



## A rare review of the latest happening

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Fall 2005

### A New Home, a New Beginning

In early 2005, **rare** purchased Lamb's Inn building in Blair (built in 1837, extended in 1844), to provide the main point of public contact with the 913-acre property. The building currently houses the **rare** administration offices and is the pick up location for the **rare organics** community shared agriculture (CSA) effort. In the near future however, the building will become a research and education facility, as well as a four-season interpretive centre that will include permanent informational/educational displays. These will include archaeological artefacts, information on the original aboriginal settlements at the confluence of the Speed and Grand Rivers, cultural history of Waterloo Region, displays on natural features of the property and its flora and fauna.

A 20<sup>th</sup> century addition on the back of the building will be removed and a new research/classroom addition will be built. As part of **rare's** commitment to conservation and ecologically sensitive approaches, we are investigating the possibility of building to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)<sup>1</sup> designation, using (where appropriate) such features as grey water systems, solar panels and low emitting materials - all the while ensuring that these methodologies work in harmony with requirements of the building's heritage designation.

The new building, coupled with the recent addition of demonstration gardens, will be instrumental in showcasing our pursuit of healthy ecological living practices.

Earlier this year, a small group of volunteers and staff of **rare** met to envision what they would like to see in its newly acquired grounds behind the historic Lamb's Inn. Many ideas were discussed and the first step they decided to take was to create an organic demonstration garden that would teach people about organic vegetable and herb gardening. On May 25th, fourteen forks and spades moved sod to prepare the ground for a 30 by 30 foot organic kitchen demonstration garden. Small

six-year-old fingers were in the earth alongside seventy-year-old hands. Ever since breaking ground, volunteers have been coming together weekly to plan, plant and tend the garden. Through this, they gain a sense of community and demystify what it means to grow food organically.

The volunteer gardeners are learning a lot about organic gardening techniques and are also beginning to enjoy the variety, uniqueness and flavour of the heritage vegetable varieties planted in the garden. So far, leaf lettuce, zucchini, bok choy and basil have been harvested. The garden and surrounding grounds are also a place to learn about wild and cultivated herbs and their culinary and medicinal qualities. In July, eighteen people took part in a workshop about the healing power of herbs, and learned how to harvest and prepare herbal remedies such as teas and salve. In the coming months there will be more workshops focused on food preserving and healthy eating, including sessions on pickling, canning, preparing medicinal tinctures, and learning how to build a solar food dryer. Watch for these and other exciting upcoming events at **rare**.

Confluence Photo above by T. Beaubien ©

<sup>1</sup> The LEED Canada-NC 1.0 Rating System recognizes leading edge buildings that incorporate design, construction and operational practices that combine healthy, high-quality and high-performance advantages with reduced environmental impacts. For more info [www.cagbc.org](http://www.cagbc.org)

### Our doors are 'OPEN' to the community on Saturday, September 17, 2005 - 10am to 4pm

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, **rare** will participate in the annual Doors Open Waterloo Region and will offer the community tours of our facility, grounds and organic demonstration garden at 1679 Blair Road. To compliment the Doors Open theme this year – places of learning – **rare** has planned lots of fun educational activities for the entire family to enjoy! Plus, meet and greet **rare's** Board of Directors, staff, and our new Executive Director! Mark your calendar – we look forward to your visit!

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## New Executive Director Welcomed by *rare*

A lover of the outdoors, an avid volunteer and a committed environmentalist, Moragh Lippert thinks she has just found the perfect job for the next stage of her career. Certainly her Prius seems at home in the *rare* parking lot. Another exciting life change; Moragh is a newlywed having married Rev. Paul Clarkson of Guelph on July 30th, 2005.



Moragh B. Lippert,  
Executive Director, *rare*

In 1998, after many years in banking, including a time as Branch Manager, Moragh assumed the position of Manager for Central Ontario of TD Friends of the Environment Foundation where she evaluated and adjudicated environmental projects based on the Foundation's mandate of environmental education, naturalization and habitat restoration. "I'm amazed at the resourcefulness and dedication of so many people who are determined to reserve, restore and reconcile the environment around our ever-growing urban areas. I believe the research focus at *rare* will reveal 'best practices' so that we actually strengthen our connection with the natural world and heal the land as we improve the quality of life for everyone. I'm very excited to continue my dedication to this effort by taking on the leadership of this new and exciting project, here in our own community".

A graduate of Wilfrid Laurier and the University of Guelph, Moragh has also held positions as the President of Guelph Junior Achievement, served on the Board of Directors and as Volunteer Coordinator of the Bruce Trail Association, and as Core Group Member of the Ignatius Farm Certified Organic CSA.

Also new to *rare* are: Oumou Annou, part-time Administrative Assistant; Janelle Martin, contract Community Relations Manager (during Patti Leather's maternity leave); and Corrine McGowan, contract Development Officer (thanks to the Foundation for Rural Living). Welcoming for the growing season are *rare organics* staff Caitlin Hall, Tanya Williams, Mark-Jan Daalderop and summer students funded through HRSDC and Cambridge Career Connections Kyla Cotton and Mary McCallion. Watch upcoming editions of the newsletter for staff biographies. For a complete staff listing, please see page 6.

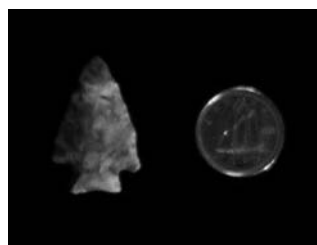
## University Students Experience *rare* Archaeology By John MacDonald

Through the week of July 4<sup>th</sup> I supervised four undergraduate anthropology/archaeology students from the universities of Waterloo and Western Ontario. This would be the first experience for these students to discover archaeological sites, define the possible limits of sites, record a site's position using a global positioning system (GPS), and test excavate a site, including setting up a grid using triangulation – that is, plotting one-metre squares using basic right angles and hypotenuses. To start them off, we went to an area of the reserve where *rare's* Archaeology Team had found artefacts while test-pitting the previous year. However, the artefact yielding, shovel blade sized pits were widely dispersed and only chert flakes were recovered. This meant that it was impossible to know how old the material was (other than being pre-contact Native) and whether we had one large site or numerous small sites covering a large area.

We began by test-pitting around the eastern-most positive pits from last year, placing test-pits every two metres. Soils from the pits were sifted through ¼ inch wire mesh to enhance detection of even small artefacts. Last year it seemed that we couldn't put a shovel in the ground without finding something, but on this first day, few artefacts were recovered, even after discovering a horse shoe. I thought to myself, we probably just missed the entire horse with our luck today.

The next day proved to be very different. We began test-pitting further to the west and the very first pit yielded two flakes and a perfect Late Archaic "small point" dating circa 3200 years old. Several other test-pits resulted in the

recovery of flakes, all located in a fairly tight cluster. We have a site, not just an isolated artefact. On the third day we set up a grid from which we could plot a one-metre square over the pit from which the projectile point (arrowhead) came. From this one-metre square we recovered numerous flakes and the tip of another projectile point. Two more one-metre squares were excavated over the next day and a half. On Friday morning we were aided by Amelia Clarkson until the dark clouds and thunder warned us that it was time to quit while we were ahead.



## The Role of Research at *rare*: The 100 Year Vision

The 913-acre site in its present state has been described as a series of large forested “islands” in a sea of farm fields and built-up urban areas. These islands are all that is left of what was once a continuous mix of forests and glades. Now the continuous landscape is one of farm fields, which provide open space but isolate the forests and wetlands.



Situated in the middle of the one of the fastest growing areas – and the 4<sup>th</sup> largest centre of immigration – in the country, *rare* has the potential to be a central reserve for the Region, an oasis for both people and nature. Through the vision of the original landowners and the stewards who followed, there exist on the site many landscapes that will be protected, revitalized, restored, and knit together. These include old-growth forest remnants, rare alvars, upland and low-land forests, wetlands, cliffs, hedgerows, and other ecological communities that provide much needed habitats for a rich mix of flora and fauna.



*Cliffs, L. Lamb*

Researchers, scientists and professionals in a variety of related fields are approaching the *rare* property in a way unavailable to them at any other site. They are developing a vision that goes far into the future – something that can only be done because the land is held “in perpetuity”. As Professor Stephen Murphy, Environment and Resource Studies, University of Waterloo, replied when asked why he was volunteering so much time to *rare*:

*rare* is a charitable organization with a unique focus in Canada – it owns property and encourages long-term research on ecological restoration and monitoring and integrates this into community education programs. There is no other organization like this in Canada. Some organizations fund research, some own property for conservation and related purposes, some focus on education about the environment. *rare* does all of this and does it in an important context, i.e. an urbanizing region where the threat to ecological structures and functions are greatest, the need for ecological restoration the largest, and the need for urbanites to have a place to go to both enjoy nature and understand the value of ecological research the most important. “*rare*” is an appropriate name for an organization that fulfills multiple functions and provides opportunities and benefits to different groups.



As the site matures, the wooded areas will be added to and connected, and much of the flood plain returned to its natural riparian condition.

The hedgerows will be allowed to develop and widen, providing much needed habitats for birds, butterflies, and small mammals. The overall effect will be to transform *rare* into a rich forested landscape with a series of open spaces nestled within it.



*Indian Woods, D. Kirk*

Many of the changes will happen slowly as areas are left to regenerate on their own. Other changes will be dramatic as scientists explore the effects of manipulating the landscapes. Because *rare* encourages both public and academic exploration and understanding of this place – ecologically, culturally, and historically – new ideas will transform our thinking and our ways of life. The science of ecological restoration itself will be advanced. And all of us will live within a more densely and richly varied landscape.



## South Field Restoration Project

By Heather Cain, Promotion and Administration Manager, *rare organics*

The knowledgeable team in the *rare organics* program work along side numerous local groups and farmers to raise awareness of food security issues. The ability of a community to feed itself, even in crisis situations, is key to its stability. Small, local farms play a crucial role and the group works to raise awareness of their importance. As well, new practices that can improve the farming economy are always being sought.

With the growing interest on the part of consumers to find affordable, plentiful organic food choices, *rare* staff and local volunteers are asking, "What does it take to transform 19 acres of exhausted farm fields into thriving organic fields?"



Forty energetic high school students and their teacher, Jason Bracey, from Southwood Secondary School's environmental studies and resource management class, along with community volunteers and *rare* staff have recently started the restoration of 12 acres from conventionally farmed fields to tall grass prairie and hedgerow habitat for the purposes of increasing habitat and biodiversity, of reconnecting forested areas in the reserve and of providing a buffer zone for future organic vegetable and fruit gardens. The area will create habitat and alternative forage areas for wildlife, forming a link of natural avenues to connect woodlots on the *rare* reserve and reduce soil erosion of the fields.

The group planted 1400 trees and shrubs over three days to create a six-acre hedgerow, as the first step towards conversion of the land from conventional farming to organic. This included planting twenty-two species of trees, mostly deciduous, and twenty species of shrubs, representative of plants found in the reserve. The hedgerow will serve to attract pollinators, insect-eating birds and other creatures to augment pest control and pollination.



A 6 acre meadow will be planted with native wildflowers and grasses in a hilly area to the south to control soil erosion, improve water quality and soil fertility. This project will divert several kilograms of chemical fertilizers and pesticides from the soil and water table.

Volunteers braved high winds and hot sun to fight soil compaction, which made for tough digging. Planters noticed that there were few earthworms and little organic



matter – "the soil looks lifeless," one student commented.

Soil regeneration will take time, and amendments such as compost and mycorrhizal fungi have been applied to each new seedling to give it a boost. Compost provides nutrients, improves soil structure and holds moisture close to plant roots. Mycorrhizal fungi are microscopic fungi that are naturally

found in healthy soils and increase the plant's ability to take up water and nutrients from its roots.

Throughout the drought, the *rare organics* crew diligently watered the seedlings, and recently, with help from volunteers, successfully weeded the impressive hedgerow.

Generous funding from Environment Canada's Eco-Action Community Fund, The Carrot Cache, The Ontario Natural Food Co-op, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and The Musagetes Fund at The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation made this project possible.

(A complete listing of our generous donors will be featured in the next issue of the newsletter.)

## The Eagle Has Landed!



Meet the newest addition to *rare*...created and generously donated and delivered by local sculptor John DeBoer. Thank you John!

### Attention

Kids...During our Open House on

September 17<sup>th</sup>, we invite kids ages 2-16 to come and 'draw' the eagle to win some great prizes! All material supplied. Age categories as follows: 2-4, 5-8, 9-12 and 13-16. See you there!

## Nature Notes & Discoveries

Contributors: Bill Wilson, Larry Lamb, Ken Dance and John Hanselman.

- A wonderfully large population of the plant, **Harbinger of Spring** (*Erigenia bulbosa*) was found in a large patch of hundreds, if not thousands of plants, in the Dolostone Dells forest area along the Grand River during a May 14<sup>th</sup> hike. It is a Nationally, Provincially and Regionally rare plant.
- A **Tawny Emperor butterfly** was seen laying eggs on a Hackberry tree during a class field trip along the base of the cliffs on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The Tawny Emperor is a rare butterfly at several levels.
- During the May 22<sup>nd</sup> guided walk to the Cruickston Creek Restoration site, a **Wild Turkey** hen was discovered sitting on a nest in an area where a few years earlier corn was being grown. The nest was among the shrubs and herbs which were colonizing the restoration site. The brooding bird could be seen from the bark mulch trail which had been constructed by volunteers and students from Southwood Secondary School. The trail past the nest was cordoned off with flagging tape to prevent disturbance during the 28 day incubation period. This is an excellent example of wildlife quickly responding to the provision of new habitat.
- In mid-May, Bill Wilson located **rare's** first **Red-Bellied Woodpecker** nest cavity.
- **Caspian Tern** and two **Osprey** have been observed hunting for fish along reaches of the Grand River through **rare** again this summer.
- On May 24<sup>th</sup>, Jason Bracey's class from Southwood Secondary School observed 2 **Sandhill Cranes** being hunted by a **Coyote** in the field next to the south field where students were busy planting the native hedgerow. The coyote was running along the edge of the tree-line and made several runs at the cranes; however, they simply flew off a few hundred metres and landed again with the coyote giving chase each time for about 20 minutes.
- At the beginning of June this year, John Hanselman (**rare organics** Field Manager) discovered more adult **Bobcat** tracks on the **rare organics** field. Last year John discovered Bobcat tracks in the same field at the beginning of May and made plaster casts of them. The best casting was taken to the Ministry of Natural Resources by Bill Wilson where it was confirmed that the tracks were those of a Bobcat. These are very special findings as the Bobcat is uncommon in this area given their need of a large hunting territory as well as being very reclusive animals.



## A rare newsletter, a rare name...

As announced in the last issue of the newsletter, **rare** will be renaming the publication and invited readers to get their creative juices flowing and submit their ideas. Many responded and we have over 60 names to choose from. Thank you to all who participated! We will 'unveil' our new name and look early in the new year. If you would like to join our Newsletter Committee, please contact Kelly Rutherford (phone 650-9336 or email [krutherford@raresites.org](mailto:krutherford@raresites.org)).

## Southwood Students

and **rare** celebrated Earth Day together on April 22<sup>nd</sup> gathering over a dozen bags of garbage and pieces of old furniture from along its trails and Blair Road. Thank you Southwood!



## Organic Demonstration

**Garden...**from concept to reality though the generous support and hard work of our volunteers. Thank you volunteers!



**Help rare turn a brighter shade of green!** Each square metre of land costs **rare** \$2.00. Your donations are needed to help us pay for the land and continue in this exciting work. Donations can be made on our website at: [www.raresites.org](http://www.raresites.org) or you can mail your donation directly to our office.



\* Unfortunately, because of space restrictions, the following listing of our staff and advisors does not do justice to all their many accomplishments. Please watch our website for more complete biographical information.

#### **Board of Directors**

**Keith Ainsworth**, Chair of the Board, Retired CEO, COM DEV

**Michael Barnstijn**, Volunteer

**Jim Chaplin**, Chairman, Canadian General Tower

**Paul Koch**, P.Eng, Marketing & Management Consultant & Civic Entrepreneur

**Thiam Lim**, Director of Real Estate, Scotia Bank

**Brian McGee**, Chartered Accountant, Partner of Zeifman & Company LLP

**Louise MacCallum**, Volunteer

#### **Environmental Advisory Committee**

**Chris Dalton**, Avocational Archaeologist, Licensed by the Province of Ontario

**Ken Dance**, M.Sc., Owner, Dance Environmental

**Larry Lamb**, Manager Ecology Lab, Adjunct Lecturer, Environmental Studies, University of Waterloo

**Doug Larson**, Ph.D., Faculty Member, College of Biological Sciences, University of Guelph

**Alan Morgan**, Ph.D., Faculty Member, Earth Sciences, University of Waterloo

**Bill Wilson**, retired Teacher, Naturalist, Regional Co-ordinator, Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas

#### **Archaeology Committee**

**George Bradford**, Archaeology Enthusiast

**Peter Brennan**, Avocational Archaeologist, Licensed by the Province of Ontario

**Chris Dalton** (see previous)

**John McDonald**, Archaeologist/Heritage Planner, Ministry of Culture, Province of Ontario

#### **Research & Education Committee**

**Wynn Watson**, Ph.D., Committee Chair, Retired Chair, Biology, Wilfrid Laurier University

**Stephen Murphy**, Ph.D., Co-Director of Research, Faculty Member, Environment and Resource Studies, University of Waterloo

**Doug Larson**, Ph.D., Co-Director (see previous)

**Jason Bracey**, M.A., Teacher, Southwood Secondary School, Cambridge

**Larry Lamb**, (see previous)

**Joy Roberts**, Ph.D., Owner, job consultants, President, Eramosa Institute

**Susan Trotter**, M.A., Teacher, New Dundee Public School

#### **Staff**

**Moragh Lippert**, Executive Director

**Kelly Rutherford**, Business Manager

**Janelle Martin**, Community Relations Manager (*\*Position partially funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation*)

**Corrine McGowan**, Rural Development Officer (*Placed by The Foundation for Rural Living/funded by HRSDC*)

**Heather Cain**, Promotion & Administration Manager, **rare organics**

**John Hanselman**, Field Manager, **rare organics**

**Oumou Annou**, Administrative Assistant

#### **Seasonal rare organics staff:**

**Kyla Cotton**, Promotion Coordinator & Gardener, (*\*Position partially funded by Summer Career Placements, HRSDC*)

**Mark-Jan Daalderop**, Gardener

**Caitlin Hall**, Gardener

**Mary McCallion**, Gardener, (*\*Position partially funded by Summer Jobs Service, Cambridge Career Connections*)

**Tanya Williams**, Gardener

#### **rare staff**

Back row (l-r): Kelly Rutherford, Janelle Martin, Tanya Williams, Oumou Annou, Moragh Lippert, Mark-Jan Daalderop, Mary McCallion, Caitlin Hall. Front row (l-r): Heather Cain, Kyla Cotton, Corrine McGowan. Absent: John Hanselman



#### **Contact Us!**

Our administrative office is open Monday to Friday, from 9:00am to 5:00pm  
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Newsletter Coordination: Corrine McGowan and Kelly Rutherford

