



OLTA Takes the Lead on Development of Organizational Assessment Program

Though the financial support of Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service, OLTA is beginning the development of an Organizational Assessment Program which is designed to help our member groups identify areas within your organizations where, with a little help, will lead you to even greater successes. This program is a major initiative and will be available to land trusts right across Canada. The successful development and implementation of the Organizational Assessment Program will provide OLTA with current information for targeting their Education and Training Programs. Funders have assured us more resources will be made available for this already successful OLTA Program. OLTA would like to thank Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service for their financial support and the Land Trust Alliance of the United States who have shared their vast resources with OLTA and continue to support us as mentors as we work to further develop the community land trust program in Ontario.

OLTAP

The applications for the next round of funding under the popular Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program (OLTAP) will be due March 31, 2006. Funding is available to OLTA member groups for assistance with securement costs of easements or title for ecologically sensitive properties. Under the leadership of Angus McLeod, this program has awarded \$100,000 in grants to OLTA members helping them secure 2346 acres of ecologically sensitive lands in their communities with a value of over \$4,000,000 in the last year alone. This program has been very successful and our funders, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Canada have recognized the benefits of working with OLTA members through this program. There will be \$50,000 available this March. Application packages will be available February 1.

Annotated Baseline Documentation Report Template

In order to aid OLTA member groups in meeting the criteria of OLTAP funding regarding baseline documentation reports, the OLTAP Committee has commissioned the development of an annotated baseline documentation report template. This new template will incorporate the requirements of the Land Trust Standards and Practices as well as the changes to conservation easement agreements brought about by the passing of Bill 16 and Bill 51 which were recently tabled in the Provincial legislature. The template will be of great benefit to the many dedicated volunteers that work with our member groups in preparing baseline documentation reports. The template is expected to be available by late March 2006.

Regional Workshops

Once again this spring, OLTA will be presenting one day regional workshops. These workshops will take place in late April and early May in three locations across Ontario. These workshops provide an excellent opportunity for land trust Board members and volunteers to come together for a day of learning and networking. Watch for the announcement of the dates and locations near you.

Busy Year Ahead

It is only January and your OLTA Board of Governors and volunteers are already hard at work to bring you new programs in 2006. These programs will help your land trust become even more successful as an organization and in securing lands in your community. Watch for further announcements as these programs are rolled out, and remember, if your group wants to learn and benefit from the programs you have to participate. So get your Board members and key volunteers together and let's work to build on the current successes of the community land trust movement in Ontario!

By the way, we would like to wish everyone a very healthy and successful 2006!

**Don't miss page 3 –Our feature Land Trust this month is
The Hamilton Naturalists' Club**

In a continuing effort to improve the programs and member services, OLTA publishes and distributes, by e-mail, a monthly bulletin to all its members. Please contribute your newsworthy items to the monthly newsletter. The articles should be limited to a paragraph or two and include a contact number where OLTA members can get more information.

All submissions should be in our hands no later than the 20th of each month.



Feature Land Trust of the Month

THE HAMILTON NATURALISTS' CLUB



The Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC) is a founding member of OLTA that has been involved in protecting nature since 1919. Our objectives include promoting habitat protection, stimulating public interest and education in nature and conservation, promoting research and acquiring and holding lands or interests therein for nature conservation purposes.

In 1961, the HNC became Ontario's first land trust with the acquisition of our Spooky Hollow Nature Sanctuary in Norfolk County. Over the next 40 years we protected another 3 properties and contributed \$600,000 to other conservation land protection projects across Ontario.

The HNC has put tremendous energy into increasing its capacity as a land trust over the past two years with exciting results. Some of our achievements include:

- Protecting the Cartwright Nature Sanctuary in Dundas. Secured in December 2004, this 46 acre property is a part of an essential ecological linkage between the Niagara Escarpment and Cootes Paradise Marsh and important habitat for many species, including the rare American Colombo (*Frasera carolinensis*) a Species of Special Concern with less than a dozen occurrences in Canada. The Cartwright Nature Sanctuary acquisition is a partnership project with Conservation Halton. The HNC has set a \$180,000 budget for the project and is working hard to pay off the \$147,000 mortgage taken back by the former owner. To date we have raised \$60,000 for this project.
- HNC volunteers have completed a public footpath through the Cartwright Sanctuary and are working on completing a bridge. 110 people attended our opening celebration in October 2005. We welcome visitors to the sanctuary, but until July 2006 call first (905)689-9466, as there will be some temporary trail closures while bridge construction is completed.
- In October 2004, the HNC completed another land securement project – a donation of 10 acres of provincially significant wetland in the Beverly Swamp. The Thomas & Mary Young Nature Sanctuary protects part of the largest wetlands in our region as well as the best example of Swamp forest in Ontario's Carolinian zone. It is the first Ecogift donated to the HNC and brings the total protected area under our management to 263 acres. A number of other land securement projects are in the works and we hope to add eight new nature sanctuaries over the next 3 years.
- Volunteer involvement in our Land Trust Program has increased four fold over the past two years, with 100 volunteers involved in 2005. A dozen organized field days, including field training sessions have capitalized on the skills of existing volunteers and engaged new people.
- The HNC has been successful in obtaining funding support for Land Trust Program initiatives (almost \$185,000 over the last two years). We were recently awarded a three year Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant to build the capacity of our Land Trust Program, which has allowed us to hire a part-time Program Coordinator. A project to recreate natural areas and corridors in the urban core of Hamilton is also now underway. We are very grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance Assistance Program (with funding from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources), the HIVA Environmental Fund, and the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation for their support.
- The HNC's efforts in protecting natural areas were recently recognized for these achievements with the 2005 Carolinian Canada Conservation Award (group category).

For more information about the HNC's Land Trust Program contact Alan Ernest, Program Coordinator at (905) 689-9466 or ernest@interlynx.net

*Photo: Cartwright Nature Sanctuary Opening Celebration Hike
October 1, 2005*

