
SER Ontario News
Newsletter of the Ontario Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration
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Chapter Update

MANY OF YOU will be receiving this newsletter electronically for the first time and we thank you for agreeing to an arrangement that will save paper, postage and handling, and expedite delivery of your SER-Ontario news. Also, thank you to Margot Ursic for helping SER-Ontario navigate the technology of the Web to make this improvement in communications a reality. Many of you have also recently received several notices of restoration education opportunities. Please contact us at ser_ont@trentu.ca if you have a new e-mail address and would like to receive our electronic communication of events of interest to ecological restorationists.

Many members recently met at the spring field day hosted by the City of Mississauga on May 9 at Cawthra Woods. Participants became familiar with the unique pressures of managing/restoring a small (22ha) woodlot that is an "island ecosystem" completely surrounded by urban development. [In this issue](#), Lorraine Johnson provides a snapshot of the day's events and impressions. Thank you to SER member, Eric Boysen, for providing us with an excellent introduction to the common ground shared by forest managers and restorationists. In his presentation, Eric showed that it is possible to restore old growth forest components to forest stands by altering typical forest silvicultural prescriptions so that (1) larger-diameter trees, (2) trees with cavity nesting potential, and (3) decaying logs on the forest floor are left. Special thanks to our City of Mississauga host, Bill Montague, for giving us an excellent introduction to the challenges the municipality faces in managing/restoring this remnant urban woodland. And, finally, a big thank you to Jim Dougan for organizing this event.

The SER Executive recently endorsed the newly created Forest Stewardship Recognition Program, a national program recognizing biodiversity conservation in Canada's forest. The program is being piloted in Ontario this year. ([See article in this issue](#)). The goal of this program is to stimulate awareness and appreciation for stewardship, sustainable practices and forest biodiversity conservation efforts in Canada's forests. As ecological restorationists, we can support the need to conserve biodiversity conservation and to reward those that are doing so in Ontario's forests. This award also presents an exciting opportunity for us to nominate colleagues who, by their efforts in ecological restoration, are meeting the goal of benefiting forest biodiversity conservation. If you are interested in nominating an individual, team, group, or organization, please contact Eric Boysen at 613/722-2090 or eboysen@whc.org to request an application form.

This summer, we will begin our annual recruitment for several Executive positions that will be vacant by fall 1998. One position we will need to fill is that of [Treasurer](#). Included in this issue is an outline of the important role the Treasurer plays. If you're interested in bringing your energy and creativity to this instrumental position on the SER- Ontario Executive, please contact Jean- Marc Daigle, our Elections Committee Chair for 1998, at 905/939-8498 or eoutlook@ican.net.

SER-Ontario Executive members Jill Cherry, Steven Smith and Kevin Trimble have been working together with Canadian Land Reclamation Association members of the organizing team for the Sept. 28-30 Toronto Conference, "[Reclamation and Restoration of Settled Landscapes](#)". The conference promises a full and varied agenda including field trips to restoration and reclamation projects in the Oak Ridges Moraine, Don River Watershed and Cootes Paradise. For up -to-date information on the conference, continue to check our website through the summer. Registration information to be available on-line soon ... We hope to see many SER-Ontario members at what promises to be an exciting event!

Have a wonderful summer!

Silvia Strobl

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The Forest Stewardship Recognition Program

THERE HAS BEEN a fundamental shift in the approach towards the management of our forests in the 1990's. We have moved from a "timber management" approach to one that considers all elements of the forest ecosystem and evaluates the impacts of various activities on the forest. But do all of the guidelines, manuals, policy and strategy documents that guide this new approach really make any difference in how forestry is practised on the ground? Is there a true commitment to the conservation of forest biodiversity from the top of the corporate structure right down to the cut-and-skid crew? Can we truly rely on "adaptive management" - one of the cornerstones of sustainable development? Many believe this is possible, but the challenge is to measure or quantify our progress towards biodiversity conservation. Sustainable forests can be achieved, in part, through people adopting a stewardship approach to the resource. This approach includes the need for new knowledge, skills and techniques which can only be achieved through a continual cycle of assessment, learning and adaptation.

A key element of the adaptive management process is the need for positive reinforcement of accomplishments or recognition of true innovation and leadership in the area of forest stewardship. The Forest Stewardship Recognition Program has been developed by a broad cross-section of the forestry community as one way to promote good forest stewardship. The goal of the program is to stimulate awareness and appreciation for stewardship, sustainable practices and forest biodiversity conservation in Canada's forests. The aim of the program is encourage innovative on-the-ground conservation practices by all forest stakeholders, and to instill a sense of pride in these accomplishments.

This will be accomplished through a non- competitive award system. Forest stewards who feel that they have achieved some measure of success in conserving forest biodiversity are encouraged to submit an application describing the technique or activity and explaining how they think the idea can be used by others facing similar conditions. Someone who feels that someone else has demonstrated leadership and innovation in a variety of management areas can also nominate a person, team or group for the award. This sharing of information and experiences is the first step in the stewardship approach.

Stewardship innovation and leadership can occur at two levels - through people who have a direct involvement or influence in forest and wildlife habitat management (loggers, landowners, naturalists, etc.) or by people who guide or study these practices (researchers, professionals, educators, etc). Activities that can demonstrate innovative "on-the- ground" management practices or activities that increase the knowledge and application of biodiversity conservation are eligible for the award.

Once applications have been received, an Award Committee will review them. This committee will ensure that the activity respects forest biodiversity and stewardship principles and meets with the program's criteria. If the application is accepted, the applicant will receive a framed limited edition print of artwork created by B.C. artist Don Li-leger especially for the program. His painting, entitled *New Morning* is meant to evoke a closer connection between man and nature. Local award ceremonies will help to promote the concept and encourage others to follow the example set by the winners. But the benefits to the forest will be compounded through a broader promotion of the results.

Summaries of the innovative activities will be use to promote : The immediate adoption of the technique by others in a similar forest condition; Further research based on preliminary observations or results; and Changes or enhancements to various forest practices, guidelines, policies or legislation. The Forest Stewardship Recognition Program can provide one way of measuring our success in achieving the goals outlined in documents such as the National Forest Strategy, the National Biodiversity Action Plan or local codes of forestry practices. But, more importantly, it will "raise the bar" on our management practices, which can only help to conserve our forests for the future.

For more information on the program, please contact :







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SER-Ontario Executive seeks new Treasurer for Fall 1998 .

The Treasurer manages day-to-day financial transactions and planning to ensure that the Chapter's financial resources are maintained in good order.

 **Responsibilities:** The Treasurer:

-  serves as 1 of 2 signing officers for the Chapter,
-  manages income and expenses for the Chapter,
-  receives dues from SER- Madison for deposit to the account of the Chapter,
-  prepares a financial summary for presentation at each Executive meeting,
-  prepares an annual financial statement at the end of each calendar year for presentation to the Executive, Members, and SER-Madison,
-  prepares an annual budget early in the calendar year for review and confirmation by the Executive.




 **Qualifications:** The Treasurer should:

-  be able to keep good records and files and have sufficient time available to prepare the required statements and budgets for presentation at Executive meetings,
-  have a working knowledge of computer spreadsheets.

 **Relationships:**

-  The Treasurer reports to the Board and is accountable to the Members of the Chapter.

 **Time Commitment:** The Treasurer:

-  puts in 2-4 hours per month to make deposits, write cheques, and prepare statements
-  attends Executive meetings which are held evenings, once every 6-8 weeks in rotating locations within a one-and- half hour drive of Toronto
-  provides additional financial planning and support as required when the Chapter undertakes special projects such as the Directory or conferences









If you're interested in bringing your creativity and enthusiasm to this instrumental position on the SER- Ontario Executive, please contact Jean- Marc Daigle, Elections Committee Chair for 1998, at 905/939-8498 or eoutlook@ican.net.

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SER-Ontario Executive seeks new Director-at-Large for Fall 1998 .

SER-Ontario Executive seeks new Director-at-large for fall 1998 SER-Ontario Executive seeks new Director-at-large for fall 1998 Directors-at-Large provide support to the Ontario Chapter by organizing numerous events and activities.

 Over the course of the 2-year term, a Director-at-Large may apply his/her talents to one or more of the following activities:

-  development of a fundraising strategy for the Chapter in anticipation of approval of our charitable status application
-  development of improved membership communications
-  liason with SER-Madison regarding SER policies, ecological restoration courses, etc.
-  coordination of a special project, e.g. restoration directory, directory of ecological restoration projects
-  coordination of a spring or fall field event or other educational opportunity
-  promotion of the Ontario Chapter at special events e.g. "Spring Blooms Show"
-  participation on the organizing committee for a large, professional conference e.g. "Reclamation and Restoration of Settled Landscapes"
-  participation in other events and activities as determined by the collective, creative energies of the Executive

 **Qualifications:**

-  If you are an individual with creative energy, good organizational skills, lots of enthusiasm, and an interest in promoting ecological restoration in Ontario, consider joining the SER-Ontario Executive!

 **Relationships:**

-  Directors-at-large work together with the other members of the Executive to further the mission of the Ontario Chapter.

 **Time Commitment:**

-  attends Executive meetings which are held evenings, once every 6-8 weeks (6 meetings annually), in rotating locations within a one-and-half hour drive

of Toronto
puts in 2-4 hours per month to implement special projects as determined during Executive meetings

If you're interested in bringing your creativity and enthusiasm to the position of Director-at-large on the SER- Ontario Executive, please contact Jean-Marc Daigle, Elections Committee Chair for 1998, at 905/939-8498 or eoutlook@ican.net.

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May 9th Field Day

HERE'S A GREAT idea for cash-strapped parks departments and conservation authorities: invite the SER to hold a field trip at your site and, by the end of the day, you'll benefit from dozens of suggestions, freely and knowledgeably given by restoration experts. The information exchange value and consulting expertise is of inestimable value--everyone benefits.

On May 9, the SER held a field trip and information exchange at Cawthra Woods in Mississauga. The morning began with interesting sessions presented by Bill Montague of Mississauga Parks on the background of the site and Eric Boysen of Wildlife Habitat Canada on management issues in woodlots. After these sessions, a group of approximately 30 participants went on a walk through Cawthra Woods and many of the unique challenges discussed in the morning session were brought "down to earth."

At 22 ha (53 acres), Cawthra Woods is one of the region's largest woodlots -- a mature, even-aged forest surrounded on all sides by intense urban activity (the roar of the QEW echoed around the edges of our walk). The site was logged in the 1920s and most of the large white pines were removed. It now consists of maple, beech, cherry, oak and ash among other trees and associated shrubs and a herbaceous layer. In 1994, a controversial tree-thinning project was undertaken by the city whereby 1600 trees were removed and the ensuing outcry forced the city to develop a management plan for the site. As described by Bill Montague, the plan evolved from a classic forestry management model to an ecosystem approach. As Eric Boysen pointed out, however, many of the original pieces of the woodlot are now missing or substantially changed and, perhaps, the best we can do is to restore the structural components of the system and hope that function follows.

The management challenge thus becomes a process of assisting in the maintenance of ecological integrity -- making informed decisions and, sometimes, choosing *not* to restore an original ecological structure if, for example, reintroducing red-bellied snakes to an isolated rare population of red-backed salamanders means that the snakes eat the salamanders!

One of the most de-spiriting moments of the site tour, indeed, revealed that when restoration intentions are not thoroughly thought through with long-term goals in mind, they can backfire. For example, Cawthra Woods includes a cleared easement area which service vehicles use. The city spent a large amount of money to plant caliper-size landscape stock of native tree species at very tight spacings with each tree doubly staked. As well, volunteers planted 3000 wildflower plugs and 3000 shrubs on the easement. It was clear from the site visit that a very low percentage of the plugs have taken hold. Although the trees were still alive, the planting's life expectancy was low as the area is still used as a service vehicle corridor and, in approximately 20 years, the water main will need to be re-serviced. Many people commented that the money spent on such a temporary measure could have been devoted to more useful restoration activities within the woods (e.g., invasive exotic species removal) and natural regeneration could have been encouraged in the easement area. Alternatively, the easement area could have been developed into a small native nursery to provide planting materials for other natural areas and/or restoration projects within the city.

Some of the other issues discussed during the day included suggestions of how to deal with contaminated run-off from the QEW, the low genetic diversity of the coppicing beeches in the woodlot, and the opening up of selected gaps in the canopy cover to encourage regeneration. The Cawthra Woods field trip gave participants a chance to observe and comment on some of the challenges of natural sites in urban areas and, more importantly, provided the Parks Department with plenty of informed suggestions to consider in their management of this unique site.

Lorraine Johnson

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2nd Annual Canada Blooms *Toronto Convention Centre, March 11-15, 1998*

CANADA BLOOMS is an International Garden Show co-sponsored by the Garden Club of Toronto and Landscape Ontario. The 1998 show attracted an audience of 109,000 of all ages and backgrounds. Visitors from around the Golden Horseshoe either had an interest in gardens and flowers or wanted an early taste of Spring.

The show consisted of Feature Gardens and Landscape Designs, a Decorative Competition, a Commercial Market Place of garden services and products, and a Non-Commercial Horticultural Division that showcased non-profit institutions and non-governmental organizations, societies, clubs and advocacy groups. The ROM Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology occupied a double booth in this division. Other participants in this division included The Waterfront Regeneration Trust, Conservation Authorities, the Canadian Wildflower Society, The Metro Toronto Zoo, The Art Gallery of Ontario, and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists.

The ROM's theme of "Backyard Biodiversity" lent itself to a variety of themes from native plant landscaping, butterfly gardening, plant identification, and invasive species (plants as well as animals). Mr. Steve Smith, Ms. Dale Leadbeater and Dr. John Ambrose worked with the ROM on behalf of Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), Ontario Chapter to develop the Plant Invaders display. The objective was to define native and non-native species, to discuss their role in natural ecosystems, and to introduce and explain the problems of invasiveness. We wanted to pose and answer the questions "Why should I care? What can I do?"

In answer, we provided a checklist of proactive measures which centred on awareness. SER-Ontario funded the reproduction of the Plant Invaders panel as a double-sided 8 1/2" x 11" handout with a list of common invasive exotic plant species on the back. At least 2,000 handouts were distributed. In summary, the exhibit was a great success as it featured themes that related to the garden experiences of many of the visitors, as well as an interactive computer program with which to identify plants. It was a good opportunity for SER to partner with the ROM to achieve a common goal!

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Prairie Summer

Summer 1998

The Ontario Tallgrass Prairie and Savanna Association is happy to announce PRAIRIE SUMMER '98 -- a series of events being held across southern Ontario to celebrate and to raise awareness about Ontario's endangered prairie and savanna communities and to help restore them. These events -- from walking tours to restoration work days -- are being held by various organizations involved in prairie/savanna conservation across the region and all are open to the public.

Please join us at one or more of these events!

Wishing all a great Prairie Summer,

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