



Thickson's Woods Land Trust

Autumn 2022 Newsletter 62

You Can't Put a Price On It!!

By Phill Holder The Matt Holder Research Fund

Since we started the fund in 2014, it has been hectic whenever I am at Thickson's. Nothing over the years has been brilliant and the discovery of many other flying insects attracted to the lights, like flies, beetles and wasps, has been a tremendous bonus and, for me, has opened up a world of discovery.

But this year, 2022, has been a challenge. It is well documented that we have lost between 60 and 75 per cent of flying insects globally, and we certainly felt the impact locally, as there has been a dramatic reduction in numbers of moths caught in our light traps, in particular the larger moths. At our last setup we caught only about 50 per cent of what we would have expected, and even though we did attract a beautiful sphinx moth, it was disheartening that the numbers were so low.

The pollinating planting project and the pond that TWLT are installing will be invaluable to create new habitat for our insect population and we look forward to results.

Forced by age-related health issues to slow down, I set up a reflection pool and sometimes spent several hours sitting in a blind waiting for whatever showed for a drink or a bath. What a wonderful experience! So much better for me than those calming apps that provide relaxing tropical rain sounds. Time drifts by; sometimes nothing shows up for ages, only interrupted briefly by an Eastern Chipmunk or a bird coming for a drink or a bath. On a few occasions several bird species arrived at the same time and squabbled over bath time.

But it continues to amaze me, after spending years at Thickson's, how quiet it is when you just stop for a while and listen to the sounds of the woods.

**We have to continue to protect Thickson's Woods.
You can't put a price on it!!**



The highlight of a poor moth night was this beautiful Pandorus Sphinx Moth (Phill Holder).



"Bath time" for this Rose-breasted Grosbeak (Phill Holder).



A young American Robin stops by for a drink while a Northern Parula and Hermit Thrush seem to be checking out the facilities (Phill Holder).

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Battling Garlic Mustard in Thickson's Woods

Work Day: Saturday December 3, 9:00 a.m., (Sunday December 3 in case of bad weather on Saturday)

Park along the east side of Thickson Road north of the Waterfront Trail. Walk east along the Waterfront Trail to the entrance to the woods on the right. Walk south through the woods to a house along the lake where tools will be provided. Volunteers have made great strides over the years in eliminating many patches of garlic mustard, but there's always more to do. Come help out and enjoy the winter wildlife in the forest and along the lake.

Mysteries of Thickson's Woods

By Dennis Barry

We're justly proud of the knowledge gained over the past forty years about the life that thrives in Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve. George Scott's meticulous search for new plants, the tireless efforts of Phill Holder and the Matt Holder Environmental Research team, James Kamstra's surveys, Richard Aaron, who on every visit finds new and exciting mushrooms and fungi, the thousands of birders who've added their knowledge to our understanding of the avifauna, (especially Glenn Coady, who's added more new species to the reserve checklist than anyone else), and many others, have shone a light on the evolving web of life that illustrates the critical role the reserve plays in the ecology of Southern Ontario.



Green Frog (*Mike McEvoy*).

But every time anyone visits or does some research to try to answer a particular question, a multitude of new mysteries appear. We know there are probably hundreds of beetle species here, but only a handful have been identified. And the same is true for caddisflies, midges, flies, wasps and true bugs.

But what about the mysteries we've never thought of, patterns of interconnected life so hidden or overlooked they've never come to mind? Or even fleeting questions about something you notice that quickly gets lost in today's hectic pace?

For my birthday last month, Margaret bought some sturdy, comfortable outdoor chairs. We live at the south edge of Thickson's Woods overlooking Lake Ontario. Many evenings recently we've been spending time sitting on our balcony watching the world pass by. Central to our front yard is our vegetable and flower garden, flanked on the east and west by tall rows of spruce and cedar trees. On the edge of the lake is a grove of hawthorns, a favourite resting spot for birds wanting protection from passing hawks.



American Robin (*Jim Richards*).

We never use herbicides or pesticides, and fertilize the ground each spring with fresh manure from a friend's farm. Over the years many natural predators have moved in to help control pests. A pair of robins and a family of song sparrows spend the summer flying in and out, moving from place to place picking off insects. A myriad of spiders spin webs and patrol the spaces between leaves on kale and zinnias. This summer we were very surprised when a green frog took up residence among the tomatoes. Not sure what it's feeding on, perhaps slugs and earwigs, but it's doubled in size over the past two months.

While moth and butterfly larvae and other hungry critters appear every year, they never seem to overwhelm any of the crops, so we're willing to share.

Sitting still and watching what's happening in nature is clearly therapeutic. It hasn't solved any mysteries so far, but it's brought a few new ones to mind. The largest creatures are always the first to grab one's attention. Recently several turkey vultures dominated the scene in our front yard. On several evenings a small group has been flying back and forth along the shore and over our garden. I know they were recently attracted by several dead fish along the beach to the east, but there's nothing obvious on the shore in front of our house.

In recent years Gerdau Steel, our neighbour to the west, has generously delivered truckloads of huge boulders unearthed in their operation, and placed them along the shore as a protection against erosion during high-water spring storms. The boulders provide a home for a variety of creatures, from mink to midges. Is it possible that some creature died among the boulders and the turkey vultures with their keen sense of smell detected it, but weren't able to reach it? A mystery...

One solved later when Margaret discovered the carcass of a larger mammal farther west along the beach, left as just a skeleton after the vultures completed their cleanup job.

On one evening after a wind shift to the north, Margaret began noticing monarch butterflies moving west across the yard. More than four hundred passed in less than

an hour – no mystery as to where they were headed. We fervently wished them a safe journey! Raptors passing that same evening were some half-dozen fast-moving American kestrels and two bald eagles.

One warm evening we noticed ring-billed gulls courting back and forth over the edge of the lake and the yard, veering frequently to snatch something from the air. This is common feeding behaviour for ring-bills. Most often their target is flying ants rising in mating swarms.

Curious, I tried to follow the swirling gulls to discover what they were capturing, but their movements were too fast and erratic. Finally, I decided to try to focus my binoculars on whatever it was the gulls were pursuing. After several attempts, I was able to make out a host of small black shapes rising and falling, oblivious to the gulls picking off some of their number. We knew that each evening dragonflies appeared, hawking for midges as the sun dropped lower in the west. But these insects were much smaller, with very short wings. After studying several in detail, we decided they were possibly wasps.



A solitary wasp - Blue Mud Dauber (Mike McEvoy).

Just then a dark wasp landed on the balcony railing by Margaret with a small larval caterpillar in its jaws. After a few moments it flew off with its prize. Were we witnessing a mating flight of wasps, after which a fertilized female found a caterpillar to immobilize to stock her nest with food for her young when it hatched from the egg she would lay on her paralyzed victim? Maybe. Or perhaps a whole different question remains to be answered.

Anyway, it's time to go sit on the balcony and see what intriguing new mysteries arise.



Ring-billed Gulls (Jim Richards).

Preserving Ontario Species at Risk

By Dan Shire



Butterfly Weed seedlings planted in the meadow, with a Monarch (Dan Shire).

Within its twenty-five acres, the Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve provides a variety of habitats – Lake Ontario shoreline, Corbett Creek and Marsh, a woods that supports vascular plants ranging from old-growth pines to spring wildflowers, and a meadow moving through succession that blossoms with wildflowers and grasses. This small reserve protects hundreds of plant species, thousands of insect species, as well as mammals, amphibians, reptiles and, most famously, over three hundred species of birds.

It takes constant monitoring and work to protect the reserve's biodiversity. We have been fighting invasive species for several decades. This work usually goes unnoticed by visitors, but it is essential to maintain the healthy habitat needed for the range of species we see in the meadow

and woods. Over the last few years we've been fortunate to augment the work of volunteers with summer students funded through cooperative programs from the federal and provincial governments. In this article, we'll review the accomplishments of the two programs and highlight the work our partners in conservation have supported.

In 2018 we teamed with Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program to hire two students to work on inventorying and removing the most troublesome invasive plant species in the reserve – Dog-strangling Vine and Garlic Mustard. These two plants can have devastating effects on the survival of native plants. If you have seen urban ditches choked by DSV, or an expanse of Garlic Mustard that has displaced an understory of trilliums in a spring maple forest, you know the damage they can do. Monarch butterflies will lay their eggs on DSV, but the caterpillars cannot complete their life cycle. DSV plants can produce up to 28,000 seeds per square metre. Garlic mustard releases a chemical into the soil that prevents the growth of other plants, so within a decade can wipe out other flowering plants and tree seedlings.

Ontario's Invading Species Awareness Program is administered by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. It operates through a combination of provincial and federal funding programs, including the Canada Summer Jobs Program. CSJ gives conservation education biology students in college or university an opportunity to get practical job experience in their field of study.

Following the election of a new Ontario government in 2018, the province terminated their support of the program and we were unable to hire students in 2019 and 2020. Thankfully, funding was provided again in 2021 and 2022. We hired two students each summer to continue the work of locating and removing the invasive species. In addition, our students performed a number of research studies on amphibians, reptiles, and bats in conjunction with Phill Holder from the Matt Holder Environmental Research Fund. Over the three years we've participated in the OFAH/CSJ Invasive Species Hit Squad program, thousands of invasive plants have been identified, mapped, removed and destroyed. Much work remains in future years.

This summer, we were grateful to receive a small grant from the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. OLTA administers the provincial Species at Risk Action Fund (SARAF) for land trusts, enabling us to protect and enhance species at risk on our properties. In our case, we applied to establish a population of a provincially and nationally endangered Carolinian flowering shrub at the reserve. In the past, we've had good success introducing Carolinian shrubs and trees due to our sheltered location and the moderating effect of the lake. Hayley Roberts left to take on another challenge, but Jocelyn Guyett stayed to prepare the location for the Carolinian shrubs and helped plant and tend them through the summer. In addition, the grant funded planting of Butterfly Weed, which is an important food source for Monarch butterflies (a species of Special Concern in Ontario).

As part of the butterfly habitat enhancement project, we also have excavated a small shallow pond in the meadow. Construction will be completed this fall. Generous contributions from supporters John Bradley,



Otto Peter, President of the Land Trust, cutting stakes to protect the plants from browsers like deer and rabbits (Dan Shire).



Digging the pond. Left to right: Clearing the site (*Mike McEvoy*); John Bradley and Dennis Barry discussing the site (*Dan Shire*); Starting the dig (*Mike McEvoy*); The excavated site (*Dan Shire*).



Sue Carr, Phill Holder, Rusty Lagman and Hayley Roberts meant that we could construct this pond at no cost to the reserve. We thank John, Sue, Rusty, Hayley and Phill very much for their donations of time and materials. Next summer, when you visit the meadow at Thickson's you should see a lively pond supporting pollinator insects, birds, amphibians and reptiles. A small rowboat donated by Hayley Roberts' family will be planted with native wildflowers to further enhance the area's appeal to insects.

For more information on invasive species and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, you can access these resources:

- <http://www.invadingspecies.com/>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/page/invasive-species-ontario>
- <https://olta.ca/>



Hayley Roberts was lucky to find a Painted Turtle and American Toad in the meadow (*Hayley Roberts*).



We wish to acknowledge our volunteer supporters and our partners - the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Ontario Land Trust Alliance, the Canada Summer Jobs Program, and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks - for their ongoing support of the multi-year invasive species control program at the Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve.

Recent donations have been made in memory of these special beings

- Glenn Carr
- Gary Hendrickson
- Peter McLaughlin
- Graeme Melcher
- Liz Nichol
- Betty Pegg

We join their families and friends in mourning their passing, and acknowledge their unique contribution to the rich web of life on planet earth.

On our website we recognize all past donations made in memory of friends and loved ones.

Finding the Mother Tree;

Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest

Suzanne Simard

By Dennis Barry

Not since *Wilding* by Isabella Tree has a book come to my attention that has such potential to change the world.

Suzanne opens her story with the admission that “For generations, my family has made a living cutting down forests.”

But how her father and uncle logged in those days stands in stark contrast to logging practices in British Columbia when Suzanne began her forestry career. Her ancestors studied each tree they planned to cut to be sure it would fall toward the flume that would transport its logs to the sea. For felling a tree with a crosscut saw would take a day of backbreaking toil if all went well.

It was this family knowledge, respect and love of the forest as a living entity that guided Suzanne in her lifelong quest to unravel the mysteries of that complex interconnected ecosystem. Her story is one of strength and perseverance in the face of stubborn opposition to the secrets she uncovered about how the forest functions, and in coping with family disruptions and tragedies, and personal health issues that surely would have defeated a lesser human being.

This book would have been extremely important just for its findings alone, but it wouldn't have been so gripping a story without the author's ability to weave in personal events and give her readers a real feeling for how the land and all its inhabitants are intimately joined.

Suzanne begins her story the year she was six. Her family spent each summer vacationing on a houseboat in Mabel Lake in south-central British Columbia surrounded by forests of ancient trees. As a child she had an unusually intimate relationship with those forests and the soils that nourished them, for she reveled in eating humus, finding the tastiest patches beneath paper birches. The birches added sugars to the soils that attracted earthworms. “...but I didn't mind. The more worms, the richer and tastier the humus, and I'd been an enthusiastic dirt eater from the moment I could crawl.”

The day her uncle's beagle fell into the family outhouse and had to be rescued was a revelation to Suzanne. She describes the process in detail, from her grampa carefully putting aside the edible mushrooms growing on the surface, to the task of digging down through the myriad layers beside the outhouse where the rescue hole was excavated. Particularly fascinating were the “brilliant-yellow and snow-white fungal threads” inhabited by insects, spiders and snails, all bearing witness to the fertile quality of materials built up over millennia in this unravaged forest.

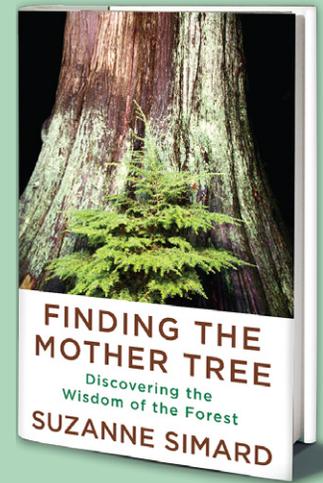


Tricholomopsis flammans (Phil Reyenga).

Further layers of fine fibrous roots interwoven with the fungal strands, humus, larger roots, soils of varying colour and texture, all gave way to the shovels, picks and axes as the men dug furiously down to where Jiggs was trapped. This revelation about the complexity of the soil makeup in a primary forest led to Suzanne's career choice, and her lifelong quest to solve the mysteries of its intricate web of life connecting all parts of the ecosystem.

In one paragraph in the introduction to *Finding the Mother Tree*, she sums up her life.

“Working to solve the mysteries of what makes the forests tick, and how they are linked to the earth and fire and water, made me a scientist. I watched the forest, and I listened. I followed where my curiosity led me, I listened to the stories of my family and people, and I learned from the scholars. Step-by-step—puzzle by puzzle—I poured everything I had into becoming a sleuth of what it takes to heal the natural world.”





Cedar Waxwing (Jim Richards).

Suzanne trained as a forester, but on her first summer job for a lumber company in the early 1980s, she was dismayed to find how different modern logging practices were from those of her family earlier in the century. Rectangular clearcut blocks were marked out on maps with no thought to topography or saving any old trees to reseed cut areas and nurture sprouting seedlings. Replanting was done with spruce seedlings because spruce lumber is more valuable. No thought was given to whether spruce was suited for the site being replanted.

Government regulations dictated how plantings should be done, and a follow-up was required to check how the seedlings were doing. Susanne was tasked with checking the health of seedlings in a particular clearcut. On the way to the

clearcut she travelled through a section of uncut forest. Young seedlings growing in the shelter of older trees were green and luxuriant. They showed bright yellow fungal threads tightly wrapped around tiny healthy root tips leading down into the humus layer where the roots were spreading. In the clearcut a naturally sprouted seedling of subalpine fir growing in the shelter of a stump of one of its downed relatives showed similar mycorrhizal networks.

But a check of spruce seedlings planted in the mineral soil scraped bare of all living layers revealed yellowing needles with blackened roots with no regenerating rootlets to collect nutrients to nurture the plant. Why was this happening? After collecting samples of the yellowing needles for testing, Suzanne determined to search for answers.

Each time she checked seedlings in areas with different soils and different species of mushrooms with a variety of coloured fungal strands, questions arose about the role these might play in the health of the whole ecosystem, how deep-rooted trees might be able to draw up water and share it with shallow-rooted plants surrounding them. Forestry school still taught that plants only competed with one another in a survival-of-the-fittest struggle, but that theory didn't seem to match what appeared to be happening in habitat after habitat across British Columbia.

Cycling back to her car from a local rodeo where she'd watched her younger brother, Kelly, compete in the bull-riding event, she stopped in the shade of a Douglas fir to eat a sandwich. While resting there, she noticed a squirrel feasting on a truffle. Curious, she took out her knife and started to dig down where the squirrel had been foraging. She dug through layers of clay, each filled with millions of dark fungal filaments, the finest of which ended in intimate contact with soil particles. Further down she uncovered a truffle with a robust cord of tightly wound fungal strands leading off through the earth. Excavating further, Suzanne followed the cord to where it connected to a group of fine Douglas fir root tips.

This was a eureka moment when she realized that the fir tree, and the extensive fungal network including the truffle fruiting body, were all linked as one entity. The ultrafine hyphae had the unique ability to access water held tightly in the soil. But why share such an often scarce and clearly precious resource with a tree?

Wrapping the truffle and its attached fungal network



Red Squirrel (Jim Richards).



Common Raven (*Jim Richards*).

in the wax paper from her sandwich, she hurried on to her car and the long night journey back to the bunkhouse she shared with her four male student co-workers. Searching around her tiny room, she finally found the mushroom book she'd borrowed from the library. Although it was after midnight and she was totally exhausted, Suzanne found the page describing a variety of truffles and identified the one she'd collected. In fine print in a footnote at the bottom of the page was the term "mycorrhizal fungus." Checking the glossary at the back of the field guide she learned that this type of fungus formed a mutualistic relationship with a plant, without which neither could survive.

The fungi had the ability to collect water and the dissolved nutrients within it and deliver them to the plants. In return the plants delivered to the fungi sugars produced through photosynthesis.

Why wasn't this relationship recognized and used in the forestry industry? Its value was beginning to be recognized in farming. Some research had, apparently, been done and experiments conducted in some tree nurseries. But it was felt that using chemical fertilizers and irrigation was easier. Anyway, foresters had a built-in bias against fungi because some unrelated species did kill or weaken trees.

But while fertilizers and irrigation allowed seedlings to thrive in the artificial environment of a nursery, the real world of drought, blazing sun and frosty nights in a clearcut meant most of the transplanted seedlings, left on their own, died. Suzanne knew she was onto something, but what were the chances she could convince the forestry industry to change its whole approach? It would take a lifetime of meticulous research, dedication and sacrifice to begin to make a difference.

After two years of frustration with failing to find a job in the forestry industry, Suzanne was relieved to be hired by the BC Forestry Service to test the effectiveness of a new province-wide forestry policy termed "free to grow." What this involved was killing all plants that might compete with evergreen seedlings.

She needed help to carry out the field experiments. Her mother suggested she should hire her older sister, Robyn. Suzanne's supervisor, Alan, disagreed with the 'free to grow' policy, but needed rigorous scientific evidence to prove it wrong. He helped her design the experiments to be carried out in circular four-meter test plots in a high altitude clearcut recently replanted. A major part of the experiment involved using Roundup at various concentrations. Mechanical removal of all competing plants was tried in other plots, while some plots were left untouched as controls. Each test was repeated in ten randomly selected plots to ensure the results were valid. Suzanne hated what she was doing, since she knew from her own observations that this was exactly the wrong thing to do. However, the experience of learning how to conduct rigorous field experiments would prove invaluable throughout the rest of her career.

After months of inner turmoil over doing a job she didn't believe in, Suzanne's luck changed. A permanent position with the Forest Service as a silviculture researcher opened up, and she was hired. With Alan as her supervisor, she now had the freedom to design experiments to validate what she knew the forests needed to thrive, how all the plants' needs and strengths were intimately linked by the fungal network the 'free to grow' approach was destroying across the province. But she also underestimated the level of opposition to any-and-all attempts to overturn the ingrained thinking that permeated the Forest Service, and the forestry industry with its profits-first mentality.

Encouraged by her supervisor, in 1987 Suzanne enrolled at Oregon State University in a master's program. As part of her studies, she decided to test the impact alders had on the survival of lodgepole pines. Current policy in the industry was to eliminate alders because they were thought to kill pines. Suzanne believed that the alders' ability to fix nitrogen and make it available to the pines was beneficial, perhaps essential to their growth.

Finding a clearcut that was perfect for her experiment, Suzanne needed a crew to cut back alders in some of her test plots. The story of how a failed experiment of bringing in a group of prisoners to do the job evolved, is one of many examples throughout the book of Suzanne's ability to weave into her narrative interactions, often humorous, sometimes poignant that make her life real to the reader. This could have been a dry, technical treatise on the failings of the forest industry in BC. The fact that *Finding the Mother Tree* became a national bestseller is due to the author's unique ability to bring her characters to life.

Initial test experiments showed that removing alders had a short-term benefit for pine growth, but this advantage declined rapidly after the first year. Also, survival rate of the pines where the alders were removed was much lower due to elevated attacks on the exposed evergreens by pathogens and rodents.

Suzanne was also suspicious that nitrogen might be transferred directly to the pine through the fungal network. Extensive searches of journals uncovered a report by a young Swedish researcher who'd discovered a mycorrhizal fungal link allowing direct transfer of nitrogen from alders to pines. In great excitement she called her sister Robyn, whose question was, "Why would the alders do that?"

In other habitats, paper birches were seen as major competitors to conifers, and great efforts and expense went into controlling them. As part of her doctoral research, Suzanne set up field experiments to shed light on the interactions between birches and Douglas firs.

The first task was to plant pairs of same-sized birch and Douglas Fir seedlings side by side in a network of sixty test plots. Next was to place tents to heavily shade one third of randomly selected firs, other tents to lightly shade twenty more, with the remainder left uncovered. The intent was to try to track whether sugars created by photosynthesis by the birches were being transmitted through a fungal network to the firs, and whether there was any similar transmission in the other direction. As a further control, cedars were planted in each test plot, since it was known that cedars could not create a similar symbiotic fungal network to that of firs and birch.

Tests a week later revealed that the rate of photosynthesis in the heavily shaded firs was only a quarter that of the unshaded ones.

A month later Suzanne returned with Dan, an expert in using radio isotopes, to continue her experiment. All the seedlings looked healthy and had put on substantial growth. In order to test movement of nutrients between birches and firs, carbon dioxide tagged with radioactive carbon 14 was injected into sealed plastic bags over the birch seedlings, with a similar process followed with non-radioactive carbon 13 on the fir seedlings. It took several hours to complete the task in all sixty plots.



To be sure the carbon 14 was being absorbed by the birches, they returned to test with a Geiger counter. To their great relief, the needle on the instrument swung strongly, indicating a high radiation count in the first birch seedling. Impatient, Suzanne longed to test the fir seedling, but Dan pointed out that English scientists carrying out similar experiments in a lab had only seen results after several days. Still, it wouldn't hurt to check. When she ran the wand of the Geiger counter over the needles of the fir in the test plot, the machine crackled faintly, and the needle moved slightly. They couldn't believe what had just happened. After testing the cedar in the plot and finding no response, Suzanne exclaimed, "We've found something really cool here."

That's only the beginning of the 'really cool' discoveries made by Suzanne, her graduate students, and others around the world inspired by her leadership. To learn how the Mother Trees, the ancient matriarchs of forests, communicate with and nurture their children, and the many other mysteries Suzanne unearthed, you'll want to read *FindingThe Mother Tree*. I promise you'll only be disappointed if you don't read it.

Suzanne ends her introduction to *Finding The Mother Tree* with these words. "After a lifetime as forest detective, my perception of the woods has been turned upside down. ...This is not a book about how we can save the trees. This is a book about how the trees might save us."

The Evolution of Nature Clubs in Ontario and Durham Region

by Jim Richards

Before discussing the formation of the Oshawa Naturalists Club, I would like to step even further back in time. The Federation of Ontario Naturalists (FON) (Ontario Nature since 2004) was officially created in May 1931 with the amalgamation of 7 clubs and 28 individual members. It was the brainchild of four members of the Brodie Club in Toronto (A.F. Coventry, H.C. Nunn, J.R. Dymond and T.F. McIlwraith), as well as luminaries such as W.E. Saunders and J. Murray Speirs. Those numbers, fortunately, have grown to about 30,000 members/supporters and 157 groups today. They advocate on behalf of wildlife and wild spaces throughout Ontario and beyond, and are leaders in natural history appreciation and conservation.

As a birder (age 13 in 1955) I was among a very small cluster of young local schoolboys (Charlie Christy, Brian Seaton, Bob Cummins, Larry Parsons and me) engaged in the 'hobby' of collecting birds' eggs at the time. Back then, you'd hide your binoculars in a packsack or under your jacket for fear that other teenagers would discover you were a 'birdwatcher' as that would spell doom for you back in the 50's among your schoolmates. I even tied a fishing rod to the frame of my bike to make other kids think I was going to the creek or marsh to fish. Hey, it worked for me!

In 1955, there were then 32 affiliated clubs under the FON umbrella. After reading about the FON in a newspaper article, three like-minded teenagers from my north Oshawa neighborhood



The first ONC letterhead designed by George Scott in 1956.



The first ONC logo designed by George Scott for 1956 - 1975.



The second logo and letterhead (for DFRN) designed by Paul Bridges and used from 1976 - 1996.



The third logo and letterhead (for DFRN) designed by James Kamstra, introduced in 1997.



Cedar Waxwing (*Jim Richards*).

(John Theberge, Glenn Owen and Bill Neal) approached a few local naturalists (Don Rice, Ora Sands, Win McRae and George Scott) to discuss the possible formation of a nature club in Oshawa. These folks put together a list of about 20 names of people to approach. Fortunately, I was on the list. A few informal meetings were held in supporters' homes over the winter to work out details. A meeting was held on 17 March at the local YMCA including eight local supporters and two representatives from the FON (William W.H. Gunn and Marshal Bartman). Next followed a public meeting at a community centre on Gibb Street on 29 March with about forty-eight people participating. While I attended the inaugural meeting, I have always felt bad that I did not have the \$2 to purchase a membership and thus my name does not appear on the list of 'founding' members! I was not told to bring along some membership money. So be it.

The Oshawa Naturalists' Club was born on 15 May 1955, with Don Rice (President), Forrest Dilling (Vice President), Win McRae (Secretary), Ora Sands (Treasurer) Alf Bunker (Programs) and John Theberge (Historian).

The organization is still active today although the name was changed in 1976 to the Durham Region Field Naturalists (DRFN).

The name change was in hopes of retaining the many members from outside Oshawa. Despite the name change, many naturalists in the rest of Durham still considered it to be an 'Oshawa' club, and so the Pickering Naturalists was born in 1977 to serve those residing mainly west of Oshawa. North Durham Nature came to be in Sept. 2013 to serve those to the north. Perhaps some day a new club will be formed in the Newcastle area for naturalists to the east.

I often think of the truly friendly, knowledgeable and inspirational people I had the pleasure of knowing through my affiliation with the club. Notable among those from early days of the club are Bob & Esther Allin, Margaret Bain, Dennis Barry, Alf Bunker, Roland and Agnes Foster, Margaret Houlding, James Kamstra, Win McRae, Ed Morley, Edge and Betty Pegg, Don and Ann Rice, Ken and Ora Sands, George Scott, Murray and Doris Speirs, John Theberge, Ron and Ted Tozer and Al Wood.

NB: Much of the information about the ONC/DRFN was taken from a 39-page booklet I wrote on behalf of the club for their 50th Anniversary in May 2005.

Editor's Note: When it became clear that something needed to happen to prevent Thicksen's Woods from being destroyed, members of Durham Region Field Naturalists played a leading role in the formation of Thicksen's Woods Heritage Foundation. Ever since, dedicated naturalists within DRFN continue to be among our staunchest supporters.

Donating to Thickson's Woods Land Trust via Interac e-transfer

by Treasurer Brian Steele

The steps to make a donation are as follows:

- (1) Sign on with your bank and select Interac e-transfer. Next pick the account the money will come from and enter the amount.
- (2) For recipient select "add new" and enter our e-mail address (nature@thicksonswoods.com)
- (3) Then enter a security question and its answer.
- (4) Under Message put your name and address so that I will be able to send a charitable receipt.
- (5) The next screen is a summary where the information can be double-checked.
If okay then click Send.
- (6) Finally, you must send an e-mail to our e-mail address (nature@thicksonswoods.com) setting out the security question and the answer. Without this information I would be unable to make the deposit. If you did not include your name and address under step 5 above then you should include it in this e-mail if you want a charitable receipt.

I bank with TD but I am sure the steps would be very similar for every bank. There may be a charge from your bank to make an e-transfer. I sent a test donation of \$25.00 and was charged \$0.25 for the transaction.

At our end, we should receive two e-mails. The first from your financial institution will say we have received an e-transfer. The second will be from you and have the security question and answer. Once I have completed the transaction, an e-mail will then be automatically sent to you informing you that the deposit was accepted.

Yes, I want to help protect Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve. It's a very special place!
We need spaces where plants and animals can thrive and people can relax in nature.

Here is my tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____ Date _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ Postal Code _____ Tel. _____

e-mail _____

Cheques can be payable to Thickson's Woods Land Trust.

Mail to: Box 541 Whitby, ON L1N 5V3 (Charitable Registration # 0674382-52-13)

Donations can also be made by e-transfer. See above for details.

**Thank you so much for helping to support
Thickson's Woods Nature Reserve, this precious corner of nature.**