

SPRING - 2020

LAND CARE NIAGARA

Official Newsletter

Message from the Stewardship Director

Dear Landowners, Volunteers, and Friends,

We would like to thank everyone for another great fall and winter season! Enclosed in this e-newsletter is an update of what has unfolded over the last few months. Land Care Niagara as an organization has experienced a few changes such as welcoming a new Stewardship Director and increasing the number of their council members with the addition of some awesome new members. In addition to these changes LCN has created new partnerships with organizations and members in the community, engaged new landowners and connected with the citizens and youth of Niagara. This was possible as Land Care Niagara attended and participated in many great events and programs over the fall and winter months. Land Care Niagara understands that these are difficult times but do remain committed to enhancing Niagara naturally and as we navigate through this pandemic together. We welcome you to follow along with us as we prepare and implement our core programs such as the Rural Tree Planting program and continue maintaining and providing trees from our very own tree nursery. Please share this e-newsletter with friends and family and stay tuned on our social media platforms for all LCN news and updates! The Land Care Niagara Council and Staff would like to take this time as an opportunity to say thank you, take care and wish you the very best over the summer of 2020!

Warmest wishes,

Land Care Niagara



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Director

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Welcome New Members

We are very excited to welcome new council members to our organization this season!

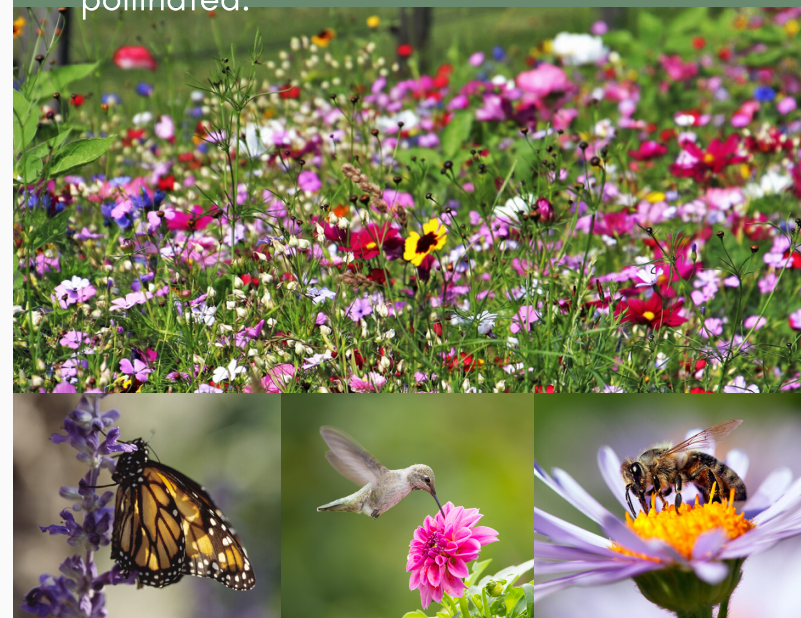
Heather Frank



Heather Frank was born and raised in the Niagara Region. Growing up close to natural areas allowed for her love of nature to develop at a young age and continue into adulthood where she pursued an education in biological sciences at Brock University. After completing her Bsc., Heather began to work and volunteer as a biologist, she currently enjoys her position as Community Outreach and Strategic Initiatives Intern with the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Heather's desire to participate in the initiatives of Land Care Niagara comes from her shared values and commitments to seeing the Niagara Region increase in environmental integrity. Heather is very passionate about seeing diverse communities educated and inspired by the amazing ecology held within the Niagara Region.



We hope everyone enjoyed Earth Day's 50th anniversary on April, 22! Don't worry if you missed it, there are plenty of ways you can demonstrate support for environmental protection this season, while keeping up with social distancing protocols. Why not create a ***pollinator garden*** of native plants in your backyard to support pollinator species like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds! Pollinators rely on flowering plants for their food supply of pollen and nectar. While foraging, pollinator species provide valuable ecosystem services by moving pollen from one area of a plant to another aiding reproduction and a genetically diverse next generation of plants. It is important that pollinator gardens are made with native plants to the region because pollinators have evolved and co-existed with native plants over thousands of years, making them more attractive and more successfully pollinated.



We are very excited to welcome a new board member to our organization this season!

Welcome New Members

Brandon Gordon



Brandon is a resident of Fort Erie and has been passionate about environmental conservation his entire life. He graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University with an Honours Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and a minor in Political Science. Shortly after graduation, Brandon obtained a job as an ecological restoration technician at Heartland Forest. This position allows him to make a difference by creating habitat for endangered species as well as coordinating educational programs for his community. In his spare time, Brandon trains for the Fort Erie Fire Department and is obtaining a certified associate in project management designation (CAPM). Brandon is passionate about Land Care Niagara's mission and is grateful to be a part of council. He hopes to use his experience and skills to foster sustainable initiatives and create a more significant impact in the Niagara Region.

Beyond the Canopy White Trillium *"Trillium grandiflorum"*

The white trillium has been treasured by Ontarians for generations, so much so that it is Ontario's official flower. The flower is a common ground cover species in Eastern North America inhabiting upland deciduous and mixed forests. The species is especially common in maple and beech forests.

It is a perennial plant, and can usually be found blooming in late April and May. The white trillium can be identified by its pale white (and sometimes pink) three-petaled flower; the flower is found above a whorl of three leaves.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not illegal to pick white trilliums, however, it is discouraged. Due to its attractive appearance, many commercial nurseries sell picked wild specimens. Deer commonly feed on white trilliums which can put added pressure on the species. While still quite common in Ontario, there has been a dramatic decline in numbers in Quebec.

If you are living in Southern Ontario, there are probably wild growing white trilliums nearby. Take a spring walk, and maybe you'll catch a glimpse of this important provincial flower in full bloom!



Community News

Notable birds in Niagara March 2018 to August 2019

I led an outing for the Niagara Falls Nature Club on the very windy day of February 25th 2018, when suddenly I spotted a *Eurasian Wigeon* in the ponds on Sodom Road close to the intersection with Netherby Road. A great bird for this date and a life bird for many. The bird stayed for three more days and many people from Niagara, Hamilton and Toronto were able to see it.

Harlequin Ducks were reported from several locations last winter. Always a nice bird to see! A *Ross's Goose* was found by Blayne and Jean Farnan on February 24th, 2019. Several *Snowy Owls* were reported last winter. They need to rest and eat to survive and return to the Arctic. Sadly, *Short-eared Owls* seem to be disappearing in our area, and *Northern Saw-whet Owls* were tough to find last fall as only several birds were reported. *Barred Owls* seem to be on the increase - please do not disturb these birds during breeding season!

Josh Vandermeulen had an exceptionally good find of a *Bell's Vireo* on May 10, 2018 on Port Weller East Pier. According to the ebird database this is the only record for this species since 1994. Until a few years ago, *Greater White-fronted Geese* were relatively uncommon in our area but they made a nice showing in the late winter of 2019 with flocks of 8 or 12 being reported from several locations. Ryan Griffiths located a second winter *Black-legged Kittiwake* at Point Abino, on November 16th, and found a *White-eyed Vireo* on Homer Road in NOTL on May 5th 2019. This bird is not a frequent visitor to Niagara and congratulations to Ryan for checking areas that don't receive much regular attention!

Other highlights include a *Brown Pelican* spotted by a birder while he was driving on the QEW past Jordan Harbour, and an *American Avocet* found by Phil Downey at Port Dalhousie. *American White Pelicans* appeared this spring and it is hoped that they may start breeding in this area soon. Several flocks of *Common Redpoll* were reported earlier this year. It is always nice to have these northern visitors stop by. Several species which used to be annual in this area have yet to be reported, likely a result of habitat loss and human disturbance, These include the *Long-eared Owl* and *Yellow-breasted Chat*, *Snowy Egret*, *Cattle Egret*, *Willet*, *Wilson's Phalarope*, *Connecticut Warbler*, and *Dickcissel*. Perhaps next year?

Certainly one of the highlights of spring migration was a *Summer Tanager* Bob Highcock and Jean Hampson reported from Mary Malcolmson Park on May 7, 2019. Remarkably another *Summer Tanager* (or the same bird?) showed up in a backyard adjacent to Forty Mile Creek where It was reported there until May 14th. Even more remarkable was a third report of the bird on May 24th from a backyard in St. Catharines.

On August 13, 2019 Lisa Bacon, a local photographer took a photo of a *Marbled Godwit* at Dufferin Islands, a first record for Niagara. A remarkable find! Congratulations Lisa. On that high note I will end this report and encourage everyone to get out and enjoy the birds!



MARCIE JACKLIN

Retired Brock University
Chair of Niagara Birding Conservation and Tourism
Collaborative. Founding member and President of
Community Voices of Fort Erie. Recipient of Niagara
Falls Nature Club R.W Sheppard Award 2020.



PROJECT UPDATES: RE-LEAF TREE NURSERY

Land Care Niagara’s most recent multi-year project was supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This project received 3 years of funding which allowed the project to be implemented from 2017-2019 and became known as the Re-Leaf Nursery project.

The project was built on LCN’s previously established indigenous tree nursery in Vineland, Ontario. Over several years leading up to the Re-Leaf Nursery project the LCN staff had propagated and housed thousands of indigenous trees in the nursery. This provided a continual supply of healthy, large caliper trees to be supplied for private and public landowners who would plant them on their properties.

As funding was secured in 2017, LCN was able to continue the propagation and growing of indigenous trees in the nursery. In addition LCN began to provide outreach and education opportunities to the public through nursery workshop days and by attending community events. The Re-Leaf Project allowed for the nursery to be revitalized with new ground cover cloth to guard against invasive weeds, fresh gravel walkways to keep visitors, volunteers and workers feet clean and dry, mulch throughout the rows to keep vegetation competition away from the trees, and new materials and supplies such as fittings and hoses for our irrigation system to keep the trees watered. The success of the project was achieved as hundreds of trees were provided to public and private landowners across Niagara over the past 3 years.

The nursery continues to grow and house healthy, beautiful trees to this day and LCN is committed to keeping the nursery growing.



Ontario Trillium Foundation

Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario

Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

RE-LEAF NURSERY

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Project Updates: Rural Tree Planting Program

The Rural Tree Planting Program has been a program implemented by Land Care Niagara (LCN) since 2007. The project has been made possible by the ongoing support of the Forests Ontario's 50 Million Trees Program. Once funded by the Province of Ontario, in 2019 the Federal Government of Canada stepped in and vouched to supply funds to the program for the foreseeable future. Land Care Niagara is the Planting Delivery Agent for the Niagara Region in Ontario.

Each year we work closely with multiple landowners across Niagara in order to implement the Rural Tree Planting Program on private lands. The success of the program has provided an increase in tree canopy cover and habitat for local wildlife. Once the trees are planted and their roots are established, they will help reduce erosion across the land and stabilize stream banks. During the previous planting season of 2019, a total of 13 sites were planted with over 45,000 seedlings on 55 acres of land throughout the months of May to July. Moving along into 2020, LCN will be working closely with another 9 landowners in order to plant 10 sites with over 30,000 seedlings across 37 acres of land. LCN remains committed to enhancing Niagara naturally and creating a healthy and sustainable environment for many years to come.



Land Care Niagara and local landowners have planted over 500,000 trees in partnership with Forests Ontario!



Announcements - Events - Updates

COVID-19

We wish to take this time to announce that Land Care Niagara has suspended all plans for in person outreach, education and project meetings until further notice. We will continually review the situation and make decisions for our organization as we move ahead. We encourage you to reach out and contact us with any questions or comments through our Facebook and website page during this time.



Wild Game Feast

Our Wild Game Feast that was scheduled on May 2nd, 2020 had to be cancelled due to restrictions with COVID-19. If you have purchased tickets please email us at info@landcareniagara.com for further details on reimbursement. We would like to extend our appreciation and thanks to all who became involved and spent time planning this event. We apologize for any inconvenience and join everyone in hoping that this is all resolved as quickly and safely as possible.

Wood Working For Nature

Our Woodworking for Nature Program is currently on hold as access to our workshop is being restricted due to COVID-19. We look forward to hosting volunteer workshop opportunities and building a variety of wildlife structures as soon as we can.

