



CANADA SOUTH LAND TRUST

Newsletter

Spring Newsletter 2011 Volume 8, Number 1

Monitoring the Balkwill Lands, May 11, 2011



When the Conservation Easement Agreement related to the Balkwill Lands was signed between landowners Bill Balkwill and Jack Balkwill and the Canada South Land Trust in April 2007, the agreement was that the Lands be inspected at least once yearly. The Conservation Easement Agreement includes a number of restrictions that were chosen as they will protect the natural heritage on the Balkwill Lands in perpetuity. Such restrictions as no dumping or filling, no construction of buildings, no construction of roads or cutting of trees are important to ensure the natural heritage is preserved.

Monitoring involves a number of persons who donate their time and expertise. The monitoring begins with a phone call to landowners Bill Balkwill and Jack Backwill. A date for the monitoring is agreed upon and the monitors arrive at an early hour. The phone call on May 2, 2011 resulted in Wednesday, May 11, 2011 chosen with monitors arriving to commence the monitoring at 9:00 a.m.

Long time monitor Ernie Kennette agreed to look after the paper work with other persons contributing including Linda Kennette, who was donating her time for the fifth year. New executive member Parma Yarkin joined the monitoring group for the first time. Photographers Alan Batke and Larry Onysko were on hand to record the monitoring as was Land Trust director Terry Anderson. Landowners Bill Balkwill and Jack Balkwill guided the group around the perimeter of the Lands.

During the morning monitoring, the northwest area of the Balkwill Lands and adjacent lands was examined by volunteer Betty Learmouth for the invasive plant Garlic Mustard. Garlic Mustard was noted on the adjacent lands. These plants were pulled with enough to fill two garbage bags.

In the past the monitoring had been divided into two half day sessions, but due to everyone's busy schedule, it was decided to continue the monitoring in the afternoon. Ernie Kennette, Linda Kennette, Terry Anderson and Bill Balkwill and Jack Balkwill walked the various lanes to complete the monitoring.

A close look at the Balkwill Lands natural heritage indicated that no restrictions had been violated during this fifth monitoring session.

Notes from monitors indicated some actions taken during the monitoring. European Buckthorn, an invasive shrub, was removed from the north end of Lane 8. Several Garlic Mustard plants were noted in the northeast woodland which were pulled by Alan Batke. As the monitoring group returned from the morning's monitoring, an Eastern Fox Snake was seen on the rock pile near the south end of the Old Logging Road.

Eastern Bluebirds were seen at several nesting box sites. Great Crested Flycatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Chipping Sparrows, Northern Mockingbird, and Northern Oriole were heard singing. A single Wild Turkey was seen in the northeast section of the woodland along with four White-tailed Deer.

Thank you to all who assisted with this year's monitoring.

Photograph on page 1: Monitors are at work on the Balkwill Lands with Bill Balkwill shown on the far right. Monitors are examining the location of a perimeter survey marker. Photographer Alan Batke is on the far left. This image by Larry Onysko.

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Welcome to New CSLT Members

**Vic & Darlene Berynk, Todd Pepper,
Paul Pratt, Sarah Renaud, and
Stan & Cheryl Somers**



Welcome to returning members
Tom and Cathy Ayles.

Thank you to Nancy Murrery for
her kind assistance with this
newsletter.

A Passage to India: A Presentation by Dorothy McLeer

Naturalist **Dorothy McLeer** will present a program entitled “A Passage to India” which will feature the ecology of South India. Dorothy will discuss the holistic ecology of the region including its birds and its people.

Mark your calendar for **Thursday, December 1, 2011**. This event will be in Room C of the Essex Civic Centre at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments will be served. The fee for this fund raising event is \$20.00. Call Betty at 519-944-0825 to indicate you will be attending.

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Canada South Land Trust Mission

To preserve natural areas in the City of Windsor, Essex County, Pelee Island, and the Municipality of Chatham/Kent for future generations.

Membership fees

Single: \$20.00
Family: \$25.00
Please mail to 2405 Princess Avenue,
Windsor, Ontario N8T 1V2

Sightings on the Balkwill Lands, January 2011 – June 2011

Bill Balkwill reported the sighting of a flock of Wild Turkeys, approximately 60 individuals about January 28, 2011. Bill reported that the Turkeys were running around, appearing as a black mass.

On Sunday afternoon, January 30, 2011, an adult Bald Eagle perched in a tree near the Balkwill residence.

Snow Buntings have been seen along the laneway. A large number of Horned Larks were seen on February 4, 2011.

Bill Balkwill reported that several Purple Finches were seen the day after a winter storm.

There is considerable activity at the feeder before evening and especially before cold nights.

On February 11, 2011, Bill Balkwill reported various bird species activity about the Balkwill Lands.

The numbers of Snow Buntings and Horned Larks have increased with the recent very harsh weather conditions that produced wind chill in the minus twenties. Bill estimates one hundred Snow Buntings and Horned Larks would fly up every few minutes as they fed at the feeder near the residence.

Jack Balkwill glimpsed a crow size gray owl that flushed from the loafing area of the large barn. On February 9, 2011, the partially eaten remains of a rabbit were found which was likely the owl's prey.

The mass of Wild Turkeys were observed twice this week. The birds were seen along the front of the woodland and in the woods. This is the first winter that these birds have been observed in the woodland. As well, the local deer population is spending time in the woodland.

On February 9, 2011, a male Northern Harrier was observed.

Around the Balkwill residence, the feeding area was active with Blue Jays, one hundred Dark-eyed Juncos, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Black-capped Chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches. Eastern Bluebirds are around the nesting boxes during the day time. Bill suspects these birds congregate in the boxes at night. Prior to night fall the feeding area is particularly busy.

As Bill provided this report he mentioned that thirty Horned Larks were sitting on the snow bank near the feeding area.

Bill's next report was on February 20, 2011 following a few days of mild weather, causing accumulated snow to disappear. The Snow Buntings and Horned Larks had disappeared with six Horned Larks back as another winter storm moved into Essex County with forecasts of 10 or 15 centimetres of snow. The American Tree Sparrows had also disappeared but were found in the woodland brush piles, then had returned to the feeding area near the Balkwill residence, but not in the same numbers.

Jack Balkwill reported a sighting of two Northern Flickers. Bill reported seeing a single Northern Flicker on two occasions. A pair of Red-bellied Woodpeckers were seen in trees near the feeding area.

Bill Balkwill reported observing both male and female Red-winged Blackbirds as well as a single Common Grackle.

Five local Eastern Bluebirds are looking over the various nesting boxes around the residence as well as checking out the starling trap.

Two Northern Cardinals, a male and a female, had collided with windows.

Jack Balkwill watched as two Rock Doves were observed flying through the property and then moments later one of the doves was seen in the talons of the neighborhood Cooper's Hawk. The talons of the hawk were grasping the breast of the Rock Dove. It would be interesting to know how that happened. Perhaps the hawk flew under the Rock Dove. Bill Balkwill remarked he had previously seen a Rock Dove and a Northern Oriole captured by a Cooper's Hawk.

Snow Drops were observed in the garden February 19, 2011 with flower buds opening.





Bill Balkwill reported that the storm on February 25, 2011 brought the largest flock of Horned Larks Bill had observed on the Balkwill Lands. Bill estimates that 150 individuals along with a few Snow Buntings arrived early in the morning then departed at 11:00 a.m. The flock kept moving around the residence, flying one hundred feet away, then returning to the feeding area. Other birds observed have been Red-winged Blackbirds and a few Rusty Blackbirds.

Bill Balkwill reported the arrival of a single Killdeer on March 11, 2011 with several now about the farm. The first Turkey Vulture to arrive appeared on the March 12, 2011. Tundra Swans appeared in large flocks overhead on March 13, 2011.

Bill remarked that the woodland on March 11, 2011 was full of American Robins, hundreds of them, but likely moving northwards rather than settling in the Balkwill woodland.

There is no sign yet of either Trout Lilies or Spring Beauties on the woodland floor.

On March 18, 2011, flocks of Tundra Swans were flying high to the south and west.

At the pond, two pairs of Wood Ducks have appeared.

At least three pairs of Eastern Bluebirds, perhaps four pairs, are looking at the nesting boxes. The Eastern Bluebirds are attempting to drive off the Red-bellied Woodpecker. The European Starlings would like to occupy a nesting

box but the Eastern Bluebirds are keeping these birds away, especially the pair in front of the house, while the pair in the garden are not so aggressive.

After providing this report, Bill said he was off to the woodland to look for thrushes.

On May 7, 2011, Bill Balkwill provide a report on sightings around his lands. Warbler species observed have included Black-and-White Warbler, a female Nashville Warbler feeding on bird seed at the feeder, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Other species seen have been Brown Thrasher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird and a male Indigo Bunting eating bird seed.

For the last three or four days, a male Purple Finch and three females have been seen about the Balkwill residence. A male Rose-breasted Grosbeak and females have been observed.

The previous week a Northern Mockingbird was observed for a couple of days.

The House Wrens are back.

The Eastern Bluebirds have set up five nesting territories, thus are widespread around the Balkwill Lands. Eastern Bluebirds may be seen at their boxes located in the front yard, in the garden, in the centre of the prairie and in a ditch.

On April 30, 2011, a Sandhill Crane was observed and later heard again on May 2, 2011 by Bill and Jack. Bill Balkwill reported on June 5, 2011, that a lot of wildlife was to be seen around the Balkwill Lands.

At the Eastern Bluebird box on the front lawn, the adults spent June 5, 2011 attempting to coax the young from the box. Visitor Peggy Hurst took a delightful image of two young peering from the nesting box entrance.

A pair of Eastern Phoebes has been observed looking at various locations, including the old stone building behind the Balkwill residence and the peak of the Balkwill home. Bill recalled that the old single lane bridge over the Cedar Creek tributary to the west of Balkwill Lands was a nesting site for this species for a number of years.

A pair of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks have been visiting the feeders at the Balkwill residence. Horned Larks have also been attracted to the cracked grain. Lots of Baltimore Orioles are around. The Gray Catbirds are using the bird bath which the Brown Thrashers are also using as well as enjoying the cracked corn. A Tree Swallow has been observed eating the cracked corn.

Butterflies are attracted to the Balkwill garden, particularly Giant Swallowtail, Tiger Swallowtail and Silver-spotted Skippers.

Canada South Land Trust 8th Annual General Meeting, March 3, 2011

Essex Civic Building, Room C, 7:25 p.m. – 9:15 p.m.

Persons present: Candace Anderson, Terry Anderson, Bill Balkwill, Janet Boufford, Sue Cullen, Shirley Grondin, Bob Hall-Brooks, Tom Hince (guest speaker), Tom Hurst, Betty Learmouth, Teresa Lemire, Dan Loncke, Mary Loncke, Bob Makar, Helen Moore, Ann Muir, Ron Muir, Larry Onysko, Paul Pratt, Ann Robertson-Segal, Bonnie Ross, Bob Sanford, Patricia Sanford, Caroline Staddon, Janet Tuite, Herman Veenendaal, Caroline Williams, Parma Yarkin (28 persons)

1. CSLT Chair Betty Learmouth welcomed everyone to the Land Trust's 8th Annual General Meeting.
2. CSLT director Terry Anderson introduced guest speaker Tom Hince who had chosen the title of Spring on the Prairies for his presentation.
3. Presentation by Tom Hince: Tom provided a Power Point presentation of a birding tour beginning and ending in Calgary, Alberta during 2010. The tour visited sites in Saskatchewan and Alberta, sampling a number of different habitats including bogs, mixed forest, boreal forest, southern pothole country, soda lakes, grasslands including Grasslands National Park, mountains, and alpine habitat.
The diversity of bird life was wonderful ranging from Great Gray Owls heard at night in northern bog habitat to boreal forest with twenty-five species of warblers observed in one day including Connecticut Warbler. We learned male Yellow-headed Blackbirds in southern pothole country always sing over their left shoulder. Grasslands National Park preserves a beautiful landscape, home to rattlesnakes and ground squirrels. A highlight in Alberta's alpine habitat was a White-tailed Ptarmigan that provided outstanding closeup views.
4. Tom Hince was thanked for his presentation by CSLT director Larry Onysko who presented Tom with a copy of Dyan DeNapoli's "The Great Penguin Rescue: 40,000 Penguins, a Devastating Oil Spill, and the Inspiring Story of the World's Largest Animal Rescue."
5. The meeting then moved to the Annual General Meeting. Land Trust board member Terry Anderson made a motion to accept the agenda. Land Trust member Shirley Grondin seconded the motion.
6. Shirley Grondin made a motion to accept the minutes of the 7th Annual General Meeting held March 4, 2010. Bonnie Ross seconded the motion to accept the minutes.
7. The financial report was provided by Treasurer Tom Hurst. Tom distributed the report as the Treasurer's Report: 2010.

General Chequing Account #001	\$8,047.21
Ojibway Fund Account #011	22.97
Conservation Easement Account #012	2,008.29
Raffle Account #013	1,173.62
Balkwill Endowment Account #14	1,491.21
Legacy Fund #015	4,813.80
Credit Union Membership Share	5.00
Term Deposit #2; Balkwill Endowment	5,122.50
Term Deposit #3; Legacy Fund	18,000.00
Term Deposit #4; Ojibway Fund	4,000.00
Term Deposit #5; Legacy Fund	10,000.00
TOTAL ASSETS	\$54,684.60
Total Assets less funds held in trust	\$50,661.63
Total Assets as of December 31, 2009	\$44,753.66

Asset increase during 2010	5,907.97
REVENUE	
Fundraising events	\$5,141.77
Donations	2,333.00
Interest	671.00
Memberships	750.00
Raffle tickets	245.65
TOTAL	9,141.42
EXPENSES	
Fundraising	1,568.30
Operating	2,050.05
TOTAL	\$3,618.35

8. Update on Canada South Land Trust Activities for 2010

CSLT Chair Betty Learmouth thanked our Land Trust members and board members for organizing the 8th Annual General Meeting.

Welcome to new board members: Larry Onyski, Caroline Williams and Parma Yarkin.

Highlights for 2010 included monitoring of the Balkwill Lands, visits to several woodlands and natural areas, the second annual land trust dinner & silent auction, and a fund raising event with a presentation by Paul Pratt.

During 2007 the land trust accepted the donation of a Conservation Agreement on the Balkwill Lands located in the Town of Kingsville. The Conservation Easement has various restrictions placed on the woodland, the Old Logging Road, pond site and prairie restoration that ensure that these natural areas will continue to thrive into the future.

As part of the Conservation Agreement, monitors monitor the lands on a yearly basis. This past year the monitors were Shirley Grondin, Linda Kenntte and Ernie Kennette, and Terry Anderson. Photographers Larry Onysko and Alan Batke captured images of the activities. Thank you to the monitors who completed the paper work on two visits, May 17, 2010 and May 20, 2010. Thank you to Shirley Grondin who has monitored for four years and who will be retiring from this volunteer activity.

The Land Trust organized several walks to view natural areas. We enjoyed a visit to David Ainslie's woodland on May 8, 2010 to view flowering plants. We visited the Ojibway Prairie in June and July 2010 to observe the prairie native plants. On October 17, 2010, eighteen persons visited the Balkwill Woodland, enjoying the fall colours.

The CSLT second annual dinner and silent auction was held at the Caboto Club during April 2010 which was well attended. Our guest speaker was Dr. Oliver Love, an ornithologist and new member of the University of Windsor's Biological Sciences Department. Dr. Love discussed one of his study species, the Snow Bunting.

Paul Pratt presented a program on birds of South Africa on December 2, 2010 which was very well received.

9. CSLT Chair Betty Learmouth thanked everyone for attending the meeting, inviting all to enjoy the refreshments.

Bob Makar won the 50/50 draw.

Gift Giving to the Canada South Land Trust

Consider making a monthly gift to the Land Trust. A donation of just \$10.00 monthly provides a gift of \$120.00 over a year. A gift of \$100.00 per month provides a gift of \$1,200.00 over a year. A charitable income tax receipt is issued for your gift.

Arrangements for a monthly gift giving may be made with the United Communities Credit Union, Essex, Ontario at 519-776-4311.

Canada South Land Trust Third Annual Dinner, April 8, 2011

Fifty-four friends and members of the Canada South Land Trust gathered together on April 8, 2011 in the Caboto Club's Marconi Room. The evening featured a delicious dinner, a silent auction and presentation by hummingbird bander Carl Pascoe.

Doors opened at 6:00 p.m. for the silent auction. Dinner was served family style at 7:00 p.m. with an Italian antipasto, green salad, roasted chicken and oven baked wedges of potato, mixed vegetables, rolls and butter, Italian pasteries, and tea and coffee. The evening's MC Land Trust executive member David Ainslie welcomed all.

Guest speaker Carl Pascoe was introduced by Land Trust executive member Terry Anderson. Carl Pascoe was an active Ruby-throated Hummingbird bander with the Holiday Beach Migration Observatory for many years. Now Carl's banding efforts involve promoting banding on Walpole Island, the Six Nations of the Grand River First Nation, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, and Manitoulin Island.

In 2009, the organization Native Territories Avian Research Project (NTARP) was incorporated. In 2010, NTARP received its charitable status.

Carl had a number of suggestions to attract Ruby-throated Hummingbirds (RTHU).

- Check feeders in the a.m. and at sunset.
- Count birds seen within 15 minutes and multiply by times 4. This will equal the actual number of RTHU visiting your feeders.
- Feeders and flowers will attract RTHU. Do not purchase commercial foods or use red dyes.
- For your hummingbird feeder food, mix one cup of sugar to 4 cups water and boil for several minutes and let cool. In the refrigerator, this mixture will keep up to two weeks. Change the hummingbird mixture in your feeders frequently, every three to five days.
- Any tubular flowers will attract RTHU such as fushia, nicotina, and cigar plant.
- RTHBs can see a feeder from a distance of one half mile.
- Leave your hummingbird feeder up until mid November.

Carl said he and his wife Rachel like the feeders with perches as they like to see their birds.

Carl provided some fun facts about RTHUs.

- Eighty percent of the diet of a RTHU consists of insects and spiders which is an important protein to RTHUs.
- The RTHU is the only bird that can fly backwards, upside down and truly hover.
- The RTHU can not hop or walk.
- The RTHU heart beats 200 times per minute at rest and 1,200 times per minute in flight.

Carl then showed his audience some "baby pictures." One winter Carl spotted a RTHU nest on a branch. He had heard that this species would return to their nest, to rebuild and reuse. Carl suggested checking every few days to watch progress of the babies. Carl showed us photographs of young RTHUs thought to be 12 to 18 days old. At the age of 21 days, the young RTHU are ready to fledge.

Plant species with flowers that attract RTHU are Cardinal-flower and its red blossoms, Rough Blazing Star, Butterflyweed, Jewelweed and Wild Bergamot. The RTHU is an important pollinator of the Cardinal-flower.

Carl stated banding RTHUs can be portable as the hummingbird trap may be moved from site to site. The cage trap works with a remote control which closes the trap's door. The Russell trap is another type of trap which is surrounded by mist nets. Hummingbirds "Larry," "Curly" and "Moe" are notable as these three hummingbirds just kept coming back to the trap, for a total of seventeen visits in one day.

Training for the role of hummingbird bander entails dedication to developing skills such as removing a hummingbird from a mist nest. As well, travel is necessary to development other specific skills such as handling hummingbirds which is obtained by spending time with Bob Sargeant in the southern United States where many hummingbirds frequent Bob's backyard.

Carl discussed the process necessary to produce a hummingbird band. The bands need to be cut from a sheet, with different hummingbird species requiring different sizes. Preparation of a hummingbird band is a lot of work. The bands are stored on a diaper safety pin. Information is obtained for each hummingbird banded including body fat, weight, sex and age. This information is collected quickly within 1½ minutes to ensure there is no stress for the hummingbird. Hummingbirds are held in the bander's grip which ensures the bird is held safely. Upon receiving a band, each hummingbird is offered a drink.

"Thumbelina" is a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird which was banded, released, and flew up to Carl's thumb where she was photographed by Aimee Johnson. "Thumbelina" is colour marked on her head with paint which disappears with feather molt. Permission was received from the banding lab in Washington, DC to colour mark hummingbirds while undertaking banding. See Thumbelina's photo bottom right.

Adult male Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are noted for their classic ruby throat. The hummingbird's feathers refract light, causing the iridescent red.

From 2007 to 2010, 632 Ruby-throated Hummingbirds have been banded by Carl with the banding done mainly on the weekends.

Every year female RTHUs return to approximately the same area. Through banding, one female RTHU has been determined to be at least nine years old and one male at least five years old.

RTHUs return the first week of May to our area. Through recaptures in July, a certain group are determined to be local birds. Peak migration periods for this species occur in late May and September/October. There have been reports of RTHUs observed in late October.

Carl stated he is very interested in the late fall migration. Some years ago on the American Thanksgiving a Rufous Hummingbird was banded in Kingsville. After breeding, it appears this hummingbird species wanders.

Carl told the group about an amazing recapture that occurred a few years ago. Carl was looking at banding material on the banding lab web site one evening, finding data material that looked familiar. It was banding information provided to the lab by Rachel Powless, Carl's wife, for a RTHU banded at Holiday Beach. This RTHU had been recaptured in Sweeney, Texas some 1,135 miles from Holiday Beach. Its journey had taken the RTHU just seventeen days. This hatch year male RTHU was banded on September 15, 2007 at Holiday Beach and recaptured on October 2, 2007. Bander Allen Chartier has had a similar experience. Information such as this provides insight into the RTHU's migration journey indicating that our birds are going around the Gulf of Mexico.

Rachel Powless reminded everyone that International Migration Day is to be celebrated on Walpole Island on May 14, 2011.

Canada South Land Trust Executive member Tom Hurst thanked Carl Pascoe for his informative presentation, presenting Carl with a gift.

MC David Ainslie thanked everyone for attending the evening's evening. Thank you to volunteers Shirley Grondin and Larry Onysko who set up the silent auction which raised \$663.00. Thank you to all those who attended for their support.



Ainslie Woodland Walk, April 30, 2011

Eleven friends and members of the CSLT gathered on April 30, 2011 at David Ainslie's woodland on the 10th Concession of the Town of Leamington under sunny skies.

David remarked that every year spring is different, reminding us that last year the woodland was dry with a profusion of blooming plant species that could be easily viewed. This year, water in low parts of the woodland was over our boots. The pools of water have been beneficial for frog species, both the green and leopard frogs.

David lead the group on a tour around the edge of the woodland, with comments about farm projects that he has underway. Near the farm pond, a solar panel has been installed. Nearby he has undertaken a number of plantings. In 1990, he planted a shelter strip of coniferous trees, taking some land out of production, planting stock which has now achieved a good size, some of which is ready for planting elsewhere.

Along the edge of the woodland, the group viewed Bellwort and Red Trillium along with Wild Leek within the woodland. The blooms of Spicebush produced a yellow haze throughout the woodland, confirming the woodland is a swamp, dependant upon good rainfalls to provide wet conditions for the woodland plants and trees. From past visits we knew that White Trillium and Mayapple would be blooming nearby on elevated lands but the wet conditions made entry into the wetland impossible.

David has transferred some woodland plants to the base of trees in the special tree planting area. These plants are flourishing, with the numbers slowly increasing of Bellwort and Red Trillium. Trout Lily and Spring Beauty have appeared. The trees produce a thick canopy but the floor of the planting area is relatively bare except for the introduced native plants. Native plant grower Vic Bernyk suggested that David observe which species grow adjacent to each other in the woodland, such as Red Trillium and Wild Leek.

David maintains several honey bee hives, watching the progress of pollinators. David commented that ten or twelve years ago there were many bumblebees; now David does not see so many.

David reported his bee hives to be very active on the day before our visit, acting like a swarm. The woodland edge is a great place for David's bees as they "work" the woodland plants. Leaf cutting bees appear to have been lost from the woodland.

Just west of the laneway, Garlic Mustard has appeared, with David working at controlling this invasive species along with Crown Vetch, another invasive species. On this walk, Garlic Mustard as single plants were discovered all along the road side edge of the woodland. Later David discovered that Garlic Mustard had moved into the woodland.

Visitors walked through a flooded portion of the woodland to return to the meeting area at the greenhouse. Along the way a Common Gartersnake was noted and Purple Cress was noted, a new species for the woodland.

The walk concluded with refreshments. Thank you to Gail Ainslie for organizing the refreshments including home made cookies and fruit. Thank you to Duncan Ainslie and his friend Austin for grilling the hotdogs and hamburgers. Thank you to David Ainslie for leading our group around his fine woodland.



Balkwill Lands Spring Walk, May 8, 2011

Nine Canada South Land Trust members and friends gathered on May 8, 2011 at Bill Balkwill and Jack Baldwill's farm in the Town of Kingsville. All were looking forward to a spring time walk in the Balkwill woodland.

The Canada South Land Trust accepted a Conservation Easement Agreement in 2007 with regard to the long term protection of the Balkwill Lands, its natural heritage and its agricultural lands.

The walk began with a stroll along the moss covered Old Logging Road, a remnant of a logging road from many years ago, that allowed local residents to take logs to nearby mills. Now Spring Beauties bloom undisturbed the length of the Old Logging Road. Birds observed or viewed here included House Wren, Northern Oriole, Palm Warbler and sparrows. Several of the old maples were beginning to display foliage.

At the northern entrance of the Old Logging Road, the group turned left and west to walk towards the pond. Along the woodland edge, Bill Balkwill showed the group a Canada Plum with its delicate pink blossoms.

Several participants heard a dry rattle which was a new sound to them. Further investigation revealed a large Eastern Fox Snake basking in the warm sun just off the grassy lane way. This sighting was the third one seen on an organized CSLT walk. See photograph below.

Bill lead the group along Lane 1 as they enjoyed the Spring Beauties in bloom and other plants emerging as well as the surrounding woodland. The group walked north to the drain which extends east and west across the northern portion of the woodland. See photograph below.

Bill drew our attention to Goldenseal, a species at Risk in Ontario. The two plants we observed had been introduced into this damp site. The group also viewed Marsh Marigolds in another area near the drain. The three plants we saw here had also been introduced into the site. A number of plants in bud in a wet spot on Lane 2 were identified as Golden Ragwort. Midway along Lane 2 the group observed the delicate Mitrewort. The dry woodland floor was covered with the leaves of Trout Lily with very few blooms as the peak time of blooming for this species had passed.

Participants sampled juice and fruit following the walk, enjoying the Eastern Bluebirds entering their nesting box on the front lawn.

Many thanks to Bill and Jack for leading the group on an enjoyable spring walk.

Ojibway Provincial Prairie Walks

June 23, 2011 – Canada South Land Trust Prairie Walk - Join a guided walk on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve on Thursday, June 23, 2011 for a glimpse of early summer flowering plants. Meet at 6:30 p.m. on Titcombe Road at the prairie entrance which is across Matchette Road from the Ojibway Park parking lot. Call Betty at 519-944-0825 to indicate you will be attending and for more information. Donation to the Land Trust's Legacy Fund is welcome. Refreshments following the walk.

July 21, 2011 – Canada South Land Trust Prairie Walk - Join a guided walk on the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve on Thursday, July 21, 2011 for a glimpse of summer flowering plants. Meet at 6:30 p.m. on Titcombe Road at the prairie entrance which is across Matchette Road from the Ojibway Park parking lot. Call Betty at 519-944-0825 to indicate you will be attending and for more information. Donation to the Land Trust's Legacy Fund is welcome. Refreshments following the walk.

