



February 2006

OLTAP

Just a reminder that the applications for the next round of funding under the popular Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program (OLTAP) are 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 have been sent to all OLTA member groups and are available on the website at www.ontariolandtrustalliance.org

OLTA Board Retreat March 23 and 24

The OLTA Board of Governors and Committee Chairs will be meeting in Barrie on March 23 and 24 for the annual Board retreat. It is at this two-day meeting that program objectives are set out for the next year. This year promises to be busy with the Board discussing the new Canadian Land Trust Standards and Practices, an enhanced Education and Training Program and public policy issues. OLTA would like to encourage its member groups to contact the OLTA office with any ideas for improvements to existing programs or new programs that would enhance the effectiveness of their organizations.

Green Legacy Program

OLTA will be meeting with the National Steering Committee regarding the Green Legacy Program. This program was developed in British Columbia to raise awareness of land trusts and stewardship groups among donors who are considering planned gifts. The Committee is also developing education and training tools for the use of community groups to help them implement a planned giving program within their organizations. More details will follow with an expected roll-out at the Fall OLTA Gathering.

Robert Bateman Original to be Auctioned to Raise Funds for Conservation

World renowned Wildlife artist Robert Bateman has donated an original painting of Wood Ducks to the Hamilton Naturalists' Club to support HNC Conservation Projects. The painting has been specifically created to serve as the front piece for a new book documenting the "Birds of Hamilton" and surrounding areas" being published by the HNC and edited by Robert Curry.

The Painting will be included in the Burlington Art Center's annual art auction with the proceeds to the HNC. The auction occurs Saturday February 18, 2006 - for more details please visit www.burlingtonartcentre.on.ca or www.hamiltonnature.org/publications/birdsofhamilton.htm Phone bids are allowed 905) 632-7796) or absentee (proxy) bids can be provided ahead of time.

For more information about the "Birds of Hamilton and Surrounding Areas" book project, please visit the HNC website or contact Bob Curry (905-637-2022) or Glenn Barrett (905-525-2142).

Feature Land Trust of the Month

THE LOWER GRAND RIVER LAND TRUST

Ruthven Park has been owned and managed by The Lower Grand River Land Trust Inc. since 1994. This 1500 acre (approx) former country estate of the Thompson family was named a National Historic Site in 1998. It was owned up until 1993 by the family. The site has many features including a natural landscape comprising Carolinian forest and provincially significant slough forests and wetlands, two cemeteries, a cultural landscape, and a significant number of nineteenth century buildings of which the 1845 Greek Revival mansion is the "jewel." Geographically, it is situated along the Grand River, a Canadian Heritage River, and between Caledonia and Cayuga on Haldimand Highway #54.

The property is open to the public for their enjoyment. Guided mansion tours are available at specified times. Visitors can also enjoy the three walking trails, picnic in the park or observe the bird banders on site. The property has a banding lab or building where volunteers band over 100 bird species per year. It is one of three banding stations of the Haldimand Bird Observatory.



The Land Trust has just completed a \$2 million cost share partnership with Parks Canada. It consisted of exterior conservation work on many of the nineteenth century buildings. The last project was the rehabilitation/conservation work required for the Coach House building. The completion of the building has provided an expanded space, with washrooms and a small kitchen, to host programs, workshops and meetings. A rental policy has just been approved by the Land Trust and will enable other not-for-profit, community and private groups to utilize the space while providing additional revenues for the site.

The recent grant from The Ontario Trillium Foundation will be utilized to contract a naturalist to expand programs for the natural areas. Our goal is to attract people to the site, educate the public (including school groups), and create a destination to enable visitors to spend the day on and enjoy the site.



Volunteer groups, committee members or individuals play a huge role in the development and success of the site. They assist with grounds maintenance, program delivery, provide expertise and guidance and generally support staff with most operational requirements. Without their commitment and work, the site would not be able to be open to the public.

This spring, the second archaeological field school will be held at Ruthven. Students from the industrial archaeology course from Wilfred Laurier University will continue with the excavation and investigation of the former town site of Indiana. The biology department from McMaster University will also continue to utilize the site as a resource for student projects.

For more information on programs, hours etc. visit the Ruthven Park and Lower Grand River Land Trust Inc websites at: www.ruthvenpark.ca or www.lowergrandriverlandtrust.ca.

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.