



Winter 2014

New executive director for *rare*

After an exhaustive search, we welcomed Dr. Stephanie Sobek-Swant who joined *rare* as Executive Director on January 6.

Stephanie holds a PhD degree in biodiversity and ecology from the University of Göttingen in Germany. She worked as a research associate and project manager at the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum in Berlin before moving to Canada where she held research positions at the universities of Waterloo and Western and was most recently teaching at Ryerson University.

Her experience as a biodiversity researcher will be invaluable in her work at *rare* as the charity works to achieve its vision of becoming an internationally-known environmental institution.

"My experience, early in my education, as an exchange student at the University of Victoria inspired me to want to return to Canada," says Sobek-Swant, who now lives with her husband and young daughter in Kitchener. "The position at *rare* is an exciting opportunity for me, since it

combines my love of research and education with what I view to be essential work in the community, helping to bridge the gap between what science discovers and what citizens need to know to make informed decisions about how they lead their lives for a more sustainable future. The staff and advisors I have met at *rare* have accomplished a lot in just 12 years and I look forward to contributing to their efforts."



Dr. Stephanie Sobek-Swant joined *rare* in January as the organization's new Executive Director. Photo courtesy of S. Sobek-Swant.



Inside This Issue

International Ambassadors' projects	2
Understanding land trusts	3
Research at <i>rare</i>	4-5
Bobolinks abound	6
Social media and <i>rare</i>	7
Monthly giving	8
<i>rare</i> bits	9
Nature Notes	10
Volunteer spotlight	11
Leadership	12

CANADA	POSTES
POST	CANADA
Postage paid	Port payé
Lettermail	Poste-lettres

Big projects from bright minds

By Patti Leather

What do water issues in China and *rare* have in common? What about signs of climate change in the Arctic and *rare*? Or art exhibits exploring big environmental themes? BRIGHT MINDS, that's what.

Wherever you find big challenges in environmental issues you often find creative thinkers ready to tackle them. Since its inception, *rare* has attracted the involvement and leadership of folks with broad training, experiences and reach who understand the importance of the work *rare* is doing locally and what it can contribute much further afield. We gain knowledge from those bright minds and they support *rare* in its vision.

Take *rare*'s leadership, for example. They deepen and enrich the global conversation about key conservation and environmental subjects. Here then is a synopsis of the recent work of two of *rare*'s Ambassadors and a Campaign Cabinet member.

Edward Burtynsky, *Photographer and Film-Maker*

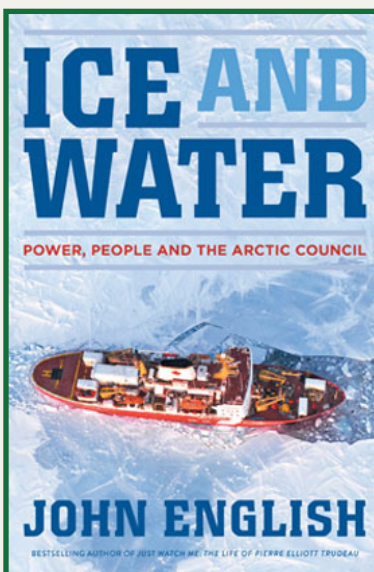


WATERMARK. If you haven't seen this film, you have an awe-inspiring experience ahead of you. Watermark is a visual exploration of global stories about water and our relationship to it. A documentary without much dialogue, the stunning cinematography speaks for itself. Imagine 30 million people all going to bathe in the Ganges River at one time. That's pretty much the entire population of Canada - and it's hauntingly serene. You'll see unprecedented access to large industrial hydroelectric projects in China, as well as dramatic footage of a completely manicured landscape in California.

WATER, the companion book explores this subject in a coffee-table format you can ponder time and again, digesting its imagery. The pictures, often shot from a bird's eye view, are sometimes hard to recognize at first. How man can't live without water, how we manipulate and control water, how water controls us, are just some of the stories told by this beautiful work of art.

Toronto Film Critics Association recently awarded WATERMARK the 2013 Rogers Best Canadian Film Award.

John English, *Director of the Bill Graham Centre for the Study of Contemporary International History*



Historian, distinguished professor and best-selling biographer, John English, has a new book, **ICE AND WATER: Politics, Peoples, and the Arctic Council** chronicling the Canadian government's role and mind-set in the mid-90s as the Arctic Council was established. In a geographic region that is both resource-rich and environmentally fragile, where we could easily detect the first signs of climate change, English tells a lively story

of the council's history and goes on to explore the federal government's attitude towards the Arctic in 2013, the first year Canada is council chair.

Says Dr. English: "Chairing the Arctic Council represents a real opportunity for Canada to show leadership in a region whose importance to global affairs is rapidly increasing."

David Buckland, *Artist and Founder of Cape Farewell*

What does
Culture have
to do with
Climate
Change?
Everything.

Carbon
14

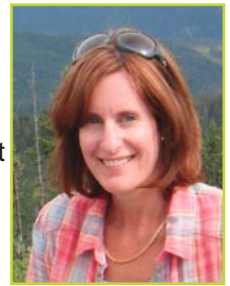
**Climate
is Culture**

UK artist David Buckland founded Cape Farewell, a project to explore climate change that led artists, scientists and educators on expeditions to the Arctic. Some might remember that *rare* provided opportunity for two Canadian high school students to participate in one of those voyages a few years ago. Cape Farewell's latest project is Carbon 14: Climate is Culture. On now through February 2014, Carbon 14, the exhibit and festival is a collaboration between scientists, cultural informers and artists confronting the realities of climate change.

See bottom of page 3

Protecting the land we love - the many faces of land trusts in Ontario

By Thea Silver



A recent botanical survey of a 1,250-acre property in eastern Ontario found more than 50 species of plants considered uncommon in the county, including two that had never before been reported in the area.

Southwest of Thunder Bay, a 108-acre property, surrounding a 32-acre lake, includes high cliffs and wetlands. The property also contains unique pictographs dating back hundreds of years.

West of London, a small 15-acre Carolinian woodland includes Sugar Maple, American Beech, Black Walnut, Basswood, Ironwood and Black Cherry and the endangered Butternut.

What do these properties all have in common? They have each been protected in their natural state thanks to the efforts and foresight of local land trusts. One has been purchased by the land trust, another donated to it, and another still protected by a binding conservation easement with the landowner. Yet, they are all conserved by the land trust for benefit of future generations.



At *rare*, over 900 acres of land are being protected, in perpetuity.

So what are land trusts? In simple terms, they are charitable organizations that own and/or manage lands and waters for conservation purposes. But that definition does not truly illustrate the scope of Ontario's land trusts. Land trusts are as varied as the lands they protect. Usually called trusts, heritage foundations, or conservancies, they are often grassroots and community-driven organizations

that represent the diversity of visions that exist in their communities. Some focus on conserving biodiversity across large eco-regions; others concentrate solely on one special place in their community. Some set lands aside purely for nature protection; others use conservation lands as a vehicle for education and public outreach. Some are staffed organizations; others are purely volunteer-run. No matter what the approach, though, land trusts are bound together by a desire and a commitment to see special places conserved for the long-term.

One such organization is the *rare* Charitable Research Reserve. Often not thought of as a typical land trust, *rare* owns and manages over 900 acres of contiguous conservation land in Waterloo Region. The expansive property contains a diversity of habitats and is home to much wildlife. To complement its conservation mandate, *rare* has emerged as a local leader in environmental education, scientific research and outdoor recreation.

The reserve is part of a family of organizations belonging to the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA). OLTA's 35 land-trust members own and manage upwards of 80,000 acres across the province, and engage countless supporters and volunteers in their efforts. OLTA aims to enhance their impact through training and education programs; by promoting networking and information-sharing, by delivering granting programs to support on the ground work; and by being an effective voice for land trusts and conservation province-wide.



With many of Ontario's most important ecological lands being privately-owned, land trusts have a unique role to play. As private community-based organizations, they are well positioned to work with landowners and other stakeholders to realize shared objectives. But achieving conservation in Ontario requires the involvement of all - landowners, private citizens, corporations, governments, conservation authorities, and non-profits. We are all but cogs in a wheel. By working together, we will achieve a lasting legacy for all to enjoy.

Thea Silver is the Executive Director of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, www.olta.ca

Where to learn more about *Big projects from bright minds* (previous page)

WATERMARK is playing at theatres across Canada. For WATER, check online for select book sale locations. Or, *rare* has two copies for sale for \$100; contact Patti to purchase at 519-650-9336 x118.

Ice and Water is published by Penguin Canada and available at bookstores everywhere, but especially at Wordsworth Books and The Bookshelf.

For a full description of Carbon 14 and the festival events schedule, visit: www.capefarewellfoundation.com/projects/carbon-14

Spotlight on research: local action - global issues

By Bob Burt

The world can be a scary place. Sea levels are rising, Arctic ice caps are melting, agriculture patterns are changing and we are facing more frequent and more violent storms than ever. Massive floods and hurricanes are taking their toll.

Blame all of that on climate change.

Add to that concerns about species of animals and plants going extinct, forests dying off and inadequate supplies of water in many parts of the world. The problems are of a global scale, but the consequences are real - for us, our children and our grandchildren.

At risk are the mix of trees in forests like Indian Woods, the quality and quantity of water in rivers like the Grand, groundwater supplies and for that matter just about everything in nature that we hold special.

At **rare**, we find ourselves at the centre of a movement searching for community solutions to global problems. Ongoing research being conducted at **rare** seeks to provide an understanding of the problems, and in some cases points to solutions. In this issue, we pay tribute to our researchers and shine a light on the work some of them are doing.

Controlling an invasive species

Gwyneth Govers, an M.Sc at UW, is trying to determine how Bloodroot can be used to control the spread of Garlic Mustard. Her work will be important for the future of home gardens, woodlots and crops grown in Waterloo Region.



Researcher, Gwyn Govers, digs a pitfall trap. Photo by J. Quinn.

Simply put, Garlic Mustard makes changes to the soil, posing a threat to orchids and Carolinian species considered rare in Canada. "These are iconic members of Waterloo Region and have enormous ecological and cultural significance," Govers says.

Small but vital

Brent Seuradge's project aims to provide insight into the importance of soil systems by identifying new microorganisms and characterizing their function. His work will examine microbial changes that occur in the soil following agricultural use.



Researcher, Brent Seuradge, digs a soil pit in Indian Woods. Photo by Lobb.

"We are microbe hunters, and we hope to shed new light on microorganisms that possess genes and enzymes for potential application in medicine and biotechnology."

Brent is an M.Sc candidate studying at UW.

Maintaining grasslands

Eric Harvey's work at **rare** looks at what it takes to maintain natural grassland ecosystems and how they can regenerate after decades of intensive agriculture. Understanding factors that affect pollinator and insect diversity and the effect of habitat fragmentation on plant-insect interactions are questions key to the understanding of the factors that promote biodiversity or lead to collapse.

In recent decades, as much as 99 per cent of Ontario's natural prairies have been lost and with it the culture and economic benefits they provide. Habitat destruction and fragmentation are the main threats to biodiversity worldwide.

Eric is a Ph.D. candidate at University of Guelph and works with Andrew MacDougall, a faculty member.



Researcher, Eric Harvey, tills Sparrow Field to prepare for his Tallgrass Project.

Spotlight on research (continued)

Environmental stewardship

Janette Kingsbury is examining how environmental stewardship groups in the Grand River Watershed affect decision-making and water management. Those groups will have an even greater role in the future when it comes to issues such as deforestation and loss of habitat.

Janette is a University of Waterloo M.ES candidate.

Don't forget the soil

Martin Kastner is interested in determining what soil treatments can play helpful roles in restoring plant communities in meadows. Kastner's work is at the intersection of a number of trends: abandonment of agricultural land, urbanization, habitat fragmentation and decreases in grassland habitat and pollinator populations.

Martin is completing a M.Sc. at the University of Waterloo.

Understanding pollinators

Tom Woodcock's research strives to develop and improve methods for monitoring and detecting problems with pollination in a variety of systems. That's important for food security particularly in light of current difficulties in the honeybee industry.

Tom is a faculty member at the University of Guelph and is associated with the Canadian Pollination Initiative.

All about water quality

Fereidoun Rezanehad, a University of Waterloo Assistant Professor, and his team chose Bauman Creek as a site to study the transformation of nutrient elements and metals as groundwater flows from the creek to the Grand River.

By monitoring and sampling the groundwater for chemical constituents, the project will provide critical information

about groundwater quality, an important topic in Waterloo Region, one of the largest users of groundwater in Canada.

The results will allow the development of more robust models to predict regional nutrient levels in river basins and their response to land use changes, increased groundwater extraction and climate change.

He is joined in his work by Philippe Van Cappellen, a Canada Excellence Research Chair and Amanda Niederkorn a M.Sc. candidate.



M.Sc. candidate, Amanda Niederkorn, installs a piezometer at Bauman Creek.

A great spot for research

Researchers see the **rare** reserve as playing a vital role in the work they do. They find **rare** to be a great place to carry out their research and conduct experiments because the property is large, relatively undisturbed, contains a mature old-growth forest and is located close to area universities. With the completion of researcher accommodations at the **rare ECO Centre**, researchers from great distances can more easily take advantage of the exceptional research opportunities available.

The physical attributes and location of the property are critical, but researchers are quick to praise **rare**'s scientific staff for being both supportive and knowledgeable and always willing to help advance research.

**Mark your calendar:
The 2014 Research Forum
is Saturday, May 4**



Researchers at **rare** presented their work to the public at the 2013 Research Forum held at the **rare ECO Centre** in April.

From left to right: Fereidoun Rezanehad, Martin Kastner, Tom Woodcock, Kyla Ercit, David Punzalan, Eric Harvey and Stefan Schneider. Photo by S. Perry.

Creating Bobolink habitat

By Katherine McLeod

In mid-May 2013, a bird flies over a hayfield in the southwest corner of **rare** lands. It is a medium-sized songbird, black with a white back and yellow patch on the back of the neck. It is a male and its flight is an aerial display announcing the breeding season has begun and a nesting female is near. He is one of several Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) observed. This is a species at risk in Ontario, and in these flights, the Bobolink announces the success of a strategy devised in 2006.



The arrival of the Bobolink in the hayfield at **rare** has announced that something about this field is right. Photo by H. Wilson.

This nearly 40-acre hayfield had been in active agriculture for many years, in **rare**'s time rotating through wheat, clover, corn, and beans. Starting in 2004, planting was done to enhance the hedgerows and buffer at the north end and east side. At the end of 2005, the crop was harvested and it was decided that the field should be allowed to naturalize. The initial 2006 growth season saw the plants typical of early succession, plants that do well at dispersing and invading newly disturbed lands. Because of these characteristics, some early successional plants are often described negatively as weeds. Native plants or not, some plants may not be a welcome sight by neighbours.

A plan was needed to allow regeneration, but ensure the vegetation excluded annoyance species. Lauren Cymbaly, a co-op student from the University of Waterloo, met with Larry Lamb, a renowned botanist and then **rare** Environmental Advisory Committee member, and our tenant farmer, Brian Domm, and devised a mixture of seed to send this field to hay with a combination of grassland species that would deter plants commonly seen as weeds from establishing. In the spring of 2007, a seed mixture of common alfalfa, orchard grass, brome grass, and perennial rye grass was planted, with a crop of hay to be cut once a year. The hayfield flourished over the subsequent years, allowing **rare** to continue on good relations with our neighbours, and the hay to be of use to the farmer.

But it became more. The Bobolink nesting this year means that it is not just a hayfield, it is breeding habitat. Songbirds such as Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark are birds of the grasslands, nesting in prairie, savannah, alvar grassland, meadow, and burned-over lands. With European settlement in Ontario and the disappearance of native habitat, the Bobolink adapted their breeding habitat to the use of pasture and hayfields. However, in the last 10 years, the populations of Bobolink have declined due to loss of these fields and changes in hayfield composition and management. In 2010, Bobolink was listed as threatened by COSEWIC, The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife In Canada.

The arrival of Bobolink in the hayfield at **rare** has announced that something about this field is right and we now have a great opportunity to look at this pressing grassland bird conservation issue. This hayfield will become a site for research on the vegetative composition and hayfield management regime needed for both the maintenance of grassland bird populations and our farmers.

We would like to thank the Toyota Motor Manufacturing Company (TMMC) employees for their hard work in planting over 1,000 plants to rehabilitate habitat in the Cliffs and Alvars section of **rare**, and for the expansion of our community gardens this past September.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Region of Waterloo Community Environment Fund in providing funds for this project.



Employees from TMMC dedicated hours of hard work planting at **rare** this past fall.



The power of social media



THANK YOU
for voting in September
on Facebook
to make us the
**CANADIAN
WINNER** of the
Gardens For Good
organic garden grant
to help further our project
and feed our community.

**WE WON
\$15,000!**

Feed Your Community.
Apply for a \$15,000 organic garden grant

Gardens for Good

It's easy to keep up-to-date with all the latest news and events at **rare** and make an invaluable difference in helping us spread the word about our most recent conservation, research and education efforts. Simply visit **rare** using any of these social media platforms:



Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/raresites



Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/raresites



Watch related videos on YouTube: www.youtube.com/raresites

Link to all of our social media directly from our home page at
www.raresites.org



Charitable Research Reserve

rare's Vision

To offer the community, including the international community and future generations, a natural area, protected intact and in perpetuity.

rare's Mission

The reserve's natural landscape is a common possession set aside for its ecological value and to provide unprecedented opportunities in ecological and cultural research, education, and passive recreation. Our work will be a model for others.

A Natural Investment

A *Natural Investment* is **rare's** campaign. Our goal is \$17 million - needed to preserve the 900+acre nature reserve, intact and in perpetuity. To date, over \$12 million has already been raised from over 1500 donors giving gifts of all sizes. However you contribute, your support as a donor helps us reach our goals and shows others how important the environment is to our community.

rare offerings

There are a number of ways to connect with **rare**, such as hiking our trails, participating in children's environmental education programs, partaking in nature programs, joining the community gardens or conducting a research study. Contact us to learn more today!

2014 WALK for rare

SAVE THE DATE: **SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 28**



Photos by D. Crowell

Get involved!

For information on how to become a **2014 Walk for rare** corporate sponsor or participant, call Patti at 519-650-9336 x.118 or email patti.leather@raresites.org today!

The Bedrock Club – providing a solid foundation for *rare*, for now and the future

If we've learned one lesson over the years at *rare*, we've learned a thousand. But one that hits close to home for me is our need to connect with people. Does the community know that they have a nature reserve of over 900 acres in their back yard? How do we ensure people know the trails are open to the public? Is there a better way to explain why the environmental research that takes place at *rare* is so critical to how we manage the lands or that it contributes to a broader, global body of scientific knowledge that puts this Region on the map and influences decision-makers on all matters ecological? Do parents really understand the *Every Child Outdoors* program that their children partake in here at *rare* or why we deliver it in the unique way that we do?

I can't point to any real evidence beyond the anecdotal to suggest why I think this, but it seems to be that through a long, consistent effort to reach out to the community, the tides are changing and the awareness of *rare* is growing. Thank you for your part in helping to make that happen.

As *rare* marks 12 years it can be staggering to consider how much *rare* has accomplished in that time. It is even more inspiring how supportive our community is. As I've said many times, without the community (that's You!), the Reserve and *rare*'s programs would be quite different. But this is not the time to ease up or slow down. With over 900 acres preserved, restoration projects underway, education centres opening and children's winter programming happening for the first time, there is much to be done. There's no rest for the weary as they say!

What's important to note is that *rare* is thoughtful and strategic about its work and the projects we undertake;

we can be because of a growing base of support, at all levels, that is regular and consistent, and highly needed.

That support comes from treasured members of our Bedrock Club who give monthly or annual donations which are the foundation of our charity's ability to fulfill its vision. These gifts to *rare*, entrusted to us by our supporters, enable the organization to be strategic, innovative and responsive as we move forward. These donations, to our most pressing needs, are critical to our sustainability.

Would you consider joining our Bedrock Club by signing up as a monthly donor right now? Or, can you renew your annual support this year?

It's easy to do. Simply tear off and mail back the completed donor card below. Thank you for considering what you can do and making that donation today. Every gift makes a big difference.

With warm regards,
Patti Leather



P.S. If you are considering a first-time gift to *rare*, consider the tax benefits. Last year, the federal government introduced a First-time Donor's Super Credit (FDSC) for taxpayers who have not claimed a tax credit since 2007. The FDSC increases the normal Charitable Donor Tax Credit on gifts between \$200-\$1000. And with tax season just around the corner, now is the perfect time for gift-giving.

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 send me information about planned giving.

☐ 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 87761 5914 RR0001



It's official: the **rare ECO Centre** celebrated its grand opening and has already been put to good use for community events, research accommodation, and school programming.



On hand to help **rare** celebrate the Community Roots food bank gardens, a **New Horizons** project, were (L to R) Regional Chair, Ken Seiling; **rare** volunteer, Allister Thorne; Executive Director of the Cambridge Self Help Food Bank, Pat Singleton; MP of Cambridge-North Dumfries, Gary Goodyear; **rare** Gardens Coordinator, Dan Radoslav; Mayor of North Dumfries, Rob Deutschmann; and Mayor of Cambridge, Doug Craig.



Opening its doors to the public for Waterloo Region's Doors Open, **rare** welcomed over 300 individuals to see the newly renovated **ECO Centre** and North House, despite the rainy weather.



15 participants braved the rainy weather to hike with Western University's Greg Thorn on the hunt for interesting mushroom specimens, which included False Turkey Tail (Bracket Fungi), a Giant Puff Ball and Lemon Drops (Cup Fungi).



In 2013, **rare**'s Community Roots Food Bank Garden grew 2353 lbs of fresh produce for the Cambridge Self Help Food Bank.



Can't wait for upcoming winter school programming! Call Gerrit at (519) 650-9336 ext.123 for more information!



The landscape at **rare** may be seasonally predictable and reassuring, or surprisingly unpredictable and uplifting, but no one enjoys **rare** more than Ruth, Jerry and John. Their interest and enthusiasm for the natural world has them returning weekly, some times daily, possibly

hourly to observe what **rare** offers. To enjoy **rare** the way they do, in the words of writer-naturalist, Jennifer Ackerman, "You can't hope for quick or easy fluency. You work from the outside in, by accumulating a vocabulary of observed details. You learn where things happen in the rhythmic revolution of the days and the years..." Consider these "observed details":

In June, Ruth Kroft discovered a RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD nest along the Grand Trunk Trail through **rare** – an exceptional sighting, for despite its nesting throughout Southern Ontario, this tiny, well-camouflaged nest is extremely difficult to find.

The first-of-the-season northwest streamers off Lake Huron that bring the mixed precipitation of October and November increases Jerry Guenther's visits to **rare**'s trails. This October, the first chill of the fall brought these noteworthy migrants: SHORT-EARED OWL, the first documented sighting for **rare**; a dark-morph ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK, an annual, uncommon visitor; and a juvenile NORTHERN GOSHAWK, the fourth sighting since 2001.

Even though snow cover curtails his archeological exploration, John Macdonald continues his ground searches at **rare**. This year, John spotted the tracks of bobcat in March and cougar tracks in early April. Regular walks have their discoveries and rewards for the experienced eye.

Following the sightings in late May and early June of BOBOLINK and EASTERN MEADOWLARK in South Field, members of the **rare** bird monitoring team and **rare** staff developed a monitoring protocol and hay-mowing schedule approved by Brian Domm Farms Inc, lessee of South Field. These efforts resulted in the first known documentation of successful breeding of BOBOLINK at **rare**. Observations of male territorial behaviour, females with food, feeding young and fledged young confirmed breeding.

More than a dozen GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS were observed this breeding season at **rare** with reports from bird monitors, banders and community gardener, Sophie Gibbs. This species was first documented at **rare** during the breeding season in 2009.

Species of snake reported in August and September include DEKAY'S BROWNSNAKE, EASTERN GARTER, SMOOTH

GREEN and MILK. LEOPARD FROGS were underfoot along bird monitoring transects though not counted; EASTERN PAINTED TURTLES and SNAPPING TURTLES were also reported.

During visits to **rare** in October by Jason Bracey's environmental

science class from Southwood Secondary School, students observed STAR-NOSE MOLE, COOPER'S HAWK and an impressive murder of AMERICAN CROWS (150+).

One of the notable features of the **rare** landscape this fall was the Tall Grass Prairie on Blair Flats, a long-term research study by Dr. Andrew MacDougall, University of Guelph. Visually dominant from Blair Road this fall were the shiny waves of golden-brown INDIAN GRASS.

Sightings of GREAT BLUE HERON are made daily at **rare**. Bird monitors, Marco and Donna DeBruin, also tallied GREEN HERON and AMERICAN BITTERN this fall. GREAT EGRETS were observed about the confluence in summer with a maximum of eight in mid-August.

Ruth Kroft counted 900 CANADA GEESE and 200 MALLARDS on recently harvested Soybean fields at **rare**. With corn harvested during the last week of October, large numbers will feed in these fields as well.

While counting wintering waterfowl arrivals in late October, Bill Wilson observed three NORTHERN RIVER OTTERS upstream of the confluence.

Birdbanding at **rare** under federal license completed its sixth fall season in 2013. Hi-lites for banders Kevin Grundy and Georg Hentsch included PHILADELPHIA VIREO (two) and WILSON'S WARBLER (one) – first fall records for **rare** – and PURPLE FINCH (October 6) – a first. A WARBLING VIREO first banded at **rare** as a hatch-year bird on May 9, 2010, was re-trapped this fall.



A baby snapping turtle seen during monitoring season was noted to be not much larger than a **rare** button - only one inch in diameter. Photo by C. Pope.



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.

Dave Smith: a *rare* man indeed

By Louise Harnett

If you are a frequenter of Springbank Gardens, chances are that you have spent time chatting with *rare* volunteer, Dave Smith – that is, if he wasn't busy building, painting, weeding, trimming, or harvesting. But even then, he probably had time to share some of his passions and interests with you.

Nearly five years ago, this Scarborough native who calls Galt home began volunteering at *rare* after being introduced to the organization at a City of Cambridge green strategy initiative. From day one, he was hooked and he hasn't looked back.

For those who know him best, like his wife of nearly 40 years, Cathy, and their two grown sons, this passion shouldn't come as a shock. In 1969, Dave was accepted into the Ontario Energy Resources Management Junior Conservationist Program, an experience he recalls fondly. A couple of years later, he helped build a log cabin on the Pickerel River system which he says "became our favourite family retreat and still is to this day."

Dave believes that if you have a skill to share, you can do so at *rare*. He initially dove in to his volunteer role here as a monitor, reporting the condition of trees along hedgerows and fence lines. He has since spent the last three years trimming back wild vines that would otherwise smother established trees and, along a similar vein of dealing with invasives, testing hogweed control without the use of herbicides. Dave's can-do, handyman attitude has always been forthcoming and has seen him assisting in maintaining the tractor and helping an extension of a much-needed water line to the upper garden plots.



Nothing compares to the joy that Dave feels like the happiness he experienced when he became a grandfather this fall to Logan.



Whether talking directly to Dave or to his friends, you will learn quickly about one of his greatest pleasures: wood-working. A skilled artist in his own right, Dave built a foot-powered lathe that has allowed him to create beautiful Windsor-style chairs and a selection of carved birds. He has been an integral part of the *rare* team on numerous joint efforts such as the rebuilding of both the greenhouse and a bat house, the building of the pavilion, and most recently, the building of a new shed at the gardens.

The large scale projects are amongst Dave's favourite aspects of volunteering at *rare*. Common with volunteering, these experiences introduced him to a new group of people, each with unique skills, and all with a common goal, who quickly became some of his dearest friends.

Along with these relationships and opportunities to share, it is this landscape that keeps Dave coming back. "It offers a wild place to hike and photograph away from the city," Dave says, adding that the peacefulness, beauty, wildlife and history of the area all add to the experience.

Undoubtedly, you will see Dave here for many years to come. And unquestionably, you will see him sporting an incomparable smile as he introduces his first grandchild, born this past October, to the passions of volunteering and enjoying life at *rare*.

Interested in volunteering at *rare*?

Whether helping at the gardens or with one of our school visits, leading a guided hike or an educational community event, supporting our fundraising efforts or lending a hand with administrative duties, there are many volunteer opportunities at *rare* in which you can become involved. Contact us through the 'Opportunities at *rare*' section of our website, call Louise Harnett at (519) 650-9336 ext. 124 or email Louise at louise.harnett@raresites.org for more details about how you can get involved.

Board of Directors

Keith Ainsworth, Chair of the Board; Electrical Engineer; retired CEO, COM DEV International

Gerald Achtymichuk, Family Physician

Paul Koch, Marketing & Management Consultant; Civic Entrepreneur

Peter Krause, President, Krause Corporate Solutions

Brian McGee, Chartered Accountant; Partner, Zeifman & Company LLP

Angela Tsementzis, Architect; B.E.S. B.Arch, OAA, LEED AP

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)

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

Doug Larson, Professor Emeritus, College of Biological Sciences, University of Guelph

John MacDonald, Archaeologist

Alan Morgan, Professor Emeritus, Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Waterloo

Stephen Murphy, Professor and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies, Environment and Resource Studies, University of Waterloo

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.

International Ambassadors

Michael Barnstijn, retired Partner, RIM; Philanthropist; Musagetes Foundation

David Buckland, Founder, Cape Farewell www.capefarewell.com; Director of Art from a Changing Arctic

Ed Burtynsky, Photographer; Subject of award-winning documentary, *Manufactured Landscapes*

Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Environmental Activist; Speaker; Television host; Author

Ron Dembo, Founder, Zerofootprint www.zerofootprint.net

Louise MacCallum, retired Software Engineer; Philanthropist; Musagetes Foundation

R. Murray Schafer, Composer; Educator; Environmentalist

Sheila O'Donovan, Founder, Lisaard House

Jane Urquhart, Author

Morden Yolles, Multi-award-winning Structural Engineer; Restaurateur; Photographer

Archaeology Committee

Chris Dalton (See previous)

John MacDonald (See previous)

Education Advisory Committee (EDAC)

Jason Bracey, Teacher, Department Head of Geography, Southwood Secondary School

Louise Dawe, retired Teacher; Community volunteer

Christopher Giesler, Teacher, Southwood Secondary School

Research Advisory Committee (RAC)

Doug Larson (See previous)

Stephen Murphy (See previous)

Campaign and Community Cabinet

Keith Ainsworth (See previous)

Sheila Ainsworth, Chair, Lisaard House

John K. Bell, Chairman, The Onbelay Group

Greg Buzbuzian, Owner, Knar Jewellery

Stewart Campbell, BlackTree Capital

John English, Director, Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History, Trinity College/Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

Valerie Hall, President, Stonefields Management Inc.

Ahmad Hammoud, Owner, Salon Butterfly

Jackie Hatherly-Martin, Chartered Accountant, HM Advisors

Keith Martin, Chartered Accountant, HM Advisors

Hulene Montgomery, retired; Consultant to philanthropic and community organizations; Community volunteer

Douglas McMullen, retired; Community volunteer

David Mitten, Executive Director, Siding and Window Dealers Association of Canada

Simon Poladian, Owner, Eagle Towing Equipment

Joy Roberts, retired; Consultant; Community volunteer

Irene Schmidt-Adeney, Writer, Ayr News

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

Volunteer and Consulting Advisors

Bob Burtt, Writer-in-residence

Ken Dance, President, Dance Environmental Inc.

Joy Roberts (See previous)

Contact Us!

Phone: (519) 650-9336

Toll Free: 1-866-927-3866

Fax: (519) 650-5923

Email: rare@rarsites.org

Website: www.rarsites.org



rare Charitable Research Reserve

1679 Blair Road
Cambridge, ON N3H 4R8



www.facebook.com/rarsites



@rarsites



www.youtube.com/rarsites

Staff

Stephanie Sobek-Swant, Executive Director

Roger Oei, Senior Operating Officer

Patti Leather, Director of Development & Community Relations

Katherine McLeod, Director of Research and Education

Shawna Craig, Land Steward

Louise Harnett, Community Engagement and Administrative Coordinator

Gerrit Kamminga, Educator

Jenna Quinn, Research Coordinator

Dan Radoslav, Property Maintenance and Gardens Coordinator

Lora Woolner, Community Development Officer