

The



review

FALL 2014

WATERLOO REGION'S CENTRAL PARK? WHAT IS *rare* TO YOU? BY PATTI LEATHER

Undoubtedly, *rare* is many things – it is an important place, important for different reasons to different people. I've been spending considerable time lately thinking about this. Thinking about what *rare* is to me, to the community, to its donors and volunteers, to the children who visit. In the last issue of the *rare review* (spring 2014), I introduced you to Inge Moore and described why she is so hopeful about a community where *rare* exists. As I gather these stories, I would like to share them with you.

Here then is the next story, in the form of a letter, which describes what *rare* is to John Panabaker.

"Dear Ms. Leather:

Enclosed is my cheque for this year's gift to *rare* from Janet and me. As you know, both Janet and I were born in this area and have lived here for

most of our lives. I was brought up in Preston, and Janet in Blair. Both of us, for example, knew the building that is now *rare's* headquarters as "Nicholson's Tavern" -- in the eyes of our parents "a place of ill-repute".

When you and Stephanie visited us, you asked why I compared the *rare* property to Central Park in New York City.

Several years ago, soon after we had made our first donation to *rare*, we drove along Blair Road, parked near the Slit Barn, and took one of the paths to the river. We sat there for quite a while, taking in the scene. The river was clear and full. There were a few geese upstream. Across the river, only the roofs of a couple of houses in Preston could be seen above the trees. It seemed incredible to me that all around us was an urban region of more than

half a million people. We might have been in some remote rural location.

On that occasion, I thought about a visit I had made to New York City in the early 1950's. Late on a bright Saturday afternoon, I decided to walk across Central Park on my way back to my hotel. During that walk, I came to a large open field. A few kids were kicking a ball around in the distance. There was a low hum of traffic. The towers of the buildings south and east of the park were like a frieze on the horizon above the trees. Otherwise, I was alone in a city of millions of people. It was an experience I have never forgotten.

My feelings on both these occasions were very much the same -- that had come to a natural oasis in the middle of an area that was really a densely populated human environment.

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Cover photography by J. Roberts (Springbank Garden Sunflowers, above) and J. Dillon and J. Moser (Red Tailed Hawk, left)



WATERLOO REGION'S CENTRAL PARK? WHAT IS *rare* TO YOU? (CONTINUED FROM COVER PAGE)

*I am not suggesting that **rare's** future will in any way resemble that of Central Park. I do suggest that **rare** can help to ensure that Waterloo Region remains a livable place for many generations to come. Interestingly, your acreage and that of Central Park are roughly the same -- about 900 acres. However, I see **rare** as having, in many ways, more long-term potential.*

- Within its mandate, the **rare** property has a wonderful variety of environments and potential uses.
- As the extensive gravel pits in North Dumfries, some adjacent to the **rare** properties, become exhausted, the expertise of **rare's** scientists and environmentalists will be important in ensuring that these lands are restored sensitively and productively.

*Integral to the long-term future of the **rare** lands is the preservation of the Grand and Speed Rivers. Today, most of us tend to see the protection of the natural environment as a constant -- and perhaps losing -- battle. However, during my lifetime, the story of the Grand River creates a far different picture.*

In the early and mid-30's, the Grand in summer was little more than an

open sewer. Without flood control, water levels were low. Until the new Kitchener waste treatment facility at Doon was put into operation, the river stank. My family lived on Queen Street (now Queenston) in Preston, near the centre of the town. Even there, on many summer evenings, the stench from the river made it unpleasant to remain outside.

At that time, virtually the only fish in the stretch of the river between Preston and Blair were carp. Never, when we were children, do either Janet nor I recall anyone reporting that a bald eagle had been seen along the river, much less nesting there.


*Better sewage treatment, the creation of the Luther marsh reservoir and the large flood control dam at Fergus transformed this unhappy situation, and helped to make the river the living environment it is today. Without a healthy river, **rare** would be greatly impoverished.*

*I do not claim to be a prophet. But I do know that the existence of healthy rivers and the extensive **rare** property are assets that will be of inestimable value -- not just*

*to Cambridge -- but to the entire region for generations to come, just as Central Park has become the "lungs" of New York City. Sincerely,
John Panabaker"*

To Mr. Panabaker's point about the health of our rivers, a number of water studies are underway by graduate students and researchers at the University of Waterloo. And, as you will read later in this newsletter, **rare** and RBC Bluewater have teamed up to increase the water research happening here and to link youth and water through our *Chain of Learning*. Saving land, on behalf the public, requires hardwork and prudence. The foresight of a few who founded **rare** and were joined by others to save this landscape swath of over 900 acres here in Waterloo Region, has given much, to many. Send me your, "what is **rare** is to me."

John and Janet Panabaker live in Waterloo. They have five children, five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. John is the retired CEO of Mutual Life and during his corporate career sat on many boards. He is an excellent painter and often paints scenes of natural settings that he and Janet have visited.

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

 **YES - I WANT TO SUPPORT** 

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 ("VOID" cheque enclosed)

☐ Credit Card

☐ I am enclosing my one-time gift of:

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 or \$ _____

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 x 118 if you no longer wish to receive information from **rare**.

☐ I have enclosed my cheque payable to:

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

(519) 650-9336
patti.leather@raresites.org
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: _____

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



For Janet Foell, *rare* was initially just a simple placement option provided by her co-op teacher at Huron Heights Secondary School in Kitchener. Although her knowledge of the organization was limited at the time, she was drawn towards the size and location of the property, “nearly 1,000 acres, but in an urban area...how was that even possible?” The beauty of pasture and agricultural space, mixed with forest stands and waterways was enough to seal the deal.

Throughout her co-op term at *rare*, Janet was able to foster her keen interest in botany by acting as a willing participant in the epic battle between invasive and native plant species. During this time, Janet found that she was “very inspired by the people who work and volunteer with *rare*, and that their passion for the environment was so clear, and so infectious.”

Upon completion of her co-op term, Janet along with her mother Cindy, signed on as trail maintenance volunteers. Having grown up on the Bruce Peninsula, mere minutes from the Bruce Trail, Cindy had an appreciation for “just how much effort and care goes into maintaining enjoyable, and well-cleared trails.” In order to attract additional volunteers, the pair even contributed new trail maintenance tools to help the cause.



Cindy and Janet Foell. Photography by G. Kamminga.

This inspirational mother and daughter duo say that *rare's* connection to the sentiments of American author/philosopher Henry David Thoreau “really hit home” as Cindy detailed “how important it is to be connected with nature from a young age and how that transcends one generation to link us all together.”

In addition to her many hours of tending trails, Janet took her dedication even further by becoming a monetary donor; an impressive feat for a recent high school graduate planning for post-secondary schooling. “I understood the value of donations to this charity,

and that we are creative with making donor dollars stretch,” Janet explained, “I feel a deep connection with the value of the land, and the enormous amount of maintenance required to keep the trails free and open to the public.”

In addition to the environmental benefits of their service, for Cindy it was also “about the ability to connect with her daughter at a time in life when connecting with a teenager can be more challenging.” For them, “*rare* was a place that brought them closer, and gave them a really enjoyable, meaningful task to do together while being outside.”



**WALK
AND RUN**
rare
Charitable Research Reserve

JOIN US
**Sunday
September 28**



NEW THIS YEAR: 5K FUN RUN

Register online at raresites.org
\$20 registration fee
Children under 12 walk/run free
BBQ, raffle & entertainment
Grand prizes for top fundraisers
Free technical tee for raising \$100+

GET INVOLVED

Participate, volunteer or become a corporate sponsor
Call Erika (519-650-9336 x 122)
or email erika.kastner@raresites.org

Co-presented by Musagetes Foundation, *rare* and North House



*Eastern Comma invites one Canadian literary writer each year to live for several months in North House, a high-tech, solar-powered, advanced-design residence situated in the natural environment of **rare** Charitable Research Reserve.*



Karen Houle. Photography by Judith Weissmann.

There is a species of butterfly—found often at *rare*—that bears on its wings a writer's best friend: the comma. It flies about the fields of asters and black-eyed susans, flutters in the community garden, and hangs out near puddles on the walking trails. With the comma always at its side, the Eastern Comma butterfly measures the shape of its world—just as the writer does—adding a clause here, inserting an adjective there, offering, with words and dashes and commas, a vision of the world.

That's why this butterfly inspired the name of a new, long-term initiative at *rare*: the Eastern Comma Writer-in-Residence. Each year, starting this September, an accomplished Canadian literary writer will be invited to live and work at North House for three months. During that time, the writer will work on scholarly or literary writing while interacting regularly with the community of people who are present at *rare* including gardeners, educators, students, artists, botanists, ecologists, geologists, archaeologists, and historians.

We're very excited to announce that Karen Houle, a poet and philosopher at the University of Guelph, will be our inaugural writer-in-residence from mid-September to mid-November. Karen is the author of two nationally-acclaimed books of poetry: *Ballast* (House of Anansi Press, 2000) and *During* (Gaspereau Press, 2008). She also published a co-edited anthology, *Hegel and Deleuze: Together Again for the First Time* (Northwestern, 2013, with Dr. Jim Vernon, York University) and a monograph titled *Complexity, Responsibility and Abortion: Toward a New Image of Ethical Thought* (2014). A program of activities will be developed during her residency to create many

opportunities for formal and casual interactions with Karen. North House is literally a house. It was designed and built by architecture students at the University of Waterloo, Ryerson University, and Simon Fraser University as Canada's entry to the prestigious US Department of Energy Solar Decathlon in 2009. With the capacity to produce twice as much energy as it consumes, the high-tech North House is permanently located at *rare* as a research and education facility. While in residence over the next few years, the writers will share their experiences of living in such a leading-edge house, complementing scientific research into the mechanical systems of the building. This will be an invaluable contribution to our understanding of how we might live in the sustainable houses of the future.

The Eastern Comma Writer-in-Residence is a joint initiative of Musagetes and *rare* Charitable Research Reserve, founded by their mutual benefactors, Michael Barnstijn and Louise MacCallum. Musagetes is a philanthropic artistic organization based in Guelph with a mandate to make the arts more central and meaningful in peoples' lives. Working in small cities in Canada, Italy, and Croatia, Musagetes creates intersectoral collaborations between artists and communities. (www.musagetes.ca)

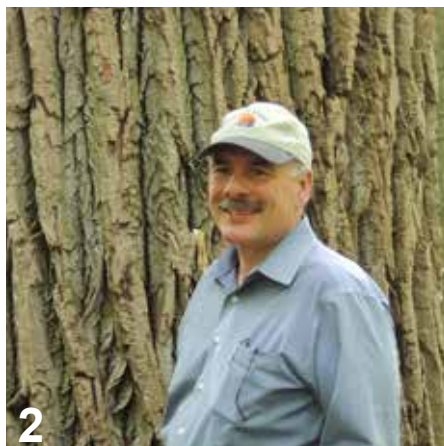
Eastern Comma will immerse writers in the landscapes and environments of *rare* and North House, an oasis literally in the crossroads of conservation, urbanity, industry, high-tech, agriculture, the arts, environmental sustainability, watersheds, gardens, and gravel pits. In addition to the writer-in-residence, Eastern Comma will convene symposia and literary gatherings, organize school trips, and establish post-secondary partnerships. Over the next few years we intend to establish an Eastern Comma publishing program with PS Guelph, a print-on-demand publisher that celebrates ideas and the social life of books.



Eastern Comma butterfly. Photography by J. Reid.



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1. For the first time, kindergarten children experienced *rare's* *Every Child Outdoors* program. Over four days, 140 kindergarten students visited *rare* this spring from Fred A. Hamilton Public school in Guelph for our Animals in Motion program. Photography by J. Quinn.

2. Environmental Commissioner of Ontario Gord Miller, stands next to a Cottonwood tree which was probably planted in 1899 on what was then the carriage-way entrance to Langdon Hall. It is now the Grand Allée trail within the *rare* reserve. The Commissioner was touring with his 11 member Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Photography by J. Quinn.

3. In May and June *rare* welcomed researchers from the Gosling Research Institute for Plant Preservation (GRIPP) headed by Dr. Praveen Saxena. The group is interested in protecting many rare and endangered plants through the development of regeneration techniques using plant tissues and cryopreservation. They were enthusiastic about the wealth of species found at *rare*. Seen in the photo is Dr. Mukund Shukla standing in the GRIPP greenhouses beside yellow lady slipper collected from *rare* that will be used to preserve and study the species. Photography by J. Quinn.

4. In 2014, the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists celebrated their 80th year. The *rare* staff feel fortunate that they elected to host their festivities at *rare*, with guided hikes and a tree planting service joined by representatives of all levels of government. We congratulate the nature club and thank them for their incredible commitment to conserving our natural heritage. Photography by A. Morgan.

5. About 30 Nature Conservancy of Canada staff visited *rare* this spring to help close off unauthorized trails in the Cliffs and Alvars. We started the day with short 'get to know one another' presentations from each organization. Later this fall, *rare* will return the favour and head to an NCC property to support restoration efforts in southern Ontario. Photography by D. Crowell.

6. Fitting that the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation (WRHF) held their 2014 Annual General Meeting in the recently renovated *rare* Slit Barn. The beautifully re-purposed building has wonderful heritage and historical value and is now the charity's main public facility. WRHF has previously and generously supported projects at *rare's* admin office, the designated Lamb's Inn, circa 1837. Photography by K. Elgie.



David Punzalan. Photography by N. Ng.

All across the globe you can find people who are asking life's questions and looking for answers. We call these people scientists, a word that often drums up the image of a white lab coat hunched over a microscope. The truth is that science isn't restricted to the laboratory and scientists come in all kinds. We've decided to help shed the white lab coat by sitting down with a rare researcher and asking a few questions about who he is, rather than what work he is doing.

Q...If you weren't a scientist, what would you choose to be?

A...Wow, a tough one right off the bat. I really don't know. I was definitely interested in science from a young age - among the many 'when I grow up..' things I said back then included "astronaut" and "palaeontologist." However, as I 'grew up,' I was not particularly bent on any particular career path. For example, my undergraduate degree choice (in zoology) was based simply on knowing that biology was fun and that, heck, if someone would give me a degree for having fun, then great! In fact, to call me a 'scientist' is probably not as accurate as calling me a 'tinkerer.' I enjoy playing with (sometimes building/breaking/re-building) things to figure them out; I mean this to include things both physical and intellectual. I realize that I am pretty fortunate to be able to do my passion/hobby for a living.

Q...Where is your favourite place on earth?

A...I have too many! But, for now, I'll say Carmanah-Walbran Provincial Park (West Vancouver Island).

MEET DAVID PUNZALAN

Q...Who is the person who had the greatest scientific influence on you?

A...As a child, an older cousin was visiting/staying with my family for a few weeks. Though he was a student in business and economics, he took special notice of my own interest in the sciences. Mainly, he observed that I was a bookworm, and he cultivated that by buying me a lot of science books and magazines. In the 'professional scientist' sense, I certainly have a few (evolutionary biologist) idols that, when I see them at conferences, make me act like a nervous adolescent at the school dance. Of course, I also have to acknowledge my PhD advisors - after all, they 'discovered' me and I wouldn't be here without them.

Q...What did you want to be when you were 16?

A...Truthfully, when I was 16, the only thing on my mind was passing my driver's license exam and 'fitting in.' Ugh, my teenage years were pretty embarrassing.

Q...What is the most significant scientific advance of the last 100 years?

A...I am obviously biased but I'd have to say that what we have learned about genetics is pretty crazy (for example, discovering physically how/where inheritance is coded, i.e. DNA). That said, Einstein's relativity which I am, admittedly, still trying to fully grasp--and, similarly, 'quantum theory'--are just mind-bendingly cool. I've always wished I was smart enough to do dabble in physics (and chemistry).

Q...If you could be anyone for the day, who would it be?

A...Sounds cheesy but I really never have (or had) wishes to be anybody other than me. Though maybe it would be good to be my wife for a single day, so I can see what she has to put up with.

Q...If you were waiting for some discovery, what would it be?

A...In my opinion, exciting science is inherently unexpected - so it is hard to say. Lots of good 'blue collar' science gets done every day, but you never know the 'big one' till it drops. Sometimes we don't even realize how big it is until the discoverer is long gone.

Q...What was your best investment?

A...Having/raising a child! Man, it is loads of work—and I'm still learning on the job—but there's nothing more rewarding.

Q...How does a good day at work begin?

A...Being a scientist is a curse and a blessing in terms

of scheduling. I find that it certainly helps to have some semblance of organization/schedule, but the nature of what I do is very sporadic. For example, when the bugs are out (i.e. in mid-July until September), I live according to their schedule and there is hardly a moment to spare. And sometimes, good ideas/inspiration comes when you least expect, like in the middle of the night - so this can translate into a very bad beginning the next day... I suppose, either way, the answer is 'coffee.'

Q...What natural talent would you like to be gifted with?

A...Better guitar "chops." (means you can play really well... we looked it up!)

Q...If you could have dinner with three people in history, who would they be?

A...Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace (the co-discoverers of evolution by natural selection - and just all around 'traveled' people with undoubtedly interesting stories). Number three is Leonardo da Vinci.

Q...What is the biggest challenge facing scientists?

A...At risk of sounding like I'm whining/begging for money, funding is always an issue, but has become even more pressing these days. At the moment, our federal government has effectively cut the drip-feed to the pure sciences in favour of projects that promise quick economic gains (but also costs). Prosperity of society certainly depends on some investment into these applied endeavours, but I think it would be nice if to keep a long-view. I think of pure science as just one type of sustainable resource; it is really an investment into the long-term prosperity of society/civilization. Places like *rare* are resounding indications that most people would agree.

Q...What do you like to do when you are not working?

A...Naturally, I like to spend lots of time (doing almost anything) with my son. But my 'personal'

hobbies include snowboarding, backpacking, hiking and playing guitar/music (poorly). I also certainly wouldn't say 'no' to a backyard barbecue.

Q...What are you secretly afraid of?

A...That, eventually, I'll have to grow up and 'get a real job.'

Q...What is your favourite breakfast?

A...Steak (medium rare) and eggs - can't have it all the time but, when I do, it is glorious!

Q...What book are you reading now?

A...These days, I'm pretty immersed in technical literature. But the last book I read/remember was "Steal Like an Artist" (Austin Kleon). At a glance, it is sounds like a 'get help' book but actually it nicely illustrates the parallels/kinship among artists, scientists and other dreamers.

Q...Do you have a favourite book, and if so, what is it?

A...My two faves are "The Life of Pi" (Martel) and "The Road" (McCarthy) - pretty much the extreme ends of the spectrum, eh?

Q...If you were an insect, what insect would you be?

A...Of course everyone will expect me to say "an ambush bug." But I think a Monarch butterfly would have a pretty good life; few predators and stunning views while on those migratory flights.

David Punzalan, is a scientist doing postdoctoral work at the Royal Ontario Museum and teaches a course on animal behaviour at the University of Toronto. Summer 2014 marked David's third year at rare as a researcher, investigating ambush bugs - small insects found at rare and across much of North America. David is studying vibrational signaling of this insect.

Ambush Bug. Photography by D. Punzalan..

QUICK FACTS ON THE AMBUSH BUG:

1. Squat, hour-glass shaped insects, small (10 to 25mm);
2. Juveniles are brighter green; adults are partially brown/black and their green yellows as they age;
3. Native to old fields, often found on the Golden Rod plant;
4. Waits patiently for its usually much-larger prey to move close enough so that it can pounce, grasping the prey (often bees, wasps,) between its pincers (front legs) and then sucking its victims bodily fluids; and,
5. Part of the Reduviidae (assassin bug) family.





Common Yellow Throat Warbler. Photography by R. Unruh.

WOOD-WARBLERS are arguably the most beautiful and eagerly anticipated family of North American birds during spring migration. At **rare**, spring records indicate that the days before and after May 17 are the best times to observe a maximum number of species. How many of the 30 warbler species previously recorded at **rare** and its associated Grand and Speed rivers' corridor could be tallied during the week of May 14 to May 20? The answer in 2014 is 23 species. Later spring arrivals increased the tally to 26 species. Hi-lites included BLUE-WINGED WARBLER (Emily Damstra, Gerrie Grainge, Ruth Kroft; and Ross Dickson), a number of CANADA WARBLERS and the first spring record at **rare** of CONNECTICUT WARBLER (observed and heard singing by Ross Dickson).

A welcomed invitation to monitor nearby Barrie's Lake was extended to **rare's** bird monitoring team by owner Bernice Beal and daughter, Sue Stublely. This third monitoring visit in the last decade was organized by Marco DeBruin. Four monitors covered

the shoreline on foot, and on lake by canoe on the evening of June 10.

Butterfly monitoring began this year on May 21 when ecological monitoring intern, Erin Sonser, recorded a RED ADMIRAL in the flood plain and, during June 16 monitoring, a MILBERT'S TORTOISESHELL in South Field. On June 12, Ross Dickson spotted a GIANT SWALLOWTAIL in the Osprey Trail Loop.

Land steward intern, Rhiannon Moore, and John MacDonald added two new species to **rare's** plant inventory: CHRYSOGONUM (Daisy family), May 15, and LESSER STITCHWORT (Eurasian), June 9.

Next time you pass a cluster or two of GOLDENROD in mid-June, look closely at the leaves. If partially eaten, the herbivore may be present in considerable number. An Internet search by Heather Wilson led to the description of larvae of TRIRHABDA species. Later in the season, these larvae are more readily recognized in the adult stage as GOLDENROD LEAF BEETLES.

While counting GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS during monitoring, Ruth Kroft spotted a knobby grey structure close to the ground below a clump of Goldenrod – the early construction of a YELLOW-JACKET'S nest. Facial features would help reveal which of our wasp species it was, but when the wasp emerged, the decision was for Heather Wilson to take a quick photo then step back leaving the ID to others in the future.

As well as bird monitoring at **rare**, Ross Dickson expands his considerable knowledge of natural history by "eyeing the ground" along the trails. A recent discovery – his first – is a GRASS BAGWORM spotted while photographing

a TIGER BEETLE. Since both native and alien bagworms are found in Ontario, keying out this insect, if possible, from his short video may add to **rare's** biodiversity inventory. Ross's BAGWORM video can be viewed on **rare's** YouTube Channel. <http://www.youtube.com/user/raresites>

Visitors are frequently surprised to learn that GREAT BLUE HERON may be observed throughout the year at **rare**. Bill Read spotted one in flight on January 28, a day of -20 C. With wind chill a mere -4 C on March 24, Jerry Guenther counted five huddled about a patch of spring-fed open water along the Grand. Land Steward Intern, Rhiannon Moore, lists the GREAT BLUE HERON along with CEDAR WAXWING and ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK as birds readily observed at **rare**. Not surprisingly, this heron is the logo of the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists (<http://www.kwfn.ca/>) and the image on City of Cambridge signage.

BALD EAGLES perched or flying or roosting at **rare** is practically an everyday occurrence now; however, John MacDonald and Sophie Gibbs added a new view of this species this past winter: in the community gardens, John found wing prints with wing span of 1.9 m (75 inches) in snow, presumably an eagle taking off.

And since we are re-tracing winter steps... During this winter's prolonged freeze-up of the Grand through **rare**, Andy and Kim Kelly observed over a two-day period as many as four COYOTES at one time, one RED FOX and predictably several AMERICAN CROWS feeding on a deer carcass. The number of deer observed along this frozen stretch of the river this winter included 6 (Eric Dewdney) and 9 (Andy and Kim Kelly).



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

Contact **rare** Nature Notes by emailing rare@raresites.org with "Nature Notes" in the subject line.



RBC Blue Water Project™



Top: A stream to wade in. Photography by P. Kelly. Bottom: An excited student at ECO Camp. Photography by A. Todd.

An \$80,000 Blue Water Project Grant announced by the RBC Foundation on RBC Blue Water Day, June 12, will assist rare in its multi-pronged approach to water conservation and water source protection.

The grant will strengthen **rare's** Chain of Learning by funding a water studies scholarship and linking youth to the science. Young people will get the opportunity to be young citizen scientists through a new Mirrored Research program.

Benthic Invertebrates are organisms that live in or on the bottom of water courses – streams, rivers, etc, and are highly affected by environmental conditions. Their presence, type, and quantities, are strong clues about the water quality of the aquatic environment being sampled and therefore of the surrounding landscape's ecological integrity. Sound interesting?

Now imagine children in waders with kick-nets, wading in streams to catch bugs and taking their samples back to "the lab" for a close up under the microscope. Let's face it, we're all scientists at heart, who delight in our discoveries.

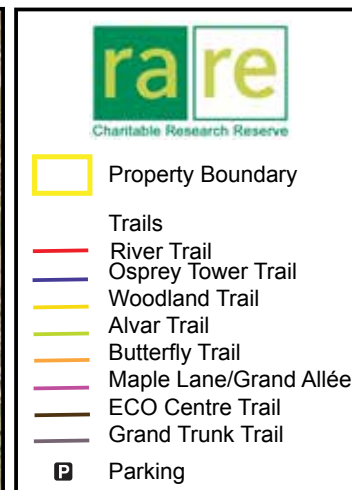
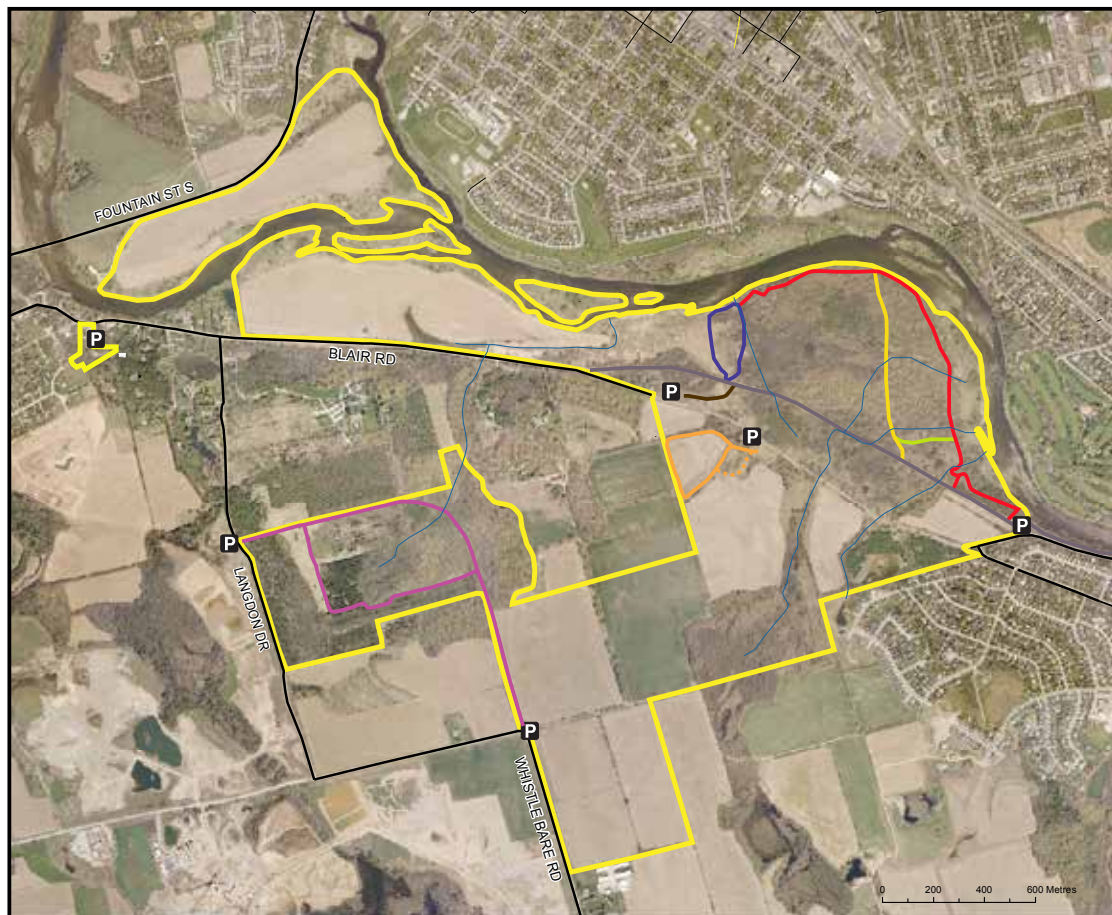
The RBC Blue Water Program aims to assist organizations tackling water issues in urbanized areas. We thank them for their support and investment. Our aim is to support today's top researchers whose work informs our conservation and restoration efforts and to make that work accessible to children – inspiring a passion for nature and inquisitive minds for the next generation.

Applications welcome this fall
for **water related research** at
rare.

\$4000
**rare RBC scholarship in graduate
research available!**

Contact jenna.quinn@raresites.org for more info.

A VIEW FROM THE TRAILS BY JASON BRACEY



rare Charitable Research Reserve property trails (2014).

When someone hikes a trail at **rare** for the first time, one of the most common reactions is disbelief that an area such as **rare Charitable Research Reserve** even exists amidst the surrounding and expanding urbanization. The transition from the hectic pace of urban life to the serenity of nature happens within a few steps on any of the trails at **rare**. Throughout the last 10 plus years I have had an opportunity to spend hundreds of hours out on the trails at **rare**, experiencing them from a myriad of vantage points.

To me, the best part of using the trails at **rare** is the escape from the demands of life to slow down, relax, recharge and enjoy the sights, sounds and smells of nature. The benefits of spending time in nature are well-documented and a growing body of research demonstrates the restorative and healing power of nature on both an emotional and physiological level. Hiking and spending time in nature is not only a calming experience but also a great form of low impact exercise. One of the best things about using the trails at **rare** is that you never know quite what to expect or what you might encounter. In a short distance you can be travelling through a diversity of habitat from deciduous forest, deciduous swamp, coniferous plantation, cold-water creeks, grassland, alvar, limestone

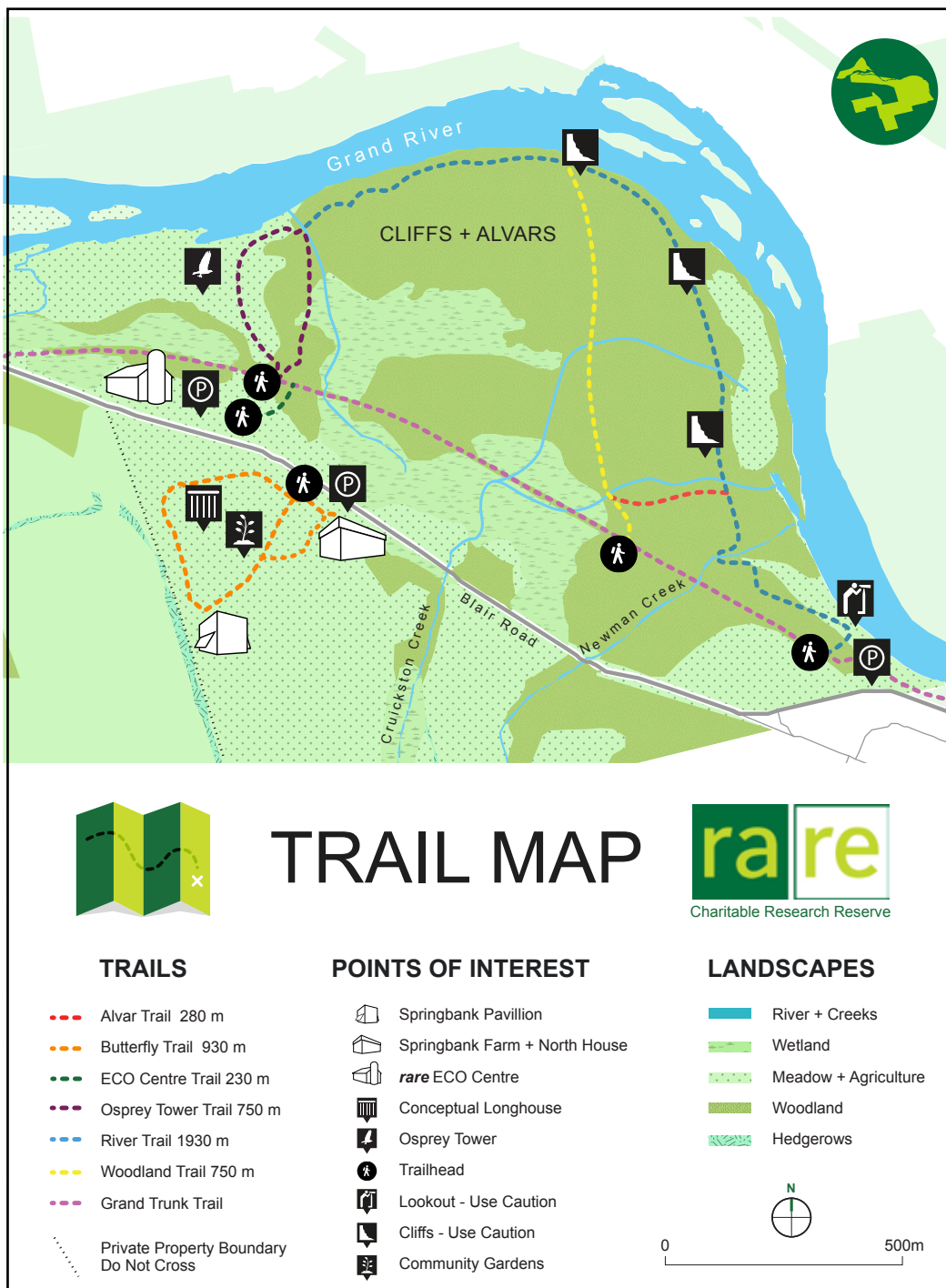
cliffs, along the Grand River and much more. Being out early to hear the dawn chorus of birds, to come across deer and their fawns, wild turkey, wood ducks, bald eagles, osprey, butterflies and a variety of other wildlife is always a treat.

The trails at **rare** also allow you to watch the transition of wildflowers as they appear in the spring from skunk cabbage, bloodroot, wild ginger, trilliums, the asters and goldenrods and many more wildflower species. Using the trails also introduces you to an incredible diversity of tree species, fungi and so much more. Whether you are an experienced or budding naturalist, or just someone who appreciates the beauty and complexity of nature, there is something for everyone on the trails. Each trail at **rare** has its own special highlights from the old-growth forest of Indian Woods and the history of the Grand Allée, the view of the Grand River from the River trail, the multi-use Grand Trunk Trail or the new Butterfly trail at Springbank that serves as an interpretive trail and a connection to the community gardens; each trail is unique in what it offers. While using the trails at **rare** you really notice the sense of community that exists. Many times while hiking or birding I have had the pleasure to stop and

talk with other hikers and nature enthusiasts to share nature sightings and experiences or to answer questions about what they have seen. To me this embodies what **rare** is about.

Through my experiences as a hiker, a birder, a teacher and exploring the trails with my family, I have come to appreciate the incredible opportunities and benefits that arise from using **rare's** many trails. The established trail systems at **rare** allow the community to experience nature while helping to

meet **rare's** goal of ecological preservation. When using the trails we all have a responsibility to stay on the trails and follow the trail guidelines. By staying on the trails we can all do our part to help protect fragile ecosystems, minimize disturbances to wildlife and to help prevent the spread of invasive species like garlic mustard while continuing to enjoy the many experiences that the trails at **rare** provide.



rare Charitable Research Reserve Cliffs and Alvars trails (2014).

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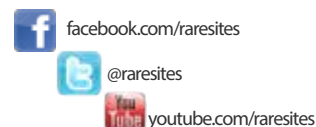
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