

Coves Conservation Master Plan Update!

The first part of the Coves Conservation Master Plan (CMP) process is almost complete. North-South Environmental Inc., the firm hired to do the live science data collection, has finished doing the field based inventory of the Coves area. A draft report of their findings and analyses should be ready by late fall. The report should include recommendations regarding the Coves Environmentally Significant Area boundary and proposed new trail locations.

A public open house will likely be held in early 2012 to present the results of this study. Friends of the Coves will be sure to let you know the date and location of this open house.



Bluet species, a type of damselfly found in the Coves Subwatershed. Photo provided by Bear Davenport.



Hikers enjoying the trail along the scenic East Cove pond

Maps of Coves Trails!

Friends of the Coves attended a couple of great “Car Free Festival” events this summer on Dundas St and Wortley St. Our booth showcased the public trails found throughout the Coves Subwatershed. The limited paper copies of the maps proved to be very popular, and soon were all handed out. If you are interested in walking some of the beautiful trails in the Coves, you can access the maps from our website by clicking [here](#).

Flight of the Monarch

During a walk on this gorgeous November autumn day, a monarch butterfly wispily flew by me on the street. Like a little kid, I followed its path for a bit, trying to catch a better glimpse of this beautiful creature. As I watched the monarch effortlessly flutter here and there, I was reminded of the long journey it has to its winter grounds in Mexico. I hope this monarch is able to meet up with some buddies for the long flight!



A monarch enjoying milkweed in Swallowtail Grove



Thom's Presidential News

We have had good news lately that the plans for the property at the west end of Elmwood Ave. are close to being able to move forward. With the money already in hand, this site is slated to become a gateway to the Coves Environmentally Significant Area (ESA). We are hopeful that the design for the property will considerably enhance the vista to the west. Stay stuned for more information from Friends of the Coves in the new year about this development!

The proposed changes in the boundaries for the Wortley Village Heritage designation will bring that boundary right to the doorstep of this gateway which is an important change. The Coves in many ways is inexorably linked with Old South. It raises the question as to whether or not the Coves ESA should be included in the visioning for the renewal of Downtown. It would certainly add a unique component to this initiative, different from any city in the world that I have visited and certainly unique in Canada.

We are certainly grateful to Bear Davenport for the pictures from the Coves that he has provided to us. The above panorama of the south bank in the South Cove is, without question, spectacular. The pictures of the snapping turtles are intriguing as well. Who would have thought that they can climb a chain link fence? Joe Rosell, owner of the HJR Tennis School & Tennis Club located at the German Canadian Club, has reported seeing snapping turtles climb his court fences in the past. ~ *Thom McClenaghan*

Upcoming Coves Events!

- **December 17, 2011** - Christmas Bird Count
Stay tuned for an email and website update on how you can become involved in this annual event.
- **February 2012** - Friends of the Coves Annual General Meeting
More information on exact date and location coming soon. Everyone welcome.

2012 Naturalization Efforts

- **May 2012** - Euston Park
- **June 2012** - Greenway Park
- **October 2012** - Basil Grover Park
Watch for email and website updates on how you can volunteer at these exciting community tree planting events being planned for next year!

Coves Critters Highlight: Snapping Turtle

Local residents and visitors of the Coves ponds are lucky enough to share the area with snapping turtles, though you may never see one on dry land as they spend most of their lives in water. Nesting season is from early to mid-summer, and the female may travel long distances overland to find a suitable gravelly/sandy nesting site, such as along a stream or road shoulder.

Snapping turtles, like most other turtles, have an uphill battle to survive from

the get-go. After laying 20-40 ping-pong ball-sized eggs, the female snapping turtle will cover up the eggs and return to the water. Offering no care for the nest leaves the eggs vulnerable to predation from raccoons, skunks and other predators. Should the nest not be predated, hatching occurs after 80-90 days, with the sex of the hatchlings temperature-dependent – eggs incubated at a temperature of 23-28°C hatch as males and eggs incubated at other temperatures hatch as females. Instinctively, newly hatched turtles head to water, but again, are vulnerable to predators both as they are crossing on land and once they make it to the water. They become virtually predator free when their shell has hardened and they have grown a bit, but are only ready to mate when their shell reaches a length of about 20 cm, which can take 15-20 years.



Young snapping turtles have pronounced ridges.

Did you know?
Snapping turtles can climb fences - check out this [YouTube video!](#)

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Did you know?
A female snapping turtle can hold sperm over several seasons, meaning she can lay eggs without a mate!

These prehistoric looking animals have ridges on their shell (more pronounced when young) and a dinosaur-like tail with triangular crests along the length. Snapping turtles come by their name honestly. Unlike other turtles, the plastron (under shell) of the snapping turtle does not cover its entire underside, preventing it from taking refuge inside its shell when confronted. Instead, the snapping turtle has evolved the ability to snap as a defense mechanism. Though they have the ability to be fierce, snapping turtles avoid confrontation, and when disturbed on land, they will most likely flee (albeit slowly), and if in water, they usually slip away quietly.

Did you know?
Turtle tails are an extension of their spine. Never pick up a turtle by the tail as doing so can damage vertebrae.

Snapping turtles are ferocious omnivores, eating everything from plants and insects to small mammals and carrion. They only eat in water, and their dark coloured shell, which can become covered in algae, allow them to be camouflaged and able ambush prey, attacking with their beak-like jaws.

Under Ontario's Endangered Species Act, the snapping turtle is a special concern species. Threats to this animal include human persecution, road mortality, nest predation and a long maturity period, which means adult mortality greatly affects the survival of the species.

Did you know?
A snapping turtle can weigh up to 16kg and grow to 36cm. But they start out small - about the size of a loonie!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

BECOME A MEMBER

Every member is one more voice in support of protecting the Coves ecosystem.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteers are always needed to help out with our many projects.

DONATE

FOTCSI is a charitable organization depending entirely on fundraising (#89976 0813 RR 0001)

Memberships (come due January 1)

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

Donations

I pledge support to Friends of the Coves Subwatershed Inc. with a donation of:

\$.....

Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations.

You can donate by credit card online at canadahelps.org

Contact Information

Name: _____
Address: _____

Telephone: _____
Email: _____

Please fill out this form and send it along with membership fees or donations made by cheque to:

Friends of the Coves Subwatershed Inc.
111 Elmwood Ave. E., London, Ontario, N6C 1J4

Seasonal Tree Care Tips

On October 22, Friends of the Coves held a tree planting and aftercare event at Briscoe Woods. Even though the leaves have been falling for a while now, urban trees still require important care during this time of year. Below are a few tree care tips that can help your trees throughout the remaining fall and upcoming winter months.

- **Watering** urban trees is important and can be done until the ground is frozen. Stress caused by drought conditions can weaken the tree's ability to survive the winter. A good way to water a tree is to leave a hose on a slow drip for about 15 minutes, 1-2 times/week, at the base of the tree, or for older trees, a soaker hose should be spread along the ground as wide as the tree branches reach in order to nourish the larger roots below.



Freshly mulched new and previously planted trees at Briscoe Woods.

- **Mulch** decomposes over time, so it is important to replenish it periodically. Adding a fresh 3-4 inch layer of mulch before the ground freezes will help the roots by moderating temperature and moisture loss. Place the mulch in a doughnut shape around the tree trunk instead of piling it against the trunk, which may cause the bark to rot.
- Unless leaves are diseased, let fallen leaves remain on the ground. As **leaves** decompose, they return valuable nutrients back into the soil.
- **Salt** applied during the winter season can seriously affect the health of near-by trees. Instead, try using sand as a way to deal with slippery conditions.
- **Pruning** for many species can be done when the tree goes dormant in the winter months. As pruning techniques and timing can differ depending on species, do your research before pruning.

Information obtained from <http://www.yourleaf.org/blogs/janet-mckay>



A dragonfly getting some late-summer nourishment from staghorn sumac fruit. Photo provided by Bear Davenport.

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