



Friends of Lemoine Point

Newsletter

Spring 2010

Sharing the Trails

It is the trails of Lemoine Point that allow us to wander in nature right within our own city, and to enjoy the peace and beauty of the natural environment while also getting some exercise. Whether we do so by walking, running or using a wheelchair or a bike, even though we move in different ways and at different speeds, we should all be able to do so in a harmonious fashion. Unfortunately, that is not always what happens. Cyclists and runners move at greater speed than walkers, especially those accompanying small children, and wheelchair users. This can give rise to a conflict between the interests of the two groups of users if one sees the other as obstructing its enjoyment of the trails. The real problem arises when bikers and runners don't respect the rights of slower moving folks, and pose a threat to their sense of safety.

For example, many cyclists and runners are considerate and careful, but too many come swooping at speed past walkers and handicapped people, with or without sounding a bell or uttering a warning. Those on foot or in wheelchairs, especially the more frail among us, can find this scenario quite intimidating, since they are not necessarily able to move rapidly out of the way. Nor should they have to do so. Furthermore, since many users are seniors, some will inevitably have hearing problems, and may not even notice a cyclist's warning signal. That situation can lead at best to the erosion of pedestrians' peace of mind, and at worst to a serious accident.

What can be done?



Some other authorities have posted notices prescribing 'trail etiquette', such as 'Wheels Yield to Heels' signs, and a city of Kingston bylaw provides that when cyclists and pedestrians (including people in wheelchairs) use the same space, the latter have priority. The exclusion of bicycle access from the narrower walking trails would certainly help, but that does not resolve the situation on the wider, accessible trails. Lemoine Point's enforcement officers can address this problem, but neither enforcement on its own nor signs and rules will remove all the difficulty. Though consideration is being given to what steps may be necessary to govern the shared use of our trails, we believe that the most powerful agent would undoubtedly be informed public opinion, and users' recognition of the need to be considerate of others. For this reason, we want to make our members aware of the problem, hoping that they will spread the word.

We would like to ask our members to help us in any way possible to ensure that our trails bring peaceful pleasure to all their users. If you have suggestions for achieving this end, please address them to Marie Surridge at 389-3515 or msurridge@cogeco.ca.

Status of the Conservation Plan

A Conservation Plan for Lemoine Point has now been developed and approved by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority (CRCA) that owns and manages it. The Plan identifies a number of ecological threats that reduce the overall health of Lemoine Point's ecosystem, and proposes ideas for addressing those while seeking to maintain a balance between visitor use of the conservation area and the sustainability of its natural environment.

For example, to maintain biodiversity and to stem the loss of habitat, there will be a renewed emphasis on the Friends' reforestation program and on our efforts to control invasive plant species, and some of the grassy meadow areas that are currently mown will be allowed to grow naturally. Also, to enhance the viability of the forest and forest community and minimize its fragmentation due to the many trails that run through it, the current trail system will be reviewed, including developing trail standards and implementing ways of reducing off-trail activity and the large number of illegal trails.

An initial three year implementation plan is being developed and we hope to give details in our Fall newsletter.

Native American Proverb:

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors ... we borrow it from our children.”

Nursery Spring Plant Sale

Our Native Plant Nursery will hold another of its plant sales on May 15 and 16, 10:00-2:00. The sale will feature deciduous and evergreen trees, a few species of shrubs, and some wildflowers, all of which we raised from Lemoine Point's own seeds. The revenue helps to support the Nursery. Contact Jane Murphy at 542-9604 for more information.



Ian Hodson

It is with great sadness that we learned that Ian Hodson passed away earlier this year.

Ian was a founding member and the first chair of our board as well as a long-term leader and an ongoing strong supporter of our organization and goals. Even when ill he was still actively supporting our efforts to improve Lemoine Point, including supporting our Native Plant Nursery and its new greenhouse, which is to be named in his honour.

Thanks, Ian ... we will miss you.

Our Website

Remember that our website is a great place to go to get information about the Friends. It is www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca/lands/friendsoflemoine.htm (or just “google” Friends of Lemoine Point). You'll find info on our objectives, activities, membership details and application, contact points such as e-mail, and copies of our annual report and our recent newsletters.

It's also useful for potential new members.



2009-10 Board of Directors

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Jane Murphy, Vice-President
Ron Bettney, Treasurer
David McMurray, Secretary
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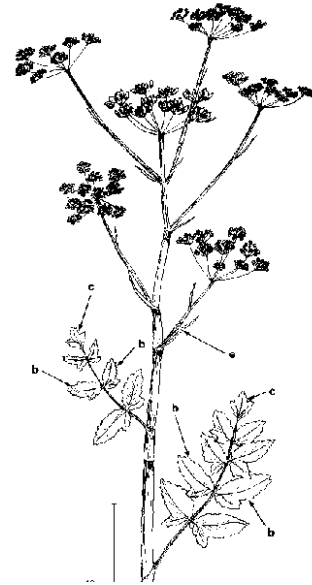
www.cataraqueiregion.on.ca/lands/friendsoflemoine.html

Wild Parsnip

An Invasive to Avoid!

Last summer many of us became newly aware of a large yellow flowering plant in our area that seemed to suddenly be flourishing in local meadows and roadsides including in some spots at Lemoine Point.

It is the Wild Parsnip, a tall and fairly attractive non-native species that flowers from May till late autumn. It is particularly noticeable and identifiable because it usually occurs in yellow, dense-growing patches that can look somewhat like Goldenrods or a greenish-yellow version of Queen Anne's Lace. The individual plant ranges up to 5 feet in height, is highly branched, has compound leaves, and its yellow, umbrella-like flowers, rather pretty, are held high above the leaves. It can be found at Lemoine Point in several of our meadows that are not mowed e.g. at the North end in the field across the road from the Native Plant Nursery.



But it is not a wildflower that one might want to pick.

It is in fact a nasty plant, and should be avoided perhaps even more so than Poison Ivy. Contact with its leaves can cause severe, burn-like blistering of the skin that can in severe cases lead to a painful and potentially disfiguring rash - the plant contains toxins that are activated by sunlight to cause a sort of chemical burn, i.e. it is not an allergic reaction such as to Poison Ivy. While the plant's toxins effectively deter many animals and insects from eating it, they make it a significant threat to us humans.

Stay away from it!

Fortunately that's fairly easy at Lemoine Point, as most patches of Wild Parsnip plants are at the moment well away from the trails, so that staying on those minimizes the threat.

Also, it is not known whether the seeming abundance of Wild Parsnip last year is a temporary blip or the start of a concerning trend. It may very well be that last year's bumper crop was the result of two summers of cool wet weather, and that the return of dry hot summers will end that. The Friends' volunteer Invasive Species Committee is monitoring the situation to determine whether it is an ongoing threat, and whether it should be added to the other three invasive plants (Garlic Mustard, Dog-Strangling Vine, European Buckthorn) that we are already working on controlling. That won't be known for a few years and, for now, the best response seems to be to leave it alone and just hope that it will simply be overtaken by the natural succession of other species.

Trails and Trees

Quite noticeable alongside our trails recently has been the sight of large trees that were felled and cut up this winter. They were removed because of potential for breaking and/or falling across trails and endangering passers-by, such as due to the area's often high winds. The trees are being split into firewood to be sold to the public in the fall, with revenues recycled back into Lemoine Point. The date of the sale will be posted in local newspapers and on the large black notice boards at both parking lots.



Two Wildflower Walks



Spring Wildflower Walk – June 6
Goldenrod and Aster Walk – August 29

This year we are offering two wildflower walks at Lemoine Point, one in the Spring and one in the Fall. Both are open to the public as well as to members, start at 1:00 pm from the North Parking Lot, and are again led by David and Margo McMurray who have been studying and inventorying our wildflowers.

Mark the dates on your calendar and plan to join us.

Calendar of Events

Our special activities for 2010. New volunteers are always welcome!

Saturday, April 17, 9 to 11am
SPRING CLEAN-UP

Starting at both parking lots. Help clean up Lemoine Point. Garbage bags will be provided. For information contact Jane Murphy at 542-9604.

In addition, the Trails Committee clears brush from along trails on the first Thursday of each month May to November: 9-11am. For information, contact Marie SurrIDGE at 389-3515.

Saturday May 1, 9 - 11am
TREE PLANTING

Our annual Spring planting to restore Lemoine Point's original type of forest cover. Starting at the South parking lot. To participate or for information, contact Larry McCurdy at 389-6427.

Tuesday, May 4, 6pm
INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

This is the first meeting of 2010 to start removing Garlic Mustard again. Meet at the North Parking Lot. The group will continue meeting on Tuesday evenings in May and June from 6 to 8pm.

From July to November, it will meet Friday mornings from 9 -11am to clear Dog-strangling Vine and European Buckthorn. If interested in helping, contact Chris Hargreaves at 389-8993.

Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16
SPRING PLANT SALE

At the Native Plant Nursery at the North end. Sale of nursery stock. See details on page 2.

Note - the Native Plant Nursery group meets at the Nursery every Wednesday morning May to November to work on its plants with the intent of restoring Lemoine Point. More helpers are always welcome; for information contact Millie Belyea at 389-8944.

Sunday, June 6 and August 29
WILD FLOWER WALKS

See details above. For more information contact David McMurray at 634-0453.