

# News & Views

September 2014

Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust  
Preserving the land  Protecting the future



## CLYDELANDS

### OUR LATEST PROTECTED PROPERTY

We are delighted to introduce you to our newest protected property, a one hundred acre wilderness in the northwest corner of Lanark Highlands. This land is among the most rugged, wild and natural in all of the county. It is traversed by the Middle Branch of Clyde Creek which flows through a broad rock strewn valley bounded on its sides by several 200 to 250 foot domed rocky hills with many near vertical cliffs.

The property is being protected under an easement agreement by Gray and Aileen Merriam and according to their wishes will be left untouched forever. Gray and Aileen's story about this lovely spot follows.

"We gained Clydelands in the early 70's through a tax-delinquent properties auction by mail-bid. We also bought another 100 acres south of Joes Lake.

We didn't know where Clydelands was except as a location on a 1:50,000 topographic map. That was enough to show that it was near the top end of the Clyde watershed and therefore was a valuable conservation holding. We had no map showing lots and concessions. So our early encounters were semi-annual expeditions to try to find our new lands. The Clerk of Lavant Township, Mr. Thomas Deachman, was most helpful in introducing us to his neighbours around Flower Station. They allowed us to explore cross-country from the north in our Land Rover. We got in as far as Lavant Long Lake with a canoe on the roof rack. That let us explore the lake down into the bay that gives rise to the Clyde and where the main stand of wild rice grew on the lake.

Each year our explorations would lead us to a new probable location for our unfound property. They were all interesting properties and it really did not matter whether we had found ours or not. The neighbours let us explore and camp and we enjoyed the country wherever we found ourselves.

One Thanksgiving weekend we were exploring up near Lavant Long Lake with four of us and a Labrador pup in a tent when an early snowstorm pushed the tent flat on top of us. A winter trip with a toboggan was greatly enjoyed by two young boys.

About that time we received a rather abrupt letter from the Ministry of Natural Resources concerning our other 100 acres south of Joes Lake. It stated quite bluntly that we better be careful if we intended to build anything on that property. If we built over the property line onto Crown land, the building would be removed and we would get a bill for the costs.

A few years later, another letter from MNR informed us that logging was to begin around Clydelands so we paraphrased their earlier letter and sent it back to them, warning against any cutting over the property lines onto Clydelands. This meant that MNR had to flag a line around Clydelands and we finally got an exact boundary for our property.

It turned out to be the nicest property of all those we had explored. It had the headwaters of the West Branch of the Clyde where it left Lavant Long Lake, and had some prominent domes of Precambrian rock from where you could see very far to the south. It had outstanding diversity of forest with many shrubs and forbes under the trees. We were very pleased.



*The Merriam family enjoying a fall day at Clydelands*

In our explorations of Clydelands, we found the original, carved, wooden survey marker at the southwest corner. On investigation we found that someone in Texas owned the 100 acres to the southwest. All other sides of Clydelands were Crown land.

By this time, our sons were in university. One day Paul joined us on an overnight up on Clydelands. We were in sleeping bags under a tarp but Paul had no tarp. It poured that night and when he headed off to Trent in the morning, he was dripping wet and a slight shade of blue.

Our stories of the hospitality of Thomas Deachman led Gray's parents to visit him at Flower Station. They probably thought that they could drive to our new property. Despite never gaining access, Gray's father left a request that his ashes be scattered at Clydelands. There now are two bronze plaques on the rocky outcrop that faces south, one for Arthur Reginald Merriam and one for Clara Ida Merriam. So Clydelands now has strong bonds with our family."

## THE ROSE HILL CHALLENGE

MMLT hosted its Annual Nature Walk at Rose Hill Nature Reserve on the lovely sunny morning of Saturday, August 9th. This year the guided hike included the new Hemlock Trail that runs through one of the most well-developed stands of old Hemlock in eastern Ontario. But a special feature this year was a very interesting side event. Not long after MMLT acquired this property, we noticed a giant boulder on an adjacent property that drew our attention. Mounted on the side was a large plaque stating that the land was a Conservation Reserve, in memory of Robert Brodey.

Our curiosity was roused and we managed to trace down the current owner who now lives in Maine. We learned that Patricia Hatton and her former husband Robert Brodey had enjoyed this beautiful 260 acre property for many years until he died tragically in a car accident in 1979. Wanting future generations to enjoy this natural paradise as they had, she had intended to bequeath the property to a land trust in her will.

Pat Hatton and her husband John came up from Maine and joined us for the Nature Walk. Afterwards they gave us a tour of her adjacent property, which she has advised she would now like to donate to MMLT. That donation would make the conservation lands at Rose Hill almost four times their current size. However, MMLT has one big challenge to overcome before we can accept this generous gift.

The lands around this region are dotted with small ponds which MPAC had assessed as “waterfront” although only beavers would ever care to swim in such ponds. As a result, the property taxes on the Hatton Property are sky-high. Before MMLT can take on the commitment to own and protect this property in perpetuity the tax assessment would have to be reduced dramatically.

There is another avenue open to us that can help reduce the taxes. The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources offers the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program for ecologically sensitive lands that meet their eligibility requirements. These include lands with documented presence of endangered or threatened Species at Risk (SAR).

If MMLT can obtain photos with GPS locations of SAR we can consider accepting this property. This is the Rose Hill Challenge! Are you a naturalist who loves exploring the flora and fauna of wilderness lands and would like to make a difference? By finding a species at risk on the endangered or threatened list you can help make it possible for this beautiful 260 acre wilderness property to be conserved in perpetuity by MMLT. For more details, please contact Mary Vandenhoff at vandenhoff@bell.net or 613-278-2939.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Fall Colours Nature Walk on Blueberry Mountain

October 4: 9:30 a.m. registration  
cliffLAND

502 Hills of Peace Rd., Flower Station  
Entrance fee: \$10 donation to MMLT

### Nature Is Sense-ational

#### Take Your Five Senses for a Walk in the Woods

October 18, 2014: 9:30 a.m. registration  
High Lonesome Nature Reserve

867 Carbine Rd., Pakenham  
Entrance fee: \$10 donation to MMLT

More details at [mmlt.ca](http://mmlt.ca)

## A NEW NAME, A NEW LOGO AND A NEW WEBSITE



If you attended our AGM back in May, you will recall that we passed a motion to shorten our name, dropping the word “Conservancy”. Now that we’ve received formal government approval, we’re ready to launch our new name with a new logo and a new website.

Our new logo was designed by local graphic designer Jenny Pfitzer and one of its renditions can be viewed at the top of this newsletter.

One of the challenges of changing our name is changing our addresses. Taking advantage of the name and address change of our website, we also revamped it. It can now be found at [mmlt.ca](http://mmlt.ca) and we do hope you will take a look. The template was chosen because it allows us to feature beautiful photographs of our wonderful properties, taken by several of our very talented volunteers.

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

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