



Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre Newsletter

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR WILDLIFE



Our last newsletter spoke about the many challenges facing wildlife. This issue will highlight some of the positive developments that are taking place on behalf of wildlife.

The Centre's Education Programs directed to area schools and more than a thousand students each year as well as its Community Awareness Programs that reach tens of thousands more people through presentations, articles in community media and a highly-used website are all making a difference.

But the most exciting development of all is that people in the community are now taking the initiative for positive actions on behalf of wildlife. Letters to the editor and calls to city councillors, individuals and neighbourhood groups contacting the Centre seeking effective, humane solutions to specific wildlife conflicts and city

governments taking progressive measures that focus on prevention and education.

The Centre's role has been to attempt to change attitudes and to create a more informed understanding and appreciation for wildlife. But clearly it cannot do it alone nor will it be successful unless its messages resonate with the community.

Across the province, people are looking for progressive solutions to wildlife concerns. The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake recently requested permission to link the Town's website to the Centre's stating it has been *"researching how best to educate our residents on wildlife concerns and found that the OCWC website is exactly what the Town is looking for"*.

The Centre is receiving an increasing number of requests from people and organizations wanting to get along with wildlife and enjoy the natural world.

THINK OF OCWC THIS UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN



We are very grateful to those of you who have allocated a gift through the United Way Campaign to the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre. The United Way is critically important, particularly during these difficult economic times, to ensure that there is a progressive voice for wildlife in our community.

Your support, through the United Way Campaign, allows us to respond to the many challenges facing wildlife with the innovative solutions and humane practices that are featured in this Newsletter.

We hope you will continue your support or, if you haven't already done so, allocate a gift through the 2009-10 United Way Campaign. It will definitely make a difference for wildlife. Just make sure the Centre's full name and charitable number 13224-0284-RR0001 is noted on the donation form.

Whether it is advising a rural resident who wants to protect a beaver dam and the biodiversity it supports, a community association looking for ways to share a park with Canada Geese or a young girl who wants to plant shrubs on her property so that *"rabbits have some protection from predators"*, the Centre's role is expanding to also being that of a 'facilitator' – a sure sign of success.

The stories on pages 4 and 5 of the newsletter demonstrate the ability of individuals to make a difference for wildlife and for governments – in this case the City of Ottawa – to provide leadership and support for these efforts. These are projects that will surely become 'models' for other communities.

Editorial

A New Era for Wildlife



While this is the worst of times for wildlife given never-ending development, for some of us involved in wildlife protection issues for decades, there is a sense that we are turning the corner.

The Ontario government is moving forward to provide a comprehensive framework for environmental education in the schools. It recognizes the pressing changes in the Earth's environment and its natural systems and the illiteracy of an urban population about the natural world.

A report on Environmental Education in Ontario schools identifies that *"Outdoor Education is seen as a distinct and critical component of environmental education, concerned with providing experiential learning in the environment to foster a connection to local places, develop a greater understanding of ecosystems, and provide a unique context for learning"*.

On another front, Richard Louv's book, *"Last Child in the Woods"*, referenced in this newsletter in 2006, described a range of current child health issues arising from a lifestyle that focuses on screen time rather than outdoor exploration. It has inspired a grassroots movement in the United States and resulted in the founding of an organization called the Children and Nature Network.

Canadians have not yet mobilized to the same degree but it is coming. The Royal Botanical Gardens hosted a workshop this past November, *'Back to Nature: Towards an Ontario Strategy for Bringing Children and Nature Together'*. It identified that *"many see this as an issue impacting the future of our society and our planet"* and has set about to establish a Back to Nature Network here.

While these initiatives offer promise, it is really the grassroots actions of individuals that are celebrated in this Newsletter and others that the Centre is very involved with in the community that offer me the greatest hope.

Donna DuBreuil
President, OCWC

Knowing makes all the difference...

By Kate MacNeil

In April I visited Mrs. Bolton's Grade 2 class at Bayshore Catholic School. The students listened attentively and eagerly asked questions about wildlife. It was a very rewarding day!

A few weeks later a package arrived, it was from the students at Bayshore Catholic. Each student had written a letter. In it they thanked me for visiting their class and also talked about what they learned about wildlife from my presentation. The letters are so positive and genuine that I carry them around in my laptop bag and read them whenever I need some inspiration. Here are some excerpts that are certain to make you smile....

"Thank you so much for teaching us about wildlife in our communities. I learned that wildlife in the city is normal...I liked when we played the animal detective game. Oh, and those animal puppets are adorable! The photos you showed us are awesome. Those quills are cool too!... If you could be one animal which one would it be? Again, thank you a BILLION times!!"

"I learned not to take a baby fawn when the mother is gone to find food... You even showed us what an otter sounds like...I hope you can come back another time to tell us more things about wildlife."

In contrast, in early May a local paper ran stories from school children. One of the topics was to describe the woods. Some of the stories seemed filled with fear about the woods and the wildlife that lived there. *"I was scared because of the noises I heard"; "I saw a fox and it was trying to bite me"*.

Nature has always been such a source of peace and happiness for me and I am always saddened when people view it with ignorance and apprehension. But before I could get too down, I pulled out my letters from Mrs. Bolton's class. I soon realized that a little education goes a long way.



We are very pleased to announce a \$5,500 grant from the HIVA Environmental Fund for the OCWC's Education Program. Irene Fedun started the Fund with a legacy from her parents Hala and Ivan Fedun, after whom the HIVA Environmental Fund is named.

Irene grew up on a fruit farm in Grimsby, Ontario, with massive vegetable and flower gardens, where she *"had an intimate connection with nature. As a result, I've wanted to save helpless animals and preserve the wild places since childhood; this foundation has given me the opportunity to do that. It has also allowed me into corners of the province that I would not have discovered otherwise, to see the inspirational restoration, rehabilitation, education and conservation work being done."*

Irene feels fortunate to work with *"three wonderful women friends as co-directors, with high levels of knowledge, skills and connections, all with a strong love of the environment."*

"We carefully read through applications from all the worthy organizations who approach us. All are doing good work but our decisions about whether or not to fund them do not always come easily. With the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre, there has been little hesitation. Your work is stellar. We value your hands-on experience and expertise gained over years of wildlife rehabilitation work and your conscientious approach to the animals. We don't doubt that teachers are lining up for your programs. There's one thing that made you stand out. You recognize the need to work with students in teacher training programs. It is crucial that teachers come into the school system with an appreciation for nature and the value of teaching it to their students."

Animal Stories

Even though we no longer do wildlife rehabilitation, the animals we have helped over the years are never far from our minds. In fact, having had the privilege of caring for a wide variety of species, all with special personalities, has reinforced our commitment to reconnecting people to nature.

A SKUNK WITH ATTITUDE



My neighbour in seeing the little skunks in a single file behind me called out *"its Mother Superior and the Sweet Sisters of Charity"*, referring to the black and white habits of my wee charges. Goodness knows what he said behind our backs.

By Donna DuBreuil

Homer was the product of the City's construction boom. Mother skunk was forced to move her babies from a site that was being prepared for new homes. Unfortunately, as she was carrying Homer, a truck startled her and she dropped him. Fortunately for Homer, the driver rescued and brought him to the Wildlife Centre.

Just a few weeks old, his eyes were still closed but his distinctive markings were already visible. Because he was so young, he didn't have the defensive posture common to baby skunks and very quickly adapted to his caregivers as substitute moms. He had an excellent appetite, firmly grasping the bottle in his forepaws while resting his chubby back feet on it for extra leverage.

Baby skunks are quite adorable with soft-as-velvet pads for feet and an attitude that exudes confidence. As soon as his eyes opened, he started the play/practice routine of lifting his tail high and forming a perfect U of his body to aim his lethal weapon at pretend opponents.

He would stamp his feet and then slide each one gracefully backwards looking like Michael Jackson doing the moonwalk. Occasionally he would perform this routine with such vigor that he'd lift his rear end entirely off the floor like he was doing a handstand.

It was some weeks before other baby skunks came into the Centre and, just like human youngsters, Homer had developed a 'spoil only-child attitude'. When we first introduced him to three baby skunks, who were smaller than he was, you'd think we had thrown him into a den of lions. He stomped aggressively and circled the three who were huddled together for protection, squealing at them and aiming his little bum with serious intention. It was quite hilarious to see this baby skunk throwing a temper tantrum like a three-year old in a toy store.

We finally intervened and explained to him that they were now his siblings and he'd just better get used to sharing and playing nice. And, much like all children, once he realized his antics were not going to get him anywhere, he settled down.

Within a few days, they were best of friends, playing and sleeping on top of one another. But, without question, Homer was the head honcho – partly because he was bigger but mostly because of his confident attitude. When it came time to take them on nightly walks to learn the ways of the wild, the smaller skunks would follow Homer in a single line and Homer would follow me as I was still considered the mother of the tribe.

Living on a country property, we were able to meander across fields, lifting rocks in search of slugs and investigating logs in the forest for edible delicacies. A neighbour who would sometimes see us on these outings would call out *"it's Mother Superior and the Sweet Sisters of Charity"*, given their black and white habits. Goodness knows what he said behind our backs.

Towards the end of summer, it was clear that the skunks were ready to go out on their own. One warm evening, we simply left their cage door open and off they went. On a couple of occasions we'd spot several of them around the property. Homer, because of his size, was easy to pick out but he didn't venture near which was the way it should be.

However, there is a footnote to this story. A month later we were having a party with many guests out on our deck. One was showing off our dog Ernie's elaborate dog house, which he never used by the way, and when she pushed open the custom made entrance flap, who should come out but Homer. He was not at all happy to have had his nap interrupted, chasing these nuisance interlopers all around the lawn, stamping his feet while they ran in full flight. According to those watching from the deck, it was the best after-dinner entertainment they'd had in a long while.

But parties weren't for Homer. He didn't return.

SOLVING HUMAN-WILDLIFE CON

Reactive, lethal responses in dealing with wildlife conflicts are highly controversial because they are inhumane, ineffective because they must be repeated.

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre will continue to promote 'model' projects such as those shown below because they offer progressive solutions that are

OCWC RECOGNIZES CITY OF OTTAWA'S 'SPEEDING COSTS YOU DEERLY CAMPAIGN'

The Centre recently gave an Award to the City of Ottawa's 'Speeding Costs You Deerly Campaign', an innovative education program that is part of the City's Integrated Road Safety Program.

At the presentation ceremony, Councillor Maria McRae, Chair of the City's Transportation Committee noted *"the campaign was named 'Road Safety Achievement of the Year' by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation in 2006 but the award this year from the*



Accepting the Award (left) Jerry Thomas, Coordinator of the Speeding Costs You Deerly Campaign, Councillor Diane Deans, Donna DuBreuil, OCWC and Councillors, Maria McRae, Marianne Wilkinson and Eli El-Chantiry on behalf of the City of Ottawa.

Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre honours a different perspective. Ottawa and its abundant natural areas has a great wealth of wildlife, something that residents very much value. The campaign shows you can, through education and prevention, protect people while preserving biodiversity."

Councillor Diane Deans added *"as Chair of the Community and Protective Services Committee, I am proud to support the "Speeding Costs You Deerly Campaign". The campaign's focus on educating drivers to react to Ottawa-specific traffic and road conditions demonstrates that road safety, as well as the preservation of Ottawa's greenspace and wildlife, are top priorities in our City."*

The campaign educates drivers about the importance of reducing speed, being alert, staying in control and understanding deer traffic patterns. *"It is effective because it is highly targeted during the fall months when deer-vehicle collisions are at their peak due to the rut and migration and hunting seasons. Public service announcements in the media and flashing road signs that are moved frequently along high-risk highways ensure*

that people do not become complacent", said Jerry Thomas, Co-ordinator of the Speeding Costs You Deerly Campaign.

Due to its effectiveness, deer-vehicle collisions have decreased by an amazing 38 per cent during the last three-year fall period in Ottawa, resulting in an estimated social cost savings of \$1.1M.

Councillor Eli El-Chantiry, said, *"rural Ottawa is celebrated for its abundance of trees, but also comes with the increased presence of wildlife which can be a hazard to motorists. I am pleased to receive the award as both the Chair of the Police Services Board and a rural Councillor. We appreciate the help of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre and their support and recognition of this important program."*

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre gave this Award, only the second given in its 22-year history, because the campaign's objective of prevention and education is at the heart of the Centre's mission, *"the Speeding Costs You Deerly Campaign is a unique undertaking whose success in just three years speaks for itself. It is definitely a model for other cities in North America that are experiencing unprecedented growth but that value greenspace and the protection of biodiversity"*, said Donna DuBreuil of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre.

OCWC WORKS WITH GRAHAM CREEK RESIDENTS TO PROTECT BIODIVERSITY

Residents living along Graham Creek in Ottawa were concerned that juvenile beavers were taking down trees at the back of their properties. Discouraged by the advice of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that the standard practice was to trap the beavers, they looked for other solutions.

Homeowners Kate Partridge and Susan Twine felt that killing the beavers was *"purely reactionary and would not provide a sustainable long term solution as this very suitable habitat would continue to attract other beavers, setting up a predictable cycle of lose trees, kill beavers, lose more trees, kill more beavers"*.

They turned instead to the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre whose mission is to help people live in greater harmony with nature. The Centre does this by providing effective solutions for human-wildlife conflicts while promoting the value of protecting biodiversity. Education and prevention of problems are its key messages rather than the outdated reactionary approach of killing wildlife whenever it poses an inconvenience to us. *"Labeling wildlife as 'good' or 'bad' fails to take into consideration the fact that all wildlife play an important role within an ecosystem. Everything in nature is connected so it is*

FLICTS THE PROGRESSIVE WAY

ted over and over again and very costly.

based on modern prevention and education strategies. These projects preserve and enhance biodiversity, allowing people to live in harmony with nature.



Graham Creek residents fence a large stand of trees against some industrious beavers, proving we can co-exist with wildlife while preserving biodiversity in the City.

important to learn how to co-exist", said Donna DuBreuil, President of the Centre.

Ms. Partridge organized a meeting of homeowners and invited the Wildlife Centre to make a presentation. Homeowners heard from the Centre that beavers are a 'keystone' species, crucial to maintaining a healthy habitat that supports a wide variety of animal and plant life.

This made homeowners on Graham Creek realize that the amazing oasis they enjoy in the middle of the City, where Great Blue Herons are observed fishing for frogs and where there are many other species of birds and mammals, would not likely be there without the beavers.

The Centre recommended protecting significant trees by placing wire fencing around

them while leaving other trees that regenerate quickly, like Poplar, as food for the beaver. Residents agreed and set about to wrap dozens of trees with the help of property manager Dan Fried.

The next stage, with the help of the City of Ottawa, will involve planting trees for the benefit of people and the abundant wildlife that call this natural area home. David Barkley, Manager of Forestry Services at the City has indicated that his department "is ready and willing to help residents keep this unique ecosystem available for all to enjoy".

College Ward City Councillor, Rick Chiarelli, said "community projects like this demonstrate the power of partnerships to get people reconnected to nature, enhance biodiversity and add to Ottawa's reputation as an environmentally-responsible city".

GLOUCESTER ALLOTMENT GARDEN ASSOCIATION GIVEN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD BY OCWC



Volunteers of the Gloucester Allotment Garden Association accept the Award from Donna DuBreuil of the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre presented a special Award to the Gloucester Allotment Garden Association last spring for its leadership in constructing a fence that demonstrates agriculture and the wild inhabitants of natural areas can exist side by side.

Located within the NCC Greenbelt, the Anderson Gardens are completely surrounded by trees. Deer, groundhog, rabbit and raccoon populations found the tree cover protective and the vegetables, fruit and flowers grown at this site very tempting.

"Although the site is peaceful and natural, a real treasure within the City, there was a high turnover of gardeners due to crop damage", said George Bushell of the Association. The solution was to build a protective fence at the site, using innovative but practical materials from Deer Fence Canada. The end result is that wildlife habitat is preserved and biodiversity enhanced while the gardens will again support a vigorous growth of produce, grown by people from a wide spectrum of cultural, ethnic, age and economic backgrounds.

Along with the foresight of the Association Executive, the project relied on a number of

partners. Ottawa Councillor, Rainer Bloess, his assistant Lynn Leduc and Councillor Bob Monette persuaded the City's Planning and Environment Committee to make an exception and provide the capital funds needed from the Green Partnership Program. Volunteers erected the fence – a total of 665 hours of volunteer time were spent on planning and construction.

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre elected to give this Award because "the Association's determined efforts are at the very core of the Centre's mandate and philosophy. Our mission is to establish a better understanding and respect for wildlife and to mitigate the impact of extensive development and human encroachment into wildlife habitat. The Association has shown that co-existence can be achieved and that living in harmony with nature benefits everyone", said Donna DuBreuil, President of the Centre.

Meet the Board...

We are fortunate to have a diverse and talented group of individuals who volunteer their time and expertise to the Centre.



Debbie Lawes: Becoming part of the story OCWC Director - Communications President, Dovercourt Editorial Services

Debbie first learned about the Centre when she was working as a reporter at the Kanata Standard. It was the late eighties and the Wildlife Centre was looking for a new home. One of the options was a small section of conservation lands in a new Kanata subdivision. However, many of the residents were upset by the possibility of the Centre moving in and Debbie was so bothered by this she wrote an editorial in support of the Centre.

Over the next few years Debbie had more encounters with the Centre, first rescuing a

groundhog and then fostering squirrels. An experience she describes as *"a privilege that is one of the most fulfilling learning experiences of my life. It became a family affair with my daughters learning about the needs of baby squirrels, from feeding and washing to their socialization and ultimate release."*

When Debbie joined the Board, the Centre was still doing rehabilitation, a service she felt was laudable, but she knew *"there was always a realization that, like any problem, it's always more effective to prevent it in the first place rather than dealing with the aftermath."* The

Centre's new direction is *"now reaching thousands of people and saving thousands of more young animals from becoming orphaned in the first place. As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."*

Debbie and her family have been connecting to nature for years through their camping adventures on their 50-acre property that has no running water or electricity. A recent addition of a cabin gave Debbie first-hand experience with solving human-wildlife conflicts. The porcupines in the area took a liking to chewing their cabin. Debbie knew what to do in an instant, she *"checked with the OCWC who suggested wire mesh along the base of the cabin. We tried it and it's working!"*



Dr. Dan Rodgers: The second best thing to becoming a zoologist OCWC Director – Vice President CEO, Alta Vista and Bayview Animal Hospitals

It was caring for two litters of baby raccoons when he was young that first piqued Dan Rodgers' interest in wildlife. Later, after summer jobs working with lemmings and white tailed deer, he considered a career in wildlife veterinary medicine or zoology. But with few paying jobs in the field he decided to become a pet veterinarian.

Dan's opportunity to help wildlife again came when Alta Vista Animal Hospital – one of the largest veterinary hospitals in Canada – began donating its services to the OCWC.

"Sometimes it was a litter of squirrels that were found with their tails tied together

(caused by pine gum). Oftentimes, it was trauma cases, lacerations and even maggots in wounds. Of course, skunks were always interesting to deal with, and yes there was one spraying which my wife remembers very well."

Dan was later encouraged by former OCWC board member Dr. Don McKiel to take his place on the board. He didn't hesitate to say yes.

"I knew first-hand from my experience as a veterinarian how important it is to provide care for injured and orphaned wildlife. I

saw this as an opportunity to contribute on a broader level."

While no longer providing veterinary services to the Centre (since its rehab program closed in 2002), Dan continues to advise on larger policy issues. Recently, he, along with the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association, were successful in persuading the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources to include a veterinarian on its new multi-stakeholder committee examining wildlife rehab regulations.

"Veterinarians are natural advocates for the care and rehabilitation of wildlife. The alternative in too many cases is euthanasia and that's not something vets want to do, especially with healthy baby animals. There's also an expectation by the public that veterinarians will speak out on this issue."



Leslie James: How one groundhog made a difference OCWC Director – Community Outreach Auditor, Public Works and Government Services Canada

Many people simply would have given the scene a curious look and moved on. Not Leslie James. She was leaving work when she saw a baby

groundhog running after a cyclist. The animal was obviously confused and distressed. After failing to convince the little guy to return to his hole, she brought him to the Humane Society

where he was quickly referred to the OCWC. Aside from being dehydrated, he was otherwise in good health.

Leslie was already well known among her neighbours as the good-hearted soul who takes in abandoned cats and feeds their feral cousins. But her experience to do even more came in 2001 when a newspaper ad for wildlife foster families led her to the doors of the Centre, resulting in both her and

her daughter Adrienne caring for baby raccoons for two years.

That hands-on experience transformed Leslie into a vocal advocate for avoiding human-wildlife conflicts.

"I'm quick to tell people about spring births and how that is the worse time to try to get an animal out of their attic or

out from under their deck. I also tell them not to blame the animal. They are not pests. They're just opportunistic. Animal proofing your home – after mom and babies have left – is the most humane and effective way to deter animals."

While disappointed that the Centre is no longer able to do rehabilitation, Leslie is

encouraged by the success of its outreach and education activities.

"By working with young people in camps and schools, we are helping to create a new generation of ambassadors for better stewardship of our environment, and for living in harmony with local wildlife."



Donna DuBreuil: Working at the grassroots to bring about change

OCWC Co-Founder – President

Retired Associate Director of Development, Carleton University

During her 30-year career as a fundraiser and administrator at Carleton

University it never occurred to Donna that she would eventually spearhead the launch of one of Canada's most progressive wildlife rehabilitation programs.

And, to think, it all started with one orphaned squirrel nearly 20 years ago.

"I was shocked to find that there was no help in our area for injured or orphaned wildlife. The only option was euthanasia."

That changed in 1987 when Donna, along with husband Gary, founded the OCWC. Over the next several years, she became a master of

multitasking – juggling a full-time job while spending most evenings and weekends caring for thousands of animals, securing a permanent home for the centre, fundraising, training staff and foster volunteers, setting up a conflict resolution service and advocating for progressive changes at all levels of government.

Donna is a tenacious realist who overcame insurmountable odds to provide a wildlife rehab service in Ottawa between 1987 and 2002. When the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources introduced new rules that made humane rehabilitation impossible, Donna worked closely with the board to shift the Centre's primary focus to education and prevention.

Those efforts are now being implemented in communities across Ottawa. Recently, Donna worked with residents of the Graham Creek neighbourhood to find a non-lethal solution to a conflict with beavers. Residents were encouraged to wrap older, larger trees while leaving others that regenerate quickly as a food source for beavers, thereby maintaining a unique ecosystem.

"People's attitudes are changing as they see continued urbanization and loss of habitat. They are no longer content to accept trapping and killing as the only solution. We're helping them mobilize to find solutions that are not only humane, but also effective."



Gary DuBreuil: No second retirement in sight

OCWC Co-Founder - Secretary-Treasurer

Retired, Public Works and Government Services Canada

Gary considers that he is the co-founder of the Wildlife Centre by default.

"While driving down Carling Avenue almost 25 years ago, Donna spotted a small squirrel stranded on the curb and, in typical fashion, shouted for me to stop while she rushed to the rescue", he said.

Little did he know at the time that it would be the start of a life-long commitment and many sleep-deprived nights caring for wildlife. But it is a passion he has readily embraced.

Gary retired from the federal government 10 years ago where he worked as an administrator in the area of property management

responsible for government-owned and leased buildings. It served him well in his volunteer capacity at the Centre, assuming the lead for the legal incorporation of the organization, its charitable registration and the many on-going business reporting requirements.

He manages the financial affairs of the Centre, juggling the never-enough funds with the growing responsibilities of its programs. His competent handling of the books always receives the approval of the auditors based on the time they save in carrying out the audit.

But his true love has been in building things around the Centre. Whether it was working with volunteers like Bob Murray, Calvin

Franklin and Gary MacNeil building or repairing the outdoor compound or working with Ross Owens in making release cages and nesting boxes, he says *"he enjoyed learning from the pros and in directly helping to get animals back to the wild"*.

These days, his skills are used in building educational displays. *"I miss working with the animals but take great satisfaction in knowing that the work we are doing in the schools and the community is essential for improving the lot of wildlife", Gary said.*

OTTAWA ECO-STEWARDSHIP FAIR – A UNIQUE EVENT

The 6th Annual Ottawa Eco-Stewardship Fair this past spring again attracted thousands of people looking to make a difference for the environment in Ottawa.

"The EcoFair is a unique event that requires a year-round effort involving many hundreds of hours of volunteer time and talent" said Ted Cooke, chair of the Planning Committee.

As one of the earliest environmental fairs around, the EcoFair has helped to introduce Ottawa residents to a greener way of living. Held at the RA Centre, it has grown in popularity each year with more than 110 exhibitors, 4,000-5,000 visitors.

OCWC's last year on Planning Committee

After serving five years on the EcoFair Planning Committee, Donna DuBreuil feels it is time to step down. Not only have the demands of the Wildlife Centre grown substantially but she feels that *"volunteer organizations like the EcoFair benefit from having new blood and fresh ideas for events that have to put on a new face every year"*.

"I still marvel at the fact that a small group of volunteers have been able to put together an event that rivals, if not in budget, those run by national event organizers and to sustain this effort for so many years. I have enjoyed working with Ted Cooke, recently retired from Fisheries and Oceans Canada,

Leah Stiles of Enbridge Gas Distribution, Bob Hillary, retired from Public Works and Government Services Canada and Joff Cote of the Ottawa Stewardship Council", Donna said.



Donna was surprised by the presentation of an Award made by Leah Stiles on behalf of the Eco-Fair Planning Committee at the 2009 Opening Ceremonies. The limited edition Robert Bateman print carries an inscription – *Special 2009 Ottawa Eco-Stewardship Award Presented to Donna DuBreuil in Appreciation of Your Vision and Leadership to Local Environmental Initiatives*. Seen in the photo with Donna are David McGuinty, MP for Ottawa-South and Ottawa Mayor, Larry O'Brien.

Step Right Up....

In 2009 the OCWC along with the RA Centre had the opportunity to co-sponsor and deliver the Children's Activities Area at the Eco-Fair.

The collaboration gave the event a new twist. The theme was an Eco-Carnival and was set up with decorations prizes and lots of carnival themed games. Activities were designed to not only entertain but to educate children about environmental topics. Everything from "Is it Grown in Ontario Ring Toss", to "Fishing for Wildlife Fun Facts" and "Recycle Relay" kept kids engaged throughout the day.

Thanks to lots of planning and many dedicated volunteers, including Debbie Lawes and Leslie James from our Board of Directors, the Eco-Carnival was a huge success.

One of our volunteers who ran the wildlife bingo station told us a story that demonstrates this point well. One of the children playing Bingo said, "Oh, I get it now, we're not just playing Bingo, we're learning about wildlife."



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