Spring 2000

SER Ontario News

Newsletter of the Ontario Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration No. 6(1): Spring 2000

Chapter Update

Thanks to all contributors of articles and information updates to this full spring newsletter issue. I am pleased to announce that Margot Ursic (mursic@home.com), who has successfully managed our web page, will be using her creative energy and organizational talents to edit the SER-Ontario newsletter in future. Our administrative assistant at Trent University, Marion Norman (thutchinson@trentu.ca), will be gradually assuming the responsibilities of web page manager. Together Margot and Marion will be continuing to provide an improved information network to all those working in the field of ecological restoration in southern Ontario. They are your newsletter and web page, so please consider contributing your ecological restoration news, workshop announcements, etc. Since the newsletter reaches a wide audience through our web page, you may be amazed at the audience your contribution will reach. Please e-mail Margot with your ideas for, and contributions to, the next issue of *SER-Ontario News*.

The next few months will be busy as the SER-Ontario Executive prepares to change some faces and responsibilities, and renew an energetic board that will continue with many activities as well as move towards realizing some of the yet to be accomplished objectives in our Strategic Plan. Jill Cherry, has recently left to take up the position of curator of the Van Dusen Botanical Garden in British Columbia. We thank her for her contributions to the Executive and wish her the best with her new career!

We are pleased that Bruce Mackenzie will be joining us as our new Resource Development Director. Bruce has worked with the Wildlands League for the past 2½ years, but will soon be starting a new assignment with S.T.O.R.M (Save the Oak Ridges Moraine) as their new campaign director. Bruce will begin promoting SER-Ontario almost immediately as he will be taking our display to the Federation of Ontario 's Annual Meeting in Midland later in May. Welcome Bruce!

Unfortunately, several other members of the Executive will soon be finishing their second 2-year terms, and as required by our Chapter By-laws, either be leaving or changing their position. If you have ever thought of volunteering with an energetic group that is actively promoting restoration ecology in Ontario, please consider joining us as we will likely have a few openings available for September 2000. We have several projects on the go, including the formidable task of organizing and hosting the SER International Conference in Niagara Falls for October 2001!

Al Unwin, the SER International 2001 meeting conference chair, has been busy meeting with chairs of the various committees confirmed to date. Special events will be co-chaired by Teresa Bosco (tbosco@city.toronto.on.ca) and Kim Statham. The program committee is being co-chaired by Professors John Klironomos (jklironomos@uoguelph.ca) and Stephen Murphy (sd2murph@fes.uwaterloo.ca). Field trips will be coordinated by a committee comprised of Mike Rose (lcn@niagara.com), Kim Frohlich, Anne Yagi, and Debbie Whitehouse. If you have any suggestions for social activities, conference themes or speakers, or field trips, please contact these people—I am sure they will appreciate your input. Al is still looking for someone to lead the Resource Development committee. If you have a talent for fundraising and are interested in helping out, please contact Al (aunwin@niagarac.on.ca).

We have an excellent field trip planned for the long weekend in May (see announcement in this issue). We are hosting this event with several other environmental NGOs, so please consider attending to take advantage of a great networking as well as learning opportunity. Thanks to Steve Smith, our Field Trip Coordinator, for making arrangements for SER-Ontario members to participate in this popular event.

Happy spring!

Silvia Strobl, Chair
Society for Ecological Restoration
613 258-8412
613 258-3920 FAX
silvia.strobl@mnr.gov.on.ca

top

Monster Grass an Invasive Native

A special contribution to SER-Ontario News by Frederick W. Schueler

Just east of the drain crossed by County Road 20 one km east of East Oxford, the rain of an end-of-summer thunderstorm beats down on the marsh vegetation. Mostly this vegetation is matted grass, with the emergent strap-like leaves of cattails nodding as the gusts come and go. But north of the road is a shaggy grey-brown mound of enormous grass, 3 meters tall if it hadn't been blown into tousled confusion by the wind earlier in the storm. Now the springy bamboo-like stems are held down by the weight of the water in the huge fluffy seed heads, only surging and rippling when there is an especially strong gust, while the ochre-brown remnants of last year's seed heads stand stiffly upright above the mass.

This is *Phragmites australis*, the Common Reed, our tallest grass species, which is increasingly common along roads in eastern Ontario. It occurs on every continent except Antarctica, and may have the widest range of any flowering plant. Its abundance has so increased in the past half century that some have questioned whether it is native to North America, but it has been found in peat cores in Connecticut and woven objects fromAnasazi sites in Colorado, and John Macoun found it on the Athabasca Plains of the Peace River region of northern Alberta in 1872 (this was the first collection for Canada).

It has been only in the last several decades that increased abundance of*Phragmites* has concerned wetland managers. It has taken over marshes all along the US Atlantic coast, and marshes near the Great Lakes, especially around Lake St Clair in southwestern Ontario. This East Oxford colony has

Vegetative spread is *Phragmites*' strong suit. The tiny winter-dispersed seeds can germinate and become established only where conditions are exactly right, usually where bare soil is exposed. An established, vigorous colony, on the other hand, can send runners 10 meters along the ground in a single season, and dense mats of stems, rhizomes and roots enable it to push out all other plants, to form uninterrupted stands. Our Curator of Invertebrates, Wayne Grimm, has recently revisited wetlands near Chesapeake Bay that used to support diverse land snails, but now that the habitats have been buried beneath*Phragmites*' sod and thatch all the land snails are gone.

The colonies along roads are likely linked to repeated roadside disturbances that promote germination and establishment. They may also reflect the plant's tolerance of brackish water from winter de-icing alt, and it's possible that increased nutrients in disturbed sites, or from nitrogen oxides from air pollution, promote the growth that lets *Phragmites* dominate areas where it was formerly sparse or absent. We generally think of invasive species as aliens — Purple Loosestrife, Shining Buckthorn, Garlic Mustard — that have taken over our local communities because they have been introduced from 'away,' but when a native takes over, it's graphic evidence that some balance has been upset, and when that native is the largest species in its group, it's easy to see the results. TheEOBM is co-operating with Erich Haber of National Botanical Services in mapping colonies of *Phragmites*.

We'd be glad to hear either of colonies or of roads with no colonies along them. Please contact:

Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum
Box 1860
Kemptville, Ontario K0G 1J0
(613) 258-3415
eobm@istar.ca

top

GPS surveys for *Phragmites* and other invasives

Since, in Ontario, *Phragmites* seems to be spreading along roadsides, it is possible to quickly and accurately survey its distribution while driving a vehicle equipped with a Global Positioning

System (GPS) unit (look for Schueler, 2000, Navigating as Naturalists with the Global Positioning System, Trail & Landscape, in press). This preserves the location of current stands so future changes can be assessed, and is quite reliable, as there's no other species with which*Phragmites* can be confused. The goal of these selective surveys is to give both a verbal description of the density of stands, and to provide exact coordinates for particular stands, so future investigators can revisit the sites and note a change in status.

Our process of developing survey methods began by:

- recording the position of every stand along the road being driven
- noting which side of the road it is on
- the relative size of the stand (best estimated in meters, with accompanying notes on density of stems)
- whether it is in a roadside ditch or not, and
- the adjacent habitat behind it (away from the road).

As the size and continuity of stands (which we suppose are usually clones) increased, it was hard to specify their limits. As the stands merged, we scored every 'mode' in the height of stems as a stand, even if the fringes of the 'stands,' so defined, were contiguous. Where the stands finally merged into a continuous

'hedge,' it became difficult to make an adequate record of distribution in a single pass along the road. hen we began to mark the beginning and end of large areas of continuous *Phragmites*, with verbal notes on the species' frequency in the intervening areas. When stands became so frequent that progress by a single driver would be impeded by stopping to write notes, or a passenger-recorder couldn't keep up with them, the density of records were reduced by restricting the records to one side of the road or the median (this is obligatory, of course on divided highways), or by only recording every 5th or 10th stand. Records for these selected stands were the same as those made in an every-stand survey, but indicating that they were then th stand since the last record and noting the distance travelled since that record (obtainable from the waypoint list of the GPS).

On a recent trip to Boston, we surveyed *Phragmites* along the Massachusetts Turnpike at an 8-km spacing, with minimal disruption to a family outing. This can easily be done by GPS-equipped travelers by using the map display on the GPS unit. Make a new waypoint record of the first *Phragmites* stand seen after the last one reaches the 'x' kilometre ring on the map display. This record is then accompanied by a brief verbal assessment of the density of stands and predominant habitat occupied along the 'x' km since the last record.

Erich Haber (ehaber@magi.com) is collecting records of *Phragmites*, adding them to a national COMREED database (Microsoft Access 97 fields: province/territory; locality; habitat; abundance; collector; collector's field number; date of collection; herbarium; field notes; latitude/longitude) and posting them to his Invasive Plants website: http://infoweb.magi.com/~ehaber/ipcan.html

Frederick W. Schueler
Eastern Ontario Biodiversity Museum

top

Seed and Stock Certification Program for Reforestation and Restoration

Many of you will have heard that the Forest Gene Conservation Association (FGCA) is embarking upon a seed and stock certification program for reforestation and restoration in southern Ontario.

This fall, the FGCA obtained generous financial support from the Richard Ivey Foundation that will help us to accelerate the implementation of the certification program at this very crucial and opportune time. The Centre for Land & Water Stewardship (CLAWS) and the Eastern Ontario Model Forest are our partners in this successful funding proposal which includes 3 main components targeted at both the consumer and the industry:

1. Tree planting education and promotion,
2. A certification program pilot study, and
3. Workshops for the seed and stock production industry.

Why certification? Unlike stock quality (such as size and health), genetic quality (seed source) cannot be judged by the consumer. This is a matter of trust, or certification of the chain of custody from seed to seedling. Certification will be voluntary, and phased in over 2 years across southern Ontario. Training programs will be developed to help the industry adapt their operations. Seed source information will be available to consumers and will allow them to make informed decisions regarding how genetically appropriate available stock is for their planting site.

But perhaps the most effective help we can offer the participating seed collectors and nurseries is an effective marketing program. We need to get the attention of the consumers--the private landowners. Our particular challenge has been described as an 'educated sell'. We need to convince consumers of the merits of purchasing certified seed and stock--even if it means they will pay a higher price. Or it may mean they should wait a year to get the most appropriate stock.

A recent advertisement I saw noted "the most expensive planting is a failed planting". And the wrong seed source is only one of many reasons for failure. As such we will promote our certification program within the context of successful tree planting. Several educational projects are aimed at this, including extension notes such as *'How to buy the right tree for your place'*, *'What is a native species'*, and *'Genetic diversity - the forgotten part of biodiversity'*.

We are also undertaking a survey to help us understand what motivates private landowners to plant trees. This survey has been expanded through the involvement and additional funding from many other partners across southern Ontario who are interested in developing programs to help private landowners manage their land in a sustainable manner.

But back to marketing. Our first task is to come up with a slogan to help people identify our program. I would appreciate any feedback SER-Ontario members can give me in the development of this theme. This slogan will have to reflect our program's basic premise:

- the assurance that they can match available stock to their site conditions, to minimize risks and maximize benefits, both ecologically and economically.
- the right to assess what risk they want to take on.
- the concept that local is suitable, and distant MAY be suitable, according to climate similarity.

How can we say this in 3 words or less?!

- Maybe we're looking for a brand name. We don't have to incorporate the whole, complex message.
- We must imply long-term success--trees should thrive and pass on their adapted genes to the next generation.

- There are factors this program won't guarantee such as stock quality and species site matching, though our education efforts will target such issues.
- The theme will be used by the industry to indicate that they participate in the program.
- It will also be used in educational products--brochures, displays, extension notes, etc, as such, a short phrase can and will be followed by a descriptive tag line or even paragraph.

We would love to hear any and all of your reactions, both to the overall program and the following label suggestion. Please be candid--we'd like to hear it now, not later. I look forward to your response.

Barb Boysen
FGCA Coordinator
Suite 233, 266 Charlotte Street
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 2V4
(705) 750-0636
(705) 750-1300 FAX

newleaf@nexicom.net

top

Trees

for Ontario

Sourced for success

These trees are certified by the

to be from the source identified on the label

A tree can be a thriving part of your environment for decades.

KNOW YOUR PLANTING SITE

CHOOSE A SPECIES that is well suited to the conditions of your site, and

CHOOSE A SOURCE that is as similar as possible to your site

Choose

Trees

for Ontario

Sourced for success

Tree Planting Case Study Book

FGCA and CLAWS are working on a Tree Planting Case Study Book. Many efforts have been made in reforestation and restoration in southern Ontario by professionals and volunteers, on public and private lands, with no budget and very large budgets--the latter no guarantee of success. There are successes and problems in all efforts. A lack of regional leadership and help means many mistakes are repeated. Documentation of successes and problems in a user-friendly book will help to guide future successful

We are looking for particular examples of successes and problems to profile in this book. If you have particular examples that you are willing to allow us to explore in detail, please give us a call. Steve Smith (ufora@idirect.com) your member representing SER on our Board will be helping to guide this effort. The Richard Ivey Foundation's grant will help us undertake the research phase of this project. We are looking for additional funds to help in the production phase. This case book could profile a small subset of the ecological restoration project directory that SER-Ontario hopes to synthesize.

As always, we welcome any feedback from SER-Ontario members.

Barb Boysen

FGCA Coordinator
Suite 233, 266 Charlotte Street
Peterborough, Ontario K9J 2V4
(705) 750-0636
(705) 750-1300 FAX
newleaf@nexicom.net

top

Wildlands League - 7th Annual Restoration Weekend in Carolinian Canada

NEW this year! Co-sponsored by SER-Ontario

When: Saturday May 20th and Sunday May 21st

Join us for a long weekend in the warm climes of Long Point, helping to restore a prairie community in Canada's deep south. The event takes place over a two-day period at the 200 acre property of Peter Carson and Mary Gartshore just outside of Walsingham and includes activities that everyone can participate in and enjoy. We will be restoring tall-grass prairie habitat, planting native trees and shrubs and learning about restoration ecology.

Camping spaces are provided as well as outdoor toilet facilities. Swimming in a spring-fed pond is available by the campsite (if the weather is warm) and a catered dinner is provided for Saturday night (all other meals are do it yourself). We strongly suggest bug, rain and sun proof clothing as the weather can range from cool to very ht and the bug densities range from zero to intense at this time of year.

The charge is $20.00 and includes the cost of the food and refreshments on Saturday night. Please bring cameras, binoculars, field guides and guitars as well as food for Saturday and Sunday breakfasts and lunches. More information is available at www.wildlandsleague.org .

Schedule of Events

Friday night:
arrive and set up tents
Saturday:
7:00 AM: take advantage of the splendor of spring migration
with a morning bird walk with a team of experts
9:00 AM: orientation
10-5: planting and tending of prairie ecosystem; this will include
tree and seed planting, weeding, removing exotics, and fencing
evening: barbecue
Sunday:
7:00 AM: early morning bird walk
9:00: continue project work
Monday:
Walks or hikes to local wetlands, Backus Woods, and Hepburn woodlot, an "old growth" woodlot owned by the local conservation authority

Please RSVP to Bruce Mackenzie at info@wildlandsleague.org if you are interested in attending. Thank you.

How to get there:

Find the junction of Hwy 59 and Hwy 24 on a southern Ontario road map. It is just north of Long Point and south of Walsingham. Hwy 24 ends at #59 but continues west towards Cultus as Regional Road 60. Pterophylla is 5.5 km west of the 24-59 jct on Regional Road 60 on the south side of the road at 911 #316. The farm is a typical tobacco farm layout with a distinctly naturalistic trend including a split rail fence.

Wildlands League - 7th Annual Restoration Weekend in Carolinian Canada

Saturday May 20th and Sunday May 21st

Please return this form to our office to confirm your attendance for the weekend by **Wednesday May 17th** or call (416) 971-9453 (so we can accurately order food and drinks). Bring your money and registration form with you for the weekend and we will collect them on Saturday morning.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Number of people: _____

FAX (416-979-3155) or email (info@wildlandsleague.org) to:

The Wildlands League
401 Richmond St. W., Suite 380
Toronto, Ontario
M5V 3A8

top

GREEN Canada will provide tools for Canadian conservationists

A new national conservation initiative has been announced that will dramatically change the way Canadians participate in conservation projects across the country.

The GrassRoots Environmental Effectiveness Network (GREEN) Canada will develop a network of conservationists across the country, and will use its organizing system to help Canadians connect with decision makers about proposed federal endangered species legislation and other national issues.

In each of the country's 301 federal provincial ridings a network of concerned citizens will be mobilized, given tips on how to strategically target their MP's on conservation issues and improve their environmental campaigns. GREEN will also provided activists with the skills and support to influence the federal decision-making process at the grassroots level. The service will be provided free of charge to conservation groups and other concerned Canadians.

"GREEN Canada is about providing everyday Canadians who love wildlands and wildlife with the skills they need to protect Canada's natural wonders", says Stephen Legault, GREEN's Executive Director.

GREEN Canada will begin its efforts to help mobilize Canadian activists by working on federal endangered species legislation. When it is capable, GREEN will take on other high-priority campaigns across Canada such as protecting national parks and international trade and the environment issues.

For more information contact:

Stephen Legault
Executive Director of the
GrassRoots Environmental Effectiveness Network (GREEN) Canada
(403) 609-2509
greencan@agt.net

top

Upcoming Extension Note on Woodland Plant Salvage

An Extension Note on guidelines and techniques for salvaging woodland vegetation for planting or restoration projects is due to be released in Spring/Summer 2000. Extension Notes, published through the LandOwner Resource Centre with support from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, are a series of publications designed to inform and educate a broad range of people (e.g. rural and urban landowners, teachers, municipal workers) about forestry and ecological topics relevant to land stewardship in southern Ontario. This Extension Note was made possible through the support of the Tree Canada Foundation.

Transplanted woodland vegetation can be an excellent source of native stock for local habitat creation and restoration projects. Although it takes many years before ecosystem processes and dynamics begin to become re-established restored woodlands, plant salvage is an excellent tool for trying to preserve some of southern Ontario's woodland biodiversity when conservation is not possible. Salvaging the soil associated with the plants, as well as other elements (e.g. pieces of fallen logs, stumps, rocks with lichens, leaf litter) can also help recreate a woodland habitat, and will likely contribute to the survival of the salvaged plants by minimizing transplant stress.

This Extension Note will provide practical guidelines on how to plan and implement a plant rescue or salvage from woodland sites where habitat loss is inevitable. General techniques for digging up, storing and transplanting savaged trees, shrubs and herbs will also be included in the Note, as will ecological and ethical considerations. It is hoped that this publication will be a useful source of information for individuals and organizations interested in rescuing woodland vegetation, on a small or a large scale.

To verify the status of this Extension Note, and to review other available Notes, visit the LandOwner Resource Centre online at http://www.lrconline.com/

Margot Ursic

top

Bulletin Board

HELP US KEEP YOU INFORMED
If you have recently obtained an e-mail address, please contact us at ser_ont@trentu.ca so that we can include you on our electronic communications of events of interest to ecological restorationists. We regularly send out notices of events that don't reach us in time to be inserted in this Newsletter.

Deadlines for submissions to the next issues of SER-Ontario newsletter:

- *Aug. 1, 1999 (for the Summer issue)*

We invite submissions about any ecological restoration projects, techniques, issues, etc.
Please contact the Editor:
Margot Ursic
296 Suffolk St. West
Guelph, ON N1H 2K3

mursic@home.com

ADVERTISE YOUR SERVICES HERE!
If you are interested in advertising in our newsletters or annual directory contact the chair or newsletter editor for more information.

Big Creek Biota	***Otter Valley Native Plants***		***Urban Forest Associates***

Offering a wide selection of indigenous wetland plants for restoration, naturalization & landscaping *~ custom seed collection & growing* *~ planting design & consultation* *~ seedbank & plant surveys* *~ macroinvertebrate surveys* *~ wetland evaluation & delineation* ***R.R.1, Walsingham, Ontario*** ***Canada N0E 1X0*** ***tel. 519-586-2603*** *bigcrk@kwic.com*	*~ Plants for Naturalization & Restoration* *~Native Plants of Southern Ontario* *~ Prairie and Meadow Wild ~Flowers and Grasses* *Contract Growing* ***Gail Rhynard*** ***P.O. Box 31, R.R.#1*** ***Eden, Ontario N0J 1H0*** ***tel. 519-866-5359***	***Pterophylla*** *Offering native plant & seed lists and ecological consulting services.* ***Mary E. Gartshore*** ***Peter J. Carson*** ***R.R.#1, Walsingham*** ***Ontario, CANADA*** ***N0E 1X0*** ***tel. 519-586-3985***	*Ecological Restoration & Management* *Community Regeneration Projects* *Vegetation & Faunal Inventories* *Growing of Native Woody & Herbaceous Plants* ***331 Linsmore Cr.*** ***Toronto, Ontario M4J 4M1*** ***tel./fax 416-423-3387*** *ufora@idirect.com*

top