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Where Do We Go From Here? Strategic Plan Forming

By Tünde Otto-Harris

Willow Park Ecology Centre (WPEC) is establishing a plan of action for the next five years. Through public input at our Strategic Planning session on Sept. 12 at the Town of Halton Hills Civic Centre, direction was received from several community groups and individuals. Further, more than 100 community members were invited to participate through a survey and critical about the

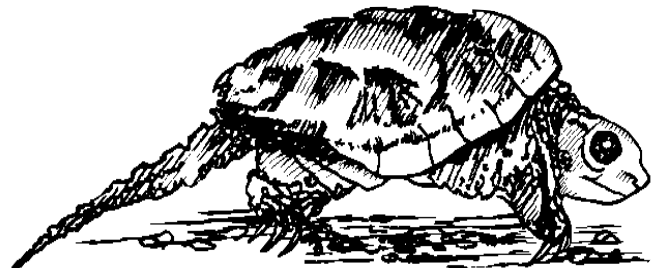
The park's next five years are being decided.

A planning session for the next five years was necessary because the original Master Plan defined the first phase, or only the first three years of park activities, and focused on the creation of the park layout and features. The goal of WPEC, as stated in the Master Plan, remains as "Provide a focus for ecological-based education and recreation in the Town of Halton Hills." The next phase includes the development of community programs and financial planning. Pilot community programs were conducted this summer.

Questions that have been addressed by the community include:

- What is your definition of an ecology park?
- What activities and functions would be too much for the ecology of the park?
- How much human impact do you think WPEC can sustain?
- What are your ideas about the park's primary focus being on formal education in schools, or informal education in the community?
- Should WPEC incorporate?
- How should WPEC acquire funding to ensure day-to-day and long-term operations?
- How do you see your organization collaborating with WPEC?

The information gathered is being analyzed for the development of the park's strategic plan for 2003 to 2008, which is to be completed by the end of this year. ✍



Summer Programs a Success

By Jackie Munroe

The first summer of community programs was considered a success and will continue next year. The first event held, Fun 'n' Free Frog Monitoring, involved many adults and children who listened to frog calls, counted and identified a variety of frog species. Results of the monitoring were forwarded to the wider frog monitoring program for the area.

Another community favourite was Parents' Day Off. Between 24 and 27 children took part in supervised environmental games and crafts while the adults learned about the ecology centre. Next year pre-registration will be required to keep the numbers at a manageable level.

Next year promises to be even better.

After Dark at Willow Park was another exceptional program, luring about 28 people out to experience the wildlife that becomes active after sundown. Bats, owls, frogs and other nocturnal creatures were watched or discussed.

The Summer Nature Camp had the kids creating the new xeriscape garden in the park. Willow Park Ecology Centre may offer its own camp program next summer.

Many people from the community volunteered their time and expertise to help create a great summer program. Many thanks go to Bill McIlveen, Teresa Rigg, Nicole Pineau, Doug Clark, Don Scallen and Don Noble. Summer student Steve Jackson was a great help in the smooth running of the programs, which wouldn't have been the same without him.

Next year's summer programs promise to be even better. If you would like a special program or have any ideas for workshops, please contact Ruth Kuchinad at 905-877-3676.



Contacts

Willow Park Ecology Centre is an initiative of the Town Environmental Advisory Committee. It is located in Norval, with an entrance off Mary St., on land leased by the Town of Halton Hills from Credit Valley Conservation.

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Friends of Willow Park Ecology Centre

We are delighted to welcome the following as the first members of our official Friends program:

Members:

Ruth Kuchinad

The Noble family

David Redman

Brian Thomas

Donors (contributions of more-than \$500):

Bill and Charlie Carney

Putzer Nurseries



For details about the Friends program, call Ruth Kuchinad at 905-877-3676.

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Carolyn Martin: A True Community Citizen

By Ruth Kuchinad

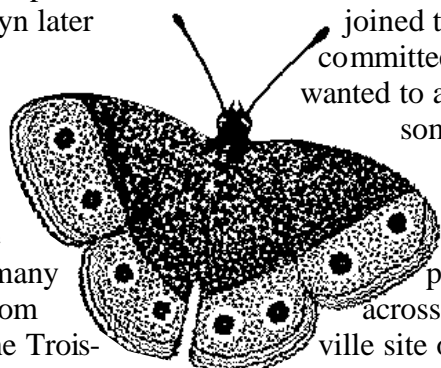
If you want to meet a volunteer *extraordinaire*, you have to meet Carolyn Martin, one of two winners of the Volunteer of the Year Award for Willow Park Ecology Centre (WPEC). Along with Don Noble, who was previously profiled in *Willow Leaf*, Carolyn was recognized in August for her efforts to enhance the quality of the park.

By day, Carolyn works as a special projects manager for Canada Post in the area of computer innovations and Internet programs. She has volunteered her free time for WPEC ever since its inception. After attending the Green Roundtables that the Town Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC) held in 1996, she joined the Hungry Hollow Committee. She brought a wealth of knowledge to this committee from her experiences with Halton Region's Social Planning Council, teen parenting programs in Halton Hills and Open Door.

Carolyn later joined the Willow Park Ecology Centre because she wanted to accomplish something in a hands-on manner. She rescued many shrubs from the Trois-Rivières site of the Falling Waters subdivision development and moved them to WPEC. Carolyn has been and continues to be involved in many aspects of the park, including building L.U.N.K.E.R.S. units, planting, photography, public outreach and strategic planning.

"These activities give me a chance to make a difference in a lasting way, creating something which will last into the future," Carolyn says. "When you know what Willow Park Ecology Centre came from, it's very rewarding to be involved in the transformation and to see how nature can triumph."

She remembers hearing about the Garrison Creek project in Toronto and wants us to avoid the regret over destroying a natural habitat by paving over a ravine. She really hopes the Ecology Centre idea catches on and spreads throughout Canada. ✍



Gardening Despite Drought

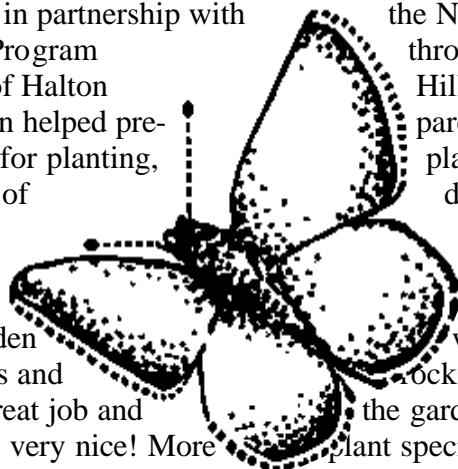
By Jackie Munroe

Willow Park Ecology Centre created a new Xeriscape Garden this summer, located beside the kiosk in the park. When you cross the bridge, it's located behind the welcome sign. A xeriscape garden consists of drought-resistant plants which are tolerant of dry, hot conditions. This garden demonstrates a highly water-efficient garden that helps to counter, due to the fact that it requires little water after the first year. This type of garden saves time and money since it is extremely low-maintenance. The plants are easy to purchase and establish on any property.

**Low-maintenance,
water-efficient
gardening.**

Once the plants are established they will be able to withstand a period of drought or water shortage. For the first year or so, however, these plants do require watering and weeding until their root systems become established. All species in the garden are native to either Ontario or Canada. One of the benefits of using native species is that they will grow hardily in our community. We have planted a variety of succulents and cacti, such as prickly pear from Point Pelee.

A company called Xeriscape Plus supplied the plants and design advice, and the garden was created in partnership with the Nature Camp Program through the Town of Halton Hills. Children helped prepare the garden for planting, and planted a variety of drought-resistant species and decorated the garden with cedar rails and rocks. They did a great job and the garden is looking very nice! More plant species will be added next year to fill out the garden. The flowers will be lovely and colourful. Why not come by and check it out? ✍



Help Create Compost at the Park

If you don't have the space or the desire to do your own composting at home, feel free to use the compost area at Willow Park Ecology Centre (WPEC).

Organic any of the and help gold" for and the

**Reduce waste
and create
black gold**

Add your or-kitchen scraps to compost units us create "black the park gardens community.

You can add to the compost piles even during the winter, although decomposition slows down considerably in cold weather. Diverting the organic waste from the garbage going to landfill can reduce your household waste by up to one half.

As long as your contributions are good compostable scraps, they will be a welcome addition to the working compost piles.



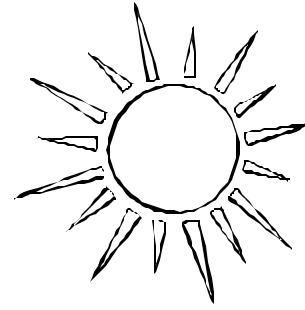
Good Things to Compost:

- ? Fruit & vegetable tops, peels, cores, seeds, & bits not eaten.
- ? Coffee grounds & paper filters; tea bags & tea leaves.
- ? Egg shells.
- ? Finished cut flowers; trimmings & prunings from houseplants, unless diseased.
- ? Scraps & leftovers from meals & snacks, unless on the excluded list below.

Do Not Compost:

- ? Sticks & twigs – they take a very long time to disintegrate.
- ? Plastic – that means removing stickers from each piece of produce.
- ? Meat, fat, bones, dairy scraps – they attract flies & scavenging animals.
- ? Cat, dog or other pets' stools.

Bring your good organic kitchen waste to WPEC and help us create great soil while reducing your own household waste. ☺



Town Endorses Kyoto Protocol

This past summer, Halton Hills Council endorsed the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, which is attempting to reduce greenhouse gas emissions around the world.

Quarry Hearing Location Changed

The Niagara Escarpment Commission has changed the date and location of the meeting on the application of the Dufferin Milton Quarry to mine more of the escarpment. Instead of Owen Sound, the meeting will be Thurs. Oct. 17 in Georgetown. P.O.W.E.R. asks all concerned citizens to attend. For details, call Barbara Halsall at 905-873-0344.

Coming Events

Sept. 21: Autumn Harvest Potluck Picnic, Everdale Farm, 10-4p.m., 519-855-4859.

Sept. 28: Wind Power Generation, Everdale Farm, 10-5 p.m., 519-855-4859, \$85.

Oct. 5: WPEC booth at Active Living - It's a Way of Life! Community Open House, Georgetown Marketplace, 10-4 p.m.

Oct. 5: Grey Water Systems workshop, Everdale Farm, 10-5 p.m., 519-855-4859, \$85.

Oct. 6: Bruce Trail Day, Limehouse baseball diamond parking lot. Hikes & other activities, 10-3 p.m.

Oct. 7-10 & 15-16: P.O.W.E.R.'s Future Forests tree planting. Volunteers needed. 905-873-0344.

Oct. 19: Ecological & Healthy Renovations, Everdale Farm, 10-4 p.m., \$45.

Oct. 26: Wild & Garden Herb Identification, Everdale Farm, 10-4 p.m., \$45.