



Photo by Kaye Edmonds

# LAURIER WOODS CONSERVATION AREA Newsletter

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## Note from the President...

**FALL 2010**

Laurier Woods can, to many of us, be the most beautiful and pleasant during late Fall. During that time, the leaves will mostly have fallen, opening up the undergrowth and inducing us to peer further into the interior. Furthermore, lots of lovely red berries of the Winterberry plant are suddenly evident and the purple ones of the Wild Grapes are more prominent.

Amazingly attractive mushrooms can also be perceived here and there.

The birds may be almost gone – but now and then one will make an appearance to refresh our view. Bright brown Fox Sparrows can often be discovered, the Ruffed Grouse may surprise us, and such rarities as Bohemian Waxwings or Pine Grosbeaks should be looked for. Of course the ebullient Black-capped Chickadees and purposeful Downy and Hairy Woodpeckers will surely be observed making their living among the tree branches.

The trails will generally be dry, but where the odd muddy spot will have been worn, new platforms have recently been added by our works crew led by Ike Chrest

and Paul Smylie, to make your walk even more comfortable. Also, new markers have been emplaced over beyond the “yellow trails”, to reduce the feeling that you may think you are temporarily lost, though in some kind of scenic wonders among the cedar trees.

Curtis Irish and Ron Slater are hard-working volunteers whom you may frequently say hello to as they improve some of the farther reaches of trails. Yes, do go out and explore the new trails beyond the beaver dam opposite the Haist viewing platform, and past the newest boardwalk at the southwestern end of the woods. It is now possible to make a rather adventurous circular route by using a portion of the old Callander Road as a connecting spur. You will appreciate somewhat more the granite, rocky ridges creating some of the wetlands, when you follow those routes.

Anyhow, enjoy the woods! They are there for just such purpose – to refresh the mind and help us to better appreciate the special, natural world still remaining around us!

## Laurier Birding

From April through August this year, there were a total of 93 reported bird species listed on the bird reporting charts at the Brule St. entrance. As always, the month of May with its influx of migrating birds was the high point with 76 species reported., including 16 types of warblers. Three types of vireos were recorded including the Red-eyed, Blue-headed and Warbling Vireos. To date, seven types of sparrows were observed. These were the American Tree Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Fox Sparrow and Song, Swamp and White-throated Sparrows. The Swamp Sparrow could usually be seen and heard at the first marsh area. All three Grosbeaks; the Pine, Evening and Rose-breasted were observed year to date. The

Virginia Rail and Sora were again recorded in the marsh. The charts will be taken down for the winter at the end of October. Thanks to everyone for helping keep track of our feathered friends!



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## ***MNR Superintendents visit Laurier Woods***

Pictured to the right are a group of MNR superintendents from all over North-eastern Ontario. They started off their conference by taking a guided walk through the Laurier Woods. They were given a brief about the Laurier Wood's history, the initial involvement of the local MNR office which established some local provincially significant wetlands nearby; the volunteer aspect of the development, the partnership with the Conservation Authority; the variety of habitats and the teaching by the local schools studying habitats within their curriculum. Also mentioned were the minimal costs of operation and attainment, groups which helped to get things started, the importance of keeping the property out of public (or private) ownership, membership and directors of our incorporated entity; and that it is hoped that the woods will remain a non-developed preserve for many future generations to come.



## ***What is a wetland anyway?***



*Photo by Kaye Edmonds*

A wetland is an area of land where the soil is saturated with moisture either permanently or seasonally. The different types of wetlands include marshes, swamps, fens and bogs. Wetlands are considered the most biologically diverse of all the ecosystems. They provide habitat and food sources to many different types of plant and animal species. By 1993 50% of the world's wetlands have been destroyed: drained for development or flooded for lakes. Many people did not realize the importance of these areas. Wetlands act like giant sponges, soaking up rain and snow which helps to reduce floods. These ecosystems help filter polluted waters before releasing them into the watershed. They provide important stop-over areas for migratory birds. Wetlands are a vital part of our environment and it is essential that we protect them.

The Friends of Laurier Woods wishes to welcome and sincerely thank you for your support!

If you are interested in helping with trail development/maintenance, purchasing a \$20.00 annual membership or making a donation towards the protection and enhancement of Laurier Woods, please do not hesitate in contacting us today!



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*Please feel free to share your pictures and stories for future newsletters!*

*More photos can also be found on Facebook see Friends of Laurier Woods!*