

# MISSISSIPPI MADAWASKA LAND TRUST CONSERVANCY

Official Newsletter

July 2013 Newsletter

## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT LAND TRUSTS & THE ROLE OF PROTECTED LANDS**

**by Howard Clifford**

Different land trusts focus on different priorities, with some emphasizing waterfront lands, others hiking trails, and others urban natural areas. All have one thing in common - holding in public trust the properties they wish to protect. MMLTC is unique. Our vision is encapsulated in our Land Protection Strategy: MMLTC is focused on encouraging and enabling the voluntary preservation of private lands to maintain biodiversity and the natural environment to ensure healthy communities and to ensure that we, our children, and future generations may continue to benefit from the presence of these natural areas.

This statement should dispel some misconceptions. We are not bureaucrats telling anyone what they must do nor a government agency trying to take over lands. We encourage private land owners, of their own volition, to engage in a partnership with us to legally protect their properties so that the natural values they cherish will be there for the benefit of future generations. What better partnerships for MMLTC than with landowners who love, know and steward their properties?

Some think that land trusts want to lock up the land. This could not be further from the truth. Few would argue that sustainable forestry is essential. But we believe it is equally vital that a portion of the landscape be allowed to unfold naturally, in all its magnificent formations, to some day approximate the biological treasures of bygone eras. All this can be accomplished without coercion but through agreements entered freely by citizens who see this as part of our birthright -- part of the tapestry of our natural world -- not locking up but opening up the landscape to rich diversity. There is unfortunately very little true old growth forest, with its layer upon layer of complexity and beauty, left in our area. People asked to rate their nature experiences consistently place higher values on exposure to big trees and to older growth forests. Physical needs for natural resources should never over-shadow the ecological importance of large, older forest tracts, not to mention our innate need for their beauty and aesthetics that feed our souls. This is what makes us human.

No, our approach is to unlock the land. Many rural folk complain of being fenced in by no trespassing signs where they were once able to roam freely. Whenever feasible, MMLTC encourages nature experiences on its properties. A growing body of scientific evidence (I have in my library alone, five books published as recently as 2012

and 2013 packed full of studies) which speak of the health benefits of nature -- ranging from prevention of emotional problems to an effective component of treatment protocols. Nature can be more effective treatment for some than the millions of psycho-tropic prescriptions written each year. The conclusion seems clear - a Nature prescription is a must if we want to curtail the spiraling costs of medicare and our educational system.

It is well documented that I.Q. levels fell as we became an indoor people, addicted to a vast array of virtual reality devices. How disconnected from Nature we have become when a young child, ahead of its parents in mastering technological devices, refers to a mallard as Daffy Duck!

MMLTC often expresses its goal as being two-fold: the protection of wilderness and the use of nature as a healing backdrop to meet the physical, emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual needs of people. In reality they are so inter-meshed as to be inseparable. The best protection of wild nature is to allow the public to experience its healing, rejuvenating, inspirational powers first hand. The evidence is clear. Early nature experiences predict positive attitudes and support for nature in later years. It is no wonder a developer trying to displace a locally treasured forested area provokes so much resistance. MMLTC, too, believes when its protected wilderness lands are open to visitors they develop a bond to the property, a sense of ownership which helps to ensure its ongoing protection. CliffLAND, once off-limits to the public, received over 800 visitors last year. High Lonesome Nature Reserve had not yet put up trail signage when the public was at its door. Unlocking the land is protection at its best. Humans evolved in Nature; it is in our DNA. We are part of Nature and Nature part of us. John Muir, after a lifetime immersed in wilderness, captured the essence of our human identity with his insightful statement, "In going out into wilderness I discovered I was coming home!" May all have a wilderness home close by!

## FIRST RUNNERS' EVENT TO BLUEBERRY MOUNTAIN

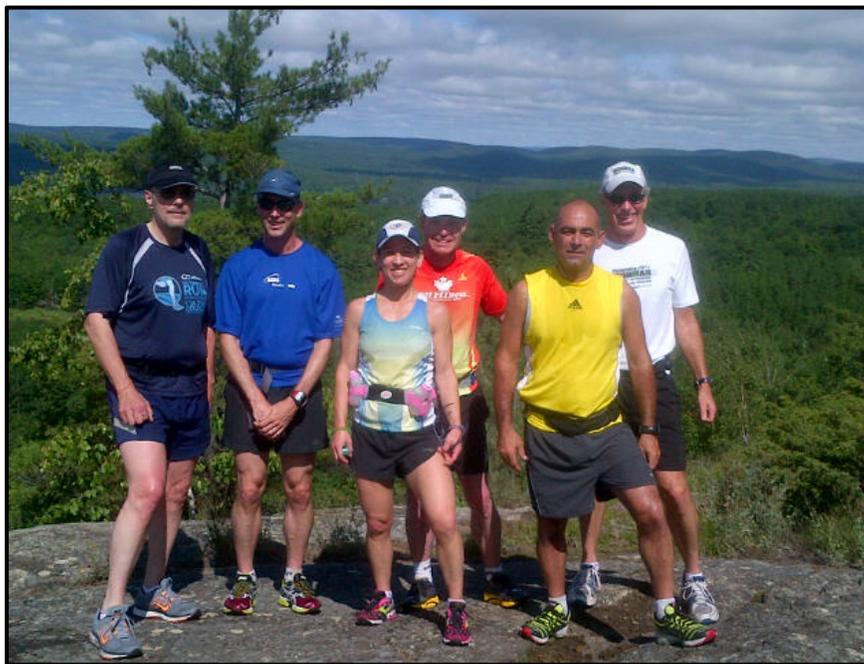
By Howard Clifford

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, Faye Goldman and five of her Ottawa running friends started from their cottage on Flower Lake, headed down the K&P Trail to the Hills of Peace Road, on to the top of Blueberry Mountain and then back to the cottage. Although both of my sons reminded me that they had jogged up Blueberry some twenty-five years ago, this outing was the first planned running event at cliffLAND.

Needless to say I did not lead the way but was there to greet and offer congratulations upon their return down the mountain. I was duly impressed by their accomplishment but they just took it in stride. They, in turn, told me how much they enjoyed the trail and the view from the top.

I knew Faye was no stranger to running through the country side. She is often seen running up the steep Flower Station Road several kilometres from their cottage. Initially, I was amazed to see her arrive for one of many hikes we enjoyed together at cliffLAND, without a vehicle, having run all the way. This super-fitness was explained by the fact she is an accomplished marathoner.

We discussed some of the research documenting how activities taking place in a nature setting have better outcomes than the same activity taking place in traditional settings. This seems to hold true for a variety of preventative and treatment protocols relating to the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being of the participants. Faye is personally convinced that the emotional high she feels when running is much greater within a nature setting. For this reason she never uses a treadmill and when running in Ottawa she takes the parkway. Faye states that a vital part of her experience when running is that her mind is emptied of all cares and distractions. Unfailingly this void is soon filled with creative thoughts as the forces of inspiration flood her consciousness. She adds that whenever faced with a perplexing problem, "I go for a run". New connections and new solutions seem to follow.



Left to Right: Ian Govan, Mike Blois, Faye Goldman, Guy Beaudoin, John Tegano and Bruce Mason.

It is therefore not surprising that she and her husband Michael have fallen in love with this special area of Lanark Highlands.

Besides discussing the run to the top of Blueberry Mountain, I was interested in her experience at the Boston Marathon, given the tragic terrorist bombing. Faye was in the second wave of runners and finished well ahead of the explosion. Her hotel was three blocks away so many people around the world were informed about the tragedy before she was. I was particularly interested in her psychological reaction. She had just completed her fastest time and was enjoying considerable feelings of pleasure at her accomplishment which was suddenly replaced by a sense of guilt. Her well-earned satisfaction about her personal best seemed to pale into insignificance in face of the sorrow and pain others were now experiencing.

Soon calls from various parts of the world began to reach her - everyone worried about her well-being. This outpouring of concern and anxiety from family and friends gave her an upwelling of gratitude for feeling so surrounded by love. She, along with so many others, experienced with certainty that love is greater than fear. Love would not allow evil to have the victory; she too was going to return next year to the Boston Marathon!

Although we did not explicitly discuss it, I know that Faye knows that taking time to be in Nature and opening herself to the healing powers of wilderness is the best way of putting all things into perspective.

**If you have questions or would like to be added to our mailing list, please contact Susan at [ssentesy@mmltc.ca](mailto:ssentesy@mmltc.ca) or 613-267-4200, Ext. 3403.**

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