



# Stewardship Network of Ontario

*Working together to conserve Ontario's biodiversity*

# SNO Squall

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[www.stewardshipcentre.on.ca](http://www.stewardshipcentre.on.ca)

## Local collaborative wins Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence

The Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative (KFSC) has won the 2011 Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The award recognizes the protection of water quality and habitat through on-farm improvements. The recently formed collaborative is a partnership of organizations in the Kawartha region, including four conservation authorities, three Ontario Stewardship councils, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Lakeland Alliance, the Community Stream Steward Program and the Environmental Farm Plan Program. The network functions as a sort of "one stop shopping" opportunity for farms that have completed (or plan to complete) an Environmental Farm Plan and are interested in accessing funding to undertake a conservation project. The network participants provide funding, technical support and physical resources to farmland owners looking to reduce on-farm risks to the environment.

In 2010, the KFSC funded twenty projects totalling more than \$240,000. The recipients also contributed to the projects, either financially, or through physical labour or using on-farm materials or equipment to carry out the project.

Projects were focused on water quality and habitat protection on farmland, as well as areas downstream, and included restoring wetlands, controlling erosion, and separating livestock from watercourses, wetlands and ponds.

For more information on the Kawartha Farm Stewardship Collaborative, visit [www.kawarthaconservation.com/pdf/KFSC.pdf](http://www.kawarthaconservation.com/pdf/KFSC.pdf) (PDF, 435 KB)

*Contributed by Lynette Mader, Manager, Landowner Outreach Programs (Ontario), Ducks Unlimited Canada & Pat Learmonth, OSCIA Environmental Farm Plan representative (Peterborough)*

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## Ontario Team Places Second at North American Envirothon

Due to much hard work and dedication, a group of 5 Ontario high school students took second place at the North American Envirothon; the best standing for an Ontario team in the competition's history. The Ontario Envirothon is the Ontario Forestry Association's (OFA) premiere education program, where students 'take the biodiversity challenge'. The Envirothon sees high school students work as a team and learn about all aspects of the natural world including forestry, aquatics, soils, wildlife and current environmental issues. The OFA oversees over 22 regional Envirothon events across the province, as well as organizing a 4 day provincial event.

In total 45 states, 8 provinces and 1 territory gathered together to compete for the title of North American Envirothon champions. This year the Ontario team was comprised of students from West Hill Secondary School in Owen Sound, who had won both their regional event in Grey/Bruce and took the Ontario championship title. For their second place standing each student took home a \$4000 scholarship. For more information visit [www.ontarioenvirothon.ca](http://www.ontarioenvirothon.ca)

*Contributed by Rob Keen, CEO, Trees Ontario*



## Ontario's New Biodiversity Strategy

The Ontario Biodiversity Council released its renewed biodiversity strategy for the province on June 22, 2011, calling on government, conservation groups, industry and all Ontarians to help in protecting what sustains us. The strategy is structured around four strategic directions that are essential if we are to effectively conserve Ontario's biodiversity. They are to engage people, reduce threats, enhance resilience and improve knowledge.

Visit [www.ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca](http://www.ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca) for more information.



*Ontario Envirothon Team (left to right): Julia Asten, Erik Waganeer, David Beisel, Claire Porteous, Arno Van Dijk and team advisor Carl Raynard. Photo by Jessica Kaknevcicius, Ontario Forestry Association.*





## Healthy Lands for Healthy Horses: An Equine Stewardship Program

Between 2001 and 2006, there was a 16.7% increase in the number of horses in Ontario. Today, there are approximately 42,241 horses in the GTA, although equestrian operations are small compared to cattle, dairy and other livestock farms. There has also been a 24% increase in the number of horse farm properties but most of these farms only average 5 horses.

Based on research conducted by Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), it was found that horse owners have a general lack knowledge about ways to manage the manure or 'nutrients' that their horses produce. It was also found that some grant programs were developed with large farm operations in mind leaving the small acreage horse farmer struggling to meet the eligibility criteria.

In 2007, TRCA began the strategic development of an equine specific stewardship program to engage this unique community. Called "Healthy Lands for Healthy Horses" (HLHH), the program was developed with financial assistance from the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and guidance from a Steering Committee including Equine Guelph, Ontario Equestrian Foundation, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, University of Guelph, Uxbridge Horsemen's Association, Ontario Trail Riders Association, and seven conservation authorities. The conservation authority partners were Lake Simcoe Region, Credit Valley, Kawartha, Central Lake Ontario, Ganaraska Region, Grand River and Toronto and Region.

The HLHH program was designed to increase the knowledge base of horse owners regarding environmental stewardship, focusing on nutrient and pasture management. This was done through a series of free workshops and a workshop tool-kit. The tool-kit is available to anyone wishing to host their own workshop and contains information such as how to track a budget, prepare an agenda, and select a venue. It also includes example evaluation forms, task lists and example Environmental Farm Plan worksheets.

The Steering Committee has now disbanded, but members will continue to provide the HLHH program through their conservation authorities and landowners can still access free technical assistance and funding for voluntary environmental projects. If you're interested in this approach to fostering equine stewardship, please contact your local Conservation Authority and visit the Equine Guelph website ([www.equineguelph.ca/healthylands.php](http://www.equineguelph.ca/healthylands.php)) for more information.

*Contributed by Nadine Abrams, Coordinator, Rural Clean Water Program, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority*



*Manure Storage Project, Hop Hill Stable, Uxbridge.  
Photo by Nadine Abrams.*



## Annual Gathering of the Stewardship Network of Ontario (SNO Forum 2011)

The Stewardship Network of Ontario gathered for its annual forum on June 7, 2011 at Black Creek Pioneer Village. 57 people attended for stimulating presentations and discussions on a wide range of topics:

*Ontario Biodiversity Strategy:* Moderator Carla Grant and panelists Mark Stabb, Moreen Miller and Don McCabe talked about opportunities and challenges for different sectors of society and challenged SNO members to look for ways to incorporate actions from Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy into their own work programs.

*Species-at-Risk:* Moderator Elizabeth Holmes and panelists Kerry Coleman, Larry Cornelis, Peter Jeffrey and Michelle Kanter discussed landowner experiences with implementation of Ontario's Endangered Species Act (ESA). For some, protecting and improving habitat for species-at-risk is creating many associated benefits, such as increased biodiversity, a more attractive landscape and educational opportunities. For others, the regulatory regime associated with the ESA is creating significant challenges that in some cases threaten to undermine the intent of the Act. Participants also discussed constructive ways to address myths and barriers associated with species-at-risk.

*Indicators of Stewardship Progress:* How should we measure the effectiveness of our stewardship activities? Which indicators are most revealing and what do they actually tell us? Suzanne Barrett, aided by Rebecca Zeran, led participants in a workshop to address these questions and provide advice on ways to improve reporting on stewardship.

Their input will be used by SNO to develop a collaborative approach for reporting progress

for the next State of Ontario's Biodiversity Report in 2015.

*Green Energy:* Ontario's Green Energy Act is making Ontario a leader in renewable energy. But there are growing concerns about impacts on local communities and biodiversity. Moderator Lynette Mader and panelists Rick Smith, Scott Petrie, Deb Doncaster, Vitold Kreutzer and James Holland tackled these issues and emphasized that there is room to resolve them through improved dialogue with local communities and interest groups.

*Reflections and Suggestions:* The day concluded with a survey asking participants to provide their views on SNO priorities, the SNO website, SNO Squall newsletter and the success of the day's Forum.

Visit [www.stewardshipcentre.on.ca](http://www.stewardshipcentre.on.ca) to view the Forum Summary Report and Appendices

*Contributed by Suzanne Barrett, Chair, Stewardship Network of Ontario*

## Spencer Creek Watershed Stewardship

Congratulations go out to the partners in the Spencer Creek Watershed Stewardship initiative who were a recognition recipient in the 2011 Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence.

Partners in this initiative included: Hamilton Conservation Authority, the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program, Bay Area Restoration Council, City of Hamilton, Green Venture, Hamilton-Wentworth Stewardship Council, and Royal Botanical Gardens.

They worked together to encourage landowners and the agricultural community to protect and restore natural heritage and to adopt beneficial management practices to protect streams and enhance wildlife.