

Volume 2, Number 3

Summer 2002

Summer Fun and Learning

This summer, Willow Park Ecology Centre offers educational and recreational programs that are open to the whole community. Some activities are free, and some are low-cost. Jackie Munroe, Environmental Program Coordinator, has developed a range of events, and our summer student, Steven Jackson, is assisting.

Here are the programs:

Fun 'n' Free Frog Monitoring

June 27, 7-9 p.m., Free!

Learn how to identify the different species of frogs found in the park. Help to gather valuable data on population numbers. Learn the importance of frogs as indicator species and what ecological problems they face.

After Dark at Willow Park

July 9, Aug. 19, 8:30-10:30 p.m., Free!

Experience what the park offers when the sun goes down. Learn about bats, owls and other nocturnal creatures.

Composting Workshop

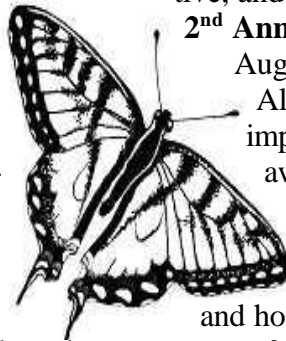
July 14, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Free!

Learn the concepts of composting. Hourly demonstrations and take-home material will be available.

The Parents' Day Off

July 17, Aug. 8, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Free!

Pack a lunch and bring the kids to the park for a fun-filled day of games and crafts while you learn about and enjoy nature.



Butterfly Habitat Workshop

July 27, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$15

Learn about the Butterfly Garden and how to create one at home. Learn about the life cycle of the butterfly and its requirements for food, shelter and space.

Native Plant Exploration

July 31, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$10

This introductory workshop begins with a tour of the native plants in the park. Learn what plants are native, and their benefits and advantages.

2nd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day

Aug. 10, 4-8 p.m., Free!

All volunteers who have donated their time to improving the park are welcome to enjoy our awards ceremony and free BBQ.

Wetland Workshop

Aug. 24, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$15

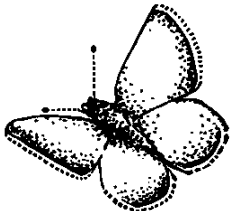
Learn about the park's constructed wetland and how to create your own. Learn of the importance of wetlands and their many environmental benefits.

Landscaping for Wildlife

Sept. 15, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$5

Learn how to add to the ecological value of the community by landscaping for wildlife. Explore such created habitats as bat boxes, birdhouses and brush piles. Discover which food source plants are needed for different species of animals.

To register, contact Jackie Munroe at 905-699-7887, or e-mail: jackie_munroe@sympatico.ca .✉



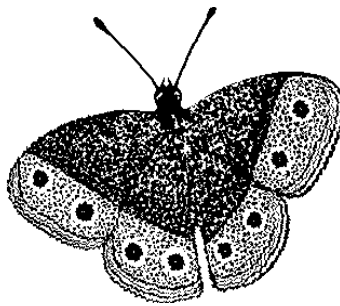
Preparing to be Judged

By Ruth Kuchinad

After winning four blooms in the provincial Communities in Bloom competition in 2001, the Town of Halton Hills is now entered at the national level. Willow Park Ecology Centre will be a major stop on the judges' tour, which will take place on July 31 through Acton, Georgetown and the rural areas.

Communities in Bloom is a Canadian, volunteer, non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community participation. Their motto is: "People, Plants and PrideGrowing Together." Communities of the same size from each of the provinces and territories across Canada compete in the following eight categories:

- ✍ Tidiness effort
- ✍ Landscaped areas
- ✍ Turf areas
- ✍ Heritage conservation
- ✍ Urban forestry development
- ✍ Floral arrangements
- ✍ Environmental effort
- ✍ Community involvement



Willow Park Ecology Centre will be sprucing up the park through plantings at the interpretive pavilion, planting sunflowers, clearing invasive species, keeping pathways weeded, installing interpretive signs and creating a xeriscape garden at the bridge. All of this is being done through partnerships with George Kennedy Public School, the Halton Red Cross and the Georgetown Horticultural Society. Our facility contributes greatly in the community involvement category as well as in environmental effort, heritage conservation and urban forestry development.

Judges look at everything from window boxes and a well-trimmed tree to large gardens and public spaces, both formal and informal. Many sectors of the community need to be involved in this effort; Town council and staff, industry and business and the ordinary citizen all have a part to play.

If you can help with this effort either through working with us at Willow Park Ecology Centre or with the Town, please contact either me, Ruth Kuchinad, Coordinator, Willow Park Ecology Centre, at 905-877-3676 or contact Kelly Ballanger, 905-873-2601 x 2345. Together we can make a difference! ✍



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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www.willowparkecology.com

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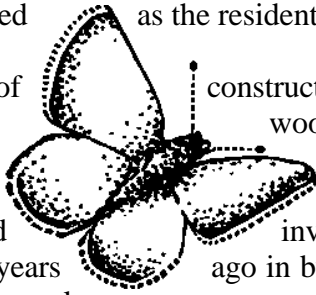
Joanne Williams

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Roses in the Park

David and Elizabeth Rose, and son Chad Inglis, are all volunteers for Willow Park Ecology Centre. Chad has written for *Willow Leaf*, Elizabeth has worked in the butterfly garden, at Riverfest, and with planting and cleaning up; David is a member of the Steering Committee, and is fondly regarded as the resident carpenter.

A teacher of technology and construction technology and wood manufacturing at George-High School, David involved his students five years ago in building projects for the park.



“The students are involved right from the planning stages,” says David. “I want them to take ownership of each project and not just hammer nails when told to do so.”

Over the years, he and his students have built the Welcome Kiosk, the rustic benches through the park, the Centre’s sign near the baseball diamond, the direction sign near the L.M. Montgomery garden, the display sign at the bridge, and the Paddle to the Sea boats for Riverfest. David has also advised on the interior benches of the Interpretive Centre.

David volunteers for Willow Park Ecology Centre to let others connect with nature. “I have fond memories as a little kid going to my grandfather’s cottage where the air was clean and full with the sound of birds,” he says. “Large trees dominated the cottage road. The road, more of a laneway, ended at ‘the cut,’ a place where you could jump into a wooden flat-bottomed boat and row through the bullrushes into the bay. I want my own kids to have those kinds of experience.”

David treasures the park as a contribution to a good life. “I like to think that I’m doing my part in the world, that we are not headed for a disconnected world of paved asphalt but rather to a place where birds sing and some trees grow large.”

Interpretive Gardens Adopted

By Tünde Otto-Harris

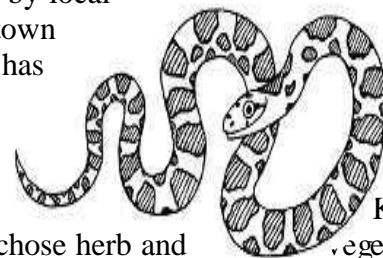
Since the goal of Willow Park Ecology Centre is ecological and environmental education, an interpretive pavilion is valuable. It’s a shelter for seminars, classes, displays and community events. At this year’s Riverfest, it was the creative site for the Paddle to the Sea boats.

The pavilion was designed by Peter Skira, Eric Connelly Architects and built primarily by Peter Smucki in 2000. The cladding of the columns and design of the benches was done by the woodshop classes of David Rose. The benches were built by Hickory Falls Ratepayers’ Association. The materials used were chosen to impact the environment in a minimal way while providing a strong physical structure. The orientation is such that the four sides face north, south, east, and west.

This year the Interpretive Gardens around the pavilion were begun. All gardens serve as habitats for insects, amphibians (frogs), reptiles (snakes), and mammals (deer, rabbits, humans). If wildlife consumes materials in the garden, it’s all right. It demonstrates greater ecosystem functions such as food chains, in which some plants and animals serve as food for others.

The gardens could demonstrate such ideas as ways to use native plant species, garden themes and local eco-climates. This year, the gardens have been adopted by local groups. The

Georgetown Horticultural Society has created a shade garden, Kathryn Braga’s Grade Four classes at George Kennedy Public School chose herb and vegetable gardens, and the Red Cross Society selected a wildflower garden. Future garden themes may be xeriscaping, grasses, rock and scent. Two garden beds still need adoption. If interested, please contact Ruth Kuchinad at 905-877-3676.



Future goals for the Interpretive Gardens are to use compost from the on-site compost demonstration, and to develop a seed exchange program for local native plant species.

Become a Friend of Willow Park Ecology Centre

Although Willow Park Ecology Centre is a program of the Town Environmental Advisory Committee, it receives only limited funding from The Town of Halton Hills. And while the park has received generous grants from environmental and charitable organizations, these groups require us to show local community support. One way of doing this is by becoming an official "Friend" of the park.

The Friends of Willow Park Ecology Centre Program is designed to let everyone in the community support the work of the park. There are three categories of annual giving:

Members

Students & seniors 65 and over: \$15

Adult: \$20

Family: \$50

Supporters: \$51 to \$500

Donors: \$501 and over

We also recognize "in-kind" donations of products, materials and services.

Funders are such environmental and charitable groups as Trillium Foundation, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Friends of the Environment Foundation and others.



Membership Satisfaction

All Friends of Willow Park Ecology Centre will receive the following benefits of membership:

- ✍ Tax receipt from The Town of Halton Hills
- ✍ Name published in *Willow Leaf* and on our Web site
- ✍ Subscription to *Willow Leaf* in e-mail, fax or print version
- ✍ Invitation to our annual appreciation event
- ✍ Discounts on our seminars, pins, T-shirts and sweatshirts
- ✍ Invitations to park work parties

You will also have the satisfaction of:

- ✍ helping to restore an urban space to nature;
- ✍ supporting a diversity of wildlife habitat;
- ✍ sustaining a passive recreational park;
- ✍ helping to educate students and the public about ecological issues.

In addition, you will have the opportunity of helping to direct the future of the park.

To become a Friend, send your cheque to Ruth Kuchinad, Coordinator, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 24 Edith St., Georgetown, Ont., L7G 3A8, or contact her for more information at 905-877-3676 or ruth@willowparkecology.com.

Coming Events

June 15: Downtown Georgetown Farmers' Market opens, every Saturday morning until autumn.

June 22: Protect Our Earth Summer Flower Contest, Georgetown Horticultural Society, Georgetown Marketplace, 905-877-0476.

June 22 & 23: The Art of the Garden Tour, beginning at Everdale, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Free.

June 27: Fun 'n'Free Frog Monitoring, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 7-9 p.m., Free.

July 6: Bruce Trail Yard Sale, 11 Edith St.

July 9: After Dark at Willow Park, 8:30-10:30 p.m., Free.

July 14: Composting Workshop, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Free.

July 17: Parents' Day Off, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Free.

July 27: Butterfly Habitat Workshop, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$15.

July 31: Communities in Bloom contest.

July 31: Native Plant Exploration, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 6:30-8:30 p.m., \$10

Aug. 8: Parents' Day Off, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Free.

Aug. 10: 2nd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Day, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 4-8 p.m., Free.

Aug. 19: After Dark at Willow Park, 8:30-10:30 p.m., Free.

Aug. 24: Wetland Workshop, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$15.

Sept. 7: Seed Saving Workshop, Everdale, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., \$45 incl. lunch, 519-855-4859.

Sept. 15: Landscaping for Wildlife, Willow Park Ecology Centre, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$5

Sept. 18: Celestial Sky Fall Flower Contest, Georgetown Horticultural Society, Knox Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m., 905-877-0476.