



From the Land

A Message from the President

HPELT is pleased to announce that a conservation agreement has been made with Jean McCornock of North Marysburgh in Prince Edward County. Jean requested the agreement to assist in preserving the natural features on an 80 acre portion of her family dairy farm.

The land fronts on Adolphus Reach on the Bay of Quinte and includes a 30 metre well-vegetated buffer along the water's edge. Natural buffers along the Bay of Quinte are important both for wildlife and for maintaining water quality. The land also includes part of the escarpment along Adolphus Reach and is heavily forested with a wide representative mix of trees native to Prince Edward County. The tree cover helps to stabilize the escarpment slope and provides wildlife habitat. Jean manages her woodlot for firewood for home heating and she has undertaken significant reforestation.

Jean is most interested in observing nature on her farm and has identified more than 100 bird species, a variety of amphibians and reptiles and 15 species of mammals on the land and water. The farm fields have established fence row vegetation that provide wildlife habitat. In addition Jean has erected an osprey nesting platform which we hope will soon be occupied by a nesting pair.

Conservation of natural waterfront lands in Prince Edward County is important for our resident and migratory species given the strong waterfront development pressures being experienced in the County. HPELT congratulates Jean for her conservation initiative and for being an exceptional steward of the land. We are proud to have been able to assist Jean to realize her conservation vision.

Together with our community partners we are working on an exciting new conservation initiative to acquire and protect one of the most significant natural heritage sites in Prince Edward County. McMahon Bluff at the mouth of the Black River is recognized by the Ministry of Natural Resources as both a life science and an earth science Area of Natural and Scientific Interest.

With our partners we will be launching a fund-raising campaign when negotiations with the owner are complete. We will keep HPELT members informed on the progress of this project.

Please renew your membership if you have not already done so. Consider volunteering to help. Community involvement helps to convince major funders that a project is worth their support.

Stewart Murray, President

McMahon Bluff - A Rare Opportunity

In a way this picture depicts an historic event. The wildflower is the first example of *Asclepias quadrifolia* (Four-leaved Milkweed) recorded in Canada in the last fifty years. Its discovery in June, 2006 set in motion a series of events which has resulted in the Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust having an excellent chance of acquiring and preserving McMahon Bluff, a 240 acre waterfront property in Prince Edward County.



McMahon Bluff, sits on the south side of the Black River, right at its mouth, looking out over Prince Edward Bay and the entrance to South Bay. A steep slope separates the lower terrace which is covered by a rich, mature sugar-maple dominated forest from the upper mesa which is dominated by a shagbark-hickory - bur oak woodland. The site stretches for more than a mile along Lake Ontario.

Early in the spring of 2006 Ruth Ferguson-Aulhouse, a local planning consultant, approached HPELT. Would we be interested in acquiring a 110 acre property in the County? The owner of McMahon Bluff was considering developing a small upscale subdivision on half the property and donating the other half for preservation by HPELT. Of course the answer was an enthusiastic, "Yes!"

The developer was very accommodating and gave us access to the property. It was on one of these hikes through the property that the *Asclepias* was found.

The discovery caused considerable interest in the botanical community. Biologists from Ontario's Natural History Information Centre (NHIC), the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Quinte Conservation all visited the site in addition to the consultants hired by the owner to do an environmental assessment. Mike Cadman of NHIC found two more rare species, grass-like sedges both ranked S2, regionally imperiled. All agreed that it would be desirable to acquire the whole property.

It's at this stage that the grasshopper shown on page 3 becomes significant. While the landowner had been very accommodating in permitting visits to McMahon Bluff he was unlikely to feel so charitable as to give away both a mile of shoreline property and anticipated profits from the proposed development. We would need considerable financial help from funding agencies in addition to expected support from local residents.

What does our need for funds have to do

with the grasshopper? Several distinctively striped grasshoppers like this actively foraged in the area where the *Asclepias* was first found. This picture was forwarded to



the MNR and from there it travelled to the NHIC and finally to Professor Steve Marshall at the University of Guelph. Not unexpectedly no one could identify the actual species from a picture. The report was that it belongs to the viridipes complex of species within the genus *Melanoplus*. Its status within Ontario is very unclear because of a lack of specimens. A search of the internet found that the presence of this grasshopper probably indicates a rare ecosite and vegetation type. Recent advances in conservation science have led funding agencies to concentrate as much on rare habitats as on rare species. This insect is further evidence of the importance of McMahon Bluff.

Currently the executive of HPELT are negotiating with the owner to acquire the bluff. The outlook both for reaching an agreement and for raising the necessary funds is promising. Biologists working in the field have suggested that there are even

more interesting and rare species to be found on McMahon Bluff. The task may be daunting but the prize is the acquisition and preservation of a unique and important property.

For further information:

A few years ago the MNR declared McMahon Bluff to be an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) in two categories, Life Science and Earth Science. These designations provide minimal protection but would not necessarily preclude developments like the one originally planned for the property.

You can find summaries of the original reports on the internet. The reports are somewhat dated now but do provide some basic information. Go to the Ontario Natural Heritage Information website at http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/nhic_.cfm. In the sidebar click on “Natural Areas” and then on “Natural Areas List.” This list is alphabetical so look for McMahon Bluff under the m’s.



McMahon Bluff has great scenic values in addition to its ecological values.

4th Annual Great Canadian Plant Sale

Saturday, May 12, 2007
10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Community Resource Centre
41 Octavia Street, Belleville
Across from Bush Funeral Home

Partnered by:
Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust
Friends of Massassauga
Quinte Help Lesotho



Pot your perennials and other plants - indoor plants too and bring them to the sale.

Name and label the plants.

We need people to help with sales, plant identification and plant pickup from donors with no wheels.

Bring a table if you can.

Other gifts such as rhubarb, home baking, honey, maple syrup are also welcome.

Coffee will be available.

For further information contact one of the Plant Sale Committee:

Tessa Bell	613-966-7265
Leslie Graham	613-968-5672
Olive Root	613-962-4648
Erica Hayes	613-969-1691

Annual Meeting

We held our annual meeting on March 14, 2007 at the Quinte Conservation offices.

After the minutes of the 2005 meeting, correspondence and the treasurer's report the main agenda item proved to be the possible acquisition of the McMahon Bluff property. The Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT) is willing to provide significant funding if certain conditions are met. These conditions include a satisfactory appraisal of the value of the property and OHT possession of the property. HPELT would maintain community control of the site through a stewardship agreement. Of course we will be happy to undertake this responsibility.

Those present also discussed our membership fees. They are low and have been the same for a number of years. Our new fees will be \$20 for a single membership and \$35 for a family. As neighbouring land trusts have fees ranging from \$20 to \$50 the new levy is still at the low end of the scale.

Directors also approved the following as officers of HPELT for 2007-2008:

President: Stewart Murray
Vice-president: Vacant
Treasurer: Olive Root
Secretary: John Blaney

Our Board of Directors:

Douglas Stevenson (Chair)
Richard Bird
Robert Clapp
Janet Foster
Andy Margetson
Lloyd Syer

Charitable Gift Giving

Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust is establishing a reserve fund to look after future need of land purchases, taxes on acquired properties of special significance and some legal expenses. If you would like to support this endeavour here are two ways that this can be accomplished.

Deferred Gift of a Life Insurance Policy

It is possible to purchase a life insurance policy and name a charity as your insurance beneficiary while retaining ownership of the policy. Premium payments are tax deductible. Depending on your age and health, a reasonably small outlay could fund a large payment on your death. If circumstances dictated that you were unable to keep up the policy's premiums, the named charity could continue payment itself to maintain the full coverage; it could cancel the policy and collect the cash surrender value; it could also reduce the death benefit so insurance remains in force but no more payments are due.

Death benefits are paid outside your estate and are not subject to probate taxes. With a deferred gift you may also change the name of the beneficiaries whenever you wish.

New in Capital Gains Tax

Also of interest might be the 2006 Federal Budget elimination of capital gains tax on donations of publicly traded securities to public charities. Market increases in recent years might make this an appealing option to any person who is supportive of land trust goals and initiatives - this is something to be discussed with an experienced financial adviser.

Announcements



Welcome, Terry!

The Hastings Prince Edward land Trust has recognized Terry Sprague's efforts on behalf of the natural world by making him a life member of the Trust.



Kathy Allan has been appointed the first Executive Director of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. Kathy is shown with Christopher Baines who made the announcement at OLTA's annual general meeting.

Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust

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**People protecting places – from the
shores of Lake Ontario to the edge of
Algonquin Park**

The Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust (HPELT) is a group of people who are committed to protecting the natural and cultural heritage features of our region. The land trust was founded in 1997, and is a community-based, non-governmental, registered charitable organization. In 1998 HPELT secured federal incorporation and status as a registered charity. HPELT is a member of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance and the Canadian Land Trust Alliance, and is registered with Environment Canada as a qualified recipient of Ecological gifts.

Our mission is “to facilitate the protection, in perpetuity, of the important natural and cultural heritage features of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties.

You Can Help

Hastings and Prince Edward Counties are fortunate to have a diversity of wild spaces and historical landscapes stretching from the shores of Lake Ontario to the edge of Algonquin Park. This land provides habitat for a unique variety of wildlife and plants, and has shaped our outdoor heritage. Through your membership and donations HPELT will help protect our land permanently, for the enjoyment of future generations. Help create a natural legacy.

Yes, I would like to support the work of the Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust. Enclosed is tax-creditable donation of \$ _____.

Yes, I would like to become a member of HPELT and help support the ongoing work of the organization.

- \$20.00 - Individual \$35.00 - Family
- \$50.00 - Association \$500.00 - Corporation

Please note: Membership fees are due January 1st of each year.

Please send me more information about the Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____