



# *review*

Spring 2013

## Meet the *rare* Staff



Back row (left to right): Shawna, Erica, Jessica, Jenna Front row (left to right): Louise, Roger, Dan, Katherine, Gerrit, Patti

In the past year, *rare* has sadly bid adieu to many incredible people heading off for bright futures, happy marriages, and new adventures. They have all left their individual mark on *rare*, helping us along on our mission to conserve, research, and educate. As the dust begins to settle, an amazing collection of new faces has emerged! With strong leadership, passion, creativity, and knowledge, the *rare* team is just that - rare.

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# Meet the *rare* Staff

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**Roger Oei (Senior Operating Officer)** comes to *rare* with 20 years of corporate experience, including Finance, HR, Compliance and Project Management. He studied at the University of Guelph, holding a Bachelor of Commerce. Roger quietly oversees *rare* operations, unifying individual strengths with *rare's* common goals. He balances a busy schedule with a dedicated commitment to each member of team *rare*.

**Patti Leather (Director, Development and Community Relations)** has been a part of virtually every aspect of the organization in her nine years with *rare*. A graduate of the Social Services Program at Conestoga College and a student of Social Development Studies at Renison College, University of Waterloo, Patti brings 20 years of experience mainly in the not-for-profit sector. Her hard work is superseded only by her passion and devotion to *rare*.

**Katherine McLeod (Director of Research and Education)** began with *rare* at the start of the new year. With a PhD in Biogeography from the University of British Columbia and over 13 years combined teaching experience at York University and Wilfred Laurier, Katherine mixes a deep ecological understanding with a comfortable teaching approach that epitomises *rare's* Chain of Learning.

**Jenna Quinn (Research Coordinator)** has over five years of experience with biological inventories and monitoring projects. She studied zoology at Laurentian University and obtained her M.Sc. in Biology from Mount Allison University. Jenna is currently pursuing her M.Ed at the University of Western Ontario and is passionate about connecting science and education, which is a vision paralleled by *rare's* Mirrored Research and Chain of Learning programs.

**Louise Harnett (Community Relations and Special Events Coordinator)** brought her contagious enthusiasm to *rare* this past summer. Her go-go-go attitude and imaginative spirit continuously inspire staff and volunteers to explore new opportunities and invent new ways to represent *rare* in the community. She brings a plethora of educational experience, highlighted by her Recreation and Leisure Services Diploma from Conestoga College. Louise recently added fundraising to her *rare* repertoire.

**Shawna Craig (Land Steward)** joined *rare* at the end of 2012. Returning home to Cambridge after 10 years away, she is deeply passionate about protecting diminishing green spaces in her own neighbourhood. Shawna studied Geography and Environmental Studies at McGill before pursuing her M.Sc. in Sustainable Energy Development at the University of Calgary.

**Dan Radoslav (Springbank Gardens Coordinator)** possesses a B.Sc. in Biology and Environmental Science from Trent University. He is thrilled to join the *rare* team and become the new face of the Community Gardens. Dan brings both an ecological and functional knowledge of gardening, along with an inventive attitude that will thrive in the growing gardens.

**Erica Nickels (Educator: Leadership)** is tri-lingual with over 10 years of experience working with children and youth. She holds a B.Sc. and a Bachelor of Education in Outdoor and Experiential Education and is an active volunteer in the community. Starting with *rare* this February, Erica brings an innovative spirit and a large repertoire of interactive learning activities.

**Gerrit Kamminga (Educator: Mirrored Research)** also started with *rare* in February. He is an enthusiastic educator who graduated with a B.Sc from University of Guelph and a B.Ed. from Nipissing University. Gerrit has a strong understanding of the environment and educational psychology and applies his experience and familiarity working with the curriculum to the educational programs at *rare*.

**Jessica Jordao (Facility and Volunteer Coordinator)** comes to *rare* part-time with an Event Planning Certificate and a B.A. in Legal Studies from the University of Waterloo. She is a warm and friendly face to welcome guests to *rare* and continuously works to bring organization and efficiency to our office. With two big responsibilities, facilities and volunteers, Jessica is never short on energy or new ideas.

The *rare* team is ecstatic to be working together towards *rare's* united vision. Please drop by to say hello, chat with us at the gardens, wave to us on the trails, and continue to ask questions, get involved, and be a part of the *rare* community! With a variety of backgrounds and expertise, we are here to protect this land in perpetuity and continue to learn along the way.

## Save the Date

### Sunday, September 29, 2013

Come out & participate in our 5k family-friendly walk

2013 WALK for *rare*

\$10 dollars/person

Tshirt & BBQ included  
Prizes to be won



# North House: A Shining Star for Passersby

By Bob Burt

For the thousands of travelers who each day make the trek along Blair Road, North House appears as a beacon, a model of sustainability standing proud.

For part of the summer and early fall, construction workers were busy reassembling the housing prototype, packed with cutting edge technology. But as fall turned to winter and winter to spring, most of the work was complete and North House was being prepared to accept visitors on tours, and researchers who will test the performance of the technology embodied in the house.

North House is a green housing prototype designed by students and faculty at the University of Waterloo, Ryerson University in Ontario and Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. The house won acclaim in 2009 when it placed fourth at an international solar decathlon organized by the United States Department of Energy. The education program that accompanied North House came in first. Since then, **rare** has been working to give it a final home. At one point, a US university was trying to buy it. "We thought the technology should stay in this community, where it was developed," said Patti Leather, Director of Community Relations, "This is a massive undertaking for us, but the community is responding."

At first glance, North House might appear out of place in a rural setting beside a farmhouse that has seen 150 years of service, and down the hill from the gardens where 100 or more gardeners toil to grow food organically.

But North House embodies what **rare** is all about.

The house, and the visits to it by school groups and others, will lend itself to **rare's** Chain of Learning concept that sees the benefit of research done by senior scientists and passed down to the youngest visitors.

Researchers will use the house as a living lab and will have the opportunity to study how technologies employed there actually perform. For instance, the house is designed to generate solar energy, but only after the output has been measured can anyone say for certain how well it works.

Researchers will conduct studies meant to demonstrate how power from the sun is used to generate enough

electricity for the house. What is left over could keep the lights on in the nearby farmhouse at Springbank Farm or feed back into the grid.

The house is a testimonial to sustainable living, a value held near and dear at **rare**.

Most of the work is done, but there are some important final elements which have yet to be completed or funded. Re-programming of the software is now the priority. Some other elements will be left for spring. For instance, final grading, landscaping and planters on the 3,200 square-foot deck and outdoor living space need to have liners. Once they are installed, flowers and vegetables can be planted for enjoyment and harvesting later in the year.

Some of the special features at North House include:

- New window and shading systems;
- Use of passive solar heating systems to minimize the demand for heat;
- Solar energy used to produce domestic hot water;
- Special materials in the floor of North House used to capture the sun's heat during the day and release it at night;
- Highly insulated, quadruple-glazed, floor-to-ceiling glass installed on the south, east, and west sides for passive solar heating during the winter as well as a connection to the outdoors;
- Automated coverings on the outside of the glass to hold heat in during the winter and keep it out in the summer.
- A computer system that allows residents to see and control their energy use from a desktop computer or remotely from a computer or hand held device.

Transporting and assembling North House at **rare** cost approximately \$400,000 and was made possible in-part with support from The Savvas Chamberlain Family Foundation; The Musagetes Foundation; Gateman Milloy; Linamar; The Region of Waterloo Community Environmental Fund; University of Waterloo; Mackie; Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro; Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation – The McMurtry Family Fund; and an anonymous donor. Special thanks for the guidance and support go to Team North Inc., David Lieberman, Waterloo Architecture and MCM Inc.



Photos courtesy of Team North

# Beverly Zatta Shares Early Memories

By Louise Harnett

It's the spring of 1939.

A white picket fence wraps itself around the front of the farmhouse yard. A small pond houses several small fish that enjoyed the warmth of an indoor aquarium throughout the chilly winter months before their seasonal return to a more natural setting.



Rocks and boulders, lugged from the nearby flats, adorn and share the length of the house with spirea shrubs which sit neatly under the large ground-level windows. Inside, over-sized ferns rest upon the deep window sills. A pair of setters lounges in the shade

of the screened-in front porch. Around back, a small herd of cows meanders from the abundant pasture land to the rear veranda, always having a clear view of the Grand River nearby.

Now a septuagenarian who once lived in the farmhouse for about four years of her young life, Mrs. Beverly Zatta recently took me on a reminiscent tour of the farmhouse (now **rare's** Resource House).

Beverly was a toddler whose father had to move to Freeport Sanatorium in an effort to defeat his tuberculosis (which he eventually did). In the meantime, her mother had been obliged to take a job to support her young daughter, and consequently, had come to Cruickston Manor to work as a cook for Miss Catherine Wilks, adding a bit of occasional light housekeeping at the Langdon estate to her tasks.

Upon their arrival, there was no running water in the house. In due time, however, a spring was found and eventually the house had running water all the time. Even so, plumbing was limited and treks to the outhouse out back were simply a normal way of life.

While Beverly and her mother shared a room upstairs (in what would later become bedrooms for **rare** researchers), they also shared the house with Catherine Wilks' chauffeur, William Hussey (known affectionately to Beverly as "Uncle Bill"), his wife, "Aunt Bessy" and their teenage daughter, Geraldine.

"Life revolved around the kitchen," Beverly says. Employees of the Cruickston Manor and Langdon Hall, some of whom had homes throughout the larger property,

would frequently gather there to play cards in the evenings. This often followed a game of horse shoes just east of the slit barn (which at that time, was used mostly for storage of hay and equipment). Beverly loved these gatherings, and recollects preferring the company of adults over other children.

In fact, the only thing she loved more was the company of the two setters. Although these were Miss Wilks' dogs, they lived at the farmhouse. "Those dogs took care of me," Beverly fondly remembers. She recalls one night when she was in trouble with her mother and she determinedly went downstairs to sleep with the dogs, feeling that was where she ought to have been.

When not at the farmhouse, Beverly and others would walk to the "pig farm" (Springbank Farm), or to the Langdon estate (where hand-me-down clothes were given to Beverly's mother for her to customize outfits for the young girl), or even to Nicholson's Tavern. Without a car of their own, walking was a way of life.

In the last year, we have seen the transformation of the old farmhouse, once part of the Wilks estate, to **rare's** Resource House, an essential part of the **rare ECO Centre**. We encourage you to visit the property, with new eyes, imagining what life was like here almost 75 years ago. What stories will we be telling about this property that many years from now?



Photos provided  
by Beverly Zatta

Above: Beverly riding on the side steps.

Side: (left to right) Beverly, Geraldine and Bessie



## Barb Dixon: Long-time Volunteer

It started with an ad in the paper in 2001. Wanted: volunteer office help, good computer skills, filing, mail, word processing.

Barb Dixon, then a stay-at-home mom who had recently moved from Montreal, applied and entered into what has become a long and rewarding arrangement as a volunteer at **rare**.

When she started in 2001, **rare** was still known as Cruickston Charitable Research Reserve and there were only three people on staff. Barb quickly became a fixture in the organization. As a willing volunteer, she was looking for a way to give back and she has been giving back ever since.

Prior to the move to Cambridge where her husband Graham took on a job at Com Dev, Barb had worked as a project cost and planning analyst at a Montreal aerospace firm for 15 years.

Barb has been in an ideal spot to watch **rare** grow from meager beginnings to a thriving charity bent on conserving the land, offering opportunities for scientific research and playing a key role in educating youngsters.

"I was one of the first community gardeners at Springbank," she says proudly, before making it clear that she doesn't lay claim to having a green thumb.

"I have two plots. I like growing my own food. I call it

'getting off the grid'."

Barb is at **rare** weekly for a few hours at a time, and she has still found time to volunteer at school and other charities.

"I like volunteering here. It gets me out in the community and I like that it is a local charity and part of the community. For me, **rare** is a worthwhile cause and something that had to be done.

"If it hadn't been for forward thinking people, the landscape would have ended up looking much different today. It took time to get some of the programs going, but now there is momentum and it is something that will carry on and people are getting behind what the charity is all about."

"Tell me what needs to be done and put me to use."

Long-time staff member Patti Leather puts it this way.

"Barb is amazing, a real '**rare**' find. She brings longevity and consistency to her volunteer work that is truly valuable. It's heart-warming to know there are people in our community who are so committed to the organization. Barb and a handful of other volunteers have been around virtually since day one. They are real champions and we are so grateful."



### WATER SYMPOSIUM: "TO CONSERVE AND PROTECT"

Hosted by:  
**rare** Charitable Research Reserve  
Great Lakes United  
and Grand River Environmental Network



At **rare ECO Centre's** Slit Barn,  
768 Blair Rd, Cambridge  
**SATURDAY JUNE 8TH, 2013**

Admission \$10 (includes a light lunch)

**Register at [raresites.org](http://raresites.org)**  
(Pre-registering and carpooling are encouraged as there is limited parking)

**rare**

## Summer-ECO Camp!

Every Child Outdoors!

Sign up now for our nature-based day camps.  
**\$150 per week - July 8th to Aug 30th, for children ages 6 - 12**  
Additional care (8am to 5pm) is available.

**Visit [www.raresites.org](http://www.raresites.org) for details**  
or Call (519) 650-9336 ext. 126

# rarebits

## Butterflies and Environmental Health

The 2013 monitoring season kicks off in May with butterflies and forest health. Come on out to volunteer in the great outdoors and learn how these key indicators tell us about local environmental health.

## Salamanders Found

Over 250 salamanders were observed during monitoring in the fall of 2012, with the Red-backed (Plethodon cinereus) variety being the most commonly spotted species. Observing changes from this baseline data in the future can be an early warning sign of environmental change. We thank the HIVA Fund for supporting salamander monitoring in 2013.

## Leadership Training

The **rare** education team is integrating a leadership component into our programs, attracting high school groups interested in tackling environmental challenges in their schools and communities. Meanwhile, the butterfly Mirrored Research Program has been developed using our Chain of Learning philosophy to immerse young learners in modern monitoring processes. Science and geography teachers are encouraged to contact our education team to learn more about these exciting, new opportunities.

## French Speaking Volunteers Wanted

If you parlez en Français and love children, we'd love to have you join us as a volunteer during our **rare** French Immersion ECO Camp this summer. Enjoy all the perks of learning about **rare** flora and fauna, enjoying our trails with guided hikes, and even assisting with environmental-based crafts and activities.

## Woodcarving Coming

We were proud to have had a **rare** display at the Canadian National Wildfowl Carving Championship in RIM Park in March. Keep your eyes open for upcoming woodcarving classes to be held at **rare**.

## Share your Skill

Have a skill you want to share with your environmental friends in the community? Contact us for an Event Proposal form.

## The Ever-Changing Landscape

Had you walked through the **rare** property thousands of years ago, you would have found a landscape much like the modern day northern tundra and the Grand River would have been much deeper and wider than it is today because of floodwater from the ice melting farther north. The Grand carried large quantities of sand and gravel that were deposited to form higher areas on the property. Ice floes in the glacial river often had far-travelled blocks of rock embedded in them and, upon melting, allowed rocks to settle, joining others that had been left behind following ice retreat. These still litter the landscape, often piled at field boundaries, or utilized in the foundations and walls of older buildings. It was into this rapidly changing landscape dotted with black spruce, and later pine that the earliest Paleo-Indian hunters moved about 11,000 years ago, following migrating herds of caribou and likely mammoths and mastodons.



**rare** is very lucky to have two co-op students from Southwood Secondary School, Michelle Passarelli and Brett Tohivsky, joining us for three months.

To the left is talented Michelle with a drawing of a snapping turtle. She is creating a number of pieces of art for the **rare** ECO program.

## Guided Walks

One of the best ways to get to know more about the **rare** property is to take a guided walk. Periodically, **rare's** resident archaeologist John MacDonald leads walks. Highlights of one such walk last fall included: several places where artifacts dating back to Native settlements had been; a tree that been scratched by a bobcat; and fire pits that had been used by natives.

## Advertising and Marketing Intern

We are thrilled to have had Mikeal Piccinin, Advertising and Marketing graduate from St. Clair College in Windsor, Ontario join the **rare** team as an intern. She was on board during the month of April to help develop community and public relations projects, as well as to take on graphic design-related advertising. On behalf of Mikeal and the **rare** staff, we would like to thank Michael and Louise Dawe for graciously hosting Ms. Piccinin and showing her some of the beauty and opportunity that this region has to offer.

## Nature Notes

By Bill Wilson (Full version available on *rare*'s website)



While monitoring the Hogsback on September 12, 2012, *rare* Research Coordinator, Jenna Quinn, observed a BLUE-SPOTTED SALAMANDER. This species has been designated as a Specially Protected Amphibian under the Ontario Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act which offers protection to individuals but not their

habitat. DEKAY'S BROWNSNAKE is primarily nocturnal in its habits. Fall monitoring by Jenna tallied 5 individuals in two monitoring areas – Indian Woods and the Hogsback.

Several new and noteworthy bird sightings occurred this year. An updated list of all the birds recorded at *rare* is at: [http://www.raresites.org/conservation/flora\\_fauna/bird-species/list-of-bird-species/](http://www.raresites.org/conservation/flora_fauna/bird-species/list-of-bird-species/)

Birdbanders banded 7 bird species for the first time this autumn at *rare*: 4 species of swallow, VEERY, WINTER WREN and CAROLINA WREN; and observed 4 others including WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL, RED CROSSBILL and EVENING GROSBEAK.

Autumn bird monitors observed more than 150 AMERICAN PIPITS and ORANGE-CROWNED and PALM WARBLERS mixed in with more than 65 YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS, and the sparrow tally reached 14 with a CLAY-COLOURED SPARROW banded at Springbank. Species of note observed on the Hamilton Fall Count by Jason Bracey at *rare* included ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, EASTERN SCREECH-OWL and WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.

During winter months, Bill Wilson and Jerry Guenther tallied 13 species of waterfowl: MUTE SWAN, GREEN-WINGED TEAL, NORTHER PINTAIL, GADWALL, AMERICAN WIGEON and HOODED MERGANSER. As many as 38 BUFFLEHEAD were seen on November 30; at least 25 remained into mid-January. Ruth Kroft reported a GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL in the same area in December. In early January 2013, MNR Biologist, Art Timmerman, and volunteer, Bill Wilson, observed 12 BALD EAGLES, 4 within the reach of the river through *rare*.

During a winter outing on January 12 by the *rare* bird monitoring team, signs of RUFFED GROUSE (a declining species in this region), male PEREGRINE FALCON, adult NORTHERN GOSHAWK and 15 COMMON REDPOLLS were observed. Sightings of WILD TURKEY during the winter season declined. Bill Read reported 4 in the

Cruickston Creek sector of *rare*.

A late winter walk along the Thompson Tract trail by Marco and Donna DeBruin on March 3 flushed a pair of WOOD DUCKS from a tree limb. Spring inspection for potential nest tree cavities by the ducks had begun despite the mid-winter conditions.

Reliable harbingers of spring – RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS, COMMON GRACKLES and BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS – were first reported at *rare* this year by Jason Bracey on March 10.

Thanks to monitors and banders Marilyn Armstrong, Jason Bracey, Emily Damstra, Marco and Donna DeBruin, Jerry Guenther, Gerry Grainge, Ruth Kroft, Anne McLagan, John and Michelle Tomins, Rob Unruh, Bill Wilson, Kevin Grundy, George Hentsch, Brett Fried and Erica Hentsch.



Birders at *rare* are dedicated to monitoring and banding year round. Photo courtesy by Heather Wilson.

Boots & Bolo

rare

# BARN DANCE

## FRIDAY, MAY 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

CALL TO BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY AT (519) 650-9336

KICK UP YOUR HEELS & RAISE FUNDS SUPPORTING  
Every Child Outdoors ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

PROUDLY SPONSORED BY:



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## Hybrid Crab Apples are a Concern Researchers Say

By Bob Burt

When most of us think about apples, our minds create visions of a delicious pie or munching on a shiny, red apple right from the tree. When Researcher Paul Kron thinks apples, he thinks about crab apples, and more specifically, how many chromosomes they have and how native trees fare compared with their domestic cousins.

Paul is a research associate working with Professor Brian Husband in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Guelph. He has been involved in a research project at **rare** for the last decade.

Paul is interested in knowing if domestic apples growing close by are hybridizing native crab apple trees. That could be a concern, says Paul, if it affects the size or survival of the native population and could result in the movement of genes from the introduced species to the native trees.

Gene movement is a major concern when native crops are grown close to genetically modified crops.

Paul has determined that 28 per cent of the seeds produced by native crab apple trees at **rare** are hybrids.

Tests done at the lab found that 70 per cent of the seeds from hybrid trees survived for at least 12 weeks while only one hybrid tree reached a mature state in the natural environment. Paul notes that it is possible some hybrid trees are escaping detection because of the methods being used.

Paul's research at **rare** expands the understanding about how plant species interact when they come in contact with other species.



Photo by Bob Burt

"Prior to our study, it was not known that such a large number of seeds produced by the crab apples were hybrid," Paul said.

His work is also of interest to conservation personnel or land-use managers concerned about the fate of native populations. The large number of hybrids represents a potential threat to the maintenance of the population.

Paul's work has shown that hybrid trees can produce fruit and seed every year, but there is only a partial understanding of why there are so few hybrid adults. The research did determine that fewer hybrid trees survive after six years than non-hybrid trees.

Paul earned a Bachelor of Arts and Science from McMaster and a Master's of Science in Biology at the University of Guelph.

When he is not working at the university or on his research, he and his wife are busy renovating a 140-year-old farmhouse in Guelph which they share with their four cats. He is also an avid birder and gardener and is engaged in a project to read something from every country in the world.

## Volunteers Aid Cambridge Food Bank

Last summer, **rare** collaborated with a group from the Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank to help these Food Bank users grow their own food. The project was led by Allister Thorne, one of our volunteers at **rare**, and involved both a gardening course and the actual planting of a garden at Springbank Gardens.

Eleven people from the food bank attended the six-week course and six of those went on to volunteer at the gardens. They were joined at various times by 12 others, including both **rare** staff and community gardeners. Local businesses made donations of seed and plants as did some of the community gardeners.

In total, volunteers spent 191 hours planting, tending and harvesting. The project contributed over 1,200 pounds of food to the Food Bank. In addition, Food Bank users learned some useful skills in growing their own food and enjoyed the experience. In 2013, we plan to continue this program and add a component to involve area seniors. Thank you goes to the New Horizons for Seniors funding of the federal government.

# Ecological Land Classification at *rare*

By Shawna Craig



Many of you may be aware that *rare* recently hired Natural Resource Solutions Inc. (NRSI) to undertake a comprehensive Ecological Land Classification (ELC) of our 900-plus acre preserve.

However, are you wondering what is involved in this process, and what makes it such a powerful tool to an organization? Broadly, an ELC helps define different ecological units of land based on several criteria obtained through field sampling including: underlying bedrock, climate, soils, and vegetation.

When the same tool is used throughout Ontario, it provides a reliable approach to classifying the lands held by different conservation organizations, landowners, and governments. This way, everyone is communicating in the same language, and conservation priorities at different geographic scales can be more easily set.

At *rare*, our ELC is one management tool that shapes our current and future stewardship practices for different parts of our property. For example, the ELC was crucial to updating *rare's* Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to better reflect elements such as regionally rare plants.

Some interesting discoveries from our ELC include: 39 significant plant occurrences including species such as butternut which is a species at risk in Ontario; the Harbinger of Spring which carries provincial significance; and Rock Polypody Fern which carries regional significance. NRSI also delineated one alvar habitat known as an 'Alvar Shrub Rock Barren' (code: RBSA1).

Geographically, this area is toward the eastern edge of the property, northeast of the Springbank Marsh. When hiking through the alvar habitat on the River Trail, you'll notice a lot of exposed, loose rocks at the surface owing to the shallow soil profile.

The trees of the alvar are quite dwarfed as compared to the adjacent River Trail, and shrubs such as Creeping Juniper flank the alvar trails. So, what makes this habitat type so special, and why is *rare* excited about it?

The straightforward answer is that this habitat type is globally rare and quite uncommon in this part of southern Ontario. Alvar habitats are more typically found to the north around the Bruce Peninsula and throughout the Niagara Region, as two often cited examples.

Since our alvar habitat is an outlier to the normal occurrence, it is something to be treasured and protected. More specifically, protection of this habitat also gives rise to the protection of many rare plants and species at risk (e.g. bobolink) that are known to make use of alvars.

For *rare*, ELC maps are one tool that helps the staff make sound decisions about what kinds of activities should be permitted on different parts of the property, and how we should target our conservation and restoration efforts to protect fragile habitat. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Region of Waterloo Environment Fund for funding this important project.



Photos by Peter Kelly

## Springbank Community Gardens

Come grow with us! Produce your own organic veggies, fruits or flowers alongside a great group of gardeners amid the beautiful landscape and vista that exists just up the hill between Springbank Farmhouse and North House.

Space is limited so contact us today!

Planting expected to start around May 24th (weather permitting).

The plots range in size from 10' by 25' to 10' by 30'. Plot rentals for the season are \$25 and includes compost, mulch, water, and the use of our gardening tools.

Contact Dan Radoslav, Gardens Coordinator  
Email: [daniel.radoslav@reresites.org](mailto:daniel.radoslav@reresites.org)  
Call: 519-650-9336 ext. 115

Community Plots

## A Message from Board Chair, Keith Ainsworth

It's my pleasure to write to you, conveying greetings on behalf of everyone at **rare** and expressing our thanks for the overwhelming interest and support that you've shown to the charity.

Our tenth anniversary celebrations last year brought us all together to celebrate accomplishments. Many of you were part of at least one of our events, which included:

- Our first barn dance in the renovated 1840s limestone slit barn;
- Our much-expanded Walk for **rare**;
- Our special editions of the newsletter featuring in-depth reports on all key areas;
- The establishment of the award-winning North House in a permanent location at Springbank; and
- The Canadian premier of John Luther Adams' Inuksuit, a musical performance that bridged road, forest and river, bringing together a community from across great distances. It was a very fitting tribute to what **rare** tries to accomplish with everything it does.

As we move into 2013, we are still energised by those celebrations and determined to bring some of our many large projects to completion. The slit barn and companion farm house are poised to be the home of our Every Child Outdoors (ECO) program. With just a bit more funding, the furnishing, equipment and technology will be there to support the enthusiastic educators and researchers who are nurturing the next generation of environmental leaders. North House, a green housing model specifically designed for northern climates, is very close to completion and will soon produce more energy than it consumes.

As you will have seen in the press, we are also planning for a change in leadership at **rare**. Our Executive Director, Susan Whelan, left **rare** when she was chosen to fulfill the role of Justice of the Peace for Windsor, her home area. She is well known in Essex County where she served as Member of Parliament from 1993-2004. We all wish Susan well and understand that this is an opportunity she couldn't refuse.

As the major construction projects come to an end and a new phase of programs gets underway with facilities that finally allow for programs to move beyond the pilot phase, **rare** will also take stock of what is required in the next leader.

In the meantime, a capable team of three senior staff will form a management team to provide leadership

and direction. Roger Oei, Senior Operating Officer, will handle all administrative and financial areas, including capital project management. Patti Leather, Director of Community Relations and Development, has been with **rare** for over eight years and capably manages the \$17 million fundraising campaign, as well as communications and outreach programs. Katherine McLeod, Director of Education and Research, will ensure all **rare's** programs continue to strengthen a Chain of Learning that extends from the most senior scientist working on the property to the youngest citizens participating in outdoor education and visiting the property with their families.

I know that none of the staff at **rare** could do their jobs half as well or feel that they had access to the best minds in their respective fields if it weren't for the dedication of a team of senior advisors who vet plans to ensure they meet the requirements of the Environmental Management Plan, **rare's** guiding document.

As the year progresses, I encourage you to give us your thoughts on our progress and to make recommendations as we deliberate on the choice of our next leader.

Expressions of interest in the position can also be sent to us. You can address your envelopes to the Board of Directors care of the **rare** administrative offices at 1679 Blair Road, Cambridge, Ontario, N3H 4R8.

Again, thank you for all your expressions of support. It's a pleasure to be part of an organisation that has such deep community connections.



Chair Keith Ainsworth speaking at **rare's** 10th Anniversary Celebration.

# The *rare* ECO Centre - Past, Present, Future

The buildings tell a story of our area's past settlers, when Mennonites began to settle in the Grand

River Valley over 200 years ago. The farmstead draws attention to, and celebrates, a period of time in Waterloo Region's development. The native history, dating back at least 10,500 years, in and around what are now *rare* lands, is a fascinating account. The stone of the slit barn, however, tells a profound ecological story. The fossils, which can be seen in the stone work, document geological transformations which shaped our landscape millions of years ago.

## This is our past.

The *rare* ECO Centre, for which we received full occupancy just of late, has just seen an incredible re-purposing. The renovations have saved the farmhouse and relatively rare stone slit barn and transformed them into the new public hub for all *rare* community offerings.

The first tenants of the space were a group of energetic children who joined us for the March Break ECO Camp; they were terrific and really easy-going. We made the best of the space with chairs and tables from the barn, and the little bits of equipment we have (like binoculars thanks to Union Gas, and a borrowed microscope).

What we really need, however, is proper furnishings and IT for the space allowing it to accommodate two classes, visiting researchers doing work on the property, and community gatherings. In addition, our Every Child Outdoors environmental education programs need equipment to support the children's hands-on learning: butterfly nets, field guides, water and soil testing kits, compasses, microscopes, computers, and so on. All of



Photos courtesy by Peter Kelly (left) and Katherine McLeod (right)

this will ensure our *rare* ECO Centre provides the children and our community with the best experiences possible when visiting *rare*. We need your help.

## This is our present.

With renovations completed and the *rare* ECO Centre fully furnished and equipped, scientists from beyond southern Ontario - even internationally - will be more attracted to visit and undertake their research work here. Their work will add to our environmental knowledge and appear, as others have already, in the scientific journals putting *rare* and Waterloo Region on the map.

Children of all ages will have year-round opportunities to be outside, armed with the tools they need to experience meaningful, hands-on environmental programs and then take those opportunities back to the *rare* research classroom for further exploration. Gardening classes and classes to learn how to preserve fresh produce grown in the community gardens for new Canadians can be hosted. Water forums and research talks can be held, our volunteer bird banders can have some safe shelter at last, and our trails can have a proper trailhead. The possibilities are endless.

## This is our future.

Won't you please help us with this final phase of our *rare* ECO Centre renovations? Your donation will ensure this important community resource gets finished and is ready to host its many community offerings. Every bit counts.

To send in a donation, fill in form and cut here.



Yes – I want to support *rare*!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address with City and Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

## Giving Options

☐ I'll help *rare* now and every month. I would like *rare* to receive my pre-authorized monthly donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be automatically withdrawn on the 15th of every month using:

☐ Payment from my chequing account **OR** ☐ Credit Card ("VOID" cheque enclosed)

**OR**

☐ I am enclosing my one-time gift of:  
\$20    \$50    \$100    \$250    \$500 or \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have enclosed my cheque payable to:

***rare* Charitable Research Reserve**  
1679 Blair Road  
Cambridge, ON N3H 4R8

Tel. (519) 650.9336  
Email: patti.leather@raresites.org  
www.raresites.org

☐ Please charge my gift to: \_\_\_\_\_ VISA    M/C    A/E

Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Expires \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please add my email address to receive e-news from *rare*:  
\_\_\_\_\_

☐ Please add my name to your list of Founders, to be displayed permanently at *rare* upon completion of the capital campaign. I'd like my name displayed as:  
\_\_\_\_\_

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 John MacDonald, Archaeologist  
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 Stephen Murphy, Professor and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies, Environment and Resource Studies, University of Waterloo  
 Martin Neumann, Supervisor of Terrestrial Resources, Grand River Conservation Authority  
 Mark Pomeroy, Fisheries Biologist, Stantec Consulting Ltd.  
 Bill Wilson, retired Teacher; Naturalist; Bird Monitoring Coordinator, *rare* Charitable Research Reserve  
 Brett Woodman, Terrestrial and Wetland Biologist, Natural Resource Solutions Inc.

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 Ron Dembo, Founder, Zerofootprint [www.zerofootprint.net](http://www.zerofootprint.net)  
 Louise MacCallum, retired software engineer; Philanthropist; Musagetes Foundation  
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 Sheila O'Donovan, Founder, Lisaard House  
 Jane Urquhart, Author  
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Chris Dalton, (See previous)  
 John MacDonald, (See previous)

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 Louise Dawe, Retired Teacher, Community Volunteer  
 Christopher Giesler, Teacher, Southwood Secondary School

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 Stephen Murphy, Faculty Member, Environment & Resource Studies, University of Waterloo

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 Valerie Hall, President, Stonefields Management Inc.  
 Ahmad Hammoud, Owner, Salon Butterfly  
 Jackie Hatherly-Martin, Chartered Accountant  
 Keith Martin, Chartered Accountant, Community Volunteer  
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 David Mitten, Executive Director, Siding and Window Dealers Association of Canada  
 Simon Poladian, Owner, Eagle Towing Equipment  
 Joy Roberts, retired, Consultant and Community Volunteer  
 Paul Ross, Partner, KPMG Waterloo  
 Hugh Thompson, President, Cambridge Towel; CEO Thompson Centre for Art and Design

### **Volunteer and Consulting Advisors**

Bob Burt, Writer-in-Residence  
 Ken Dance, President, Dance Environmental Inc.  
 Joy Roberts, retired, Consultant and Community Volunteer

### **Contact Us!**

**rare** Charitable Research Reserve  
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### **Staff**

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 Patti Leather, Director of Development & Community Relations  
 Katherine McLeod, Director of Research and Education  
 Shawna Craig, Land Steward  
 Louise Harnett, Community Relations and Special Events Coordinator  
 Jessica Jordao, Volunteer Coordinator and Facilities Manager  
 Gerrit Kamminga, Educator  
 Erica Nickels, Educator  
 Jenna Quinn, Research Coordinator  
 Dan Radoslav, Springbank Gardens Coordinator