

The Oxbow

STEWARDSHIP OF THE COVES SUBWATERSHED



www.thecoves.ca

Fall 2006

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Go Green in your Garden FREE Natural Landscaping Consultations

Go green in your garden this fall with the Friends of the Coves ecologically-friendly advice and services. We offer free natural landscaping consultations, pesticide-free lawn care advice, backyard habitat workshops, native plants for erosion control, and the opportunity to buy discounted rain barrels. For households who are committed to naturalization, we will also have free native wildflowers available.



Photo courtesy of Charles Kinsley

By making this commitment you will provide food and create habitat for wildlife, conserve water, improve the soil, and remove the need for harmful pesticides and fertilizers. Information and resources on composting, using rain barrels and controlling "invasive" species will also be available. If you live in the Coves Subwatershed and want to learn more, please contact the Friends of the Coves: (519) 640-5397, or contact@thecoves.ca.

What you can do to begin your backyard naturalization:

- Select native plants to provide food and shelter for wildlife to rely upon.
- Avoid using chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Don't dump yard waste or other items into natural areas.
- Use a rain barrel. Your plants will love the chemical-free water!
- Use natural compost to improve your soils.
- Plant trees to shade in summer and provide a windbreak in winter.
- Take action to control invasive plants in your yard. Remove flower heads from invasive plants so that they do not go to seed and spread.



Backyard habitat provided a home for these Screech Owls spotted on Elworthy Ave, in the centre of the Coves Subwatershed this May. Photo courtesy of Alan Stuart.

Thanks to our Sponsors for the Go Green in Your Garden program:

- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Environment Canada
- EcoAction Canada
- The City of London
- ReForest London
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

Thom's Presidential News

This past year has been extremely busy and I am amazed at what has been accomplished. Mary-Pat Mathers has been with us full time for a year now as our Executive Director and we are most pleased with her efforts to move the organization forward. Funding has come in from various sources for a number of projects – many of which are mentioned in the newsletter. Of particular note is the progress of the Implementation Committee which you may recall was struck by London City Council to come to grips with the implementation of the 59 recommendations in the Coves Subwatershed Report.

We are still looking for interested people to serve on our Board of Directors - if this is of interest to you please give Mary-Pat a call at the Coves office 519-640-5397. She will be able to advise you on what qualities and skills the 'Friends' are looking for as well as the time commitment, with regard to length of term.

Finally, I would like to welcome Ethan Ling to our staff. Ethan has a background in Urban Planning and project management, both in London and Toronto and has returned to the Coves subwatershed to help implement the plan and improve the overall environment. You can read more about him and our other staff members on the website www.thecoves.ca and meet them through becoming a member or volunteering with our upcoming projects.

- Thom McClenaghan



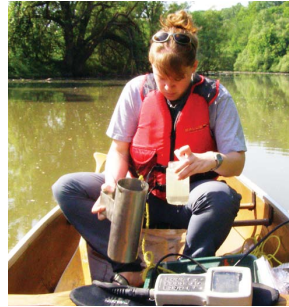
Coves Monthly Checkup

It's time again to check the pulse of the Coves. Monitoring will ensure that we can measure the impact that our rehabilitation initiatives have on the health of the Coves. Throughout the summer and fall of 2006, the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) is taking water samples from the Coves. Results to date show elevated levels of iron, copper, phosphorus, suspended sediments, aluminum and zinc.

This year, we are also building upon our partnership with Ridgeway College. Through the winter, students will identify potential problem areas

by taking water samples from Silver Creek and various stormwater outlets throughout the Coves Subwatershed.

Fish sampling in the Coves is also underway. During an August sampling, John Schwindt from UTRCA noted that the common carp – the most plentiful fish in the ponds, are cross breeding with the goldfish from people's backyard ponds. Both carp and gold fish are not native to the Coves or to Canada. These non-native, invasive species spread and displace the native fish species. Please be sure to keep your gold fish and bait fish out of the Coves.



Karla Young, UTRCA Monitoring water quality in the Coves

Coves Swallowtail Grove

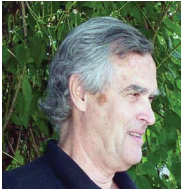
Well, it's finally here. The first public garden designed by Friends of the Coves was landscaped and planted this August to provide habitat for wildlife and a rest stop for passers-by. Swallowtail Grove is named for the large, colourful butterfly that is easily identified by the eye spots on their "tail", used to trick potential predators. Over 35 native plant species are present in the garden, such as a tulip tree, fragrant sumac and spiked blazing-star, to meet the needs of all stages of the butterfly life cycle.

As a part of this project, the City of London has mowed a path to connect the Grove with our naturalization planting along the West Pond. In the future we plan to connect the East and West Ponds with this path, and install more rest stops along the way. A special thanks to all of our volunteers who came out to plant, water and weed, and to Julie Michaud at the City of London for all of her hard work and dedication. To find out more, come and visit Swallowtail Grove, or visit our website at www.thecoves.ca.



Aerial view of the Gateway site

Good “Friends”



Thom McClenaghan
President,
Friends of the Coves

Each newsletter, we will profile an active supporter of Friends of the Coves. What better place to start then with Thom McClenaghan, President and

Founding Member of “Friends of the Coves”.

Thom continues to be a lifelong resident of South London. He is a retired School Principal and former Trustee with the Board of Education for the City of London.

Thom is married to Martha with 4 children David, Erin, Kathleen and Andrew and two Grandsons Thomas and Samuel.

Why the Coves? “This long neglected part of South London is long overdue for a little tender loving care. Possibly my grandsons will be able to enjoy them as I did when I was a child!”

Days Are Numbered For Giant Coves Mascot

The old sycamore overlooking the East Pond is for many the most familiar symbol of the Coves.

Unfortunately, some unthinking people have repeatedly used its hollowed-out trunk for fires.

In the past, the tree has battled and withstood the internal fires; however the most recent occurrence removed the entire back of the tree. Now, supported on only two sides, it is only a matter of time before this endearing mascot becomes a part of the ponds themselves. You may want to pay a visit to this ailing guardian of the ponds before it’s too late...



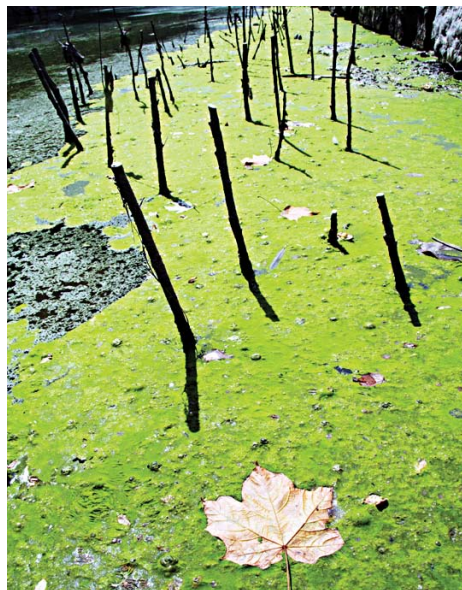
Photo courtesy of Doug Bisson

“I’ve been Coved!”

This June as I was exploring the coves with my two young nieces we discovered painted turtles, a green frog, creek chub, and four great blue herons. All of this was accompanied by a chorus of birds that caused one of the girls to exclaim ... “We’re in the wild!”

Fast forward to the heat of July when the steady path of our canoe parts a thick layer of algae and each stroke of the paddle disturbs a few carp that leave a trail of mud in their wake. All of this is accompanied by the stagnant perfume of septic waters that causes me to lament “I’ve been coved!” and to head home for the shower.

Much work lies ahead in our mission to make the Coves a healthy home for plants, animals and the two-legged creatures of London.



Algae in the Coves
Photo courtesy of Doug Bisson

Thick algae blooms are the result of excess phosphorus in the water. As the algae dies, it consumes the oxygen required for the survival of plants, aquatic insects and fish. The non-native, invasive carp disturb the sediment as they forage for food. By disturbing the sediment, the carp prevent sunlight from penetrating the water’s surface, uproot aquatic vegetation and reintroduce phosphorus into the water column.

Dramatic action is needed to improve water quality and to rehabilitate the natural diversity of the Coves. The Friends of the Coves has initiated the Coves Aquatic Rehabilitation Program (CARP) to reestablish conditions that will support the growth of native aquatic vegetation and provide the foundation for a healthy ecosystem. Management strategies that have been used in other areas include combinations of netting and removing the carp, lowering water levels in the ponds to remove the carp, using a piscicide (a fish poison), installing aquatic barriers to prevent the re-introduction of the carp or applying a flocculent - a substance that causes phosphorous and particulate matter to settle to the bottom.

The Friends of the Coves has hired a limnologist (a freshwater specialist) to assist in identifying the best management approach. Involvement and feedback from the residents and community will be an important part of developing an effective strategy to rehabilitate the ponds.

For more information, to comment or to participate in the Coves Aquatic Rehabilitation Program, please give us a call. - *Mary-Pat Mathers*

What can you do to help?

- don’t dump your bait fish, vegetation from fish tanks, or gold fish in the Coves. They will multiply and compete with native fish species.
- reduce phosphorus and algae blooms by avoiding the use of chemical fertilizers on your lawn.



Carp in the Coves



THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS



Through community engagement we will continue to succeed in conserving and rehabilitating the Coves as a natural refuge within our community.

The Friends of the Coves thanks these groups that have made financial contributions in support of a healthy, natural Coves:

- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Government of Canada
- London Community Foundation
- The Richard and Beryl Ivey Fund, a fund within London Community Foundation
- The Haines Family Fund, a fund within London Community Foundation
- City of London
- The Arcangelo Rea Family Foundation
- TD Friends of the Environment
- HIVA Environmental Fund
- Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat and Network Fund
- Ministry of Natural Resources Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program

- Home Depot and Evergreen Rebuilding Nature Partnership
- Reforest London
- Stantec

And, thanks to these organizations for supporting our events with in-kind contributions:

- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
- City of London
- Ministry of Environment
- HP Canada
- John's Valu-mart
- Kensal Rentals Services Ltd
- Brockley Tree Service
- Canadian Wildlife Federation
- Springbank Garden Centre
- The Little Red Roaster
- Echidna Solutions Corp
- Fred Landon Branch, London Public Library
- Gary's No Frills
- Pizza Pizza
- Adobe
- 3M Canada
- Davey Tree Experts

- University of Western Ontario
- Davis Martindale Accountants
- Spectrum Radio
- Tim Hortons – Cove Road and Springbank Drive
- Village Harvest Bakery

And a special thanks to these groups for their "sweat equity":

- Rotary Club of London South
- Manor & Highland Park Public School
- Catholic Central Secondary School Environment Leadership Program
- Middlesex Stewardship Council Ontario Junior Stewardship Rangers
- Ridgetown College
- South Secondary School
- St. Martin Catholic School
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited
- Scouts Canada Youth

... and of course to all of our faithful and tireless individual volunteers.

PERSONALS

Energetic do-gooder's seeking same for Board of Directors

As the Friends of the Coves moves forward in our mission to "enhance the quality of community life through stewardship of the Coves Subwatershed", our seven-member board is seeking new members. This successful registered charity is recruiting board members to provide strategic direction to staff, to fundraise and to participate in community functions. Interested parties should contact Mary-Pat Mathers at the Coves Office, or by email at contact@thecoves.ca.

Good Work Team Coves!

In 2005, the City of London adopted the Cove Subwatershed Plan and struck the Coves Subwatershed Implementation Committee. The team meets monthly to prioritize and guide the implementation of the fifty-nine (59) recommendations of the

Coves Subwatershed Plan. To find out more, you can talk to the following folks:

- City of London
 - Terry Grawey
 - Pat Donnelly
 - Julie Michaud
- Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
 - Mark Snowsell
- Ministry of the Environment
 - Ron Griffiths
- Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee
 - Dean Sheppard
- London Advisory Committee on Heritage
 - Mary Kerr
- Old South Community Organization
 - Barb MacDonnell
- Friends of the Coves
 - Thom McClenaghan
 - Mary-Pat Mathers
- Private landowner representative
 - Hamoody Hassan

Membership Information

If you or your family are interested in helping our cause, memberships are available for you at the following rates:

- \$10 Individual membership (one year)
- \$15 Family membership (one year)
- \$200 Lifetime individual membership
- \$300 Lifetime family membership

New members will receive:

- Friends of the Coves newsletter.
 - Recognition in our newsletter.
 - Option to purchase a Friends of the Coves tote bag for an additional \$5.00
 - Opportunity to purchase discounted, locally produced rain barrel
 - Backyard Habitat Consultation including free native plants, etc.
 - Discounts and special offers at local businesses*
 - Invitations to special events/general meetings/other opportunities
- *see website for details

New members and volunteers are always welcome, and we hope to see you out to our many upcoming events.

Board of Directors

Thomas McClenaghan,
B.A Assoc. of the Inst. Of Ed.
U of Lon.
Interim President

Michael Watson,C.A.
B. Math
Treasurer

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M.Sc.
Secretary

Nan McIntyre, R.N.
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Ian Cousins, B.A, LLB
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