



# MAITLAND MUSINGS

Volume 3, Issue 1

May 2008

**LOWER MAITLAND STEWARDSHIP GROUP (LMSG)**

## Lower Maitland Stewardship Group BBQ

Come join the Lower Maitland Stewardship Group on:

**Saturday May 31st  
10am—12 Noon  
Murray Lobb's  
Property  
(directions below)**

We will be meeting at Murray Lobb's property. Located along the Maitland River, we will be walking the trails while both Tom Lobb and Steve Bowers share their expertise about the Flora and Fauna in the area.

So come out and enjoy a mid-morning walk and please dress for the weather. Lunch will be provided after.

### Directions:

80946 Maitland Line. The Northwest Corner of Maitland Line and School House Road in the Municipality of Central Huron.



### For More Information:

Please RSVP or for more information contact:

**Steve Bowers** at  
steve.bowers@ontario.ca (519)  
482-3661.

### Fall Outing:

Stay tuned for an additional fall outing. This event may happen around the time of the Ball's Bridge grand opening (further details about Ball's Bridge on page 2).



## About Us & The River Valley...

The Lower Maitland River Valley is a landscape worthy of protection. Surrounded by highly productive agricultural land, the valley is deeply incised and features an intact corridor of forest, numerous natural heritage features for fish and wildlife habitat, woodlands, limestone outcroppings, and many other features of interest. To date, the river valley has been relatively untouched by development.

The LMSG was formed in 1998 and consists of landowners, organization and agency representatives, and individuals interested in protecting and enhancing the valley and its natural features.

The group has prepared a strategy to outline its goals and to direct its activities to reflect our vision for the area, with a focus on valley protection, landowner's rights, and sustained stakeholder use.

### Steve Bowers, Stewardship Coordinator

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We're On The Web:

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

### **Inside this issue:**

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### **Special points of interest:**

- Be Knowledgeable! Articles on what's in Huron along the Lower Maitland!
- Get Involved! Learn about your opportunities to get involved with the LMSG, Huron's Sustainability, and the Lower Maitland Clean Up!

## A History of Ball's Bridge

By Beth Ross

Built in 1885, Ball's Bridge is one of Ontario's oldest and finest bridges. It is unique in that it is, technically, a two-span, pin-connected, Pratt through truss bridge. According to Nathan Holth, a bridge expert in Michigan, "Not only is the bridge important because it offers a glimpse into the past, it is also a beautiful structure with many aesthetic qualities not found in modern bridges designed and built today. Bridges like the Ball's Bridge were designed with a great deal of attention given to the details. There is v-lacing and lattice present on various places of the bridge, which adds to the beauty. The complex arrangement of trusses form a



geometric art that is unlike the simple beam bridges that are often seen on today's rivers and expressways."

Closed by the County of Huron in 2006 after being declared redundant to the County's infrastructure, Ball's Bridge was at risk of abandonment or destruction. Local residents were upset, as were many in the community who had enjoyed fall colour drives in the Little Lakes area, hikes on the Maitland Trail or snowmobilers, all of whom

used the bridge.

Also, the bridge has a special meaning for the community and has a love connection. Ball's Bridge was built on its current site because the County Engineer fell in love with a daughter of the Ball family, which still farms nearby. Because of this the bridge remains a popular romantic destination today!

The community rallied around this popular heritage structure, forming the Friends of Ball's Bridge, and persuading the County to devolve the bridge to the local municipalities, the townships of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh and Central Huron, who appreciated the

social importance of the bridge to the community. Grants of \$250,000 from the County and \$242,000 from the Province of Ontario ensured that the bridge could be repaired and brought up to current standards for light vehicular traffic and maintain its elegant aspect. It reopened in October 2007.

**"It is a piece of Huron County's heritage and a beautiful addition to the Maitland Valley landscape."**

Ball's Bridge will continue to serve its local community and delight visitors by car, foot, canoe, or bicycle for many years to

come. It is a piece of Huron County's heritage and a beautiful addition to the Maitland Valley landscape.

## The Butternut

By Steve Bowers

In our previous newsletter we provided an overview of the topic, "Species at Risk". One such species is Butternut, a tree once found throughout the Lower Maitland area. Butternut has been quietly disappearing from woodlots throughout its range in both Canada and the United States as a result of a disease called Butternut Canker. The canker was first reported in Wisconsin in 1967 and in Ontario in 1991; although examination of cankers indicates it has been present in Ontario for over 20 years. Surveys in parts of the US indicate sig-



nificant decline in the number of butternut in their forests. The disease is presently found throughout the entire range of Butternut, which includes southern Ontario and Quebec, as well as part of New Brunswick. Decline of Butternut has reached the point where it is listed as endangered on both the federal *Species at Risk Act* and Ontario's *Endangered Species Act*.

The disease is caused by a fungus that scientists assume was introduced from

outside North America. It causes cankers on the stem, branch or root flare that result in tree decline and eventual mortality. Cankers affect trees of all sizes. They appear as elongated, sunken areas that exude inky black fluid in spring and early summer or as sooty black patches later in the summer. The infection often starts in the lower crown and spreads downward to the main stem as spores are washed downwards by rain. As more cankers develop, they can eventually girdle the branch or trunk, causing dieback and usually mortality after a number of years of decline. There is currently no known treatment

or cure for the disease.

Butternut, a close relative of the black walnut, is found in mixed hardwood forests throughout its range. Like black walnut, it is not tolerant of shade, needing openings in the canopy to regenerate successfully. It usually grows in mixture with other hardwoods as scattered individual trees or in small groups and is sometimes found in open areas or fencerows. Butternut is a small to medium sized tree and seldom lives longer than 75 years.

While it is not of major importance as a timber species, the lumber is valued by

(Continued on page 3)



**The Butternut, continued from page 2**

By Steve Bowers

(Continued from page 2)

woodworkers for furniture, turning and carving. Butternut is also an ecologically important component of our local forests, contributing to woodlot diversity and producing nuts that are an important food source for a variety of wildlife. While the outlook appears bleak, there is still hope for recovery. An Ontario Butternut Recovery Team has been formed, lead by the Forest Gene Conservation Association <[www.fgca.net](http://www.fgca.net)>. They recognize that the range of Butternut in Ontario occurs mostly on private land and the success of any recovery efforts will depend largely on assistance from private landowners. As a result, much of their effort to date has focused on providing information to landowners about Butternut and its current status, as well as information

**“Butternut is also an ecologically important component of our local forests, contributing to woodlot diversity and producing nuts that are an important food source for a variety of wildlife.”**

on management approaches for landowners interested in maintaining their trees in as vigorous a condition as possible.

Other efforts have targeted improving the knowledge base about the tree species and about the disease. While Butternut is widespread, it is rarely abundant in woodlots and not of huge economic value, so little research had been carried out on its genetics or how to best manage it. Many other questions require answers, e.g. how quickly trees die after infection, if there are organisms that can reduce the virulence of the disease, if regeneration is still occurring, if other stress factors such as climate change influence susceptibility of trees, etc.

Of particular interest is whether all trees are susceptible to infection and if all

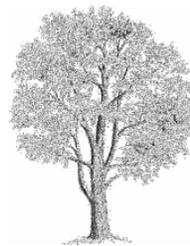
infected trees actually die. Preliminary field work has found some trees that appear to be vigorously surviving, sometimes even in close proximity to other infected trees. This may provide the most hope for recovery of the species. In the interest of keeping this species on our landscape, landowners are encouraged to keep all Butternut trees around as long as possible; especially the ones that appear vigorous and could possibly have some resistance to the disease. They are also encouraged to consider management efforts to enhance vigour of their Butternut and encourage regeneration or even to include a few Butternut seedlings in any tree planting efforts to help maintain local gene pools.

Over the past couple of years some initiatives have been started to find surviving trees

and assess their status as part of species recovery efforts. The Butternut Recovery Team is interested in locating trees that may be resistant to the canker to include in a long term grafting, breeding and screening program in hopes of developing resistant planting stock. It is anticipated that these efforts can be expanded this year. For example, in Huron and Perth Counties and nearby areas the Huron Stewardship Council, Perth Stewardship Network and Huron Perth Chapter of the Ontario Woodlot Association are hoping to work with interested landowners to start developing an inventory of trees in our area and their status. If you have

Butternut trees in your woodlot and are interested in participating in recovery efforts, please contact Steve Bowers at 519-482-3661 or [steve.bowers@ontario.ca](mailto:steve.bowers@ontario.ca).

Certainly now is time to act while we still have hundreds of Butternut trees on our landscape. Who knows, you may have the tree in your



**TD Canada Trust Great Canadian Shoreline Clean Up  
Come Help Us Clean Up!**

The TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup is a conservation initiative of the Vancouver Aquarium. For over 15 years, participants across the country have been removing harmful litter from local shorelines.

The program allows and enables participants from all walks of life to be an environmental steward for a day. By choosing a shoreline, participants can register to cleanup and record all the litter found at that shoreline. All tallied data is forwarded to the International Coastal Cleanup to contribute to the worldwide results. In 2006, Canada was the 2nd largest clean up in the world!

The LMSG has set the date to clean up the Lower Maitland shoreline on:

**Saturday,  
September 27th  
9 am**

**CPR Station, Main Beach, Goderich.**

For more information,  
Contact:  
Joyce Wilson,  
519 524 8394  
ext 3.

Or see the TD Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup Website at:  
<http://www.vanaqua.org/cleanup/home.php>

**National  
Clean-Up  
Week:  
September  
20th-28th**

## Huron County's Online Interactive Mapping Tool

A GIS is a computer –based mapping tool that takes information from a database about a location, such as streets, buildings, water features, and terrain, and turns it into visual layers. The ability to see geographic features on a map gives users a better understanding of a particular location, enabling planners, analysts, and others to make informed decisions about their communities.

Although you may not be aware of it, GIS touches our lives daily. It is used throughout the world to solve problems related to the environment, health care, land use, business efficiency, education, and public safety. The power supply directed to homes, the patrol cars and fire trucks that keep neighbourhoods safe, and the delivery trucks on the road all function

more efficiently because of GIS.



And now, the Planning and Development Department of the County of Huron is bringing GIS to you! From the comfort of your own home (or from any computer with internet ac-

cess) you can use Huron County's Online Interactive Mapping Tool to explore the County. Dozen's of "layers" containing different types of data are available, including topographic features such as roads, rivers, and elevation contours, and informational layers like land use designations from the Official Plan of each municipality, and locations of all the members of the Huron Manufacturing Association and each of the businesses in Ontario's West Coast Travel Guide.

- **Search Properties and Businesses in the County!**
- **Create and Print Custom Maps!**
- **View Aerial Photos of Huron County IN COLOUR!**

## Public Meeting Notice: Sustainable Huron

As an owner of property along the Maitland River, you value the importance of a healthy natural environment. There is more to sustainability that just a healthy natural environment, but also a viable economy and the social and cultural well being of our residents. More information on how you can help create this is below.

### How Do You Imagine Your Future Community?

What do you like about your community? Another community?

What would you like your community to look like in 20 years?

What needs to be done to achieve this?

What can the individual do to achieve this future?

The Huron County Planning and Development Department is undergoing a 5-year review of the County's Official Plan, a land use planning document

that is a statement of where and how development should take place. The Plan includes the vision, goals, and policy directions for development of the County, as established in 1998 and 1999.



Along with this, the Planning Department is looking towards creating a "Sustainability Plan" for the County. Sustainability looks at the long term well being of residents and communities within Huron County.

Sustainability is about finding the balance between environment, economy, and society/culture in all activities and use of land. In order

to create the most effective plan for

**Public Meeting:**  
**Wednesday,**  
**May 21st at 7 PM**  
**Huron County Museum**  
**110 North Street**

Huron County, public input is of great value. A public meeting will be held to gather this input notice. Have a say in the future of your community and share your ideas, opinions, and perspectives and work together to ensure the long-term well-being of Huron County and its residents.

For further information, please contact:

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Email: [planning@huroncounty.ca](mailto:planning@huroncounty.ca)