

THE THAMES TALBOT LAND TRUST

TaTTLe^r




Monarch; by Rebecca Launchbury

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Vision 20/20 Campaign

In 2018, Stan Caveney, a former Board President and all-round tireless land trust volunteer, met with me to discuss his Vision 2020 proposal. He explained that the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) had the chance to acquire six properties by the year 2020.

Stan wanted us to mount a consolidated campaign to raise all the money we needed for the securement of these six properties and their required stewardship funds. Three of the properties were to be donations including one belonging to his family. Two properties would bulk up our Skunk's Misery properties, an area in Southwest Middlesex with large intact forests that have high ecological value. Another would add to our West Lorne Woods holdings and the other two properties would round out our geographic area of interest. We would finally have a property in Oxford County, the Mud Lake Nature Reserve and one on the border of Middlesex and London, the Auzins Nature Sanctuary.

The Board approved the largest campaign in our history. We are going to add six properties to our holdings and also raise the stewardship fund for the Gillies property that had been donated to us in 2018. Wow talk about a bold initiative: we agreed to a campaign of over \$2.8 million. This is almost double the campaign we had undertaken for Hawk Cliff Woods in 2016.

"We are a Board that responds enthusiastically to land opportunities for conservation," explained Andre Lachance, Board Chair. "This campaign will launch us well into the next decade and we appreciate and welcome these new challenges."

With half of the campaign goal already realized in property donations, we still had to raise \$1.6 million. As we prepare to launch the full campaign in 2020, it gives me great pleasure to report that we have secured more than \$800,000 of that obligation. We have quietly called on friends, donors, foundations and naturalist organizations and the response has been unconditional support.

We aren't at our target yet, but we are certainly well on our way. We now need all of you to play a part in helping us to complete our Vision 2020 for the Thames Talbot Land Trust. Please consider us when you are thinking about supporting conservation. This campaign is an opportunity to protect biodiversity and to help mitigate the effects of climate change in our own backyard.

-Suzanne McDonald

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Walk for Wildlife

Saturday, February 1st

Westminster Ponds, 944 Western Counties Rd, London

Join us for our Winter Walk for Wildlife! Help us raise funds for conservation and enjoy a guided hiking tour of the beautiful Westminster Ponds. Afterwards, warm up and enjoy a delicious lunch inside!

See more information on page 5 of this newsletter and watch www.TTLT.ca for more details on this event.

PASSPORT TO NATURE

Passport to Nature is series of free events hosted by TTLT and its volunteers. Pre-registration required. More information about each event is available at www.TTLT.ca

Learn to Snowshoe

Saturday, January 25th, 11 am - 1 pm

@ Meadowlily Nature Preserve

Mini lessons in winter tree identification and animal snow-prints will be provided throughout the adventure. Free snowshoe rental are available in adult and child sizes, but snowshoes must be booked through registration details. Bring layers of warm clothing and a full thermos.

Winter Walk

Saturday, February 22nd, 10 am - 12 pm

@ Westminster Ponds

Your naturalist guide, David Wake, has a long and personal connection to this natural gem in the city. Participants will learn about the glacial activity that created this unique landscape and pick up some tips for identifying trees in winter. Be prepared for winter walking.

New Canadians Walk

Saturday, December 7th, 1-3 pm

**Meadowlily Nature Preserve,
17 Meadowlily Rd S, London**

Join us for a winter walk around TTLT's Meadowlily Nature Preserve. Take in the sights and sounds of the Carolinian forest while making new friends and learning more about the natural environment of your new home city. A great event for families and new residents of London!

EcoFolk 2020

Sunday, March 29th 2020

Aeolian Hall, London

Enjoy an afternoon of great music and the opportunity to sample unique craft beers at one of London's historic landmarks, renowned for its outstanding acoustics. Bring your friends and join us as we mark the fifth anniversary of EcoFolk. Proceeds of the event will support the work of TTLT.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

An easy way to stay up to date on all things TTLT is to follow us on our various social media platforms.

If you have photos from any of our properties or events, please don't forget to tag us or send them our way!



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Summer Students

Another summer has come and gone, and with it, TTLT's most recent summer staff. As we say good-bye to Phil Brewster and Darby Alderson (Colin Johnson has returned to the fold as Administrative Manager), we would like to share reflections from past summer students the importance of these positions. Chris Therrian, summer staff of 2015 and 2016, now working as a Fish Culture Technician for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. He believes the TTLT summer position "can serve as the first step in a young ecologist's or forester's career. . . It gives students hands-on experience that makes a difference." Meidan Liederman, summer staff of 2016, worked for the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust after his time with TTLT and is now studying Programming. To him, the summer position ". . . created the opportunity to engage in the real world and translate my knowledge and skills into action that can lead to positive changes in the world." Lastly, Ashley Turner, summer staff of 2018, and former TTLT Administrative Manager, notes that, "The Land Trust was very keen to hire individuals . . . who had a desire to

learn . . . so to give a new batch of youth the opportunity to get their hands dirty . . . and potentially kick start their careers is awesome."

-Darby Alderson



From left to right: Darby, Colin, Rebecca and Phil

Leonardo the Painted Turtle

Early in the morning, a fog rises from a warm countryside road. Daria was driving down it, unreservedly singing along to her favourite song, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun", when she noticed an odd lump on the road. She pulled over to find a painted turtle that didn't quite make it across the road. He lay there with a cracked shell, hit by a passing car too busy to stop and see the damage caused. Daria, as a well-informed turtle citizen, knew of a turtle sanctuary. After a quick call to the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC), Daria drove the turtle, affectionately named Leonardo, to the sanctuary.

A couple months later, on a rainy afternoon, Daria received a phone call from OTCC that Leonardo is healthy and ready to be released. Leonardo got his life back that rainy afternoon. Daria released him to the pond just across the road he was found on. To call Daria a hero may be a stretch of the definition, but sometimes all it takes is making the time to call the right people. Daria helped save a life that spring morning, and the team at OTCC works tirelessly all summer to save as many turtles as they can. Next time you see a lump on the road, take the time to make a call. You too may save a life!

- Colin Johnson

Notes:

- ◆ All species of turtles in Ontario are considered a species at risk.
- ◆ OTCC is a charity that helps over 1000 turtles a year.
- ◆ TTLT is expanding its turtle efforts in 2020 with a grant from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to train volunteers as "Shell Chaperones" - monitoring and helping turtle populations.



Leonardo found with a cracked shell; by Daria Koscinski



Leonardo being released to his home pond; by Daria Koscinski

MUD LAKE NATURE RESERVE

Following 57 years of loving care by Don and Ruth Bucknell, Mud Lake Nature Reserve has become the newest property of Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT). Situated in the Township of South-West Oxford, this 42-ha (104-acre) parcel protects most of the Mud Lake Marsh, a Provincially Significant Wetland.

Mud Lake is familiar to generations of nature lovers in Oxford County. Don Bucknell, who grew up in Ingersoll, recalls visiting Mud Lake as a Boy Scout in the late 1940s.

Nearly half of this nature reserve is wetland. Surrounding Mud Lake are a cattail marsh and dogwood thickets. The marsh provides nesting sites for many birds, including Virginia Rail and Sandhill Crane. In the upland deciduous forest there are impressive examples of Shagbark Hickory.

As soon as they took ownership in 1962, Don and Ruth started planting trees in the former pasture fields. Black Walnut, White Pine, White Spruce, as well as Carolinian species such as Tuliptree, Hoptree, and Kentucky Coffee Tree now thrive here.

In 1973, Don and Ruth built the house where they still reside. In 1991, an additional 4.5 ha (11 acres) to the south of the original 40-ha (99-acre) parcel was purchased.

In 1999, the Bucknells finalized a Conservation Agreement with the Nature Conservancy of Canada. Years later, they decided they would like to do even more to ensure the long-term stewardship of the property. They asked if TTLT would accept a donation of land. As TTLT prefers not to own residential property, options involving a portion of the property were explored.

Following discussions with elected officials and staff of Oxford County, applications were prepared for approvals under the Planning Act, including amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law. The Conservation Agreement was transferred from the Nature Conservancy of Canada to TTLT. With all details resolved, the transfer of ownership took place in July 2019.

Thank you, Don and Ruth Bucknell for your generous gift to the Trust. TTLT is honoured to become the steward of this very significant

natural area.

To provide the best protection to the natural features, Mud Lake Nature Reserve will be closed to the public. It is anticipated, however, that special public events will take place from time to time.

-David Wake



Don and Ruth Bucknell; By Dave Wake



Mud Lake Nature Reserve wetlands; by Dave Wavell

Ontario Land Trust Alliance Recognition for David Wake

At the Annual Gathering on October 7th, 2019, the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) presented its highest recognition for volunteers to TTLT's David Wake. In announcing the Angus MacLeod Visionary Award to David, Chris Baines commented on David's many contributions to TTLT and the land trust community. These included leadership as Director and President, committee work, volunteer contributions as photographer and naturalist, and advancing landowner and government relations. His visionary work led to the creation of the London Environmental Network and the Westminster Ponds Centre.

every land trust has crises from time to time. David has been a "steady hand in many storms." TTLT has great resiliency and a good policy base, thanks in part to David's work. There have been many times when David has stepped up to "save the day". David's willingness to go the extra mile, attend a key meeting or provide measured professional advice resulted in success or a problem averted. For these and other contributions, he is greatly appreciated and TTLT's future is bright.

The directors, volunteers and staff wish to congratulate David Wake on this richly deserved recognition.

-Ric Symmes



Dave Wake accepts his award at the OLTA Gathering

Winter Walk for Wildlife

Winter Walk for Wildlife is back by popular demand! On February 1st, 2020, we invite you to walk with us and raise money to support our conservation efforts.

Enhance your knowledge of natural history



Tree sparrow on a snow mound; by Brenda Gallagher

through guided walks, hosted by local naturalists in the picturesque setting of Westminster Ponds Environmentally Significant Area. This family friendly event will also include a nature bingo walk for curious kids, families, or the young at heart. After the walk, come inside to warm up with a hot meal and mingle with other nature enthusiasts and friends from your community.

We challenge participants to try to raise money from family, friends, neighbours and coworkers. The top three fundraisers will win a prize (along with bragging rights).

In 2018 you helped us raised almost \$15,000 during the Winter Walk for Wildlife. These funds are so important to our work, supporting conservation and restoration on over 1700 acres of protected natural lands. Join us and help make the 2020 Winter for Walk for Wildlife another huge success!

Watch www.TTLT.ca for updates on how to register and participate in this great event.

- Rebecca Launchbury

Species Spotlight: Canada Warbler

A recent study in the journal *Science* reported that nearly 3 billion birds have disappeared from continental US and Canada since the 1970. Yes, 3 BILLION. That represents a decline of 29% in bird populations. Shocked? So were the authors. We all feel that things are getting worse but these numbers really tell the story. Sadly, many of the birds hardest hit are ones we know well and love: native sparrows, warblers, finches and blackbirds. Even common species such as Dark-Eyed Juncos are declining.

One of the declining species is the Canada Warbler. It is listed as Threatened in Canada and Special Concern in Ontario due to steep population declines resulting from habitat loss and degradation. The Canada Warbler



Canada Warbler

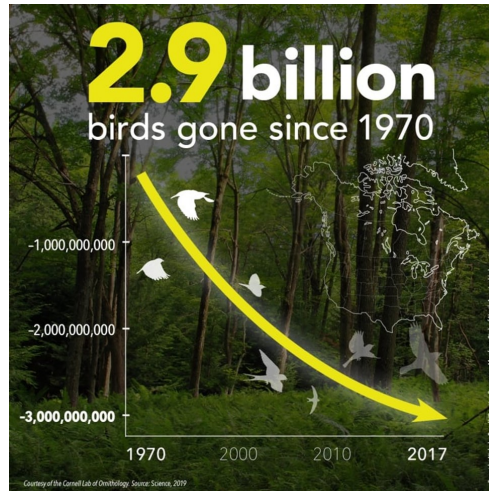
is a medium-sized warbler with a bright yellow belly, a grey back and a black "necklace". Canada Warblers breed in Canada in large intact forested habitats with shrubby understory with ferns and moss, often

near water. The nests are made on the ground in small hollows made by upturned trees, in stumps or moss. Females lay 2-6 eggs and have a single brood. These warblers are insect eaters. They hop around branches gleaning insects from vegetation in a flurry of activity.

They can also catch insects out of the air. Canada Warblers arrive late in the spring and are some of the first to leave for their wintering grounds in South America, a flight of more than four thousand kilometres. The species also faces challenges of habitat loss and degradation on its wintering grounds.

Although declining and rare in southern Ontario, you can find Canada Warblers in some of the last remaining large blocks of forest. A prime example is Skunk's Misery, one of Thames Talbot Land Trust's focal areas. Protecting these important refuges is a high priority for the Land Trust and other conservation groups in the area. Together we have protected nearly 30% of the Skunk's Misery Natural Area. Sitler Woods and Bebenssee Tract Extension, part of the Vision 20/20 Campaign, are two additions to TTLT's portfolio of protected areas in Skunk's Misery. Conservation of this region helps Canada Warblers and many other species that depend on these large forest blocks for survival.

- Daria Koscinski



Hawk Cliff Weekends

Another highly successful annual pair of Hawk Cliff Weekends took place on September 21-22 and 28-29. At the same time that the Hawk Cliff bird counters took their usual position in the adjacent field, our parking lot in Hawk Cliff Woods came to life with exhibits by the St. Thomas Naturalists, Monarch Watch, Another Chance Wildlife Rehabilitation, our friendly book vendor, and of course, the TTLT tent and displays.

On all four days, a steady flow of visitors of all ages toured our booths or gathered in the tent for exciting presentations by the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banders, Monarch Watch, and the Rehabilitation team. All presentations were well attended, some with standing room only, irrespective of the weather, which ranged from hot and humid to cool and breezy – mostly hot and humid! Children of all ages were ready to assist Bruce Parker in releasing monarchs captured and tagged for research purposes. Mid-day guided hikes on the trail

were led by naturalists Dave Wake and Cathy Quinlan. TTLT staff Rebecca, Colin, and Daria took turns at overseeing parking and answering questions at the information booth, with the assistance of several eager TTLT volunteers. The total number of visitors easily added up to over six hundred. Special thanks to Bob Johnstone for his enthusiastic participation as Master of Ceremonies, with the occasional assistance of others.

-André Lachance



Learning about hawks

President's Message

Every TTLT Board meeting starts with a reflection offered by one of the Directors. At our last Board meeting, I told fellow Directors about my life as a Professor. I have recently taken up teaching Bioethics, which was a new subject for me. In preparation for that, I have read stacks of books and articles. I learnt that what we do at the Land Trust is guided to a large extent by a theory known as Ecocentrism, based on the idea that ethical action consists in preserving the integrity of ecosystems. I also discovered that one major ethical theory is owed to the Greek philosopher Aristotle and focuses on the pursuit of a unique kind of happiness that arises from a life of virtuous action. I recently stumbled upon a quote from the Roman orator Cicero, who stated that gratitude is the mother of all virtues. This became the theme of my reflection. Gratitude, the antithesis of entitlement, is the driving force of the Thames Talbot Land Trust. Our past 19 years are the result of benevolent acts by a long string of dedicated people who have committed themselves to pursuing what is best for the Land Trust and its mission, to protect, restore, and nurture. A myriad of acts performed in recognition of the beauty of all life forms and their ecosystems and also as a means of giving thanks to all those who have contributed to preserving biodiversity. One of my roles as President is to be the bearer of gratitude towards all those who contribute: our founders, our members, our volunteers, our donors, our directors, and our staff. At this time, it is appropriate to be especially grateful to two individuals.



Chris Leys, former Vice-President

Chris Leys has just commenced employment with a new firm, and his new position will call upon him to spend considerable time away from the four counties in which TTLT operates. He has therefore resigned as Vice-President. On everyone's behalf, I express my gratitude to him. I first recall Chris leading a work team at Hawk Cliff Woods during our big cleanup event. He was a key player in the construction of the

boardwalk at Joany's Wood. As a Board member, Chris also made major time contributions to our exploration of Westminster Ponds at the time that the property was being offered for purchase by the London Health Sciences Centre. Most recently, in his capacity as member of the Executive, Chris drafted a plan of action for our imminent strategic plan exercise and a review of our human resources structure. Chris assures us that he will continue to serve as a volunteer to the extent possible. I wish him the very best with his new position.

At our last Board meeting, Suzanne McDonald also announced her retirement as Executive Director at the end of 2019. Suzanne joined TTLT in 2011. Our number of properties has since doubled. Under her tutelage, our organization has grown to a staff of



Suzanne McDonald

four and successfully conducted several major fundraising campaigns, in particular that which generated 1.6 million dollars for the purchase of Hawk Cliff Woods, one of our most prominent properties. One highlight was a reception at the house of Architect Brad Skinner, during which Suzanne outbid me in the live auction for a beautiful painting of a Canadian forest scene, now adorning a wall of her house. Then, out of the blue, she declared that the time had come for TTLT to acquire a truck and would the guests please pitch in the funds required; and so it was done! Suzanne's energy is currently focused on the 2020 campaign, which, although officially launched only recently, has involved much leg work for over a year and has already reached a significant fraction of its objective. Suzanne is also committed to our strategic plan exercise and helping us plan for her succession. Being TTLT President has given me the opportunity to interact frequently with Suzanne. It has always been a pleasure to witness her enthusiasm, optimism, and grace.

I express my sincere gratitude to Chris, Suzanne, and all who contribute to the success of the Thames Talbot Land Trust.

- André Lachance

Renew/Sign Up For Your 2020 Membership

*Charitable receipts are issued for all contributions
(Reg. # 86745 7475 RR0001)*

Membership Donations

Youth/Student (under 18): \$25
Individual Member (18+): \$50
Affiliate/Group/ Corporate: \$100

Additional Donations

Donation amount: \$ _____ Total: \$ _____

Membership Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Postal Code: _____

Telephone: (____) _____

Email: _____

You may also contribute online through our website, or become a monthly donor and make a big impact.

Supporters' Circle (Automatic monthly donations)

Advocate \$240 (\$20/month)
Protector \$480 (\$40/month)

Direct Bank Debit:

I (we) authorize the Thames Talbot Land Trust to process a debit, in paper, electronic or other form in the amount of \$ _____ on my (our) account on the first day of each month beginning 1, _____, 20____.
(Month) (Year)

I (we) acknowledge that we have read, understood and accepted all the provisions set out in the Terms and Conditions
www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca

I (we) enclose a cheque made payable to the Thames Talbot Land Trust and marked "VOID."

Signature(s) of Donor(s)

Date: _____

Please mail the completed application form and cheque to:

Thames Talbot Land Trust
PO Box 25054, London ON N6C 6A8

Privacy Policy

Thames Talbot Land Trust respects your privacy and will not share your personal information. From time to time we may contact you with information about the Land Trust and its activities which we believe are of interest to our members and supporters. For more information about our privacy policy visit www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca

Giving Tuesday

December 3rd, 2019.

GivingTuesday is a global movement for giving and volunteering, taking place each year after Black Friday. The "Opening day of the giving season," it's a time when charities, companies and individuals join together and rally for favourite causes. In the same way that retailers take part in Black Friday, the giving community comes together for GivingTuesday.

Over 6,500 partners came together for the 6th annual GivingTuesday in Canada in 2018. The movement also went Global, with activities in every country of the world. Canadian online giving has increased by 785% since 2012 as measured by CanadaHelps. More than \$15M was donated online on GivingTuesday last year.

The Thames Talbot Land Trust will be participating in Giving Tuesday with high hopes that your generosity will allow us to continue to protect, restore and nurture our environment.

Please think of us on Giving Tuesday.

"We have two days that are good for the economy. Now we have a day that is good for the community too."



www.GivingTuesday.ca

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