



E-News – September, 2011

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Note: If you are planning to change your e-mail address, please do not forget to let us know so that we can continue to keep you up to date! If you would like to print this newsletter it is available on our web site as a PDF <http://www.oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca/>

Upcoming Events

ORGANIC LAWN CARE WORKSHOP – TUESDAY SEPT. 13, 7:00 – 8:30 PM ELGIN WEST COMMUNITY CENTRE. 11099 BATHURST STREET.

There are alternatives to pesticides that can be used in caring for your lawn and gardens. With preventative maintenance and natural landscaping, lawns and gardens can become more resistant to pests. This free workshop includes a presentation, displays and a draw for prizes. Admission is free. For more information and to register, call the Richmond Hill Outdoor Education Program Coordinator at (905) 787-1441, ext. 223.

COMMUNITY TREE PLANTING EVENTS



Community tree planting events are a great way for the whole family to actively participate in restoring and protecting the natural features in our neighbourhoods. All residents are invited to join in the following events.

Tree Planting at Saigeon Trail - Sat. Sept. 24, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon - French Royalist Park. Information and map at:

http://www.richmondhill.ca/documents/fall_tree_planting_saigeon_trail.pdf

Tree Planting at Timber Valley Ave. - Sun. Oct. 2, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon - Timber Valley Avenue. Information and map at:

http://www.richmondhill.ca/documents/fall_tree_planting_timber_valley.pdf

Equipment and gloves will be provided. Please dress according to the weather and wear sturdy footwear. Drinking water, hat, sunscreen, bug repellent and a snack are also a good idea.

To register contact the Richmond Hill Natural Heritage Section at naturalheritage@richmondhill.ca or call 905-747-6465.

HARVEST CELEBRATION – SAT. OCT. 1, PHYLLIS RAWLINSON PARK, 11715 LESLIE STREET

Join Evergreen and the Town of Richmond Hill for this annual local food festival! At 10:00 am meet at the Community Garden in Phyllis Rawlinson Park (off Leslie just north of 19th Ave.) to help set up a zero waste outdoor kitchen and prepare simple fresh salads for a summer feast.

At 12:00 noon sit down to enjoy the banquet and celebrate the season's bounty with children's activities, music, storytelling and more.

Please bring your own dishes, cutlery, picnic blanket and musical instrument.

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Richmond Hill's Natural Heritage Section at naturalheritage@richmondhill.ca or call 905-747-6465.

Local News

VOTE FOR LAKE WILCOX

The Lake Wilcox SNAP project is part of a competition to receive a \$25,000 grant from Shell Canada's new FuellingChange Fund. The FuellingChange Program will grant \$1 million to environmental projects and organizations selected by voters. Projects that receive the most votes will receive grants in the amounts of \$25,000, \$50,000 and \$100,000.

The Lake Wilcox SNAP will help to make the community a greener, healthier place to live, work and play. SNAP brings together residents, community groups, businesses and government agencies to develop a science-based action plan to help the community be more environmentally friendly and prepare for climate change.

Vote for SNAP now to help make our neighbourhoods better places to live, work and play!

Voting is easy:

- Go to: http://www.fuellingchange.com/main/how_it_works
- Register to get 10 free votes.
- Find the SNAP project (it's titled "Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Toolkit for Change") and vote for the lake!

To earn more votes, you will have to make a purchase at Shell and redeem receipt codes for votes. See the Fuelling Change website for more information.

Voting period ends October 31, 2011 but don't wait, place your votes now!
For more information, contact Janet Ivey at jivey@trca.on.ca or (416) 661-6600 ext. 5729. Learn more about SNAPs at www.sustainableneighbourhoods.ca

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTION – THURSDAY OCTOBER 6TH

In the next few weeks, the campaigns will heat up for the provincial election. Once again the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment will not endorse any candidate or party but urges you to become informed about the issues and vote on October 6th. There are many things to consider for our government for the next four years. These include climate change as evidenced by the increase in the number and frequency of wicked storms and protecting our natural spaces. On the latter note the Oak Ridges Moraine Act and Plan, along with the Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment Plans, come up for review in 2015. The politicians that we send to Queens Park this fall will have a big impact in the outcome of that review. Please ask the candidates about their positions on these issues and consider their response but most of all vote!

Nature News – The Birds of Oak Ridges – Baillie Birdathon Report

Again this year, the Bradleys had an interesting time chasing birds over a 24 hour period for our Baillie Birdathon fund raising for the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment and Bird Studies Canada and also learned some more lessons about birding in the process. Here is their report.

We waited until later in May when the late birds arrived. They were slower in coming due to the lousy spring weather. When we finally heard the Wood-Pewee and the calendar said the end of the month, we had to get going. The problem in doing so was the hot weather and the wind that made it harder to hear the bird calls.



As usual we started with our late morning walk to Sunset Beach. There we found the Tree and Barn Swallows nesting. A momma Kingbird also decided that it was a good spot and we saw her sitting on a nest on the shoreline. We hadn't seen a Loon for a while but when looking out on the lake one magically appeared. At the same time a Turkey Vulture soared overhead. Of course the Canada Geese and Mallards are regular visitors. We continued on our walk up to the Newman wetland and into the subdivision.

There were no Cliff Swallows at the storm pond as in previous years but we found a nest - high in the archway of the front door of a home on Wildwood - see photo. The birds were at the pond by the school along with a Raven overhead and a Chipping Sparrow and House Finch. It is worthwhile noting that it is illegal to disturb such a nest while occupied.

We went home for lunch and to check the feeders. Over the 24 hour period we had the usual cast of characters including a Blue Jay, a pair of Cardinals, Chickadees, Grackles, Cowbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, Mourning Doves, a White-breasted Nuthatch, a Downy Woodpecker and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird. We also saw and heard a Kingfisher and a Baltimore Oriole.

After lunch we headed to the Oak Ridges Corridor Park west side to search for the meadow species. We were rewarded with our favourite aerial artist, the Bobolink, along with Savannah Sparrows, Goldfinch, a Killdeer and some Yellow Warblers near the wetland. We then went to Grovewood Park and into the Corridor Park area from there.

Here we found a Catbird and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. As we turned around, we saw a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk being harassed by some Red-wings. On our way home through town, we spotted a Starling on Kingshill and a House Sparrow at Oak Ridges Food Market.

In the early evening, we went to Jefferson Forest at the south end. On the way we passed by the woodlot on Nantucket and heard an American Redstart. We did check the Osprey nest in the cell phone tower behind St. John's Church. It was obviously a new nest this year but no one was home. In the forest we heard the Pewee and also a Scarlet Tanager. We also saw and heard the beautiful blue Indigo Bunting pictured here. We checked out the North Lake wetland and Wilcox Channel on the way home, but apart from a Song Sparrow there was nothing new.



We got up early the next morning and headed off to Jefferson Forest at the north end. On the way we stopped by Sunset Beach again to confirm that the Gulls in the area were indeed Ring-billed. At the forest we were greeted with the beautiful flute like call of the Wood Thrush along with the harsh nasal call of the Great Crested Flycatcher. A Red-eyed Vireo was singing its constant tune. It is nick-named the "energizer bird" for its frequency of song. We also caught a Hairy Woodpecker drumming on a tree. Then we took a quick

visit to Swan Lake where we flushed a Wood Duck and heard Pine Warblers in the conifers. We got permission to make a quick stop at Lake St. George and were rewarded by finding an Eastern Phoebe and a House Wren.



We finished our search at Bond Lake where we found a Northern Flicker, also pictured, and as we were running out of time we heard the call of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo. This was a challenge as the wind was blowing over 25 k making it hard to hear. We kept following the sound but the bird's habitat is dense tangles and thickets so it was hard to get close. We did check with a more knowledgeable colleague that this was a realistic find.

Our total count of 52 species was rounded out by Robins, Crows and a Rock Pigeon that we saw during our travels. We were disappointed that we did not at least match our previous two year highs of 55 species. We missed some of our regulars like the Osprey and the Great Blue Heron and found very few warblers. Part of the problem was the heat and also the wind that muffled sound such that we probably missed some species with subtle calls. We also think that some of the birds were in the nesting phase just sitting there watching the world go by. Thus in future years, we shall start earlier in May to give ourselves weather flexibility and hopefully catch some migrants too.

We still enjoyed being out in our wonderful green spaces as well as seeing and hearing our interesting feathered residents. Most of all, we greatly appreciate the support of our sponsors that spur us on in our search.

This assistance will help us pay some bills for the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment. It will also help Bird Studies Canada with projects like researching the causes for the decline in some of our beautiful bird species that may also indicate other problems in our environment.

If you would like more information on any of these birds just visit

<http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/search> and type in the name in the search function.

Note: You can still sponsor the Bradleys by making a donation at:

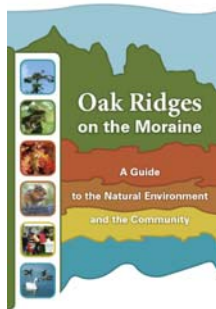
<http://www.gifttool.com/athon/MyFundraisingPage?ID=1914&AID=1491&PID=202719>

Green Tip of the Month

It is almost fall and the eating is easy - especially if you get it directly from the producer. This is a wonderful time of year to get out in the country and visit a farm market to buy and even pick your own fresh produce with so much being available right now. For a copy of York Region's Farm Fresh Map and Guide visit:

http://69.73.181.177/~yorktour/resources/FarmFresh_Map_Guide.pdf There are wonderful things to pack in those school lunches.

You can also consider attending one or more of the many fall fairs where local farmers and craft persons offer all kinds of goodies to eat or put in a Christmas stocking. There will be many original offerings produced right here in our own back yard. For information on York Region's Festivals and Fairs visit: http://www.yorkscene.com/festivals_fairs/



OAK RIDGES NEIGHBOURHOOD GUIDE NOW ON OUR WEB SITE!

WWW.OAKRIDGESFRIENDSOFTHEENVIRONMENT.CA

Oak Ridges on the Moraine: a guide to the natural environment and the community is your source for environmental and community information in Oak Ridges. The supply of hard copies is pretty well exhausted. The whole guide is available on the ORFE web site.

The Guide has been produced by the Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment with the support of the Oak Ridges Lions Club and the financial assistance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation.



The Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment also appreciates the ongoing support of the Town of Richmond Hill.

The Oak Ridges Friends of the Environment E-News welcomes comments and suggestions. Please send to orfe@oakridgesfriendsoftheenvironment.ca. To unsubscribe to this newsletter please send a message to the same address with "Unsubscribe E-News" in the subject line. We shall be sure to respect your wishes. If you are receiving this "second hand" and would like to subscribe please contact us and we would be happy to add you to the list.

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