



The Pin Oak

Issue 8

The Newsletter of the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park

December 2008

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This newsletter will be published twice per year beginning in 2009. This newsletter is written by the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park.



Native Plant Sale 2009

I will be putting together the Friends plant order in the next few weeks. In the past I have accepted species requests by dedicated buyers. Please note that all requests may not be granted because of plant availability. Please forward all requests to Josh Diamond at jkdiamond@sympatico.ca.

Park News

The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park would like to wish you all a happy new year. The 2008 year was a busy year for Malcolmson Eco-Park. We accomplished many things this year including another successful Earth Day and Plant Sale. We were also able to initiate our native plant program in our greenhouses. The waterfowl berm was repaired again and hopefully this will be the last time. The Friends have also stepped up their efforts in the Tall Grass Prairie area by removing invading shrub species in an attempt to maintain the prairie species at the park. A fire break was cut in the Fall to allow for a Spring 2009 Controlled Burn.

Unfortunately, vandalism continued to be a problem at Malcolmson Eco-Park in 2008. Our greenhouses have been broken into several times. Illegal dumping in our parking lot continues to happen despite the posting of new signs. Some dog owners continue to walk their dogs off-leash and do not remove their dog's feces. Please report any damage to the park to the City of St. Catharines or the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park.

The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park and Niagara Action for Animals have nearly completed the park signage project. As you may recall the signs were designed by Port Weller Public students with the purpose of educating the public about park issues such as littering and encouraging park visitors to treat the park and its inhabitants with respect. Signs have been printed and are just waiting to be installed throughout the park. The installation of the signs was postponed from the Fall until Spring 2009.

The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park has been slightly reorganized. Josh Diamond and Greg Eckhardt will be Co-Chairing the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park Advisory Committee. Josh will be coordinating the administrative portion of the Chair's position while Greg will be coordinating the park management portion of the Chair's position. This new structure will improve the functioning of the Friend's group.

We hope to see you all at the park.

Year End Pictures from Malcolmson Eco-Park



In October the Friends and students from Niagara College's Ecosystem Restoration program began to remove vegetation that had begun to invade the Tall Grass Prairie Area. This small area of Malcolmson Eco-Park is quite unique for Niagara and contains species such as Indian Grass, Big & Little Blue Stem, Switch Grass, and Butterfly Weed. A controlled burn of this area is planned for Spring 2009. Thank you to Niagara College for your assistance.

A series of violent windstorms caused some havoc in Malcolmson Eco-Park. Two large conifers were taken down by the wind gusts. The gusts were so powerful that a couple of windows in the glass greenhouse were even broken. Fortunately damage to the compound area was relatively minor.



This Cooper's Hawk *Accipiter cooperii* was observed taking a Mourning Dove by surprise during a snowstorm in December. Birders jokingly refer to Mourning Doves as hawk-candy because these doves are easily taken as prey.



Support from TD Friends of the Environment for our Seed Growing Project

In October, we were pleased to receive a grant of \$1800 from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation, toward the costs of our seed growing project. The grant will enable us to expand the project, which was begun in January 2008, to promote growing native plants. June Streadwick, an Advisory Committee member, has been coordinating the program. She ordered seeds for 18 native wildflowers, such as Dwarf Blazing Star, Lupin and Butterfly Weed. These were sown into pots in the glass greenhouse, where most germinated and grew well. They were transplanted several times by June's team of 5 volunteers until, by the time of our Earth Day celebration on April 26, they were large enough to be sold at our plant sale. Between 50 and 75 people purchased plants last spring. Through these sales, we educate and enable members of the community to grow native plants in their own gardens. Some of the most popular wildflowers are: Butterfly Weed, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, and Brown-Eyed Susan.

In June, we planted some of the wildflowers in the park, in the Outdoor Learning Area, and in the Prairie Area. By promoting reestablishment of these wildflowers in the park, we hope to give park users the opportunity to enjoy them and to become more aware of their importance as food and habitat for butterflies, birds and insects. A walk through the prairie area in July is an amazing experience, as you see the riot of colour, smell the scents, and experience the flash of butterfly wings and the hum of bees.

In 2009, we plan to start more seeds, to have more plants for the park and for the sale. We will cover one of the polyhouses with shade cloth, so it can be used to store plants that are waiting to be planted out or sold. There will be special planting days when the public can participate in wildflower planting in the park. Anyone who is interested is welcome to participate in this project in some way. For more information, check out our website, www.malcolmsonecopark.com.

By: Claire Theijsmeijer



Thank You!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the volunteers, including those who serve on the Advisory Committee for your dedicated work to Malcolmson Eco-Park this year. The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park is a volunteer group and all those who have participated in 2008 gave their free time to make Malcolmson Eco-Park a better place in our community. The Friends have been around since 1992 and this group has accomplished much since this time. You should be proud of yourselves. I look forward to working with you in 2009.

Sincerely,
Josh Diamond

Malcolmson Eco-Park Mysteries

Question: What is that large blue structure in the main parking lot?

Answer:

The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park are in the process of erecting a trailhead sign for the park. The blue steel structure that is shown in the picture below is the frame that will support the three coloured panels that have information about the park. This sign would not have been possible without the support of Niagara Structural Steel, Eric Wiens Construction, O'Hara Excavating and Tom Bernard at the Region of Niagara. Jim Streadwick, Claire Theijsmeijer and Cindy Bryson from the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park spent a number of hours working on this sign. On behalf of the Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in this project. This is a tremendous accomplishment for a small volunteer organization. The official unveiling of the sign is slated for Earth Day 2009. We hope to see you there.



By: Josh Diamond & Greg Eckhardt



Website
www.fomep.com

2009 Malcolmson Eco-Park Advisory Committee

Mike Anderson: City of St.Catharines
Joshua Diamond: Co-Chair
Greg Eckhardt: Co-Chair
Cindy Bryson: Committee Member
Sandra Johnstone: Committee Member
Jim Streadwick: Committee Member
Claire Theijsmeijer: Outdoor Learning Area

Contact: 905-688-5601 ext. 3140
Contact: 905-646-4810 jkdiamond@sympatico.ca
Chris DiRaddo: Committee Member
Maggie Skov: Committee Member
June Streadwick: Committee Member
Doug Woodard: Tall Grass Prairie Coordinator

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