoubtedly grew stronger from the experience of living and gardening with his wife Kate on a hobby farm in a rocky and rural part of Mississippi Mills. After Kate died in 2007 Ed thought he would like to remember her in some gesture that reflected interests they had shared together.

When he was invited to an event in 2013 to help the Land Trust raise funds and grow its support in the community, Ed says he found a worthy cause. Learning about the goals, accomplishments, and activities of people behind the MMLT, including their championing of the healthy therapy of experiencing wilderness, he became a Sustainer, a supporter who pledges a donation of \$1000 a year for three years.

However, and perhaps with his innate ability to zero in on things he considers significant, Ed pledged to be a lifetime Sustainer of the MMLT. "People know that the Land Trust will protect these special places forever" he says. "My support represents the kind of concrete action we can take now that will have a lasting effect."

There's a final outstanding act of generosity made by this true friend of the Land Trust. Convinced of the commitment of our volunteers and the importance of our cause, Ed has set aside legacy funds in his estate for the Land Trust. "Animal, vegetable, mineral, I know a good cause when I see it" he says, confidently, and with a big smile.

CANADA 150 CONSERVATION PROPERTY RECOGNITION

Two of MMLT's conservation properties have been recognized by Environment and Climate Change Canada in their celebration of Canada's 150th anniversary. This national initiative recognizes 150 Canadians who have sold or donated land or interests in land through programs such as the Ecological Gifts Program. Donor recognition will be in the form of a letter from the Minister as well as an engraved plaque to be installed at the property.

Environment Canada has selected cliffLAND, the Clifford Family Protected Wilderness and the Keddy Nature Sanctuary owned by Paul and Cathy Keddy. MMLT will also be acknowledged as a recipient organization for conserving biodiversity and promoting conservation and stewardship through partnerships.



Long Pond at Keddy Nature Sanctuary

A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR ROSE HILL VOLUNTEERS

MMLT, as a not for profit organization, could not survive without the contributions of a dedicated core of energetic volunteers. Last year, at our 358 acre Rose Hill Nature Reserve north of Denbigh, we were most appreciative of the efforts of the following local residents: Ken (Sonny) Fuller, his wife Janice, their daughter Emma and son Austin; Arnie Tate and his wife Lisa; and Jeff Doyle.

These folks were responsible for helping to clear the new Brodey and Fufflemucker Trails, to create a parking area near the Brodey Trail entrance and to install new boundary signage. Volunteer Coordinator Dale Dilamarter, a resident of Kingston who cottages at nearby Ashby Lake, monitors the Reserve periodically, most recently snowshoeing into Fufflemucker Pond with board member Bethany Armstrong.

Our 2015 land donors, Pat and John Hatton, visit each year from Maine to mark trails and otherwise support MMLT, including installing special signage last year at Rose Hill Rock to recognize the original families that made Rose Hill Nature Reserve possible. Numerous other Board and MMLT members and their friends and family have also contributed to making Rose Hill a prime destination for nature lovers.



Photo left: Lisa and Arnie Tate (left), and Dale Dilamarter (right) erect signage at Rose Hill

Photo below: A new plaque was mounted beneath the earlier sign at Rose Hill Rock to recognize donors from the Brodey/Hatton and Armstrong/Bernhardt families.



If you have questions or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Susan Sentesy, Program Manager, at ssentesy@mmlt.ca or 613-253-2722.

*Office Hours: 8:30 - 4:30
Monday to Friday*