

The Oxbow



STEWARDSHIP OF THE COVES SUBWATERSHED

www.thecoves.ca

Winter 2007

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out www.thecoves.ca for updates and details on these upcoming events:

- **Coves Annual Meeting**
Thurs., April 12 at 7:00 pm at Landon Library
Guest Speaker: Gordon McBean
- **Coves Clean-up**
Sat., April 21 – 9:30-11:30 at Greenway Park Soccer Pitch
- **Green Garden Visits**
March through April
- **Win an Eco-Garden**
Join until April 30, 2007
(see back page for more details.)
- **“Night for Nature” Benefit Concert with Stumblepoint**
Fri., April 27 at 8:30 pm at the German Canadian Club • 1 Cove Road • \$10 at the door
All proceeds will be donated to FOTC.



Elmwood Gateway

Imagine driving along the commercial stretch of Wharncliffe Road S and catching a glimpse of green - what a welcome relief to the eye! The Elmwood Gateway to the Coves is a 7 acre parcel of greenspace that will welcome Londoners to the Coves Environmentally Significant Area.

The Friends of the Coves and Old South Community Organization encouraged the City to acquire this property and to make it available for parkland. On February 5, 2007, City Council voted to make this a reality.

Above photo: Future site of Elmwood Gateway - Thom McClenaghan, President of Friends of the Coves, is joined by Brian Huston of Dillon Consulting, Patrick Donnelly, Terry Grawey and Ugo DeCandido of the City of London.

The Elmwood Gateway will provide the residents of Old South and Manor and Highland Park with easy access to the Coves.

The site of the future Elmwood Gateway is located at 201 Wharncliffe Road South.

We would welcome your ideas for a Gateway design. The above design is one possible option and includes signage, kiosk, naturalized garden, and parking.

Check out our website for a look at this design.

Mark your calendars for April 12, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.

Friends of the Coves Annual General Meeting is set for April 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Landon Library. Dr. Gordon McBean is the guest speaker. Dr. McBean is the author of an open letter, signed by 90 climate scientists calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to develop an effective national climate change strategy. Dr. McBean is a Canadian climatologist who serves on the board of the Canadian Foundation for Climate and Atmospheric Sciences. He is a professor at the University of Western Ontario.

Thom's presidential news

These are busy and exciting times and we are pleased to have another newsletter out so soon to keep you informed of what is unfolding. From our very start as an organization, the people of the subwatershed told us that legal public access to the Coves should be our highest priority.

Needless to say, this presented a very considerable challenge for the Board, particularly when we did not see our role as that of landlord. In dreaming of what might be -- and what was indeed possible -- there was always a very considerable hurdle and some believed that these hurdles were virtually insurmountable.

With the recent vesting of the 7 acres at the west end of Elmwood Avenue (the former Ah So Gardens property) by the City of London and its designation as open space, a giant piece of the access puzzle has fallen into place.

This property is the ideal location for the significant gateway for the Coves Environmentally Significant Area (ESA), located as it is at the western end of Elmwood Avenue, a major one-way street in Old South London.

The council and staff of the City of London are to be commended for their foresight in proceeding with this acquisition. Negotiations are underway as well with a property owner whose holdings may form a major piece of the land

necessary to complete the trail along the eastern shore of the East Pond.

This in turn will allow the construction of a connector path from Greenway Park to the Elmwood Avenue gateway. So, slowly but surely the pieces are falling into place. The future of the Valspar property is still very much up in the air, but we have considerable confidence that King & Benton, currently negotiating with Valspar, will be successful and that limited development of the property will result in environmental cleanup of the site and additional public greenspace in the Coves.

All of this is proceeding in conjunction with our efforts to come to grips with the water quality in the ponds. This project is making progress slowly as the obtaining of permission from the various agencies is a lengthy process. The Go Green in Your Garden program is active as well, and the workshop at Landon Library on Feb. 17 has created considerable interest in the community.

None of this would be possible without the Herculean efforts that are being made by our staff in the office. So our hats are off to Mary Pat, Dave and Vanessa for their efforts on behalf of Friends of the Coves and may our successes continue.

- Thom McClenaghan



Home Depot
Jill-of-all-trades
Event

Volunteers created a Coves display case

Trail mapping

The crunch of the light snow underfoot is reassuring in late January as we trudge along the sometimes ragged trail alongside the East Pond. In the dead of winter, mapping the maze of trails along the Coves is a daunting prospect, with ice, snow, tangled roots and, steep slopes, making footing a dodgy prospect.

But this morning's falling snow gave myself and Mike Knox at least some traction. Mike, is an Operations Assistant with Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. "You can hear the traffic over there," he says as we hike north along the East Pond. "But at times it feels just like

you're in Algonquin Park."

Mike uses a GPS (global positioning system) unit to map trails around the Coves Subwatershed. Today, our hike takes us south as far as Euston Park and north as far as Greenway Park.

Mike and I find the going tougher as we head south past the German-

Canadian Club toward the South Pond, the most secluded of the three ponds. Species like the black crown night heron rely on this quiet hinterland where there is little human disturbance.

The quiet solitude of the Coves changes with the seasons and each season holds its own charms.

- Dave Miller



Mhairi McFarlane and Jessica Sontrop help map the trails of the Coves Subwatershed.

Trail mapping is the first step the Friends of the Coves is taking to formalize a trail plan. A trail plan will promote community use and appreciation of the Coves while protecting the ecologically sensitive areas of the Coves. Please contact us to comment.

Good “Friends”



Dr. Eric Shepherd,
Board Member,
Friends of the Coves

Each newsletter we profile an active supporter of the Coves.

Born in London, Dr. Eric Shepherd is a surgeon and urologist at Victoria Hospital. He has lived in Old South for 35 years.

Eric is married to Bev and has three children, five grandchildren and is celebrating his 40th wedding anniversary this year. A simple conversation with neighbour Thom McClenaghan led him to find his way to a position on the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Coves.

He puts it this way: *“I have been increasingly aware of the pressures of urbanization on our surroundings and now realize the need to identify the activities which lead to the degradation of our environment. It is also important to become part of the solution. The Coves Subwatershed is one area where we hope to bring problems and solutions together. There is now a formal plan with a solid scientific basis, and municipal and provincial support which we hope will result in restoration of the Coves environment. We are working to achieve enhanced access so the public will feel welcome to come and appreciate this marvelous preserve in the heart of the city.”*

Let’s go fishing

Plans are afoot to net the carp and goldfish out of the East Pond. To help corral and net the carp, the Friends of the Coves is proposing to lower the water level in the East Pond. This would involve pumping water from the East Pond into the South Pond over a period of 5-7 days. Some water will be left in the pond to protect existing native fish and turtle populations. The draining and netting is currently scheduled to take place this summer.

Carp continually disturb sediment in the pond bottom which uproots aquatic vegetation, reduces water clarity and contributes to the formation of algal blooms.

Thanks are extended to Dave Hayman of D.G. Hayman Environmental for his support and expertise in planning for this project.

We will soon be posting signs to remind people not to dump bait fish, gold fish or vegetation from backyard ponds and aquariums into natural areas. Invasive species are quick to take over natural ecosystems and could quickly undermine the benefits of this project.

Please contact Mary-Pat Mathers if you want to comment or to get involved.

ECO crew greens the Coves

This past fall, Friends of the Coves was lucky to have a keen, dedicated group come out and assist with our ongoing naturalization projects in Euston Park and Greenway Park. Dallas Campbell, ECO Coordinator at the Boys’ and Girls’ Club of London and his enthusiastic crew came out twice in November to plant and mulch native trees and shrubs and to learn about the Coves.

Friends of the Coves was happy to “help” the ECO crew gain experience with tree planting in Euston and Greenway Parks. Not only did the group of six seem to really enjoy working outside, but the crew also managed to get over 200 trees and shrubs in the ground! And to top it all off, it was their first time ever planting! We want to give a big thanks to everyone who came out, and FOTC looks forward to working with the ECO crew again in 2007.

The ECO (Environmental Community Opportunity) program was created by Ontario Works and is offered in partnership with the

Boys’ and Girls’ Club of London and the Goodwill Career Centre.

ECO provides valuable job training opportunities for adults through a variety of environmental work scenarios.

To find out more about the ECO Project, contact Friends of the Coves or Dallas Campbell at the Boys’ and Girls’ Club of London at 519-434-9114.



Vanessa Kinsley (Friends) and the ECO Crew at Euston Park. Photo courtesy of Dallas Campbell.

The walls came tumbling down

After sitting empty for 6 years, the old paint factory buildings in the heart of the Coves have been torn down – the first step in what will hopefully amount to a cleanup of the entire Valspar site.

King and Benton Development Corporation is interested in purchasing the site at 65 Duke Street and building low-density residential development on a maximum of 8 hectares of the 28 hectare site. The sale of the land, currently owned by Valspar Industries, is contingent upon King & Benton’s ability to address challenges associated with flood potential and to secure the necessary permits. King & Benton has committed to increase public access to the natural areas of the ponds, to involve the community in planning and to an environmental clean up of the site.

A real opportunity exists to naturalize the apple orchard along the South and West Ponds and to create a trail network for the community to enjoy. Please contact us to share your vision for the future of this site.



The old paint factory is demolished!!

Students sample Coves water

Martin, John, and Matt - three students from Ridgetown College - are helping to monitor water quality in the Coves and the ravines that drain into the ponds. As part of their Environmental Management Program they spend one day per week sampling and analyzing water from the Coves. Their work will help to identify potential problem areas and pollution sources.

Thanks to the City of London's Greenway Pollution Plant, the results from this summer and fall water sampling are in and have been posted on our web site.



Martin, John and Matthew display water samples collected.

Many thanks are offered to Tony Van Rossum and Jim Burnard. This is a costly service that they offer free-of-charge. In addition, Greenway Pollution plant has taken samples from the West Cove and analysed the results over the last 20 years.

The results from the June – November 2006 analysis indicate that total suspended solids, iron, copper, aluminum and total phosphorus levels are unacceptably high at various locations and at various times of the season. Coliforms and ecoli levels are also very high.

WE WISH TO GRATEFULLY acknowledge the support of each of the following:

- ♦ The City of London
- ♦ Ontario Trillium Foundation
- ♦ Government of Canada
- ♦ The ArcAngelo Rea Family Foundation
- ♦ London Community Foundation, and funds within, including:
 - ♦ The Richard and Beryl Ivey Fund
 - ♦ The Haines Family Fund
 - ♦ The Joseph Rea Environmental Fund
- ♦ TD Friends of the Environment

See www.thecoves.ca for a full list of sponsors.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL OR NEW APPLICATION

Individual membership	\$25
Family membership	\$35
Lifetime individual membership	\$200
Lifetime family membership	\$300
Non-profit organization (one year)	\$75
Corporate membership (one year)	\$200

DONATIONS*

Please help support Friends of the Coves with your generous donation:

I pledge \$.....

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**Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations.*

GREEN VISITS

It's time to start planning for spring! Let Friends of the Coves help by booking your Green Garden Visit with our Go Green advisor. We will provide you with resources to assist with pesticide-free lawn care, attracting birds and butterflies to your yard, water conservation, and composting. This service is offered to all members of Friends of the Coves, and is free to members who reside in the subwatershed.

WIN AN ECO-GARDEN!

Members who book their visits before April 30 can enter to win an eco-garden designed by our experts. The lucky winner will receive the plan with all the native plants and landscape supplies necessary to make it happen. We'll even help you install it if you want. This grand prize is valued at approximately \$500.

RAIN BARRELS

Did you know that one rain barrel can conserve 200 litres of water every time it is filled? A rain barrel placed under your downspout will collect soft, natural rainwater for a healthier garden, too. You'll also be protecting the environment and saving money by conserving tap water.

Order your discounted rain barrel from Friends of the Coves by March 31 to ensure you have the best rain water for your garden this spring. They are \$30 with FOTC membership and are made right here in London. And, if you book a Green Garden Visit with us, we'll be happy to deliver yours right to your door. Thanks to Tuckey's Home Hardware for ordering and storing the rain barrels.



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