



review

Celebrating 10 Years!

Fall 2011

A rare beginning

By Susan Whelan
Executive Director, **rare** Charitable Research Reserve

It is hard to believe that I have been working with the dedicated team of individuals, both staff and volunteers, at **rare** Charitable Research Reserve for six months. Each day brings exciting new challenges and discoveries.

A scientific advisor with much greater wisdom and knowledge than I, described **rare** as this: **rare** is not only a place; it is also a concept and more importantly, it is an attitude.

I marvel at the fact that the lands, now **rare**, were originally owned by an environmentalist ahead of his time. Matthew Wilks' family integrated agriculture with environmental preservation for over 150 years. They understood the special and unique features of the lands and as a result of their vision, today **rare** has a natural laboratory for scientific study and research-based education programs, which includes some old growth forest (200 plus years) and incredible wetlands.

Today, the combination of activities at **rare** is impressive - research, outdoor environmental education, land restoration, trails, and sustainable agriculture with a focus on community gardens.

There is still much work to be done preserving **rare** and educating the next generation. We continue to need your help. It is the dedicated staff, volunteers, and benefactors that keep the legacy that is **rare** moving forward.

I believe the potential at **rare** is limitless; and it has only just begun.

Susan



Executive Director, Susan Whelan.
Photo by Peter Kelly.

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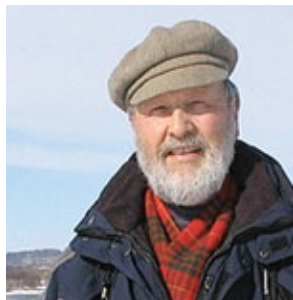
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Nature Notes

By Bill Wilson
Environmental Advisory Committee, **rare** Charitable Research Reserve

In 2001, a four-season bio-inventory of **rare** was undertaken by a group of four, the Environmental Advisory Team (EAT), to document as much of the animal and plant life of the 913 acres as time and expertise would allow. This formal monitoring and opportunistic sightings of flora and fauna would provide a preliminary base-line of the biodiversity of **rare** and a springboard from which other nature observers would build species' lists. More importantly, such on-going observations provide educators, researchers, and visitors to **rare** with background essential to environmental education lessons and to research questions.



Since 2001, I've had the opportunity and pleasure to both observe **rare's** biodiversity and to record the observations of others. Rather than just four pairs of eyes, **rare** today benefits and continues to benefit from more than four hundred pairs of eyes and counting.

During the first ten years, *Nature Notes* has provided a compilation of some of the observations by those who have walked **rare's** trails and footpaths. Some significant sightings during our first decade:

- The first nationally significant plant was discovered in early spring 2002 by Larry Lamb, HARBINGER-OF-SPRING.
- Professor Emeritus Wynn Watson made significant contributions to **rare**. One June day in 2001 while exploring the Hogsback, Wynn and I found SPHAGNUM, a rarity within the region of Ontario.
- In the pre-dawn twilight of mid-winter, MNR Species-at-risk biologist, Tanya Suggit, and I observed through telescope at distance a nocturnal roost of BALD EAGLES, seven in total.
- Thousands of pairs of eyes have seen it, however, few are aware that the BUR OAK along Blair Road – a singular giant of a tree in Blair Flats – was, and remains, the largest specimen in Waterloo Region.
- Little attention is paid to plants known collectively as equisetum or horsetails which is perhaps why *CAREX SCHWEINITZII* has no common name. Larry Lamb spotted it growing in a **rare** wetland in summer 2002.
- When 93 acres along **rare's** western boundary was added to the nature reserve, birders were some of the first naturalists to explore the landscape. In 2009, Jerry Guenther and subsequently, Josh Shea, observed a **rare** first during the spring migration: PRAIRIE WARBLER.
- Being organic gardeners, Charlie Mini and John Hanselman, often had their eyes to the ground. Such behaviour and keen attention to details at soil level led them to make a plaster cast of a suspicious paw print in 2004. MNR confirmed it was a BOBCAT which roams **rare** as a part of its territory. Subsequently, John MacDonald located a scratching post.
- The keen search image of Larry Lamb differentiated between bird droppings and GIANT SWALLOWTAIL larvae on NORTHERN PRICKLY ASH, the first reported in the Region.
- Heather Wilson found the first BLUE-SPOTTED SALAMANDER at **rare**; it measured 9 cm in length.
- The addition of 93 acres along **rare's** western boundary added EBONY SPLEENWORT, a regionally significant species, to the fern list; it was discovered by Larry Lamb, Charlotte Moore and Josh Shea.
- Imagine adding a new species of mammal at **rare** in 2009. Using a bat detector which measures ultrasonic "fingerprints", Andrew Ryckman identified the vocal clicks of LITTLE BROWN, BIG BROWN and HOARY (mammal species #23) bats.
- A 2008 visit to **rare** by the Toronto Mycological Society (TMS) raised both the interest and profile of fungi. Having collected 63 species of fungi during a one-day-foray, a follow-up in 2009 located 86, bringing the total number to 110 species of fungi. Found by Marianne Wright, *RHODOTUS PALMATUS* had only been reported to the TMS on five occasions in the last 20 years.
- One doesn't require snorkel and flippers to see pelecypods (clams), brachiopods or corals at **rare**. Join University of Waterloo earth scientist, Alan Morgan, on one of his geology walks about the reserve.



An Orange-Crowned Warbler spotted on the **rare** nature reserve.
Photo by George Hentsch.

Not every recorded observation at **rare** is of National, Provincial or Regional significance. Nor do only Endangered Species thrill, inspire or endear the observer. Often, those who visit **rare** experience what Richard Conniff terms that “sense of private joy in small amounts of discovery”. Nature Notes shares such observations through the newsletter:

- In 2010, more than 1100 students and 150+ parent and teacher volunteers from elementary and secondary schools joined Matt Lawson, **rare's** Manager of Education, to experience gardens as ecosystems, old-growth trees, the Living Pond, the cliffs.... Imagine the collective “amounts of discovery” and “private joy” provided by **rare's** *Every Child Outdoors* program.
- Students from St. David's, accompanied by Chris Dalton and Patti Leather, observed a SNAPPING TURTLE laying eggs.
- About a dozen visitors were amazed to observe and photograph 21 species of ASTER and GOLDENROD within a hectare of old field during a Larry Lamb hike.
- More than 150 birders came to **rare** in winter 2003 to observe an unexpected western visitor – SPOTTED TOWHEE.
- Over the years, owl prowls led by Jason Bracey, Ken and Kevin Dance, and Bill Wilson have provided scores of visitors with their first sighting – perhaps first sounds – of owls. The first rufous morph EASTERN SCREECH-OWL in a region dominated by grey morphs was spotted during a Dance outing.
- When one has banded as many birds as Kevin Grundy, birdbender at **rare**, does any bird provide that “sense of private joy”? Of course. OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER, ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER...
- Larry Hubble has birded the world but from his home base, Cambridge, he volunteers at **rare** to monitor migration. LECONTE'S SPARROW hi-lited his weekend monitoring at **rare** in October 2009.
- Early morning mist over the Grand settles along **rare** cliffs as Marco and Donna DeBruin witnessed the silent flight of GREAT HORNED OWL, and on another occasion, the ghost-like flight of a NORTHERN GOSHAWK along the river trail.
- Jason Bracey is energized and motivated by the enthusiasm of his Grade 12 Environmental Science students at Southwood Secondary School who regularly visit **rare** “in their own backyard” for environmental field studies. In autumn 2009, they shared their **rare** experience with a Grade 3 class as part of the *Chain of Learning* program.
- Since 2007, Jessica Greeley co-ordinated the North American Butterfly Association butterfly count at **rare**. In 2009, a **rare** migrant in most of its Canadian range, an AMERICAN SNOUT was found.
- Due diligence paid off for Ruth Kroft who spotted a LONG-TAILED DUCK at the Confluence, one of 25 species of waterfowl recorded along the Grand River through **rare**.
- Peter Kelly wanders with purpose about **rare**, camera in hand, capturing selected scenes of landscape, habitat and organisms. His “moments of joy” provide information for potential researchers. Research at **rare** began when Dr. Phil Husband and Paul Koch, University of Guelph, learned that over 100 FLOWERING CRAB APPLE trees grow at **rare**.
- During 2004, more than 50 artists visited **rare** and captured the landscape and historical buildings on canvas. The art work was displayed at Doon Art Gallery that September, providing gallery visitors with artists' visions of **rare**. Have you thought of bringing a sketch book or easel during a visit?



Aster found on the **rare** nature reserve. Photo by Amanda Newell

The **rare** experience should not be equated with a trip to a zoo or a wildlife park. The **rare** Charitable Research Reserve is an example of the natural heritage of Waterloo Region. Ecologist Michael L. Rosenzweig suggests that “human beings can get used to almost anything and what we get used to, we come to prefer”. Places such as **rare** maintain our connection with the natural landscape. Regular visits to **rare** can remind us that the human experience is more than concrete, pavement and urban infrastructure. On your next visit may you have that “sense of private joy... of discovery.”



Have some **rare** finds of your own?

Should you wish to share, contact **rare** Nature Notes by emailing rare@raresites.org with “Nature Notes” in the subject line.

Research at *rare* 2001 – 2011

By Dr. Doug Larson and Dr. Stephen Murphy
Research Advisory Committee, *rare* Charitable Research Reserve

The idea for the property came first. It was to create an opportunity to preserve landscape for its ecological value, to restore landscape to add to this value and to study the landscape to benefit all of us. It has worked, but the results are just starting to build up steam. Like similar research centres, the first decade was about trying to sort out logistics and ambitions. It was not easy. The first problem was clearly defining the goals of research and how that definition could be given a home base here at *rare*.

One of the declared goals of *rare* was to preserve the property "intact and in perpetuity" setting the landscape apart from all others in the region. This was – and is – an important feature as none of the neighbouring universities, conservation authorities or government agencies could ever guarantee that a research project started on a piece of property would be allowed to develop and then persist on the site. The fact that the landscape would be 'theirs' as long as they needed proved to be attractive as researchers began applying.

The first projects were reviewed and initiated in 2004 with the goal of examining genetic variation in wild crabapples. Then came projects involving secondary succession and then fertilizers. Bit by bit the number of projects expanded.

When Peter Kelly was hired as the first Research Director in 2008, opportunities expanded enormously. Peter was able to see clear links between the goals of *rare* at the largest scale, and the goals of each of the research programs he was asked to review.

The research topics have been varied in nature and scope and have been conducted in every corner of the property from small mammal seed predation in the northwest (Preston Flats), to pollinator connectance-web studies and the study of butternut canker in the northeast (near George Street parking lot), from ephemeral stream flow patterns in the southeast (Cruikston Creek fields) to studies on rove beetle/soybean aphid interactions to the southwest (Hedgerows and fields). Taxonomic groups that have been the focus of this research have included butterflies, ferns, bees, wasps, crickets, beetles, damselflies, wildflowers, grasses and old-growth trees.

Another significant factor to foster research at *rare* is the '*rare* Scholarship in Graduate Research,' valued at \$4,000 and awarded annually since 2009 to a promising graduate student conducting research at *rare*. Funded by the Cloverleaf Foundation, the 2009 scholarship was awarded to Adam Brunke, a M.Sc. student in the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph. Adam studied the role of rove beetles (Staphylinidae) in the predation of soybean aphids. Stefan Weber, a M.Sc. student in the Department of Integrative Biology at the University of Guelph, won the scholarship in 2010 to support his



Writer and Naturalist, Seabrooke Leckie gives a moth identification workshop at *rare* to a group of volunteer land stewards. Photo by Peter Kelly.

research on the role of pollinating insects in the assemblage of spring wildflower communities. Most recently, Martin Kastner from the Department of Environment & Resource Studies at the University of Waterloo was awarded the 2011 Scholarship to support his research on the ecological restoration of meadow communities.

The "*rare* Public Research Forum" was also initiated in 2009. Typically, few occasions exist where the public has the opportunity to interact with university researchers conducting research in their own communities. At *rare*, the public is invited to listen to university researchers give presentations on the work conducted on the reserve. This event has been very successful in engaging the public, and researchers have found it rewarding to interact with enthusiastic audience members and other researchers.

One day *rare* could be the NGO equivalent of the W.K. Kellogg Biological Station operated by the University of Michigan. The Kellogg Centre has quite a head start on *rare* – by about 50 years – and is affiliated with one main partner (Michigan State University). Expect our progress in research to mirror that of the Kellogg Biological Station: steady and then rapid increases as the second decade of research begins.

With the first research publications beginning to show up in international peer reviewed literature, we at *rare* can proudly say that we foster research, scholarship and higher education.



Quaid gets ready to make a piece of art in the outdoors during the 2011 ECO Summer Camp at **rare**. Photo by Brittany Slugoski.

Environmental Education at **rare**: A Look Back

By Jason Bracey, *Southwood Secondary School*

As I look back and reflect on the last ten years at **rare** I cannot help but be inspired by what has happened in the field of environmental education at **rare**. My personal involvement with **rare** began over 8 years ago as an environmental educator and now includes Bald Eagle monitoring, Spring and Fall bird monitoring, the Christmas Bird Count, delivering community workshops, leading hikes and owl prowls, being a member of the Education Advisory Committee, advocating for **rare** and of course bringing countless students to the **rare** property. As a secondary school educator, **rare** volunteer, area resident and proud parent, I am well positioned to see the incredible impact that environmental education opportunities have had and will continue to have on both students and our community.

For me, the highlight of environmental education at **rare** is what I have witnessed as a rapidly expanding development of what David W. Orr calls “ecological literacy” among students and the community. Orr defines ecological literacy “as something that is driven by a sense of wonder, the sheer delight in being alive in a beautiful, mysterious and bountiful world”. The power of hands-on, experiential outdoor education is stunning in its ability to engage students of all ages, when learning becomes something that they don’t even realize is happening as they participate in an activity. Seeing 18 year olds shriek in excitement

while catching a crayfish while completing a water quality analysis of a stream or seeing how excited they are in seeing their first wild turkey is inspiring. In an age of cellphones, personal music devices and headphones, capturing their interest and attention is a powerful accomplishment. I believe that inside of each of us there is an innate sense of connection and belonging to the natural world that if given a chance, quickly awakens and helps form our own development of ecological literacy.

To achieve a degree of ecological literacy Orr believes that three things are necessary:

- Experiences in nature at an early age
- A teacher or mentor as a role model
- Resources such as seminal books to help explain and heighten learning.

With the environmental education opportunities and experiences now available at **rare** coupled with the pending completion of the **ECO Centre**, **rare** is well positioned to offer even more of these opportunities that Orr identifies as so important. The crucial first step is to get students outdoors and to experience nature firsthand. This is something that **rare** excels at.

Since his hiring in 2009, Manager of Education Matthew Lawson, has overseen visits from more than 4000 children and 500 parents and teachers from throughout the Region. Lawson mentions that “It is satisfying to see the growth in our environmental education programs. The **rare** property is the most unique outdoor teaching venue that I have had the privilege of working in....it is completely accessible to everyone in the region.”

The evolution of environmental education at **rare** has had some very specific significant events:

- Cape Farewell Expedition where student Chisomo McHaina and teacher Christopher Giesler were sponsored by **rare** and the British Council to take part in an Arctic expedition aboard a Russian ice-breaker to document the impact of climate change;
- The **Chain of Learning** concept was created by the Educational Advisory Committee with the idea that learning can be passed on through all ages and levels of expertise where we teach each other.
- The Launch of the **Every Child Outdoors** initiative that was kicked off with a talk from Severn Cullis-Suzuki;
- The hiring of certified teacher and outdoor recreation specialist, Matthew Lawson as the Manager of Education;
- The on-going renovation of the historic slit barn and resource house on Blair Road which when completed will become the new **rare ECO Centre**;



Southwood Secondary Students, Chisomo and Alejandra are accompanied by teacher, Christopher Giesler on the Cape Farewell Voyage to the Canadian Arctic in 2008.

- Hosting the regional Envirothon competition;
- Piloting a summer camp for Environmental Education.

So how did we get here? On a winter day sometime way back in February of 2003, I was planning out the new Environmental Science course that I was teaching and decided that I couldn't teach an environmental science course without some outdoor, hands-on learning. I happened to google "outdoor education opportunities" and found a link to what was then called "Cruickston Charitable Research Reserve" – now **rare**. I sent an email to them explaining that I was looking for a place to take my students from Southwood Secondary for some outdoor environmental education. To my surprise, Bill Wilson who was then the Land Steward, quickly responded and took me on a comprehensive tour of most of the **rare** property.

Bill helped me set up an initial framework for a six visit program, and with the help of his wife Heather, aided me in delivering the program. Over the subsequent years, the environmental education program offered to Southwood students expanded, as did my own knowledge, with the help of volunteers such as Bill and Heather Wilson, Ken and Janet Dance and many others, leading eventually to the program we have today where my grade 12 students spend about 25 hours at **rare** during their semester. Today, all Southwood geography students from grades 9 to 12 take part in environmental education at **rare** during their semester.

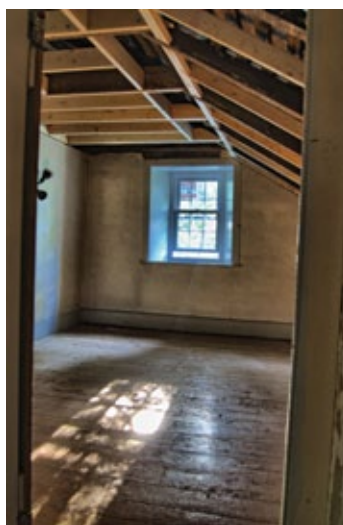
Of course, environmental education is so much bigger than just one school or program.

A committee of like-minded educators was formed with the goal of planning and expanding environmental educational opportunities at **rare**. Our challenge was to guide the development of future education at **rare** that would do two primary things; link it to **rare's** research priority and creating a local solution to the problem coined by Richard Louv,

of 'Nature Deficit Disorder' or a lack of direct, sustained interaction with nature and the outdoors. Myself, fellow teachers and **rare** advisors Sue Trotter, Louise Dawe, Judy Mendicino, Christopher Giesler, Joy Roberts, along with others at **rare**, Matthew Lawson and Patti Leather, brainstormed many possibilities to expand environmental education – and the concepts of the "*Chain of Learning*" and "*Every Child Outdoors*" initiative were born.

The *Chain of Learning* is a concept where knowledge, expertise and ideas are shared by all learners from university professors and students, to high school students, to elementary students to families and community members. Our programs are inquiry-based, landscape-specific, help teach critical thinking and are hands-on experiential learning.

As I look forward to the future, I am excited by the prospect of the completion of the **rare** ECO Centre and having even more students and community members experiencing educational opportunities at **rare**. Many of you will have driven by the slit barn and resource house on Blair Road and wondered what it was being used for. A plan is well under way to renovate the slit barn to provide a base of operations for year-round public programming and this will go a long way to implementing the core goal of **rare's** *Every Child Outdoors* philosophy. To combat Nature Deficit Disorder we need to get people, and especially young children, outside! This is one of the core goals of the education program at **rare** and the Manager of Education, Matt Lawson, has now completed a full range of programs for students from grades two to twelve.



The beginning of 'A Transformation'

– Part of the inside of the Farmhouse currently being transformed as part of the **rare** ECO Centre. These facilities are being renovated to help accommodate year-round research, programs for New Canadians, and environmental education.

Photo by Barry Finnen.

Given the tremendous developments in education that have occurred at **rare**, I urge everyone to continue to support **rare** and the completion of the new **rare** ECO Centre as the positive impacts on the physical, emotional and spiritual health of individuals through outdoor experiences are undeniable and **rare** plays a such an important role in providing these experiences and benefits.

Landmarks in Land Management at *rare*

By Laura Robson

Land Management Coordinator, *rare* Charitable Research Reserve

In the history of a landscape like *rare*, 10 years is a short time. The dolomitic limestone cliffs along the Grand River are 420 million years old, the first humans to use these lands arrived around 10,500 years ago, and many of the trees still living in Indian Woods germinated at the end of the 18th century. And yet, the events of the last 10 years have played a significant role in shaping the lands as they are today and as they will be in the future.

The completion of the sale of 913 acres to *rare* (then known as Cruickston Charitable Research Reserve) in February 2002 marked a critical turning point for the property. When the University of Guelph chose to sell the property, there were a number of possible fates for these cherished acres, including urban development, aggregate extraction, and a golf course. By purchasing the land, *rare* secured its future as a nature reserve, protected in perpetuity. From an environmental protection perspective, this was *rare*'s most significant endeavour to date, but the Charity's work towards the conservation of this invaluable landscape was only beginning. Highlighted below are some of the landmarks in land management at *rare*:

- In its early years, the ecological integrity of *rare* was threatened by the proposed development of a network of Regional roads and bridges that would have crossed the property, fragmenting habitats and degrading many of *rare*'s sensitive natural features. Staff and volunteers at *rare* flew into action, rallying the community to promote sustainable development and to protect natural heritage by hosting a Smart Growth Conference in February 2003. The community spoke, and the Region listened; the plans for the proposed "roads and bridges" project were removed from the 2006 Regional Official Plan.
- Since 2001, land management at *rare* has been guided by a number of key documents, written by *rare* staff, advisors and consultants. The documents include bio-inventories, ecological monitoring reports, restoration priority lists, and invasive species removal plans among others, and they all share the same purpose of informing restoration and conservation activities at *rare*. In 2002, *rare*'s Environmental Advisory Committee (then called the Cruickston Park Ecological Advisory Team) drafted the Charity's first Environmental Management Plan (EMP), which provided scientific descriptions of the natural features of the property and identified opportunities and priorities for environmental stewardship and management. This plan was updated and revised in 2006 to reflect the changing conditions and uses on the property. Now, as we enter our 10th year of land management, the EMP is being revised again by *rare* staff, environmental advisors and volunteers. The 2012 EMP will use Ecological Land Classification to zone the property into



Land Management Coordinator, Laura Robson, holds a Salamander who has made the *rare* nature reserve his home for many years now.

– Photo by Holly Dodds.

management units, delineated by their vegetation, each with its own conservation action plan and list of stewardship priorities. Check our website and future newsletters for updates on this exciting new plan!

- Since 2001, hundreds of acres of *rare* lands have undergone restoration and naturalization. One of the charity's first restoration actions was to remove a number of steep slopes next to watercourses from agriculture; these fields are now naturalized meadows, humming with insects and dotted with saplings. Buffers were created between farm fields and forests, hedgerows were widened to create wildlife corridors, and thousands of native trees and shrubs were planted. Over the years, tree plantings have been conducted along the unforested segments of both Cruickston and Bauman Creeks, two cold-water creeks that pass through the *rare* property.

Landmarks in Land Management at *rare* – by Laura Robson (Continued)

- The sensitive creeks require shade to keep water temperatures low, which in turn provides impressive invertebrate diversity and Brook Trout habitat. While much work remains to restore and conserve the many important habitats at *rare*, each tree planted, each buffer created and each acre naturalized represents a step towards a healthier landscape.
- In 2009, Josh Shea (*rare's* land manager at the time) established the Volunteer Land Stewards (VLS) program. Even before the formation of the charity, countless community members devoted innumerable hours to tending the lands that they had come to love as recreational users, researchers and neighbours. The staff at *rare* realized that the Reserve came with a “built-in” set of protectors and caretakers, and developed the VLS program as a means of organizing and

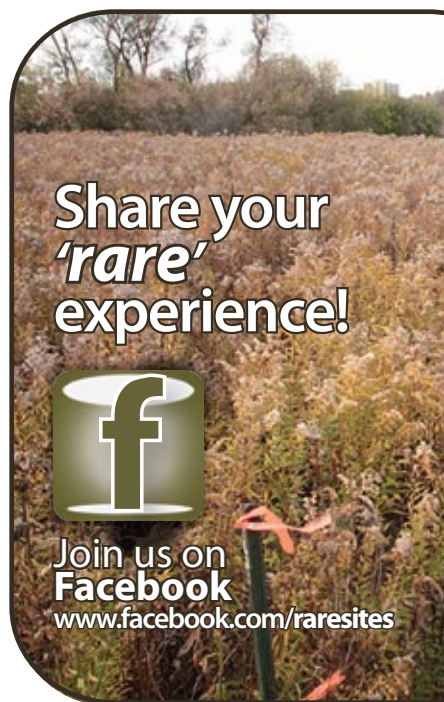
streamlining volunteer stewardship efforts on the property. Over the past two years, the list of volunteer land stewards has continued to grow, and volunteers have improved and protected *rare* through many projects, including trail monitoring and maintenance, tree planting, native seed collection, boardwalk installation, and ecological monitoring.

As we celebrate *rare's* 10th birthday, we celebrate every acre, every habitat, and every species that will forever be protected on our 900+ acres. Jane Jacobs told *rare* in 2004 that we needed to build a “hornet’s nest” of supporters, ready to defend and protect the lands against any threat. After only 10 brief years, *rare's* hornet’s nest is strong and growing, not just defending, but also enhancing these precious lands.

Share your
‘rare’
experience!



Join us on
Facebook
www.facebook.com/raresites



Indian Woods -Shadows of Winter. Photo by Peter Kelly.

10th Anniversary

Open House and Snowshoe Outing – Happy Birthday *rare*!

Come join us on **Sunday, December 4, 2011**
to celebrate *rare's* 10th Anniversary.

Event Times:

1:00 to 5:00 PM – drop in for cake and conversation

1:00 to 3:00 PM – snowshoe or hike along the trail with
Matt Lawson, *rare* Manager of Education

Meetup Location:

The *rare* Administration Centre,
1679 Blair Road in Cambridge

Come learn more about *rare* – past, present and future. A schedule of formal remarks will be announced closer to the date. If you wish to partake in our snowshoe outing, please register in advance by calling (519) 650-9336 ext. 125 to ensure we have enough snowshoes.

Meet at the Administration Centre and the group will head out together. Please be sure to watch our website for any updates to this event at www.raresites.org.

Agriculture at *rare*

By Amanda Newell
Gardens & Building Projects Manager, *rare* Charitable Research Reserve

What is a farm? It's more than fields growing crops. Some farms have livestock too. The ones I grew up with have hedgerows, and tracts of forests, and water features such as streams, ponds, wetlands and sometimes rivers. They have lanes, out-buildings, houses, and an office. They sometimes have a greenhouse, and most have flower and vegetable gardens. They are managed and supported by people who care for the land they depend upon. They feed people. They are part of a community.

How is *rare* different from this description? It's not! Since the area was settled in the mid-1800s, the estate lands now called *rare* were worked to be agriculturally productive. They've supported prize winning horses and cattle breeds, grains, and fruit trees. Although business models and focuses have changed over the decades, there has been a steady vision to manage the lands in a way that incorporates the overall ecological integrity of the area since the charity began stewardship in 2001.

Beyond the 179 acres that are currently worked by a local farmer, *rare* is a farm and more. Wide hedgerows reminiscent of yesteryears are being conserved and restored, not only because they are beautiful, but because they support biodiversity and soil health. Tracts of forests once used for fuel and lumber are now protected in perpetuity, able to be enjoyed by walking the trails. Waterways are restored and studied. Lanes lead to research and garden plots, and buildings for staff and educational resources. Our office in historical Lamb's Inn is the brain of it all. Ideas, knowledge, and opportunities are cultivated here by staff, advisers, visitors, volunteers, and other members of the greater *rare* community.

Through a little trial and error, *rare* has found a way to preserve agricultural heritage, support sustainability in food systems, meet organizational goals, and involve community members in a meaningful way. In 2002 and 2003, the beginnings of an organic farm got underway, and in 2004 and 2005 vegetables and herbs were being produced and sold through farmers' markets and a Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) program. In 2006, the CSA moved to Springbank Farms, and continued through the 2007 season. At this point, it was clear that although *rare* was serving the community and the environment through the production of ecologically responsible food, the effort was taking up too many resources to meet education and community involvement goals.

At the end of the 2007 season, the CSA was retired and new plans were underway to create a



Tomatoes await their harvest at the Community Gardens of *rare*'s Springbank Farm. Photo by Barry Finnen.

bustling hub of activity focused on nature, gardening, and local food at Springbank Farms. Today there are 70 community garden plots worked by friends and neighbours, as well as education and demonstration gardens planted and tended by students from all over the Waterloo Region. The landscape of Springbank allows *rare* to share the land with people invested in its well-being and provides a beautiful setting to inspire and teach visitors.

Aside from Springbank, *rare* is now in a position to consider deeply how agriculture will be managed in the future, especially as it relates to conservation of biodiversity. There is much work to be done in the world regarding sustainable food systems and ecology, and *rare* is very excited about future research projects, partnerships, and undertakings that will lead and be a model in the Region and beyond.

A Decade of Fundraising: It All Adds Up

By Patti Leather
Director of Development and Community Relations,
rare Charitable Research Reserve

Our 10th Birthday! Happily, I've been at **rare** for eight of those years. As I look at your name, along with hundreds of others, scrolling by on our supporters and friends list, I am overwhelmed by the amazing support that has preserved nearly 1,000 acres of natural landscape in the midst of one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the country.

We all have our reasons for appreciating what is **rare**. I can take a break from my desk by going for a stroll on trails that pass trees over 240 years old or bring Maya and Will out on the weekend to help with the gardens and learn about food. But there is Roger in California who isn't close enough to visit, but thought his donation dollars could still help. There are Paul and Rita Ross whose children are now working or in University and weekend visits are full of activities that don't often allow for calm walks but who understand the importance of the Reserve for the community and its children. George is an avid birder. Janet makes donations each December in honour of her children's teachers. And there is Ruby McMullen who at 94 can still drive out for a visit, but she says her trail-walking days are over. I could fill many pages with names and widely-varying circumstances but they all have one thing in common – each and every one of the more than 1,000 donors have made or continue to make gifts to **rare** to ensure these lands are here for our environment's health and our community's quality of life.

With autumn now here, and all the school groups visiting, it seems time to provide you with a Report Card of how we've done so far on our major campaign, **rare: A Natural Investment**, with its goal of \$17 million.

That goal of \$17 million may seem awfully big but, as with most big jobs, once broken down into a series of smaller jobs it becomes less daunting. Over the past 10 years we've had a series of mini-campaigns. And when I tell you how much all those successfully-completed goals have added up to, I think you will be as encouraged as all of us at **rare** are.

Do you remember the "**rare** to me" campaign? It projected colourful images of diversity and health that are at the basis of our programs and it allowed us to create a website so that many of you could provide input and respond to the many threats to the lands. Or perhaps you first got involved when we asked for help to buy Lamb's Inn? Once the first stagecoach building in Upper Canada, this historic landmark has become our Village Hub, allowing us to provide a gathering place without building on the sensitive lands of the Reserve. For sure you will recall last Fall's major push to raise the funds



Posters from the "**rare** to me" campaign of 2005.

necessary to buy the 93 acres that now provide a buffer to Indian Woods, our old-growth forest.

So where are we now? The flow of recent gifts coming in to support our September 25th 2011 Walk for **rare** are moving us closer every day to \$10.5 million. That's right: well over half-way there. And the mini-campaign in progress now is to *Open the Door to Environmental Education* and help us get *Every Child Outdoors* through our *Chain of Learning*, one that begins with the most senior scientists who do research on the property, providing insights and the next set of questions in a wide variety of ecological fields and then extends meaningful experiences in nature to all citizens.

With your help, **rare: A Natural Investment** is doing just that.

Overview to Date:

- \$10.5 million raised from more than 1,000 individual donors
- Over \$2.5 million spent to date to secure and preserve ecologically significant lands
- Supported Smart Growth & Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes
- Funded operations since 2001
- Purchased the historic Lamb's Inn & invested in major repairs
- Developed and are expanding robust research, education and community programs

Trillium Grant a Major Boost as *rare* Launches ECO Centre \$1.7 Million Campaign

The *rare* Charitable Research Reserve is pleased to announce that the Ontario Trillium Foundation Community Capital Fund has contributed \$500,000 toward a \$1.7 million fundraising campaign to transform an 1840s Slit Barn and Companion Farmhouse on Blair Road into the *rare* ECO Centre. When finished, this new facility will serve as an education resource centre to expand and create environmentally-focused year-round programming for designed to reach populations of all ages and education levels, providing a way for members of our broader community to connect with Ontario's natural environment. Programs include: *Every Child Outdoors*; An Agricultural Mentorship Program for New Canadians; and Peer-Reviewed Research.

"The support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation is an incredible boost to our \$1.7 million dollar fundraising campaign, bringing our raised to date total to \$1.1 million," said Keith Ainsworth, *rare's* current Board Chair. "Our campaign team is rolling up their sleeves and we are confident that the community will assist us in raising the remaining \$600,000 dollars needed to finish the project."

The Campaign Team

Joining the *rare* ECO Centre fundraising campaign team as Honourary Co-Chairs, are Mayor Doug Craig of Cambridge and Mayor Rob Deutschmann of North Dumfries Township and Community Co-Chairs, the families of Gerald and Carol Ann Achtymichuk and Paul and Rita Ross.



Eyes of wonder: Josie, a young land steward in the making, participates at *rare's* 2011 ECO Summer Camp. Photo by Brittany Slugoski.

A Transformation
begins with all of us.



Donate online at www.raresites.org or use your smart phone QR Reader app to scan this code and make your donation directly from our site!



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:

At *rare*, we respect your privacy and value your support. We carefully treat all personal information according to applicable Canadian privacy legislation. Please contact 519-650-9336 ext. 118 if you no longer wish to receive information from *rare*.

Charitable tax receipts will be issued for all gifts of \$10 or more and upon request for gifts under \$10. Charitable number 877 5914 RR0001

Board of Directors

Keith Ainsworth, Chair of the Board; retired CEO former Chairman, COM DEV International
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Paul Koch, Marketing & Management Consultant; Civic Entrepreneur
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Brett Woodman, Terrestrial and Wetland Biologist, Natural Resource Solutions Inc.

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Seyern Cullis-Suzuki, Environmental activist; speaker; television host; author
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Christopher Giesler, Teacher, Southwood Secondary School

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

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Hugh Thompson, President, Cambridge Towel; CEO Thompson Centre for Art and Design

Volunteer and Consulting Advisors

Ken Dance, President, Dance Environmental Inc.
Joy Roberts, retired, Consultant and Community Volunteer



Contact Us!

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

Phone: (519) 650-9336
 Toll Free: 1-866-927-3866
 Fax: (519) 650-5923
 Email: rare@raresites.org
 Website: www.raresites.org

Staff

Susan Whelan, Executive Director
Holly Dodds, Ecological Monitoring Intern
Nancy Duffy, Communications Consultant
Julia Marko Dunn, Land Steward (maternity leave)
Peter Kelly, Research Director
Matthew Lawson, Manager of Education
Patti Leather, Director of Development & Community Relations
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