



Lake Simcoe  
Conservation  
Foundation

## Spring 2011 Newsletter

Our Vision is of a community that works together to respect and support a healthy ecosystem. Lake Simcoe and its rivers and streams will be cleaner, the land greener and its natural features protected for future generations to enjoy.

All we need is YOU!



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**Many children suffer from "nature-deficit" disorder. We can help.**



**Discovery Play Garden for Children  
Scanlon Creek Conservation Area  
Grand Opening Sunday July 24  
Noon - 2:00 pm**

Journalist Richard Louv coined the above phrase in his book Last Child in the Woods to describe how a lack of connecting with nature is contributing to rising rates of obesity, attention deficit disorder and emotional issues amongst children. Doctors are now recommending doses of Mother Nature to help alleviate stress, depression and boost physical activity. Some are even using



## Watershed 101:

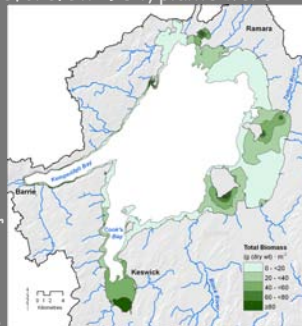
### Aquatic Plants: An Important Lake Habitat

credit: Dr. Brian Ginn, Limnologist, LSRCA

Aquatic plants found in all lakes, are an important shelter and nursery area for fish, help trap sediments and help reduce wave action on shorelines. When a lake receives an increase in the amount of nutrients (think of adding fertilizer to your garden), aquatic plants increase and can become a nuisance: tangling boat propellers, impairing swimming areas, and washing up on the shoreline in large quantities. In Lake Simcoe, phosphorus, a nutrient usually found in small amounts, has increased over the past two hundred years due to land clearance, agricultural run-off, and urban development. This phosphorus increase has led to increases in plants and algae and less oxygen for coldwater fish such as trout and whitefish.

#### Aquatic Plant Cover Increasing!

If you think there are more plants in Lake Simcoe than before, you're correct! Since the early plant studies in Cook's Bay, there has been a three-fold increase in plants, which are also growing deeper than before. In 1984, plants were only found in waters shallower than 6m. Now, plants grow as deep as 10m! This increase is likely due to invasive zebra mussels which arrived in Lake Simcoe in 1995. Zebra mussels feed by removing algae and particles from the water, which results in greater water clarity and deeper penetration of sunlight, which in turn increases the area of plant growth by allowing plants to grow deeper.



#### What is being done?

Aquatic plants are important habitat for fish and are found in all lakes. For this reason, they are a habitat protected by the Federal Fisheries Act making it illegal to remove or otherwise destroy aquatic plants. Increased phosphorus leads to plant growth reaching nuisance levels (impairing boating and swimming) and dying plants remove oxygen from the water (which can lead to fish kills), washing up along our shorelines. Our efforts to reduce the amount of aquatic

their pads that they use to prescribe antibiotics and blood pressure medication to jot directions to local walking trails. In an era when adults and

plants are included in the strategy to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Simcoe. Many groups are working together as a team to reach this goal:

**LSRCA Watershed Science Team** monitors Lake Simcoe and the watershed, and tests science-based solutions to reduce nutrients. Stewardship projects seek to restore natural cover and vegetation, and use new technologies to remove phosphorus from urban and agricultural run-off.

**Lake Simcoe Protection Plan:** An Ontario law since June, 2009, it legislates strategies to reduce phosphorus loads to Lake Simcoe to levels near pre-European settlement (44 tonnes of phosphorus per year; currently 72 tonnes but down from 100 tonnes in the 1980s).

**Lake Simcoe Clean-up Fund:** A federal government initiative through Environment Canada to support projects to reduce phosphorus loads and restore coldwater fish habitat.

#### What can you do?

- **Reduce or stop using fertilizers** and other chemicals on your lawns and gardens - rain washes these into storm sewers that flow directly into Lake Simcoe.
- **Divert rain water** from paved surfaces to grass which absorbs phosphorus. Stabilize streambanks to prevent erosion. Plant native trees and plants to restore phosphorus-trapping vegetation and reduce erosion from wind and waves. Contact LSRCA Stewardship for information about planting buffers with native species.
- **Get involved** by learning about water pollution, inform your neighbours and persuade them to follow your example. You can make a difference! A small change repeated by a thousand people becomes a BIG change! [Donate](#) to help support this vital research.

Map credit: Journal of Great Lakes Research



**Partnerships that connect our community to a healthy environment:**

#### **Baywood Homes to Renovate Historic Scanlon Farmhouse**

The Scanlon Family first settled in the Bradford area over 100 years ago. They farmed on what would become the Scanlon Creek Conservation Area and built their family farmhouse there. Baywood homes will now be

children spend hours sequestered indoors, "park prescriptions" are becoming a more common remedy. \*

We invite you to fill that prescription at the Scanlon Creek Conservation Area as well as other Conservation Areas in the Lake Simcoe watershed where our nature trails and new Discovery Play Garden will allow children to re-connect with nature. Funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and our generous donors, enabled work to begin in May on the trails that will lead children in natural play. Authority staff are working with Sustainable Trails and Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds to create a unique one acre park. Shown in the pictures below are the beautiful trails, as well as the climbing rock and the mound being developed for the hill slide. Wacky posts, a sandbox, natural musical instruments, a fort and natural plantings will make it complete - and AWESOME!

If you would like more information on the grand opening, please check our website under events. If you would like to support the Discovery Play Garden or Scanlon Creek Conservation Area, please contact Brenda Winter



#### **\$114,000 was Raised at our 23rd Annual Conservation Dinner**



Thanks to the almost 400 people who attended our Conservation Dinner held on May 13th. Everyone enjoyed the live music by Music by Aine, martini bar, great food and fabulous auction items. The now famous Simcoe chairs were all sold and will be seen soon on a dock or deck near you. Remember

bringing it back to its former glory - and then some! The farmhouse has been closed for a few years now as it was in need of major repairs. This renovation will provide a natural location for local community programs and provide much needed space for staff. Renovations will begin in early summer with the grand opening in late fall.



### **RBC Bluewater Project: \$100,000 to Support George Richardson Park Project**

The Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority is thousands of steps closer to completing a local stormwater improvement project in George Richardson Park in Newmarket thanks to a \$100,000 Leadership Grant that the Lake Simcoe Conservation Foundation received from RBC. This is the second time that RBC has supported our critical work - a real testimonial to the impact and results we consistently achieve. RBC supported the Western Creek Project previously.

The George Richardson stormwater improvement project was designed to be completed in three phases. Phase one is now complete and with the assistance of RBC, the remaining two phases, consisting of retrofits to address sediment and the uptake of phosphorus, are expected to be completed by the spring of 2012. Once construction is completed, the Foundation and Authority along with community partners, will plant native vegetation to further improve the function of the pond. Other valued partners are the Town of Newmarket, Environment Canada, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, York Region (LEAP Program) and LSCF.

George Richardson is a 74 acre park located in north Newmarket. This park is located along the banks and floodplain of the Holland River. Mature trees and vegetation line the river trail and many species of wildlife can be seen. There are also extensive areas for baseball and soccer. Thanks RBC!



you can still order yours from [BestAdirondackChair.com](http://BestAdirondackChair.com) with a donation being made to the LSCF for each chair sold!

**We'll be posting more pictures on our website soon. Stay tuned.**

\* credit Andrea Gordon, Toronto Star, Saturday June 4 2011



### **Congratulations Devon MacPherson on 31 Days of Giving!**

We are lucky that Devon MacPherson chose us for her "Giving for 31" Campaign! She volunteered with us on Day 10 and helped our event planner Yvette prepare for our 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conservation Dinner. Her efforts helped make the dinner a huge success.

Devon is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year university student from Bradford that is passionate about helping others. The goal of the Giving for 31 campaign is to highlight and support 31 Charities in the 31 days of May. What a marvelous example for us all.

[Click here to read her blog on Day 10 here at the Foundation](#)

### **GEEP Earth Day in Barrie**

Thanks to Global Electric Electronic Processing (or GEEP) in Barrie who, for their Earth Day BBQ

**We would love to have YOU as our partner too. Please contact us to find out how.**

### **Spring Bird Banding is Soaring**

Thanks again to the McLean Foundation and our individual donors for supporting our bird banding program! Nigel Shaw banded over 200 birds of over 40 species. This is double our 2010 spring migration season results. The most numerous species were Blue jay, Black-capped chickadee, Nashville warbler, Chipping sparrow, Indigo Bunting and American goldfinch. Northern Saw-whet owl, Cooper's hawk and Northern harrier were also banded. Nigel's full spring migration report will be available soon. The fall will see more of our popular bird banding programming. If you would like to get on our waiting list to help Nigel Shaw band birds or participate in a workshop, please contact Brenda Winter.



donated all proceeds to us! Though it was a cold and rainy day hundreds of dollars were raised for our critical restoration projects.

**Thanks to all our donors, volunteers, supporters and staff.  
Your commitment to a better world in our own watershed is making a difference.**

**Our next Event: Foundation Tour of Projects: July 22th, 2011 (afternoon).**

For more information or to make a donation please visit our website at [www.LakeSimcoeFoundation.ca](http://www.LakeSimcoeFoundation.ca).