



Nature London

The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario Inc.

2015/2016

ANNUAL REPORT

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A Brief History of Nature London

The origins of Nature London go back to 1864. In that year, William Saunders, a local druggist, and several of his contemporaries organized the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada. The study and collection of insects was a popular hobby during Victorian times and the society flourished. In fact, local interest was so strong that, by the early 1870s, the parent society had moved its headquarters, insect collections, and the publication of its monthly scientific journal to London which, for several decades, functioned as the entomological capital of Canada.

In 1890, the Entomological Society broadened its interests to include other branches of natural history. Accordingly, sections devoted to botany, ornithology, geology, and microscopy were organized. These prospered for a time, and meetings, field trips, and collecting expeditions were held to study insects, plants, birds, fossils, rocks and microscopic life.

William E. Saunders, son of William Saunders, was the founding president of the ornithological section and was to remain its driving force and most prominent member until his death in 1943. In 1902, the ornithological section became the McIlwraith Ornithological Club, in honour of Thomas McIlwraith of Hamilton, the foremost ornithologist in Ontario at the time.

By 1904 interest had waned, and all four sections – botany, ornithology, geology, and microscopy – had ceased active operation. Two years later, the parent Entomological Society moved its headquarters to Guelph. For a number of years, no London organization having natural history as its focus held formal meetings, though members of the ornithological section continued to associate, go on field trips, and maintain bird records.

London's annual Christmas Bird Count – first organized in 1909 by two local school boys – soon after came under the auspices of the McIlwraith group. Today it stands as the longest continuously running count in Canada.

The only branch of the Entomological Society to survive the decade-long hiatus of meetings was the McIlwraith Ornithological Club. Reorganized in 1915, this time without ties to the Entomological Society, it has met continuously ever since. In 1965 its name was changed to the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (MFN) to reflect an expanded interest in all aspects of natural history. A constitution was adopted in 1970, and the society was incorporated in 1972. In 2009, MFN changed its common name to Nature London while retaining as its business name The McIlwraith Field Naturalists of London Ontario Incorporated.

In its early years the revived club met in a variety of locations including members' homes, the Collegiate Institute, Normal School, YMCA, and London Life. In 1940 it began meeting in the new library at 305 Queens Avenue, where it remained for 56 years. In 1996 the meeting place became First-St. Andrews Church, and in 1998 the Civic Garden Complex on Springbank Drive, which is the current venue.

Initially, meeting programs focussed on birds and relied on study skins, with later transitions to films, slides and, more recently, digital images. Over time there was a gradually increasing interest in non-bird species and also in conservation issues. Field trips were, and continue to be, held on a regular basis. A quarterly publication, *The Cardinal*, first appeared in 1951.

At various times over the years, among other things, the club sponsored public lectures, Audubon film nights, inventories of natural areas, non-credit courses in natural history, junior naturalists' groups, Trees for London (which promoted the planting of native trees and shrubs), and local and regional reptile and bird research and protection initiatives. Several times the club has hosted conferences of its national and provincial affiliates – the Canadian Nature Federation (Nature Canada) in 1974 and 1990, and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists (Ontario Nature) in 1949, 1962 and 1981.

A conservation committee was established in 1966 and an archives in 1967. Nature London's nature reserve, Cedarcroft, located near Delaware, was officially opened in 1983. A Birding Wing, for those particularly interested in birds, began meeting in 1988. In 2000, a group of MFN members was instrumental in setting up the Thames Talbot Land Trust, which maintains close links with Nature London. Nature in the City, a winter series of talks on nature has been offered to the public since 2006. The Christmas Bird Count for Kids was first held in 2014.

A highlight of Nature London's year is the annual Conservation Awards banquet. The club conducts the London Christmas Bird Count each December, and the Skunk's Misery Butterfly Count in July. The popular *Guide to the Natural Areas of London . . .* first appeared in 1995; a fifth, much expanded edition, was published in 2015. Nature London's Information Line (519-457-4593), website (www.naturelondon.ca), facebook page and semi-monthly e-newsletter keep members and others informed of nature sightings and club activities. Nature London representatives sit on several advisory committees that work to protect various natural areas and parks.

During 2014, many special events were held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the London Branch of the Entomological Society of Canada, the group from which Nature London traces its roots. For more detailed information about Nature London's history, please see *150 Years: The Nature London Story 1864 to 2014*, published in 2015.

Winifred Wake

REPORTS from THE PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT & PAST PRESIDENT

President's Report for 2015-2016

Nature London continued to diversify its activities, and to simultaneously sustain its "traditional" events, activities, committees and outreach. We had our second successful Children's Christmas Bird Count, our twentieth summer Butterfly Atlassing and perhaps one hundredth Christmas Bird Count. The E-newsletter which is distributed via emails, was in its second year and continued to be used and appreciated by the majority of club members. The newest edition of the Natural Areas Guide to London and Region sold very well at our club meetings and at ten different commercial outlets, providing valuable information for interested naturalists and providing revenue for the club. Our membership increased to 433, and 25% of the membership used the newly-available option of online payment for annual dues, and banquet tickets.

A six-member Cardinal Editorial Committee, with support by the stalwarts who have been proof-reading, printing labels, stuffing envelopes and organizing the mailings for many years, produced quarterly issues of *The Cardinal*, varying in length and format during the year, and successfully distributed to our whole membership, ten other nature clubs and associations, local conservation authorities, London and Middlesex County Public Libraries, ROM, NHIC, Cornell and UWO and University of Toronto libraries and the National Library of Canada.

To recognize the significant contributions of volunteers, we presented Suncatchers to Carol Agocs, Shirley and Denzil D'Mello and Bob McGee; Special Recognition Awards to Barbara Bain and Jim and Roslyn Moorhead; the Conservation Award to Dean Sheppard and the W.E. Saunders Award to Sandy Levin. The Conservation Committee developed a new award, the Enviro-Hero Award, and presented it to the Green Team at Sherwood Fox Public School and to Susan Price and Carolyn Doyle of the London Public Library. This is a record number of awards for our club.

The Awards Banquet moved to a comfortable new location, the Greenhills Country Club, and we enjoyed a unique dramatic presentation by Betsey Means performing as Mary Kingsley who had ventured into Africa in 1893, observing and collecting both "fish and fetishes".

We received a \$1000 bequest from the estate of Dorothy Martin, and a \$5000 donation from the Lawson Foundation. We donated \$15,000 to the Thames Talbot Land Trust for the acquisition and stewardship of Hawk Cliff Woods, 230 acres of woodland, ravines and cropland fronting on Lake Erie. We also supported the Eastern Spiny Softshell Turtle program at UTRCA with a \$5000 donation toward the salary of a field technician.

Membership in the newly formed London Environment Network has given our events more profile among other London environmental groups, and provided us with access to other programs in London.

We had displays at the London Children Museum's Bug Day in September 2015, at all the Nature in the City evenings in January and February 2016, at the London Middlesex Master Gardeners' Seedy Saturday in March 2016, and an even more popular display at Carolinian Canada's Go Wild, Grow Wild Exposition in April 2016.

We welcomed three new Board members, Lisa Bilty, Gordon Cameron and Ron Martin, and appreciated Lisa's offer to become the Recording Secretary.

Nature London wrote to the London City Council, encouraging them to require a thorough environmental assessment before making a decision regarding Springbank dam; we supported Ontario Nature's comments on the provincial Wetland Conservation Discussion Paper and on the proposed exemptions on the provincial Environmental Protection Act Requirements for Reflect Light that Kills or Injures Birds and we submitted comments to the province on the proposed Pollinator Health Action Plan.

In spring 2016 the Birding Wing said farewell to Pete Read and Dave Martin as they retired after 26 years, and welcomed a new Birding Wing Committee of Gordon Cameron, Gail McNeil, Paul Nicholson, Ian Platt and Joan Taylor.

Gail McNeil joined Cathy McCrae as the Nature London Team for the Great Canadian Birdathon, ventured to Bruce County for their birdathon weekend and raised over \$1700 for Bird Studies Canada and Nature London.

The club's success depends on many active volunteers. At least sixty members have contributed this year, including many stalwarts who have volunteered for Nature London for years. I hope we have been able to recognize them and that they know their efforts are admired and appreciated. It is the work of these long-term, dedicated volunteers that has built this club's reputation in London and Ontario. I am proud to have been Nature London's president for a second year.

Muriel Andreae

Past-President's Report 2015-2016

The members of this year's nominating committee were Ray Robertson and Norm Corrin. Catherine Burr also agreed to serve but had to leave the committee due to work related commitments.

The committee was fortunate to have Lisa Bilty volunteer to serve as recording secretary and Ron Martin to serve as a Director at Large for this fiscal and Bernie VanDenBelt to serve as Vice President for 2016-2017. I wish to thank Norm for his great support over this past year in helping the committee successfully fill these open positions.

After organizing 28 Birding Wing Meetings, Dave Martin and Pete Read decided to retire. Nature London was fortunate to have Paul Nicholson, Gail McNeil, Gordon Cameron and Ian Platt agree to be the new Birding Wing team organizing the meetings starting in the fall of 2016.

As you read over this Annual Report you will see that over thirty of Nature London's volunteers submit a summary of their activities. Nature London is a strong and vibrant club which is clearly demonstrated in these reports which I have gathered together to form this document.

This year Nature London recognized Sandy Levin's inspiring leadership of the Conservation Action Committee with the W. E. Saunders Award of Merit; Dean Sheppard's tireless advocacy for the environment with a Conservation Award; Roslyn and Jim Moorhead's efforts as editors of the Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Region and Barbara Bain's many contributions as a member of The Cardinal committee with a Special Recognition Award.

I continued to work on updating Nature London's Manual and made progress but still there is work to be done which I hope to finish by the end of next year.

It was an honour to serve as Nature London's Past President this year and I look forward to serving again next year in this capacity.

Karen Auzins,
Past President



REPORTS from the DIRECTORS, APPOINTEES & COMMITTEES

Archivists' Report 2015/16

Spreadsheet database: After struggling for several years with an error-plagued database, a concerted effort was made to identify and correct inaccuracies and to standardize the presentation of digitized information. Information contained on the spreadsheet still needs to be proofed against actual items in the fonds.

Storage and organization of Nature London fonds: Efforts continue to gradually bring the NL archives into compliance with current accepted archival standards. During the year more items were transferred to acid-free storage containers, and additional progress was made in organizing items by series (of related documents) rather than by chronological date of acquisition. The NL fonds is stored (rent free) in the London Room of the Central Public Library.

Acquisitions: During the year, a number of items were acquired but not formally catalogued. The assigning of series and accession numbers to new items is currently on hold while the accuracy of the database is being improved and reorganization of the fonds is ongoing.

Requests for information: Information on William Saunders and his farm near Pottersburg Creek was retrieved from the fonds for two different non-Nature London members. Minute books and back issues of *The Cardinal* were searched to accommodate two requests from club members. In June 2016, we were visited by Heather Marshall of Alberta, who is researching Elgin County naturalist Frank Farley. We supplied information as well as suggestions for other sources she might pursue.

150th anniversary plaque: The archivists continue to keep communication channels open with the Historic Sites Committee of the London Public Library. The Library's plans are inching forward towards erecting a plaque in Springbank Park to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the club's founding in 1864.

Professional development: Both D. and W. Wake maintained membership in the Southwestern Ontario Chapter of the Archives Association of Ontario (SWOC). W.W. attended the AGM, which included a tour of the Middlesex Centre Archives in Delaware.

Winifred and David Wake

Brochure Producer/Editor's Report 2015-2016

Nature London produced and distributed 2 editions of the brochure in 2015/16 - September and again in January. The September issue had 800 brochures distributed and the January issue had 1,100.

The largest distribution was to the libraries with 75 copies going to the Central Library and 15 to each of the Branches. Nature in the City received 400 copies. Retail outlets in the city including Featherfields, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Wild Birds Unlimited and Springbank Gardens Nursery received 205 copies. Not-for-profit organizations including Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Tourism London, butterfly banding at Hawk Cliff and Friends of the London Civic Garden Complex received 65 copies. The remaining brochures went to NL volunteers including the Conservation Committee, Field Trip Coordinator, Publicity Administrator, Membership Secretary and Board of Directors.

As nurseries close in favour of big box stores we are losing access to gardeners. Van Horick's Nursery, which supported Nature London for many years by making our brochures available, closed during this

reporting period. Springbank Gardens Nursery is the only garden center left on our list.

Eight volunteers were involved in providing input and helping to “get it right.” Thank you to those NL members. If you can help by a) suggesting new outlets for the brochure, b) assisting in the distribution and/or c) in other ways, please let us know.

Ray Robertson

Butterfly Count Co-ordinator’s Report 2015-2016

Our 20th but 17th official count for the North American Butterfly Association, took place on Sunday, July 3rd this year, in perfect weather. There were a total of 38 participants, (a record), and 56 species were seen , although fewer individuals than normal. The count took place from 8.30-4.30. A great BBQ was then enjoyed by the participants the home of Marj and Bill Prieksaitis in Rodney. Nature London donated funds for the hamburgers and participants brought salads and desserts.

Ann White

The Cardinal Report 2015/2016

Nature London has published four issues of the Cardinal (with the fourth issue in the latter part of November). There are continued issues associated with the finding of a suitable layout editor. Cynthia (Yu Yue) Zhang, who gave generously of her time was forced to leave this position as a result of the pressures of her studies. Since then a shortened version of the Cardinal has been produced by Leslie Kostal using Word.

Previous editions have been as long as 48 pages however much of the material contributions to the Cardinal in the form of both text and photographs cannot be readily included in the smaller version. Several options are being discussed including more extensive use of email as a vehicle for delivering all or part of future issues of the Cardinal. If this were the case the options include a members only section of the Nature London website which would be accessed using a single password. The advantages to this approach would include a return to longer issues of the Cardinal and more extensive use of color illustrations. Also longer articles could be included.

The Cardinal remains in the state of flux. The options being considered are: hybrid documents consisting of a short quarterly newsletter imprint which would include information about Nature London’s activity and important news items, a full web edition and/or a return to the original format if an appropriate layout editor can be found.

Ron Martin

Cedarcroft Committee Report 2015-2016

A successful Cedarcroft walk took place on Oct 10. Twelve people participated; the majority were new attendees. It was concluded that the walks are a good way to introduce Cedarcroft to members who have not been there before. It was pointed out that the Beech Point and Pond trails are relatively flat and easy to walk. The River trail is longer and a bit more challenging. It was also used by some of the Cedarcroft members. The Lookout trail (difficult) was not used during the formal walks but members do use them.

The fall Cedarcroft potluck (Sept 12) had a lower turn out then normal with twelve members in attendance. The trails were used and enjoyed as well as a sumptuous meal. We agreed to hold it again on September 10, 2016 and continue to monitor attendance. Again thanks to all who helped with the preparations. The picnic tables are still useable but are ending their useful life.

The Committee met twice through the year on November 4 2015 and April 18 2016. The herbicide applications to control the spread of periwinkle have been completed. Two applications have occurred (Aug 28 and Oct 23) along the edges of the ridges to try and control the spread of the periwinkle down further into the ravines. The herbicide takes a long time to have an affect due to the thick cuticle on the periwinkle leaves. A spring review did show the herbicide applications worked in limiting the spread of the periwinkle at the ravine edges.

Jeff Paul reported on the status of the dam and pond. The pond has been dry practically all summer but it was surmised that this was primarily due to the dry summer and fall season. We agreed to have the contractor take out the old, original culvert as agreed to previously

The new roundabout trail (Lookout trail) has been reflagged. Some brushing and chain saw work to clear the new trail was completed. Jeff agreed to build the new Number 2 Bridge in 2016. It will be placed back towards where the former Bridge Number 4 was located.

Winter walkabouts were scheduled and completed by various members of the committee. Thanks to those who braved the winter winds.

The annual spring Cedarcroft Cleanup occurred on May 7 2016. A small but energetic crew of six people (Barb Kaiser is missing from the picture) came out to carry out a lot of work in a short time. The weather cooperated beautifully and the garlic mustard which the ladies again tackled so efficiently was just at the right stage for removal. Three garbage bags were picked and the trail to the cabin is relatively free of garlic mustard for another year. Thanks also to Barb, Daisy McCallum, Catherine Turner and Phyllis Ede who re-marked some of the trails with white paint on April 25th. A leaning tree on the pond trail was cut down to remove the overhead hazard. The old, middle foot bridge was dismantled safely and placed on the side of the ravine. There is only one more of the old foot bridges to dismantle.



Thank you to Barb for cleaning and painting the outdoor privy. The bottom ends were reinforced with new boards and the entire unit was reseated. It looks better and is much improved.

The small bench at the trail start has been repaired but will not last much longer. Some of the wood is rotting. It is an ideal location for a seat and a new one would be wonderful to receive.

We purchased two new cedar picnic tables. As well a wonderful round picnic table compliments of James and Ros Moorhead (many thanks) is also present. The Carolinian trees and shrubs that were planted several years ago are doing well with a few exceptions. Unfortunately the large redbud tree on the edge of the cabin clearing died two winters ago but the lone redbud just opposite, compliments of Wayne Tingle is thriving. Our ladies from Cedarcroft Committee (thanks to Barb, Daisy and Phyllis) have done a wonderful job of labelling many of the plants and shrubs for viewing and identification.



The new sign on the gate makes it easy to find the entrance on Westminster Road. Thanks to Nature London member, David Daugharty for his excellent wood working skills in making the sign.

We are fortunate to have easy access to Cedarcroft and you are urged to take advantage of this forest gem.

On May 14 the Cedarcroft introductory hike was cancelled due to high winds.

The Cedarcroft Property Standards has been approved. In 1984 a document was prepared to help guide The McIlwraith Field Naturalists in the operation and maintenance of Cedarcroft. The opening summary read as follows *“The following recommendations are presented in order to guide the Board of Directors in future decisions affecting Cedarcroft. The Guiding Principles are intended to provide a framework for those decisions. The specific recommendations are intended to address specific issues which were raised during the interviews conducted during the summer of 1983. The recommendations provide a list of projects which may be undertaken in the future if and when time and money become available.”*

In 2014 Nature London’s Cedarcroft Committee undertook to review the 1984 document. Because the 1984 document was a mixture of what they envisioned Cedarcroft to be and actions that should be taken the committee’s first step was to restate the 1984 plan as a set of Standards. That set of standards was

then updated to reflect what the committee believed Cedarcroft should be in 2014. Periodic evaluations of Cedarcroft can be made using the Standards as guidelines and from the evaluations recommendations can be made.



An update was provided on the removal of the original culvert in the dam which is to take place this year. Thanks to Jeff for his very able assistance in resolving the dispute with the contractor.

Our thanks to Daisy for obtaining a \$250.00 grant from Bell Canada, her former employer. The money went to the purchase of a new picnic table. A second table was purchased from the Cedarcroft budget.

The Lookout Trail has been flagged with red tape and some of the trail has been cleared for easier walking. The Lookout Trail has been classified as difficult and should only be used with caution. It is a long term project of the Committee and when finished will provide a complete circle route through Cedarcroft. Jeff has again amazingly agreed to build another foot bridge at the far eastern end of our property. We agreed that all members would assist if possible in bringing the wood to the location.

Thanks once again to an amazing group of volunteers who make looking after Cedarcroft so enjoyable and rewarding.

Herb Bax

Chimney Swift Liaison for Nature London Report 2015-2016

This account covers the period Nov 1/15 to Oct 31/16, which facilitates reporting on one season of swift presence. Activities are carried under the auspices of the NL Chimney Swift liaison.

Summary of Season

The 2016 season appears to have been a poor one for Chimney Swifts in London. Hot, dry weather is thought to have negatively affected the food supply (flying insects) and may have caused reduced survival and fledging success. Fall migration started early and traditional roosts were empty by mid-September, two-to-three weeks earlier than most years, with numbers of active roosts and counts at these roosts significantly down. Since swift monitoring started in London in 2004, numbers of swifts observed have decreased noticeably.

Education/Outreach

- Maintained posting on NL's website of 2 educational documents on swifts.

- Wrote article on loss of swift chimneys in London 2004–2013 (*The Cardinal*, May '16).
- Wrote article on chimney conservation efforts in London (submitted to *Ontario Birds*).
- Wrote article on 5 occupied swift chimneys in a London church (*Tidings*, Aug '16).
- Twice gave PowerPoint on swifts (May 13/16) to grade 4 groups at Lord Roberts School.

Monitoring / Data Collection

- Helped recruit and/or mentor a dozen volunteers for swift monitoring.
- Provided ongoing support to Ontario SwiftWatch coordinator at BSC.
- Volunteers made about 200 monitoring visits to 75 London chimneys; data sent to BSC.
- Created annotated photo catalogue of 169 London chimneys used by swifts since 2004.
- Discovered 3 new swift chimneys in 2016; 47 swift chimneys were lost from 2004 to 2013.
- Examined all extant London swift chimneys on aerial images to assess openness of shafts.

Conservation

- Provided information in response to inquiries, e.g., hand-rearing of swifts, protection of swift chimneys in local apartments, swift collisions with glass buildings, and stewardship.
- Made representations to CWS, EC, MNRF, etc., protesting demolition of swift chimneys at Wolseley Barracks and Elborn College.
- Met with Anne Bell (Ontario Nature) re lack of effective protection for swift chimneys.
- Helped Swift Care Ontario find suitable release locations for hand-reared swifts.
- Sandy Symmes arranged release of swifts in Windsor after all London roosts were empty.

During reporting period, NL swift liaison put in 625 hours of volunteer time. Many additional hours were put in by other NL volunteers who assisted with monitoring and other initiatives. The assistance of everyone who helped monitor numbers, check for potential release sites, assist with releases, and/or advocate on behalf of London's swifts is much appreciated.

NL = Nature London, BSC = Bird Studies Canada, MNRF = Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, CWS = Canadian Wildlife Service, EC = Environment Canada.

Winifred Wake

Conservation Action Committee Report 2015-2016

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

CAC = Conservation Action Committee

CMP = Conservation Master Plan

EEPAC = Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee

EA = Environmental Assessment

ESA = Environmentally Significant Area

MNRF = Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

NL = Nature London

OMB = Ontario Municipal Board

UTRCA = Upper Thames River Conservation Authority

This year's Conservation Action Committee consisted of 11 Nature London members:

Sandy Levin, Chair; Anita Caveney, Will Lyons, Daphne Lowe, Roslyn Moorhead, Norm Corrin, Gerald Pierce, Carolyn Beacroft, Bill Maddeford, Jack Blocker, and Susan Blocker.

The CAC met 3 times during the period of this report: December 3, 2015, and March 15 and June 15, 2016.

1. **ESA Visits.** CAC members made no ESA visits as a committee during the period of this report, but the committee scheduled a visit to Kains Woods ESA for September 2016.

2. **Work Undertaken:** The CAC monitored numerous items and attended a variety of public meetings throughout the year. In many cases, the CAC initiated correspondence with the City of London, Provincial and Federal Ministries, UTRCA and other groups or agencies for the purpose of stating the CAC's support, opposition or recommendations. For some issues, comments were submitted to the Ontario Environmental Registry. Issues monitored or addressed included:

- **Komoka Provincial Park** – The new entrances on Gideon Drive and Komoka Road have been opened, and paid parking has been initiated.
- **The Coves** – CAC member Bill Maddeford is now serving as a member of the local advisory committee. The City has completed construction of a new boardwalk and lookout over the East Pond. A public celebration was scheduled for September 1, 2016 to mark the commencement of construction on trails from the Elmwood Gateway and in Euston Meadows.
- **Westminster Ponds/Pond Mills** – The proposed Community Connection between Parliament Street and Commissioners Road, over the former landfill and adjacent to the rail line, has been approved by the Trails Advisory Group and Council. The plan, including closing of unauthorized paths, is being implemented in 2016. The City has received a \$100,000 grant from the federal government's Canada 150 fund to construct a new boardwalk and improve trails between the Saunders Cabin and the Dearness Home, fulfilling a recommendation of the CMP. The funding will also be used for restoration in 2017 of the wet area near the tourism building now containing buckthorn and dead ash trees.
- **Thames Valley Corridor Plan / Thames Valley Parkway** – An EA for a connection for the Thames Valley Pathway system, from the University Bridge at Richmond Street to Adelaide at the Sports Fields (with an eventual side connection to Stoney Creek) is on the public record. Of concern to the CAC is the existence of endangered species near this new connection.
An EA for a proposed pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Richmond Street north of Sunningdale Road is now on the public record. CAC members are monitoring this process, with particular concern about the provincially significant wetlands which are part of the Arva Moraine Wetland Complex and about possible connections through the Medway Valley ESAs.
- **Kains Woods** – The City has realigned the trail to avoid more of the Nature Reserve area. Sifton Properties has given the City an easement for the re-routed trail. The EA for extending the Thames Valley Parkway to Riverbend is scheduled to begin in mid-2017.
- **Review of Trail Standards Document.** The committee reviewing the document *Planning and Design Standards for Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas*, which was adopted by City Council in 2012, has completed its work and submitted its recommendations to City Council. The new version has been adopted by City Council and will be posted soon on the City's

website. A search for Natural Heritage Features Documents will take you to it. While the matrix that determines the zones has been simplified, and the number of management zones reduced, the new document makes it possible for trails to be established in more places and perhaps hardened trails in more places. Three members of NL, representing NL and two Adopt an ESA groups, served on the review committee.

- **Conservation Award** – The 2015 Conservation Award recipient was Dean Sheppard.
- **Strategic Planning Initiatives** – In three of the *Cardinal* flights during the reporting period, the CAC has included in the Conservation section a boxed notice urging members to take action on a specific issue.
- **Rondeau Provincial Park Cottage Leases.** The CAC sent a letter to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) opposing the Ministry's proposal to extend the cottage leases to 2038. The letter points out the conflict between this proposal and provincial policy to protect the ecological integrity of the habitats included in Provincial Parks.
- **Annual Meeting with City Staff and UTRCA.** The annual meeting with City staff and UTRCA is scheduled for October 27, 2016. This meeting was not held in 2015 due to the City strike.
- **John E. Pearce Provincial Park Restoration Project.** The CAC has written to MNR commending the Ministry for its announced plan to restore 24 hectares of land which had previously been leased for agricultural use. Rehabilitation through control of non-native and invasive species, planting of a prairie, restoration/creation of a wetland, and thinning of a white pine plantation within this area are intended to improve ecosystem functioning and increase biodiversity in the Park. Negative impacts to native species will be minimized by conducting rehabilitation work only within specified time windows.
- **Enviro Hero Award** – Three nominations for NL's newest award were accepted by the CAC and confirmed by the Board. In June, two CAC members presented the first Enviro Hero Award certificate to the W. Sherwood Fox Public School Green Team for the students' work in conducting yearly biodiversity improvements to their school yard, including the installation of nest boxes, green cones, and pollinator gardens. Furthermore, the students starred in the Thames Valley District School Board's new waste minimization video. In August, a CAC member presented the second and third Enviro Hero Awards to librarians Susan Price and Carolyn Doyle of the London Public Library in recognition of their contributions to conservation education through public raising of Monarch butterflies in various library branches over many years.

Complete information on the above items is detailed in the CAC meeting minutes.

Selected details were published in the Conservation section of *The Cardinal*, flights 241, 242, 243 and 244.

Jack Blocker

E-mail Coordinator's Report 2015-2016

This task consists of monitoring and redirecting email that is sent to info@naturelondon.ca and preparing the email newsletter.

The Nature London e-mail newsletter continued on a twice-monthly basis over the past year. Initially we thought that one letter per month would be sufficient most months, but it became apparent that twice

monthly was necessary to keep each letter brief and current.

The email newsletter content consisted of Nature London events, largely copied or summarized from the Web Page, announcements or last minute corrections, and a trailing section with items from other organizations that we thought might be of interest to Nature London members. The mailing list consisted of members who indicated they wished to receive the letter.

The number of members requesting the newsletter has grown steadily:

Oct 2014	192
Oct 2015	333
Oct 2016	411

Over the last year, we have had 11 persons “unsubscribe” –moved, dropped memberships, or no longer wished to get the newsletter. This compares with 87 that asked to be added over the same period

The percentage that “opened” the letter (according to Mailchimp) has been quite consistent at about 64 %. People scanning the content from their summary screen without opening the email are an additional unmeasured audience.

Our informal inquiries about the content have indicated a clear preference for a concise, infrequent (twice monthly) summary that would act as a timely reminder/notice of upcoming events. Text and links were sufficient. Pictures and illustrations seemed to be considered a distraction. Consequently, we propose to continue with the same format for the coming year, subject to any direction from the Board.

The email newsletter is only possible because of the great cooperation and support of the Webmaster, Mady Hymowitz, the Membership Secretary, Gail McNeil and the Database Manager, Hugh Casbourn. We are anxious to acknowledge this fact and to extend our thanks.

Ric & Sandy Symmes

Field Trips Report 2015-2016

Date	Location	Leader/s	Duration	No. of participants	Weather	Highlights
Sept. 12/15	Cedarcroft	C. McCrae, D. McCallum, B. Kaiser	3 hours	12	breezy, warm	- hike and picnic - Great Crested Flycatcher, Pine Warbler, Hairy Woodpecker
Sept. 20/15	Hawk Cliff and Port Stanley S. L.	C. McCrae	4 hours	12	seasonal	- novice birder outing -8 raptor species - Northern Parula, Magnolia warblers - 6 duck species
Sept. 26/15	Wheeler	B. and L.	2 hours	21	sunny,	- toured a variety

	Property near Granton	Wheeler, C. McCrae			mild	of habitats - noted various native tree species
Oct. 4/15	Medway Valley ESA	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	17	damp after rain	- Bladdernut tree - Hermit Thrush, Brown Creeper
Oct. 10/15	Cedarcroft	B. Kaiser, D. McCallum, P. Ede	3.5 hours	12	beautiful fall weather	- Honey Locust and labeled plant species - Downy Woodpecker
Oct. 17/15	Kains Woods ESA	W. and D. Wake	2 hours	9	cool, windy, some rain	- Hop Hornbeam, blooming Witch Hazel, Eastern Hemlock
Oct. 25/15	Forest S. L. and Kettle Point area	G. Cameron and C. McCrae	8 hours	18	mainly sunny, seasonal	- 58 bird species including Red-Necked Grebe and Pileated Woodpecker
Nov. 8/15	Fanshawe C. A.	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	10	sunny, cool	-family nature scavenger hunt - disappointing attendance
Nov. 14/15	Coves ESA	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	30	overcast, seasonal	- Bittersweet - Hooded Mergansers, Double-Crested Cormorant
Dec. 12/15	Springbank Park Area	B. Van Den-Belt, C. McCrae and others	3 hours	40 (20 kids)	cool, overcast	- second annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids - 28 species, 1175 birds
Jan. 1/16	Greenway Park	C. McCrae	2.5 hours	57	cold, flurries	- 18 bird species - Pied-billed grebe
Jan. 16/16	St. Clair River and Sarnia	C. McCrae	9.5 hours	15	windy. cold	- Snowy and Screech Owls - Glaucous Gull
Feb. 7/16	Springbank Park	C. McCrae	2 hours	50	cloudy, seasonal	-White-Fronted Goose, American Coot

Feb. 20/16	Gibbons Park	G. Cameron	2 hours	27	mild, slushy	- Red-Bellied Woodpecker, typical waterfowl
Mar. 6/16	Chelsea Green Park	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	49	sunny but cold, slushy	- Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, Hooded Merganser
Mar. 20/16	Aylmer WMA and S. L.	C. McCrae	2 hours	30	cold but sunny	- Tundra Swans, Little Gull - good variety of ducks
Apr. 10/16	Hullett WMA	C. McCrae	5 hours	10	cold, windy	- 58 bird species including Sandhill Crane, Northern Pintail, Rusty Blackbirds, Osprey
Apr. 16/16	Gibbons Park	J. Bristow	2 hours	16	mild, breezy	- enjoyable photography outing
Apr. 27/16	Kilally ESA	C. McCrae	1.5 hours	58	partly sunny, cool	- heard and saw territorial display of American Woodcock - Lesser Celandine, Bloodroot
May 1/16	Dingman Creek CA	C. McCrae	2.5 hours	21	cloudy, seasonal	- a few spring wildflowers -3 species of sparrows
May 4/16	Meadowlily ESA	M. Channon	1.5 hours	36	warm and sunny	- a nice array of spring wildflowers - young rabbits, Northern Oriole, Rose-Breasted Grosbeak
May 7/16	Cedarcroft	B. Kaiser and D. McCallum	2 hours	6	grey and coolish	- spring clean-up dismantled bridge - Red-Bellied Woodpecker
May 7/16	Coldstream CA	D. and W. Wake	2 hours	27	grey and coolish	- some rare wildflowers

						- disrupted by ATV riders
May 11/16	Thames Valley Trail near Plover Mills	C. Quinlan	2 hours	18	warm, partly sunny	- interesting riverside walk for plants and birds
May 15/16	Komoka PP	C. McCrae and G. McNeil	2 hours	6	cool and windy	- novice birder outing - 5 warbler species, Bald Eagle
May 18/16	Elsie Perrin Williams Estate and Medway Heritage Valley ESA	P. Nicholson	1.5 hours	28	seasonal, partly sunny	- Yellow- Throated Warbler, Rose- Breasted Grosbeak
May 20 – 22/15	Bruce Peninsula	C. McCrae	2 days	22	sunny to partly sunny, warm	- 90 bird species - American Bittern, heard Whipporwills
May 25/15	Warbler Woods ESA	W. Wake, P. Tripp, P. Nicholson, and C. McCrae	1.5 hours	36	warm, sunny	- good looks at trees and wildflowers - few birds other than Scarlet Tanager
June 1/16	Huron Woods	C. McCrae	2 hours	22	warm, partly sunny	- deer, beavers - some nice looks at nesting birds
June 8/16	Komoka PP	A. and S. Caveney	2 hours	27	sunny but cool	- lots of interesting plant species - few birds
July 3/16	Skunk's Misery	A. White	8 hours, then BBQ	36	warm, mostly sunny	- annual Butterfly Count

Director Cathy McCrae,

Guide to the Natural Areas in London & Vicinity Report 2015-2016

As reported in the previous Annual Report, the fifth edition of the *Guide to Natural Areas in London & Region* was completed and 1500 copies printed in June, 2015 with the books being sold at all NL events

and in several retail outlets for \$15. The sales have been very brisk with 1,037 being sold by the end of this fiscal year – August 31, 2016.

Updated by Karen Auzins on behalf of
Jim and Roslyn Moorhead, Editors

Image Data Base Report 2015-2016

A small number of photo images continue to be contributed to the database. These are mainly related to recent field trips and Nature London meetings. A request to contribute images is on the website as well as posted in the Cardinal.

The database now contains nearly 14,000 items (including some duplication). These continue to be indexed using the IMATCH software which is very effective both for finding specific images as well as tracking what images have been used previously in specific Cardinal issues.

John Berry

Indoor Meetings Annual Report 2015-2016

September 25

John Schwindt, Aquatic Biologist at the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, spoke on “**Fish of the Thames.**” John’s illustrated talk addressed the current health of fish stocks, including endangered species, as well as water quality in our river and its tributaries and informed us about research methods currently in use.

John Schwindt was introduced by Cathy Quinlan.

October 15 (Thursday)

Joni Baechler is Distinguished Practitioner in Residence at Western University’s Local Government Program, former Mayor and Councillor of the City of London, and environmental advocate. In a lively talk entitled “**Who Speaks for the Trees? A Civics Primer for Nature London,**” Joni briefed members on some important things we need to know in order to be effective in influencing nature-friendly decision making at City Hall.

Joni Baechler was introduced by Carol Agocs and thanked by Jack Blocker.

November 20 (Banquet)

In a one-woman dramatic performance, **Betsey Means** presented “**Fish and Fetish: A Lecture by Mary Kingsley.**” Betsey Means, founder of Womanlore Productions of Chicago, brought to life a remarkable English woman, Mary Henrietta Kingsley (1862-1900), who set sail for Africa in 1893 to collect specimens of fish for the British Museum and to gather information on African religion. Despite the many challenges she faced, the articles Kingsley wrote about her travels, and the two books she published reporting her ethnographic observations, made her famous. Kingsley’s writings were brought to life by Betsey Means, who appeared as Mary Kingsley lecturing about her travels in authentic period costume and setting. Responses to audience questions about Kingsley’s work were given first by Kingsley, and then by Betsey Means, reflecting on her performance. The audience numbered 120.

Betsey Means was introduced by Carol Agocs and thanked by Kathy Ellis.

January 15

Stan Caveney spoke on “**Naturalist Collectors in South Africa and Upper Canada in the early 19th Century: Parallel Adventures in the Discovery of New Worlds.**” Stan’s presentation introduced us to the famous amateur British naturalist-explorer William John Burchell, who in 1810-1815 travelled through the interior of Southern Africa by ox wagon collecting specimens of plants and animals (including many large mammals), 65,000 specimens in total. Stan described Burchell’s expedition as a naturalist’s travelogue, pointing out parallels between Burchell’s experiences and those of other British naturalist collectors in Upper Canada of the period. Approximately 70 people attended.

Stan Caveney was introduced by Carol Agocs.

February 19

Linda McDougall, Ecologist, City of London, spoke about recent work by the City to protect habitat for species at risk and reduce threats from invasive species and other sources in London’s Environmentally Significant Areas. Her talk was entitled “**City of London – ESA Habitat Protection, Restoration and Stewardship Initiatives.**”

March 18

In a talk entitled “**Nature Photography: Possibilities from Backyard to Local Areas,**” **Suzanne Southon** used her beautiful photographs to illustrate approaches to photographing birds and wildflowers and introduce nearby areas where we can photograph the natural world. Approximately 100 people attended to hear this popular talk.

April 15, Members Night

Approximately 70 people gathered to hear members present their talks and photos on the following topics:

John Berry, “A Year at the Forks”

Suzanne Southon, “Front to Back in the Natural World”

Hayden Bilty, “Wildlife in Ecuador: From the Amazon to the Andes”

Don Rycroft, “Nature in the City”

Karen Auzins, “Coyotes/ Coy Wolves”

Don McCall, “Birds of Trinidad and Hawaii”

Carol Agocs,
Indoor Meetings Co-ordinator

Highlights of Nature London’s 2015 Awards Banquet

A complete recount of the Annual Awards Banquet can be found in the January edition of *The Cardinal*. The following are some of the highlights of the evening.

The banquet was held on November 20, 2015 at Greenhills Golf Club in Lambeth. Deb Gorman-Smith and Susan Van Arkle were in charge of the bucket raffle and silent auction which raised \$820. One hundred and twenty attended and enjoyed a served, traditional turkey dinner; congratulated the various people who received awards (see list at the end of this report) and enjoyed immensely the presentation by Betsey Means entitled “Fish and Fetish”.

I wish to thank all of the people who volunteered to help with organizing and running this successful event.

Karen Auzins

London Advisory Committee on Heritage Report 2015-2016

Built heritage is the most prevalent item on our agendas, below is a list of issues dealt with that had some relevance to natural heritage.

1 Coves - The Coves ESA trail building is continuing with two new trails being built this fall. The old paint factory site near the trailer park is still not resolved.

2 Cultural Heritage work is continuing for the Meadowlily area, however various reports on the area are in process and their completion is key. Heritage protection for the area may be advanced as consultants work is completed. A historical designation for the ruins of the Mill, east of the bridge is being worked on. A survey and mapping of the site has been completed.

The rebuild of the dikes on the west side of the river near Blackfriars Bridge requires the removal of several mature trees, Replanting plans after the construction is finished was acceptable to the LACH.

While built heritage is the main focus of LACH, the preservation of heritage homes often includes the preservation of the surrounding mature vegetation as demolition of a heritage home usually results in total removal of all trees and shrubs and an increase in the new building footprint leaving no room for replanting.

Jim Cushing

Membership Secretary's Report 2015-2016

Our membership for 2015/2016 was at an all time high with 433 members. There were 94 new members of which 6 were free memberships. 1 was given at Nature in the City and 5 given during a promotion on field trips in the spring. 4 of our members chose to give a membership to Nature London as a gift. One third of our members or new members paid on line.

Let us continue to enjoy the many activities of Nature London and encourage others to be part of this growing club.

Gail McNeil
Membership Secretary

Membership Database

Hugh Casbourn continued to provide support for the Membership Database, adapted it to accommodate and track changes such as use of PayPal and memberships awarded at Nature in the City or on field trips, and prepared summary reports as needed. .

Middlesex County Woodlands Advisory Committee Report 2015-2016

No Meetings held during 2015-2016.

Pete Read

Nature in the City Report 2015-2016

Another banner year for Nature in the City! Although we have always had great speakers, this year's lectures seemed to have been especially well received. The speakers, their topics, and the number of attendees were

January 12th Jody Allair Will songbirds fall silent? 241
January 19th Jennifer McDonald The secret lives of plants 280
January 26th Scott MacDougall-Shackleton Birds of a feather respond to the weather 306
February 2nd Ryan Fraser Get starry-eyed on a winter's night 295
February 9th Scott Gillingwater The slandered serpent! 166
February 16th Winnie Wake Warbler Woods: much more than warblers 262

Average attendance was 255. Two Nature London memberships were sold.

The lecture series put on for the 11th year continues to be a successful partnership with London Public Library. Its Wolf Hall provides very comfortable seating and excellent projection equipment, well managed by Tom Wearing, a London Public Library employee.

Others who helped included Anita Christopher-McCallum of London Public Library; Dave Wake who took photos of our presentations; and Ann Henderson, Nature London's Sales Co-Ordinator, who sold \$685 worth of nature guides and the very popular newest edition of the *Guide to natural areas of London and vicinity*. A donation of \$25 was given to the Club.

Getting the word out about Nature in the City is integral to its success. The London Public Library designed and printed flyers and posters. Nature London's webmaster Mady Hymowitz kept the lecture series up front on the web page and on social media. Paul Nicholson in his role as publicity administrator for the Club and not incidentally *London Free Press's* The World Outdoors columnist attracted a lot of attention for the lecture series. Pat Tripp sent out emailed notices to clubs, teachers, former speakers and attendees, and local events columns. She also arranged interviews, organized articles in the print media and hung posters. As an ongoing marketing effort for the Club, Ray Robertson prepared the Club's Walks and Talks brochure, which ensured Nature in the City attendees had information about other Club events.

Committee members are Winnie Wake, Leslie Rockwell, Lisa Bilty, Paul Nicholson and Pat Tripp.

The "buzz" in Wolf Hall was especially enthusiastic this year, and that good buzz was reflected in the many warm compliments submitted on the last night's evaluation forms. Thanks to all members who came out to support Nature in the City and to our speakers for sharing their wealth of knowledge and passion. Planning is underway for Nature in the City 2017.

Pat Tripp

Nature Line Coordinator(s) Report 2015-2016

Every week throughout the year one of the three volunteers, Bob McGee, Gail McNeil or Rick Martin, collected information about bird, butterfly & other sightings in the area that would be of interest to naturalists and along with information about NL's indoor and outdoor activities prepare a recording each

Thursday for inclusion on the Nature Line (519-457-4593) . People dialing this line would then be able to hear this message and they could leave a message as well. If a message was left, one of the three volunteers would endeavour to contact the caller and provide an answer.

Bob McGee

Ontario Nature (FON) Report 2015-2016

Nature London (NL) representatives attended the fall and spring meetings of the Carolinian West Region (CWR) of the Ontario Nature Network, hosted by member groups. These meetings provide an opportunity for naturalists to share ideas and report on successes and failures of programs they have undertaken, as well as seek advice from the umbrella organization. Staff representatives from Ontario Nature (ON) give an update on the organization's conservation science programs, Nature Network, youth programs, and educational programs. The regional group may draft resolutions about issues of concern, and move and approve them before they are sent to ON, which checks the wording carefully. ON presents the resolutions to its membership for a vote at the AGM and, if approved, the resolutions are submitted to the Provincial Government. Through these Nature Network meetings, NL is able to keep abreast of regional and provincial matters relating to natural heritage.

This year, regional meetings were hosted by the Sarnia Urban Wildlife Committee, at 100 Christina Street S. in Sarnia on October 31, 2015 (Anita and Stan Caveney represented NL); and by the Carolinian Canada Coalition, at the Flight Executive Centre in Dorchester on April 9, 2016 (Anita Caveney and Muriel Andreae represented NL). Anita Caveney, ON's Carolinian West Regional Director, chaired the regional meetings. Full reports of these meetings were published in the February 2016 and Summer 2016 issues of *The Cardinal*.

Anita and Stan Caveney, Pat Tripp, and Dave and Winifred Wake represented NL at ON's 85th AGM and Gathering, *The Bruce Beckons*. It was held at the Evergreen Resort, South Bruce Peninsula, June 3-5, 2016, and included a Nature Quiz, guest speakers, workshops, the AGM and Conservation Awards Ceremony, a banquet, and field trips.

Some dominant issues on ON's agenda this year were: 1) an appeal of the Divisional Court's ruling in the Provincial Government's favour regarding the *Endangered Species Act, 2007* (ESA) lawsuit brought against the government by ON and CPAWS—Wildlands League, with legal assistance from Ecojustice, against exemptions to Ontario's ESA (no decision by the Court of Appeal as of the end of August 2016); 2) the 2015 Review of the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Greater Golden Horseshoe Plan; 3) consultations on Ontario's Pollinator Health Action Plan; 4) and a court case by ON, David Suzuki Foundation, and Friends of Earth Canada against the Federal Government for the unlawful registration of two neonicotinoids (Clothianidin and Thiamethoxam) by the Pest Management Regulatory Agency.

Nature London—ON interactions during the year included the following:

- There were a number of requests by ON to its member groups to submit comments to the EBR Registry on MNR proposals relating to the hunting of wolves and coyotes, the management of Snapping Turtles, the proposed Ontario Wetlands Strategic Plan, the Ontario Pollinator Health Plan, and exemptions to the *Endangered Species Act, 2007*. Several NL members submitted individual

comments. Nature London was a signatory on ON letters to the MNRF regarding the Pollinator Health Action Plan, and the MNRF's Environmental Assessment process for the proposed extension of cottage leases in Rondeau Provincial Park.

- ON co-ordinated with NL on NL's response to decommissioning of Springbank Dam.

No resolutions were moved by the Carolinian West Region for consideration at the 2016 AGM.

Anita Caveney
Nature London Representative at Ontario Nature Regional Meetings
Carolinian West Regional Director, Ontario Nature

Publicity Report 2015-2016

Publicity efforts for Nature London during this reporting period were again satisfactory. As in recent years, the approach was very low cost and multi-modal. Flyers were printed and distributed by various Nature London members at various events. These were also distributed through other organizations (e.g. libraries.) Nature London programs and events were promoted in local newspapers and web sites as well as through e-mail, Twitter and other social media, and broadcast media. Aspects of Nature London's efforts were frequently featured in *The London Free Press* and were also written up in *The Londoner*. There were also dozens of references to Nature London initiatives in many Southwestern Ontario dailies over the course of the 12 months. Information was also shared routinely at Nature London events, other events, and of course word of mouth. Partnerships (e.g. with the London Public Library for the Nature in the City series) again allowed for low cost cross-promotion. Interestingly, Postmedia and *The London Free Press* declared the fifth edition of Nature London's *Guide to the Natural Areas of London and Region* to be London's "Nature Book of the Year."

Paul Nicholson

Sales Co-ordinator Report 2015-2016

Nature London Club sales were \$2378.80 and Nature in the City sales were \$710.00 which gave a total sales for 2015/2016 of \$3088.80.

Total purchases from St. Thomas Field Naturalist \$402.50. Not a clear picture this year of what we really made as the Reptile books are free for our club because we donated toward their printing costs, and I have no idea what the Nature Area books cost to buy.

Grouped in Nature London sales is \$675.00 which was collected from other events as follows:

- I sold to Thames Valley Trail Association members on hikes \$150
- I took the new Nature books to 3 St. Field Naturalists meetings and sold \$150
- Anita Caveney took books to a hike she lead for Society for Learning in Retirement and sold \$75
- Norm Corrin took books to the Go Wild Grow Wild Show and sold \$165
- I worked at Master Gardeners' Seedy Saturday and sold \$135

Maybe we will get a chance to do some of these venues again next year and keep up our sales.

Saunders Library Report 2015-2016

THE W.E. SAUNDERS MEMORIAL LIBRARY COLLECTIONS: AUGUST 2015 TO JULY 2016

Nature London donates \$1000 annually to the London Public Library for the W.E. Saunders Memorial Library. The books or other items purchased are related to nature, conservation, or the environment. Multiple copies of some titles were bought.

London Public Library card-holders may place holds on these books at the London Public Library web site, www.londonpubliclibrary.ca

BOOKS FOR ADULTS

101 Nature Hot Spots in Ontario: The Best Parks, Conservation Areas and Wild Places by Chris Earley
Algonquin Park: a Portrait: The Landscape, Wildlife, Forests, Lakes, Streams and Ecology of This Iconic Canadian Treasure by Jan Rinik

Lake Nipigon: Where the Great Lakes Begin by Nancy Scott

Land, Stewardship, and Legitimacy: Endangered Species Policy in Canada and the United States by Andrea Olive

Moon Spotlight Georgian Bay and Cottage Country by Carolyn B Heller

Nipissing: Historic Waterway, Wilderness Playground by Francoise Noel

Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of Toronto's Don River Valley by Jennifer L Bonnell

ROM Field Guide to Butterflies of Ontario by Peter Hall

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

Spit and Sticks by Marilyn Grohoske Evans

Bugs, Bees, and other Buzzy Creatures

Everything You Need to Know about Birds

My Book of Birds by Geraldo Valerio

Ultimate Explorers Field Guide: Birds by Jonathan Alderfer

The Ultimate Guide to Gardening by Lisa Amstutz

Woodland Adventure Handbook by Adam Dove

Pat Tripp,
Saunders Librarian Liaison.

Strategic Planning Committee Report 2015-2016

In the spring of 2016, the Board reviewed actions that occurred as a result of suggestions from the Strategic Planning process. The Kids Christmas Bird Count continued; we exhibited at the Children's Museum's Bug Day; and some outings were planned to correlate with a particular speaker. The Natural Areas Guide sold extremely well. The goals outlined in the Strategic Plan continue to be a focus of the club. The demographics of the club are still a concern, but the membership is growing.

Muriel Andreae,
President.

Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) Report 2015-2016

The idea of establishing a local land trust developed within the McIlwraith Field Naturalists (Nature London) in the late 1990s. In the year 2000, the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) was launched as a separate entity. TTLT is a registered Canadian charity, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

From these early beginnings to the present, the two organizations have worked together to protect ecologically significant land in the London region. TTLT currently owns 14 conservation properties and holds one conservation easement. The trust employs a small staff consisting of an Executive Director, Conservation Property Manager and a Development/Communications Officer. Additional contract employees have assisted us in 2016, as noted later in this report.

This report covers Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT) activities during the period September 2015 to August 2016.

September 2015 brought the launch of the campaign to protect Hawk Cliff Woods, the largest campaign in TTLT's history. Extending inland nearly 1 kilometre from Lake Erie, Hawk Cliff Woods is one of the largest remaining deep interior forests in Elgin County. The campaign goal was \$1.6 million, and had four components: purchase of the land, stewardship funds for the property, augmenting the Opportunities Fund, and enhancing the Jane M. Bowles Stewardship Fund. As of August 2016, the campaign was at 96% of the target. Further contributions are welcome!

In May 2016, the ownership of Hawk Cliff Woods was transferred to TTLT. This allowed the Trust to commence management of the site, including ecological restoration work. A grant from the Trillium Foundation supported development of a property management plan and outreach programming at Hawk Cliff. Rebecca Launchbury was hired to do this work, and she has been very busy indeed!

Visitors to Hawk Cliff Woods will note that TTLT has planted a mixture of meadow species in the former agricultural fields. This new meadow is intended to provide habitat for grassland birds, as well as pollinators, including the Monarch butterfly. Portions of the fields have been seeded with oak, hickory, and plum trees, which will grow into new woodland. Ultimately, the result will be an increase in the overall forest area at Hawk Cliff Woods, and will nearly double the amount of deep interior forest. A major focus in 2016 has been work to remove invasive plants including garlic mustard, autumn olive, multiflora rose, and common barberry. A team from Kettle Creek Conservation Authority assisted with the planting of a white pine shelterbelt along part of the northern boundary of the property, adjacent to neighbouring agricultural fields.

TTLT received federal funding for three summer students in 2016. One student worked in the office, while two worked in the field, serving as stewards at several properties. They carried out removal of invasive species, management of native species, and inventory and monitoring of native species including species at risk. In addition they assisted with outreach events, and helped maintain records and conduct maintenance on TTLT properties.

Special events took place at TTLT properties throughout the year. Here are a few examples. In April, a celebration at Five Points Forest near Putnam highlighted the new trail guide for this reserve. (The trail

guide is downloadable from the TTLT website.) Members and friends were invited back to Five Points in August for a bat walk with bat expert Toby Thorne. At Newport Forest, a fungus workshop was held in October, and the annual wildflower walk took place in May. A reptile event took place at Hawk Cliff in August.

The TTLT annual Speaker Event was held in February. Cyril Crocker of the Hawk Cliff Raptor Banders spoke about hawk migration and banding at Hawk Cliff. At the Annual General Meeting in April, members elected new directors, and learned about the activities of TTLT over the preceding year.

A new event this year was Eco Folk 2016 at Aeolian Hall. While providing an enjoyable afternoon of music for everyone, this fundraising event also provided the opportunity for music fans to learn about TTLT.

Volunteers are essential to the operations of TTLT, and assist in many ways. Opportunities include serving on the board and committees, as well as “hands-on” work at properties. Spring and fall work days are scheduled for maintenance of trails and removal of invasive species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn and autumn olive. The new “adopt a patch” program aims to engage volunteer property stewards in ecological restoration. Regular removal of invasive species from a “patch” helps to protect surrounding habitat. Once the invasives have been removed, native species may recolonize the site, or may be planted.

The Vistas of the Thames photo contest was a great success. The top 25 photos were selected for inclusion on the beautiful 19x24 Vistas of the Thames poster. Copies of the poster are available for \$20.00 from the TTLT office. Plaque mounted posters may be purchased for \$50.00.

There are several ways to keep up to date on the activities of TTLT. Members and friends of TTLT receive a newsletter, the *Tattler*. Electronic communications include email updates, the website, Facebook, and Twitter.

Donations from the broader community are essential to the ongoing work of the trust. TTLT thanks Nature London and its members for ongoing support. We look forward to working together on more projects in future.

Dave Wake,
TTLT Liaison.

The Urban League of London Annual Report 2015-2016

The year was a busy and productive one under the leadership of president Greg Thompson, succeeded by Wes Kinghorn. Each monthly meeting included reports on current issues and activities from London-wide and neighbourhood-focussed organizations that are members of Urban League, as well as a business meeting on UL activities. Most meetings also included a discussion of a current issue, such as whether bike paths should be constructed in ESAs.

Some meetings also included a guest speaker or panel on a timely topic. For example, on March 31, 2016, a panel discussed “Emerging London,” focussing on planning issues. Speakers included Sean Galloway, Manager of Urban Design at the City of London; Carol Wiebe of MHBC Planning, Urban

Design and Landscape Architecture; John Nicholson of Nicholson Sheffield Architects and Ed Soldo, Director of Roads and Transportation at the City of London. Discussion followed the presentation.

During the spring of 2016 the Urban League developed a new program of public debates on current topics of community interest at Wolf Hall. The UL also continued its program of small grants to community organizations for special projects. In partnership with the City of London it also sponsored a series of workshops intended to help community organizations to organize and run successful events.

The UL took a position on the Springbank Dam controversy, requesting that City Council decide not to repair the dam, but instead, explore options that would allow the river to run freely. The UL's decision followed an enquiry into the issue, including a public forum as well as a panel discussion whose speakers included representatives from Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, Thames River Keepers, Thames River Anglers Association and London Rowing Club.

Nature London is a member of Urban League and was represented by Gail McNeil and Carol Agocs during 2015-16.

Carol Agocs

Volunteer Coordinator's Report 2015-2016

Nature London is a volunteer organization that depends on the good will and commitment of the many people who take on jobs large and small. Every member and volunteer contributes in one way or another to our goals of enjoying and conserving our natural world. We thank them all.

We want to bring more people to our cause and engage them to make meaningful contributions to Nature London. This is formally the job of our Nominating Committee and volunteer recruitment program but is aided by every member who fills out a Volunteer Form or suggests a potential new leader.

Our leader Karen Auzins continued to work with leaders to update our Operating Manual. This revised manual will contribute for years to come to the process of recruiting and orienting volunteers. Thanks, Karen! And thanks to all who volunteered for the many excellent programs and initiatives of Nature London.

Norm Corrin
Volunteer Coordinator

Website & Facebook Annual Report 2015-2016

Our website continues to be hosted from the generosity of Ken and Gail Dimson through their company Cambrian Software. Thank you Ken and Gail for donating the computer resources, for your continued assistance, and for paying the domain fees.

The website and Facebook page are increasingly integrated with The Cardinal and with NL email announcements. We continue to look for ways to update the NL website; ideas and suggestions are welcome. As of October 2016, the Nature London Facebook page has 294 "Likes," an increase of approximately 20% in the past year, while announcements for Nature in the City can reach over 500 viewers.

| Mady Hymowitz

AWARDS 2015-2016

W. E. Saunders Award of Merit

Sandy Levin

Conservation Award

Dean Sheppard

Special Recognition Award

Roslyn & Jim Moorhead
Barbara Bain

Thank-you Award (Suncatcher)

Carol Agocs, Bob McGee and Shirley & Denzil D'Mello

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-2016

President	Muriel Andreae
Past President	Karen Auzins
Vice-President	Vacant
Treasurer	Henry Przysiezny
Recording Secretary	Lisa Bilyd
Cedarcroft Manager	Herb Bax
Conservation Liaison	Jack Blocker
Field Trips Co-ordinator	Cathy McCrae
Volunteer Co-ordinator	Norm Corrin
Director at Large	Chuck Summers
Director at Large	Ron Martin
Director at Large	Gordon Cameron

APPOINTMENTS 2015/2016

Archivists	Dave Wake, Winifred Wake	
A/V technician	Eric Auzins	
Awards Banquet Coordinator(s)	Karen Auzins Deb Gorman-Smith	
Birding Wing Program Co-ordinator	Dave Martin	
Brochure Producer	Ray Robertson	
Butterfly Count Co-ordinator	Ann White	
Editor, <i>The Cardinal</i>	Vacant	
Chimney Swift Liaison	Winifred Wake	
Christmas Bird Count	Pete Read	
Conservation Action Committee Chair	Sandy Levin	
Cookie/Coffee Co-ordinator(s)	Linda & Jim Bristow	
E-mail Co-ordinator(s)	Ric & Sandy	Symmes
Facebook Co-ordinator	Mady Hymowitz	
Friends of the Coves Sub-watershed Rep.	Daphne Lowe	
Guide to Natural Areas in London & Vicinity Editor(s)	Jim & Roslyn Moorhead	
Heritage Co-ordinator	Jim Cushing	
Indoor Meetings Coordinator(s)	Carol Agocs Kathy Ellis	
Manual Secretary	Cathy Quinlan	
Membership Secretary	Gail McNeil	
Membership Database Support	Hugh Casbourn	
Middlesex County Woodlands Advisory Committee	Pete Read	
Middlesex Stewardship Council	Cathy Quinlan	
(Bird) Migration Secretary	Pete Read	
Nature in the City Co-ordinator	Pat Tripp	
Nature Line Co-ordinators	Bob McGee, Gail McNeil, & Rick Martin	
Ontario Nature Representative	Anita Caveney	
Publicity Administrator	Paul Nicholson	
Sales Co-ordinator	Ann Henderson	
Saunders Library Liaison	Pat Tripp	
Thames Talbot Land Trust	David Wake	
Urban League of London	Carol Agocs	
Web Host	Ken Dimson	
Webmaster	Mady Hymowitz	

**This annual report has been compiled by
Karen Auzins, Past President 2015-2016**