

MISSISSIPPI MADAWASKA LAND TRUST CONSERVANCY

Official Newsletter

September 2013

WE'VE MOVED!

In late August, the MMLTC moved into its new office space within the newly constructed head office of the Mississippi Valley Conservation Authority (MVCA) located in Carleton Place.



As many of you know, the MMLTC has been provided with office space and has shared staff with the Lanark County Stewardship Council for the past 5 years. Last year, the Ministry of Natural Resources regrettably cut its funding to the Ontario Stewardship Program. Although many stewardship councils, including Lanark County's, have chosen to continue on their own without MNR support, this change has resulted in some downsizing. Although we will no longer be working out of the same office, we're sure that future opportunities will arise where we can continue to work together with stewardship councils.

Fortunately for us, MVCA was moving at that time into their new headquarters and generously provided MMLTC space in the lovely building pictured above. The MMLTC and the MVCA already have an established relationship and have worked together on several projects. We're delighted with this improved opportunity for even more joint projects. Our heartfelt thanks go out to both the Stewardship Council and MVCA for believing in us and supporting us this meaningful way.

If you'd like to see our new home, the Official Opening of the new Mississippi Valley Conservation Centre will be held on Friday, October 18th from 3:30 to 6:00 p.m. The building is located at 10970 Highway 7 in Carleton Place.

PROTECTED IN PERPETUITY IMPLICATIONS FOR MMLTC

When MMLTC takes on the responsibility for conservation of land, that legal obligation is in perpetuity, forever, for eons of time, or to satisfy the lawyers' need for more precision, 1000 years.

That is a long, long time by anyone's definition. The donation of much loved property or funds to acquire important natural heritage is not only a highly generous act but is an act of faith, faith that MMLTC will be able to protect that important piece of wilderness forever. That long-term protection depends on the resilience of MMLTC as a viable and thriving organization to serve generations to come.

MMLTC is a very active organization and its administrative and operational costs are escalating accordingly making it increasingly challenging to find the necessary revenues from just memberships, grants and events, our usual sources of funding.

MMLTC is confident that together we can take steps today to conserve not only land but also the organization that cares for it. We're inviting supporters to consider becoming Founding Members of the MMLTC Sustainers Circle, donating \$1000 annually for a minimum of three years; monies that MMLTC will use for operational needs. The 2013 goal is 30 Sustainers which would cover half of this year's operational costs. Over the coming years the Circle will expand to allow for strengthening of the organization to survive and thrive through coming years.

"We, the Founding Members of the Sustainers Circle, joined in recognition that the splendid goals of MMLTC can only be reached with an efficient, supportive organization. What a legacy to ensure that it happens - a gift that continues to be there long after our lifetime!" says Howard Clifford.

Please contact Howard at 613-259-3412 to learn more about joining the Sustainers Circle and becoming an integral part of MMLTC's vibrant future.

THE FOREST NEVER SLEEPS

by Howard Clifford

Some denizens of the forest you meet at night, others during the day, some at any hour. Some have changed their historic patterns. Wiser and older trophy deer have learned that hunting stops at dusk and they lay low during daylight hours.

If you are not acquainted with night walks or night sits then your nature experience is incomplete. The magic that moonlight plays on the forest is incredibly beautiful. The orchestra of howling wolves, the haunting call of the loon, the whippoorwill, or the owl, cast a mood

one never forgets. The strange night sound of beavers cutting down a tree or the scurrying of critters through the autumn leaves seems too loud for their size. Whose breath has not been taken away or who hasn't frozen in alertness when the monstrous sounds of mating porcupines, or the padding of a bear's paws reaches your ears and seem terribly close? Even old-timer's nerves have been put on edge by the devilish screech of bobcats, master ventriloquists, surrounding you in the dark.

If you want to stimulate your imagination try a night sit. The great Canadian legend, Grey Owl, was said to be given his name which meant in Ojibwa, "He who walks by night." He found nothing increased the capacity of all his senses than his habit of walking at night in the deep forest.

To me, night sits are a most rewarding experience. The forest is never silent if you are quiet.

I quote an experience by Joel Bryne, a remarkable supporter of MMLTC and a charter member of our Sustainers' Circle. "The last rays on the tree tops drew my eyes to the bulging moon. A coyote wailed then fell silent. The growling of a distant generator finally ceased. Night eased down on High Lonesome, a crisp, clear night - made for walking in. And I was the only human animal there."

Beautiful - isn't it?



To hear a pack of wolves howling, click on the image

TRAIL EXPANSION AT HIGH LONESOME

Last winter's ice storms resulted in many fallen branches and blocked trails at High Lonesome Nature Reserve. The harsh realities of managing a wilderness property really hit home! But thanks to the work of a crew of hearty volunteers, and under the guidance of property stewards Ken Spicer and Joel Byrne, the debris was cleared and trails were opened by mid-June. The trail network now has colour-coded directional signs to match the trail map provided for visitors.

Later in the summer we were also fortunate to have the assistance of the Stewardship Youth Rangers to help build two new trails at High Lonesome. The brand new Lost Antler trail was created, starting out from Beaver Pond Road in the back northwest corner of the property to join up with Wolf Trail beside Bear Rump Clearing, thus creating a new loop through a part of the 200-acre property that was previously uncharted.

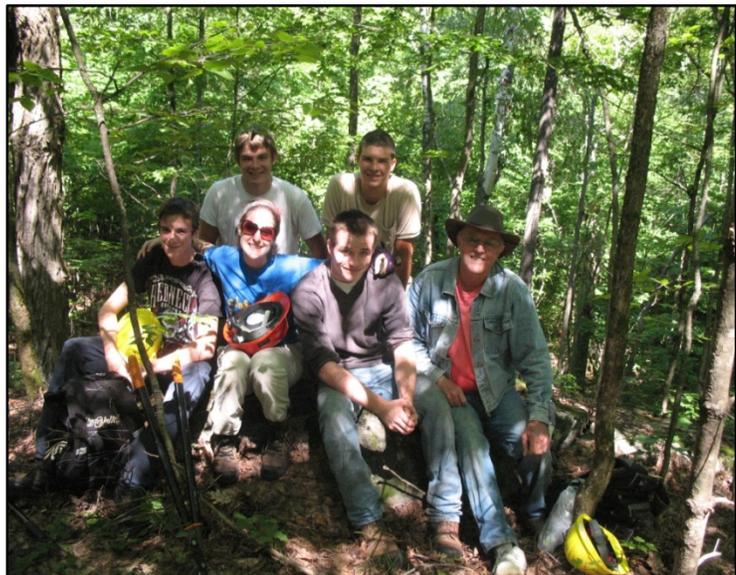
The new North Wind Trail begins at the Old Red Oak Tree and loops around to the back northeast corner of the property and then returns to Bear Rump Clearing. You can stop at Picnic Perch on the way.

"This was one of our favourite projects of the season," said project leader Stephanie McConkey. "We enjoyed working in such a beautiful location and being part of such a friendly and dedicated team. After a hard day of work, brushing and creating new trails, it was very rewarding at the end of the day to see all the progress we had made."

The Stewardship Rangers are a team of four 17-year-olds who spend the summer working on a number of natural resource management projects. This program, offered by the Ministry of Natural Resources, helps the youth decide whether they want to pursue a career in the field.

The summer's trail work was topped off when Ken Spicer built the new Spooky Marsh Trail. This new trail creates a loop from Bear Trail, circling round over a high plateau to the eastern property boundary, then back along the edge of the marsh to join up with Wolf Trail. The high plateau has been named Spring Beauty Heights for the obvious reason that it is covered with these delightful wildflowers each spring.

The next step in our plan is to install some interpretive signs along the trails. Many thanks go out to the willing hands that are making this beautiful property a choice destination for visitors.



The Stewardship Rangers and project leader Stephanie McConkey enjoy a lunch break with Ken Spicer during a hard day's work at High Lonesome.