

Head-of-the-Lake Land Trust a program of the Hamilton Naturalists' Club

2010 ACTIVITY UPDATE

The Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC) is a volunteer-run charitable organization with over 600 members dedicated to the study, appreciation and conservation of wild plants and animals. As the oldest land trust in Ontario, the HNC has been acquiring and caring for land for 50 years. With increasing development pressures, the HNC saw the need to build the land conservation program and in 2005 formed the Head-of-the-Lake Land Trust (HLT) program to identify and protect key ecological features in Hamilton, Burlington and surrounding areas. To date the HLT has protected over 300 acres in five nature sanctuaries.

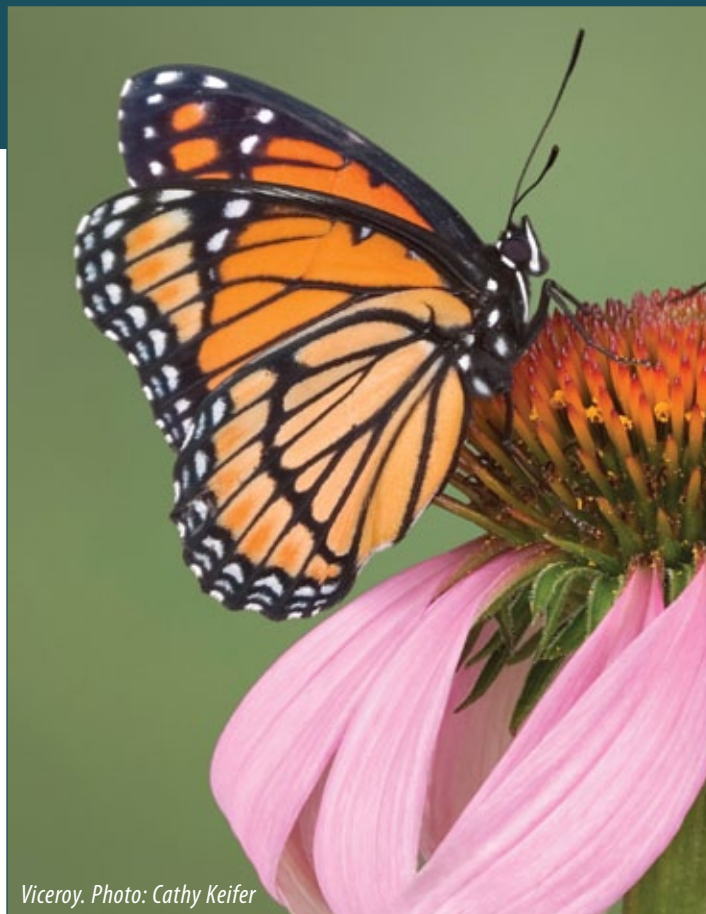
HEAD-OF-THE-LAKE LAND TRUST ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

PROTECTING LAND

The HLT program works with landowners to find the best way to meet our mutual conservation goals and the landowner's tax and estate planning needs. A land securement strategy was developed by the HLT and highlights significant environmental areas that are important to protect from development. The strategy helps to direct the HLT's land protection activities.

Amaolo Nature Sanctuary

In November 2010 the HNC was proud to announce that additional wildlife habitat was protected forever, thanks to a generous gift of land from George Amaolo. The new 39 acre Amaolo Nature Sanctuary is located west of Lynden and is partially forested, both naturally and aided by Mr. Amaolo, who has planted over 16,000 trees and shrubs. The HNC will follow in Mr. Amaolo's footsteps by restoring an



Viceroy. Photo: Cathy Keifer

abandoned field with native plants to create native savannah ecosystem. The HNC thanks Mr. Amaolo for his incredible generosity and looks forward to furthering his 'green' legacy by caring for the Amaolo Nature Sanctuary forever.

STEWARDSHIP LAND

The HLT program developed stewardship plans to guide activities at the nature sanctuaries. This primarily involved managing invasive plants and monitoring endangered species. HLT volunteers removed invasive plants by the truckload from the Spooky Hollow and Cartwright Nature Sanctuaries. Annual volunteer work parties also cleaned up garbage and maintained trails and boardwalks.

Managing invasive species is hard work and the HLT was fortunate to have the help of dedicated teams from the Ministry of Natural Resources Stewardship Rangers, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Deloitte, and many dedicated HNC volunteers.

Volunteers helped conduct the annual survey of the American Columbo colony at the Cartwright Nature Sanctuary. The HNC has been surveying and monitoring the population of this endangered plant since it was discovered in 2005. HNC's ecologist also collected health data for the endangered American Chestnut and Eastern Flowering Dogwood trees at the Spooky Hollow Nature Sanctuary and submitted the data to scientists looking at the protection and recovery of these species.

EDUCATING FUTURE LAND STEWARDS

The HLT's education program fosters an interest in nature conservation in our future caretakers of the land. The innovative program fills an important niche in environmental education by delivering interactive programs in classrooms, and leading school field trips to the nature sanctuaries. Students explore the natural world while actively participating in stewardship activities.

Over 300 students from Hamilton's downtown core joined us on nature outings and for many it was their first time visiting a natural area. The Scavenger Hunt we've developed is popular with students as it helps them look for plants and animals and learn about nature.

ECO Art



ECO Art print

ECO Art is a unique partnership project between the HLT and The Print Studio (www.theprintstudio.ca), a local non-profit art organization, to make hands-on nature and art education available to Hamilton schools. The HLT teaches students about endangered species, local habitats and wildlife, bird migration and how they can become caretakers of the earth.

This is done during an interactive program in the classroom, as well as during an outing to a nature sanctuary. With guidance from The Print Studio, students then create print art based on what they've learned about the natural world. Over 1,000 students from Hamilton's

downtown core have participated in the ECO Art program since its inception in 2008.

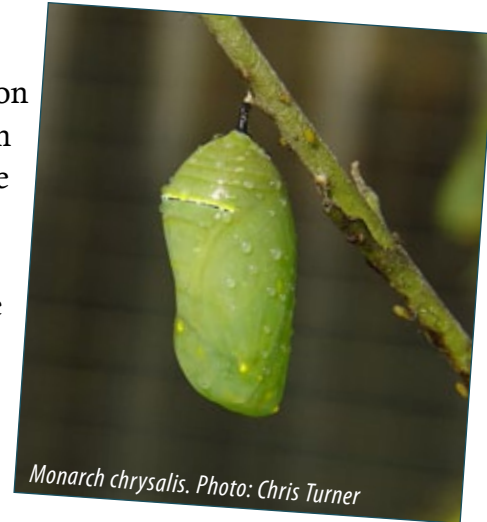
Monarchs & Milkweed

Through this hands-on program students learn about the Monarch life cycle and their unique dependence on milkweed. The three-phase program begins with a special presentation about Monarchs and having students plant seeds in the classroom.

Students then visit a nature sanctuary and plant the plants grown in the classroom, helping to create Monarch habitat. Lastly, students are able to see the Monarch life cycle first hand by raising Monarch caterpillars in the classroom. The butterflies are then released on the milkweed that they planted. Over 400 students have been involved in the popular program in 2010.

HLT's new website

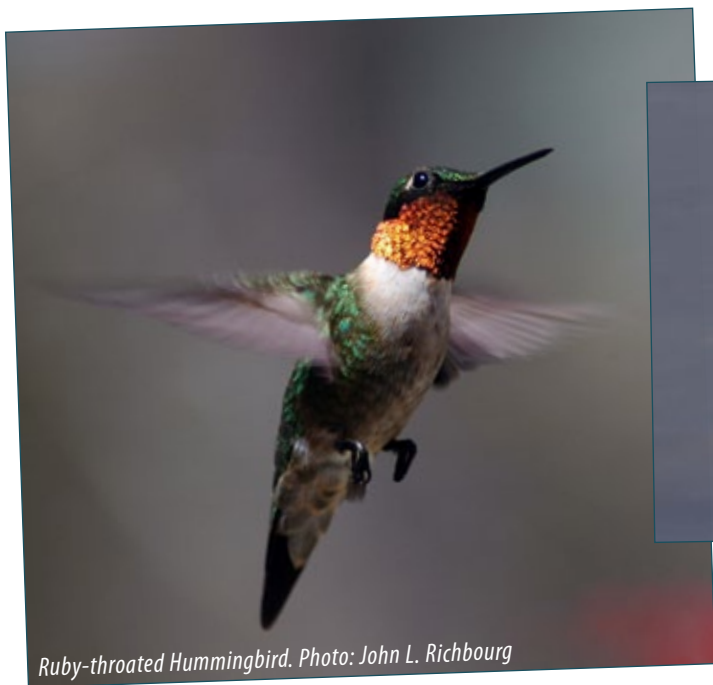
The HLT program developed and launched a new website that can be found at www.headofthelakelandtrust.org.



Monarch chrysalis. Photo: Chris Turner



www.headofthelakelandtrust.org



Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Photo: John L. Richbourg



Bullfrog. Photo: Brad Thompson



Butterfly Weed. Photo: Glenn Barrett

PARTNERING FOR LAND CONSERVATION Cootes to Escarpment Park System

The HNC, through the HLT program, is one of nine partners spearheading the development of a long-term conservation vision for the natural lands and green space from the western end of Hamilton to Burlington. Our vision is to link together 1,500 hectares (3,800 acres) of natural areas owned and managed by the partners (HNC, Bruce Trail Conservancy, City of Burlington, City of Hamilton, Conservation Halton, Hamilton Conservation Authority, Hamilton Halton Remedial Action Plan, Halton Region, and Royal Botanical Gardens). This globally significant urban park will stretch from Hamilton Harbour, through Cootes Paradise Marsh to a 10 km section of the UNESCO designated Niagara Escarpment. This is much larger than Hyde Park in London, England and Central Park in New York. The project partners developed a strategy and are now working on its implementation.

Ontario Land Trust Alliance

The HLT's coordinator has been elected to the Ontario Land Trust Alliance (OLTA) Board in the position of Secretary. OLTA is the umbrella organization for Ontario's 38 land trusts. It seeks to encourage the land trust movement in Ontario by providing administrative and professional support to its member groups.

Walk for Nature

The Walk for Nature was a joint venture of local environmental clubs and organizations including Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC) as the lead organizer, Royal Botanical Gardens, Hamilton Conservation Foundation and Green Venture. A special feature added for 2010 was the Nature Quest, a series of clues along the trail that needed to be solved before participants could get their prize. It was enjoyed by young and old alike. Special thanks to Natalia Rojas for the success of the Nature Quest!

The fundraising walk followed the magnificent trails along the north shore of Cootes Paradise where the spring wildflowers were plentiful. Walkers raised over \$6,500 to support HLT activities. Generous sponsorship from the TD Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation, coupled with the work of 30 volunteers allowed every penny raised to go directly towards supporting the club's land trust program and to supporting the partner groups.



Photo: Glenn Barrett

LOOKING AHEAD

In the year ahead we will be very busy with a number of programs to fulfill the HLT’s mandate of protecting and stewarding land and educating students about the importance of conservation activities. Our programs will include:

Protecting Land

Staff and volunteers from the HLT program will continue to meet with landowners interested in permanently protecting their environmentally significant land. This work has received the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Stewarding Land

The upcoming year will be busy with stewardship activities at the nature sanctuaries, with special projects at the Amaolo and Spooky Hollow Nature Sanctuaries, and regular maintenance of the other sanctuaries including work at our urban restoration site “Lands Inlet”.

An 8 acre abandoned field at the Amaolo Nature Sanctuary will be restored to grassland savannah and will provide important wildlife habitat for birds, mammals and pollinators such as bees and insects. Volunteers will assist by planting native species.

Students from the ECO Art program will also help to create an interpretive sign for the sanctuary that will describe the project’s nature restoration goal. Thanks to the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, Shell Environmental Fund, Hamilton Wentworth Stewardship Council, and The Home Depot Canada Foundation for supporting this program.

A small, low level prescribed burn will be conducted at the Spooky Hollow Nature Sanctuary with the support of the TD Friends of the Environment, Shell Environmental Fund, RBC and private donors. This will further the HNC’s ongoing restoration project to convert a pine plantation into a natural native oak savannah habitat and to protect and restore endangered species.

Educating Future Land Stewards

Due to increasing popularity and demand, the HLT will be expanding both the ECO Art and Monarchs & Milkweed projects with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ed Smee Conservation Fund. Both projects will offer nature outings and students will be able to actively participate in the restoration project at the Amaolo Nature Sanctuary.

Funding the Land Trust Program

The HLT will continue to engage HNC members and donors who support the land trust program. This will include ongoing investments in the HNC endowment funds to ensure that we have resources to protect nature now and long into the future.

SUPPORTERS

The HLT program is deeply grateful to all the individuals, businesses and foundations that have helped to protect, steward and educate future stewards about land conservation. **None of this great work could happen without you.**

Thank You!

Thank you for being such an important part of protecting and stewarding land and educating about land conservation. If you have any questions about the HLT program, please contact us by telephone 905-524-3339, or by e-mail: land@hamiltonnature.org. Visit us online at www.headofthelakelandtrust.org. Visit the Hamilton Naturalists’ Club online at www.hamiltonnature.org.

