

News & Views

October 2015

Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust
Preserving the land  Protecting the future



Rose Hill Celebration

In our last newsletter, we told you our exciting news about the expansion of Rose Hill Nature Reserve with an additional land donation of 258 acres. On August 8th, we celebrated this donation at the site, and it couldn't have been a lovelier day. About 40 people gathered by Rose Hill Rock, the huge glacial erratic where Patricia (Brodey) Hatton had mounted a large bronze plaque back in 1980. It was due to the discovery of this plaque that we first learned about Patricia and her intentions to preserve the property in its natural state. Patricia's full story, which is both tragic and inspiring, can be found on our website at <http://mmlt.ca/wp-content/uploads/July-2015-Newsletter.pdf>.



Donor Patricia Brodey Hatton with husband John Hatton

Visitors to the event enjoyed a celebratory cake while videographer, Shelley Ball, filmed Patricia telling her touching story. We plan to make this video available on our website as soon as it becomes available.

It had always been Patricia Hatton's intention that this beautiful wilderness property be used for scientific research. To this end, the Rose Hill Brodey Fund has now been set up with an initial investment of over \$25,000. Using monies from this Fund, MMLT plans to begin its research by conducting a full biological inventory of the property next spring.

*For more information please contact
ssentesy@mmlt.ca or 613-253-2722.*

Beavers, Birds & Bugs with Michael Runtz

Michael Runtz drew a crowd of about 80 people to our Beavers, Birds & Bugs event at High Lonesome Nature Reserve on September 19th. In his usual riveting style, interspersed with humour, Michael described his nature observations while touring two beaver ponds on the property.



An added bonus was the availability of Michael's newly published book, [*Dam Builders: The Natural History of Beavers and Their Ponds*](#), which he personally signed for visitors.

MMLT Loses a Friend, David Walker

MMLT was saddened to hear of the sudden passing of David Walker, Executive Director of Rideau Waterway Land Trust. David was the godfather to the younger and smaller MMLT.

Ever generous with his advice and time, he made a huge contribution to us as we struggled to work our way through the mountain of policies, regulations, standards and practices that govern land trusts. He was our go-to person for advice and never let us down with his practical and pertinent information, often alerting us to issues of which we were not yet aware. His passion for land conservation was evident in all he did and indeed it was infectious.

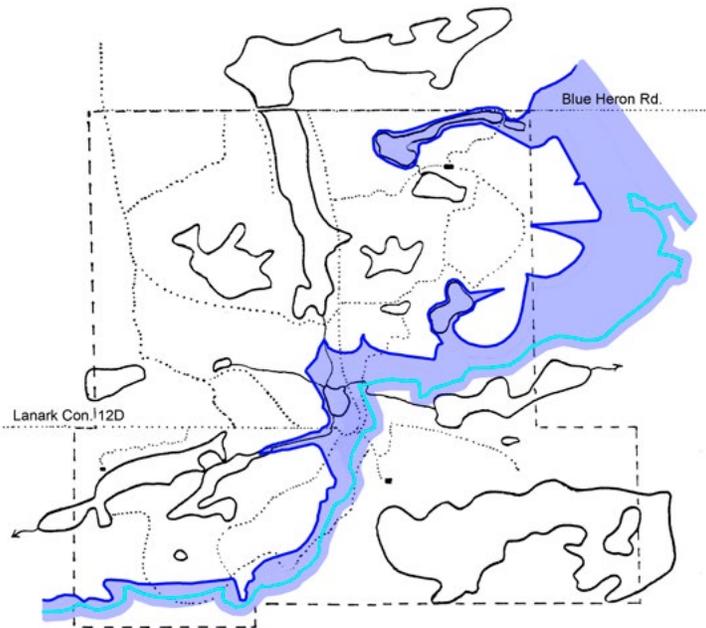
MMLT's Fall Nature Walk at Blueberry Mountain was dedicated to David in recognition of the impressive contributions he has made to our organization as well as the land trust movement in Canada. He will be sorely missed.

News from the Keddy Nature Sanctuary

by Dr. Paul Keddy

It has been a busy and pleasurable summer at the Keddy Nature Sanctuary (KNS). We've made two interesting botanical discoveries.

There are many ways to divide the property into different ecological sections. Since **the old shoreline of the Champlain Sea snakes its way through the property**, KNS falls naturally into two parts. The higher elevations have more rocky areas that were never flooded by the sea. The lower elevations on the east side however, were covered with salt water, and tend to have flatter topography, and often large deposits of clay. In these clay areas, occasional large rounded rock outcrops, known as "whalebacks" emerge from the clay. Each whaleback is like a little elliptical rock island rising up above the clay plain.



The shoreline of the former [Champlain Sea](#) (10,500 years BP) traverses Keddy Nature Sanctuary between the 145 m (dark blue) and 150 m (light blue) contour lines.

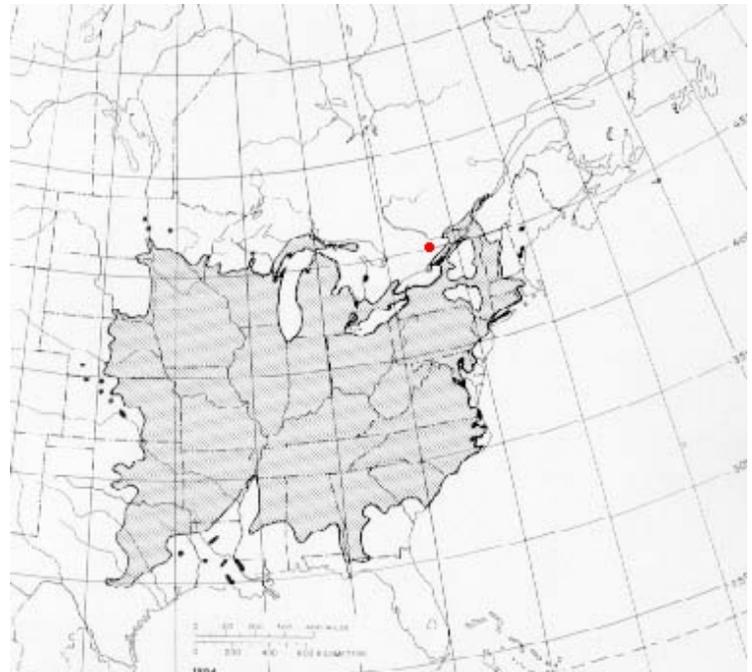
On the edge of one such whaleback, under a cedar canopy, we discovered a large population of a plant that is rare in Lanark County, the orchid **Downy rattlesnake plantain** (*Goodyera pubescens*). This is, indeed, only the second location for Lanark County, and this was a large population with several hundred rosettes and about thirty flowering stalks. This species was an unexpected find for two reasons. First, the property as whole has acid rather than calcareous soils, and this *Goodyera* is known to prefer calcareous habitats. Perhaps glacial till from areas with marble that lie just to the north may have contributed to this unexpected occurrence, and it inspired us to keep looking for other species typical of higher pH soils. It was unexpected for a second reason. The east side of the property was heavily disturbed by agriculture in the late 1800s and early 1900s, yet apparently the forests are recovering enough to begin supporting significant plant species. Oh yes, since, as many of you are aware, grazing by white-tailed deer is having a devastating effect on forest understory plants across eastern North America, it may be noteworthy that an herbivore, most likely

a deer, had eaten about half of the flowering stalks. That is to say, perhaps a little as one visit from one deer cut the reproduction of this plant population in half in 2015.



Downy rattlesnake-plantain orchid (*Goodyera pubescens*) was found on Keddy Nature Sanctuary this fall. Its name refers to the the snake skin like pattern on the leaves.

The other surprise was a new species of tree. We thought we knew all the trees on the property. But a fresh pair of eyes can make a difference. When Owen Clarkin, (Conservation Committee Chair, Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club) visited, he found a population of slippery elms (*Ulmus rubra*). They have bark that looks like white ash, with typical elm leaves except that they are more rough to the touch—like coarse-grade sandpaper. We enumerated at least a dozen trees ranging from saplings to an adults more than 30 cm DBH. If you look at a North American map, KNS is very near the northern limit of this species on the continent (the tree occurs further south, in small stands, all the way to the Mississippi River delta). There is an excellent [online article including a map](#) available from the US Forest Service. The location of this population was also interesting—in deeper soils in a location that would likely have been near the edge of the Champlain Sea.



The range in North America of [slippery elm](#) (a new species for Keddy Nature Sanctuary). KNS is located at the red dot.