



# MAITLAND MUSINGS

Volume 5, Issue 1

September 2010

## Fall Event: GEOCACHING in the Lower Maitland River Valley

Do you enjoy treasure hunting, exploring new places, and using tech-gadgets? If so, geocaching might be for you!

Geocaching (pronounced geocaching) is a worldwide game of hiding and seeking treasure. Geocachers make use of a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) device in order to place and find caches. When a cache is placed, the geocacher uses GPS technology to pinpoint it's location and then shares the coordinates online. Anyone with a GPS device can then try to locate the geocache.

The geocaches or 'treasures' vary: weather-proof containers could contain anything ranging from fridge magnets to buttons but certain items, such as food, are not permitted as they would likely attract more wildlife creatures than geocachers! For more information, check out <http://www.geocaching.com>

**Interested in trying it out? Join the LSMG on Saturday, October 16 from 9am-12noon for a high-tech treasure hunt in the Maitland River valley!**

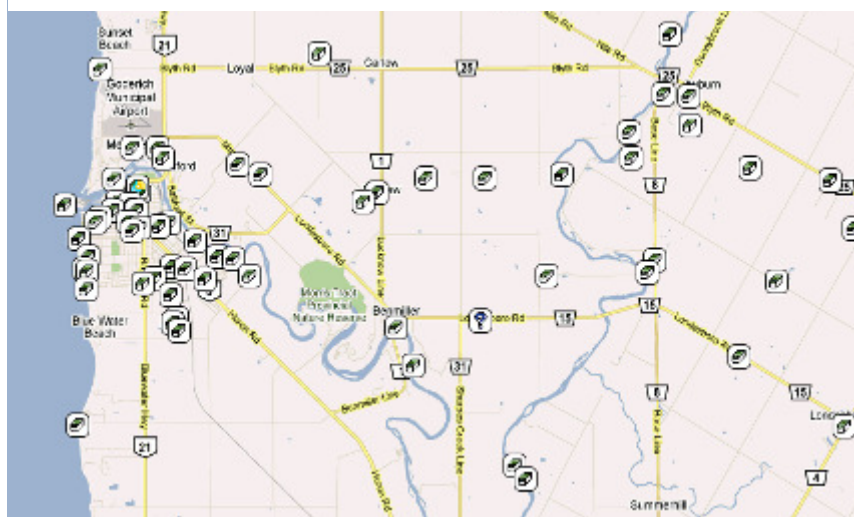
**The day will begin with an online geocaching demo followed by a hike from 10-12pm where we will find a geocache hidden along the Maitland river! GPS units will be provided.**

### Directions:

Please meet at the Goderich Tourism office (located at 91 Hamilton Street) at 9am. We will relocate to Mill Road where the hike will begin!

For more information, contact Denise at 519.524.8394 ext. 3 or [dcarnochan@huroncounty.ca](mailto:dcarnochan@huroncounty.ca)

**Map 1: Location of Geocaches in the Lower Maitland River Valley**



### **Public Meeting:**

A public meeting will be held on **October 5, 2010 at 7:30pm in the ACW Council Chambers** (located at 82133 Council Line) to discuss a proposed gravel pit in the Maitland River Valley.

Please plan on attending to have your voice heard!

For more information contact Planner Monica Walker-Bolton at 519-524-8394, ext. 3

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

Have you responded to the LSMG's offer for a free, stewardship visit? Interested? Call Steve Bowers, Huron Stewardship Coordinator at 482-3661.

## Follow-up: LMSG Landowner Contact Initiative by Tara Lessard

The LMSG would like to thank everyone who agreed and participated in our landowner contact survey. Based on the survey, the Huron Stewardship Council has hired a local biologist to follow-up with landowners about some of the stewardship projects along the Lower Maitland valley.

The following is a list of the key summary items and recommendations that were highlighted through the survey:

- Most landowners have a deep appreciation for the Maitland River Valley. The most popular activities that they conduct in the valley include hiking/walking and canoeing/kayaking. Although most landowners don't believe that the valley will change over the next 20 years, they would like to see an improvement to the river's water quality, as well as improvements to shoreline erosion. Many landowners are also concerned over the presence

of and destruction caused by ATVs and other motorized vehicles in the valley.

A group of local agencies (MNR, Conservation Authorities, etc.) has been assembled to discuss ATV issues in the area. This committee's mandate is to review concerns regarding ATV usage in Huron County, with emphasis on protecting sensitive natural areas, and to try to develop effective solutions to these issues that will satisfy government, environmental groups, private landowners, and ATV users. The eventual outcome of this committee will be a management plan that will help protect natural areas like the Lower Maitland River Valley.

- Many landowners have completed some form of stewardship projects on their property, the most popular being tree planting. Some accessed outside funding sources for these projects, namely through the Conservation

Authorities, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environmental Farm Program. However, many landowners were not aware that funding programs existed, and that when combined, had the potential to fund 100% of their project expenses. More effort should be made by the local groups to promote the existence of such programs. This would entice more people to consider implementing projects where funding may be a concern.

- Landowners are interested in learning more about stewardship projects, namely tree planting projects, remedies for erosion, and about the associated funding opportunities, although they are not interested in having a stewardship plan created for their property. Their main source of environmental information consists of the local newspaper. This is important for the Lower Maitland Stewardship Group and other agencies to note because

if we/they are interested in getting public information to the locals, the newspaper would be an effective means of doing so.

- Of those landowners who had a preference in terms of the types of outings that the Lower Maitland Stewardship Group organized, hiking, coupled with species identification along the Maitland River was the most popular, as well as visiting other properties to see completed stewardship projects, particularly erosion control. This feedback will help us plan future Lower Maitland Stewardship Group outings.

*This report will be made available to the public on the LMSG website. Please check it out at <http://lmsg.huronstewardship.on.ca>*

*Thanks again to participants!*



## Update: Take Action for a Sustainable Huron report

Over the past two years, the County's Planning and Development Department, in consultation with the community, have developed a 'Sustainability Plan' for Huron County, entitled, the Take Action for a Sustainable Huron report.

On June 2, 2010, County Council accepted the report "as a framework document and consultants LURA were hired to implement the plan over the next 12 months.

Sustainability looks at the long term well being of residents and communities within Huron County; it is about finding the balance between environment, economy, and society/culture in all activities and use of land.

If you are interested in becoming involved in the implementation of the plan, please contact Lindsey Goodchild of LURA consulting at [lgoodchild@lura.ca](mailto:lgoodchild@lura.ca).

To obtain a copy of the Take Action for a Sustainable Huron report, check out the Planning and Development Department's website at: <http://www.huroncounty.ca/plandev>



## County of Huron Natural Heritage Strategy

The County of Huron Planning and Development Department is working towards the development of a County-wide Natural Heritage Strategy. A Terms of Reference for the project is currently being developed through a collaborative effort which involves the Conservation Authorities whose watersheds are partly within Huron including Saugeen Valley, Maitland Valley, Ausable Bayfield and Upper Thames River as well as the Ministry of Natural Resources and the County's Planning and Development Department,

The LMSG held an event in March

of 2010 where key note speaker, Jeff Brick of the Upper Thames River CA spoke to a group of approximately 40 people about the experiences of Oxford and Middlesex Counties in developing Natural Heritage Strategies. Jeff offered suggestions as to how Huron may approach this process in the coming year.

The purpose of the strategy is to identify County-level significant natural areas and develop policies within the Official Plan to ensure their long-term protection and rehabilitation. The Plan will include comprehensive mapping of the

targets for natural heritage resources in the County and provide direction for local land stewardship programs.

For more information on the development of a Natural Heritage Strategy for Huron, please contact County Planner Susanna Reid at 519-524-8394, extension 3 or email [sreid@huroncounty.ca](mailto:sreid@huroncounty.ca).



## Ball's Bridge Approved for Provincial Heritage Plaque by B. Ross

The Ontario Heritage Trust has approved the nomination of Ball's Bridge for a "blue and gold" Ontario heritage plaque for its unique provincial heritage significance. The plaque will be installed in 2011. This recognition will attract new visitors who seek out such heritage designations.

Ball's Bridge is an example of Ontario's beautiful built heritage in a lovely setting. Built in 1885, it is one of Ontario's oldest and finest bridges, crossing the Maitland River on Little Lakes Road just south of Auburn. Technically, Ball's Bridge is unique in that it is a two-span, pin-connected, Pratt through truss iron bridge, and one of the few remaining ones in Ontario. One reason for its longevity is that it is closed to winter traffic and therefore does not get salt applied to its surface.

The Maitland Trail hiking trail crosses the Maitland River on Ball's Bridge. It provides a destination for travelers by car, bicycle,

canoe, or on foot.

In 2008, the Friends of Ball's Bridge received The Margaret & Nicholas Hill Cultural Heritage Landscape Award from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario for their public awareness campaign, restoration, and lobbying for funding to Ball's Bridge.



The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, in partnership with the Municipality of Central Huron and the Friends of Ball's Bridge has recently applied to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for enhancements to the Ball's Bridge site, including the construction of portals as well as a canoe

launch and rest stop.

The addition of the portals will ensure the safety of travelers and the bridge by restricting the size and weight of vehicles on the bridge. The attractive stone and iron design of the portals will complement the view of the river and bridge itself. A picnic area and rest stop will be used by all visitors, whether car travelers, canoeists, hikers, or cyclists, and the canoe launch area will make the river access easier and safer. Many people already visit Ball's Bridge and many more will in the future as its heritage and cultural value is promoted.



## INTERESTED IN BECOMING MORE INVOLVED IN THE LOWER MAITLAND STEWARDSHIP GROUP?

The Lower Maitland Stewardship Group holds meetings several times a year and invites interested landowners to come out and join the discussions, help plan outings, and stay informed about happenings in the Valley!

Quarterly meetings are held at the Tourism office in Goderich on the first Thursday of the month and always begin at 7:00pm.

**The upcoming meetings are scheduled as follows:**

**December 2, 2010 • March 3, 2011 • June 2, 2011 • Sept. 1, 2011**

Further, if you would like to be receive additional information about LMSG meetings and activities, please send your email to Denise at:

dcarnochan@huroncounty and she will add you to the distribution list!



## Lower Maitland Stewardship Outings: Fall 2009 & Spring 2010

The Lower Maitland Stewardship Group outings were well attended in both Fall 2009 and Spring 2010!

On October 18, 2009, the LMSG hosted the 'Fall Colours' event at Benmiller Inn. The day began with a 'walk and talk' by John Hazlitt who spoke about the history of the Benmiller area and the many mills that were in the area in years past. Next, participants enjoyed a spey-casting demonstration by LMSG member, Mike Verhoef. Mike gave a brief introduction to spey-cast fishing and spoke about the importance of sustainability for fish populations in the Maitland River. After lunch, John led the group on a short hike to the new Above the Falls Challenge Course. Thanks to John Hazlitt, Mike Verhoef and the staff at Benmiller Inn for helping to make this outing an enjoyable day!

In early May 2010, the LMSG held a farm tour on Jim and Brenda Ginn's farm west of Holmesville which was followed by a GIS demonstration and lunch at Shelter Valley Campground. The weather did not cooperate for the farm tour but Jim and Brenda explained the various projects they have completed on their farm over the years and passed pictures around so that attendees could visualize the changes. Next, LMSG members Nathan and Denise led the group through a 'how-to' session on the County's on-line Geographic Information System (GIS) and provided landowners with aerial photos of their properties. Landowners were then given the opportunity to discuss the possibility of stewardship projects on their own land with Conservation Authority staff and Huron Stewardship Coordinator, Steve Bowers. Several landowners present at the meeting have since booked stewardship visits! A big thanks to the Ginns and Dirvens for hosting this event!



Above: A group of participants enjoying a fishing demonstration courtesy of Mike Verhoef in Oct. 2009.

Below: Learning about stewardship options at the Ginn farm in May.



Photos submitted by Steve Bowers