



The Environmental Advocate

www.conserversociety.ca

Small Change Fund Selects Conservers to Distribute Funding

“The Small Change Fund empowers you to make big change with small change. We provide a place for you to discover, share, connect with, and support amazing grassroots projects in communities across the country – projects that need just a small amount of money to make a real and significant impact in the world.”

In the spring of 2012, representatives from the Small Change Fund contacted the Conservers Society with an offer we couldn't refuse. They wanted to provide us with \$6,000 to divvy up and support grassroots projects focused on volunteerism and community improvement.

The Conservers Board solicited for proposals and were very pleased to receive eight worthy proposals. As we were restricted by the Small Change Fund to select five projects, a grant review team was established and judging began. The following five projects were awarded \$1,000 each:

- Hamilton Fruit Tree Project (Environment Hamilton)
- Community Garden at Crown Point

(Neighbourhood Volunteers)

- Adding Colour to Stinson Neighbourhood (Neighbourhood Volunteers)
- First Nations Environmental Outreach (Earthday Hamilton-Burlington)
- Summer Environment Camps (Environment Hamilton)

Your membership and donations to the Conservers Society make the programs and activities included in this newsletter possible—thank you for your continued support.

As directed by the Small Change Fund, the remaining \$1,000 will be retained by the Conservers Society to cover administrative requirements such as an annual financial audit and Directors & Officers insurance.

You can expect to see updates on the awarded projects in this and future newsletters.

More information on the Small Change Fund can be found at www.smallchangefund.org.

October 2012

**Conservers
Society
of
Hamilton
and
District**

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smallchangefund



Green Venture Depaves Paradise

Kathryn Gold—Green Venture

With support from the McCutcheon Foundation and Green Communities Canada, Green Venture will be establishing a demonstration site where asphalt paving is torn up and removed. The project will take place at an elementary school in Dundas on October 20, 2012.

Both the school and the community will assist in depaving the space, and once complete, a native species garden will be planted in the formerly paved space.

Native species act as filters and sponges for polluted stormwater runoff and help restore the natural hydrological cycle. In addition, this garden will provide additional greenspace for students to enjoy.

This project will engage and empower

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volunteers and the community; participants will learn new skills, build connections with their neighbours, and see the potential for new green spaces in the urban environment.

Similar Depaving projects are taking place in multiple communities across Ontario.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this project (planning or depaving), please email Clare Wagner at clare.wagner@greenventure.ca.

**We need your
membership more
than ever, please
join the Conserver
Society of
Hamilton & District
today!**



Photo: Green Venture staff are trained on Depaving Paradise by Green Communities Canada in their sister group's (Hearthmakers) region of Kingston, ON.

Green Venture's Kathryn Gold (far left) and Clare Wagner (far right) are eager to apply their new knowledge on projects in Hamilton and the surrounding area!

Summer Camps Go Green!

Julia Kollek—Environment Hamilton

Building on last year's success, Environment Hamilton took our popular Eco Fairs on the road to summer camps again. Our goal: to bring environmentally-themed activities to day camps in low-income neighbourhoods that would not otherwise have this kind of programming.

Many of our activities are developed in-house and tested before they go out - and all of them have a message: Clean air shuffle is a dance game played like musical chairs about keeping air clean: children make their own eco-friendly laundry soap, learning about water quality: the new Web of Life game explores food chains: and the relay race Top Lo-

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cal Chef reinforces the importance of local food and healthy eating.

We were able to hire 2 part-time summer interns to run the project and delivered programming to 302 children in total .

Guest presenters included Paul Barrett from Green Venture who taught the kids how to put their bike on a bus rack he brought with him and with a fake food relay, Chris Wilson from the City of Hamilton helped to show why scraps down the kitchen sink are a Pain in the Drain.

Feedback from camp managers

Stinson Community (as reported by in-

tern Breanne Graham):

"Roy and his co-counselors had an abundance of positive things to say about the EcoFairs we presented for them. It was awesome to present at the Stinson Summer Camp twice because the counselors were helpful and were interested in what we were discussing.

"They were involved and asking questions, which was encouraging for the campers... it made me as a presenter and organizer of the EcoFair feel like they understand the importance of recognizing environmental topics - and that they appreciated our time."

Eva Rothwell Centre, North End, Hamilton (as reported by intern Anna Jurcevic)

Marissa Cunnington, the Summer Camp Coordinator, gave us the following feedback:

"The campers really enjoyed the activities that they attended. They were age-appropriate, educational, and fun all at the same time.

" I really liked how there was a variety of activities for campers, and I believe the only thing that could have been improved on would be doing some sort of craft. I remember that in a previous year they made a necklace, so some arts and crafts appeal to some campers ensuring there are activities that appeal to all.

"I really liked that the activities were practical, such as scraping food into a green bin (which we hope they do every day here) or lifting a bike onto a bike rack.

Continued...



Photo: Tomorrow environmental leaders participate in Green Summer Camps delivered by Environment Hamilton staff.



"I believe this eco fair was very educational but was hidden with such fun activities that the campers never knew they were learning."

Our thanks to the Small Change Fund and Conservers' Society of Hamilton for supporting this successful program: this couldn't have happened without your help.

Huge Implications for the City Budget

Don McLean

The fate of the biggest urban boundary expansion in Hamilton's history may be decided early in 2013. From January 14 to February 1, the Ontario Municipal Board will hear arguments about the 4574 acre scheme to create the Aerotropolis industrial development zone around the airport (also known as the Airport Employment Growth District or AEGD).

On one side is the city with a taxpayer-funded pot of \$300,000. On the other sit two citizen groups with a lot less – Environment Hamilton and

Hamiltonians for Progressive Development. Also in the hearings and supporting the city on the boundary expansion are a handful of land developers controlling about a third of the lands – who hope to be able to convince the Board at a later hearing that their lands are “more suited” for residential uses. A final major player is Tradeport International, the private operators of the city's airport, and also enthusiastic supporters of the boundary expansion which includes the airport itself and over 500 acres being designated for future airport expansion.

About 40 individuals have secured

participant status and the right to present their views to the board, but without the opportunity to question the other players and their expert witnesses.

If the city wins what it wants, taxpayers face a bill of at least half a billion dollars for servicing. City reports acknowledge \$353 million, but neglect to mention the cost of required trunk sewer and water pipes running 25 kilometres to the Woodward Avenue treatment facility.

And while economic development staff are gung-ho for the aerotropolis, finance staff are quietly pointing at the debt implications. A September report from the latter on the dismal state of the city's development charges account included this statement:

"The forecast growth Capital Budget for the next 20 years is dominated by 2 developments: the wastewater plant expansion and associated linear infrastructure and the Airport Employment Growth District. The sheer size of the investment in both areas will require significant debt. DC growth revenue must remain stable relative to

forecast in order for the financial plans of both developments to remain sustainable."

That wastewater plant expansion is an \$800 million bill – and part of that should likely also be added to the AEGD costs. The expansion has been delayed five years because of slow growth and the fear that the expected development charges won't materialize because the growth won't occur.

The city's financial picture is further clouded by a \$2 billion accumulated deficit in the maintenance of existing infrastructure – an amount currently increasing by \$195 million per year. To put that in perspective, a tax increase of 25 percent would be required to add \$195 million to city coffers and stop it from sinking further into that infrastructure hole.

But if the aerotropolis fills up with new industrial growth, and the airport finally takes off, city planners anticipate a \$50-60 million annual net increase in business taxes by 2031. That and the upfront costs make the boundary expansion a crucial part of the city's future financial health – one way or the other.



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Green Venture Digs into Rain Gardens

Kathryn Gold—Green Venture

On Thursday September 20, Green Venture hosted a Rain Garden Workshop at EcoHouse. North American Rain Garden Guru, Rusty Schmidt, was flown in from Minnesota to lead 10 professionals in a hands on workshop aimed to illustrate the process of building and maintaining rain gardens. There was a large classroom component, but participants were able to dig in and build their very own rain garden before the day was over.

This is the third rain garden constructed at EcoHouse in the past five years. This particular garden is located on the east side of the property, and brings us one step closer to managing 100% of our stormwater runoff.

Funding for this workshop was generously provided by Green Communities Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the RBC Blue Water Project.

Strategically placed, rain gardens significantly improve water quality by absorbing



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and filtering runoff. Traditionally, rain lands on hard surfaces (roofs, roads, parking lots), picks up numerous pollutants and transports them directly to Hamilton Harbour. This rain garden will capture the runoff and allow it to infiltrate slowly into the ground.

Join us at EcoHouse on October 13 for our official Rain Garden Launch. See our new brand new rain garden in person, as well as the other two rain gardens on our property (planted 1 year ago, and 4 years ago). That same day is My Green Adventures, which is a day when EcoHouse is open to the public for tours.



Photo: Green Venture workshop participants dig a rain garden at EcoHouse.

Climate Actions in Hamilton

Don McLean

The Hamilton 350 Committee – a coalition of local groups including the Conservator Society – continues to take action to combat greenhouse gas emissions and raise public awareness about the seriousness of climate change. The problem has become much more obvious with the extreme weather events this year – including a 1000-2000 year rainstorm on the south east mountain, and both drought and a confused spring hurting local farmers.

South of the border over half the counties in the United States were declared disaster areas this past summer because of a drought that cut deeply into agricultural production. And even more disturbing news was the rapid disappearance of the arctic ice cap. By late August, its volume was less than 25 percent of the average recorded at the end of summer between 1979 and 2000. New Scientist magazine calls it the earth's "biggest change in three million years".

Unprecedented melting has also taken place in Greenland this year, and climatic disasters are continuing to afflict large parts of the world, especially the breadbaskets in Russia and China as well as the US.

Beside these developments, Hamilton has so far gotten off easy, but it barely dodged a bullet on July 22 when a three hour downpour dumped 5-6 inches on parts of upper Stoney Creek and Binbrook flooding hundreds of homes.

That's the eighteenth storm in the last 100 months severe enough to have flooded Hamilton homes. Most of the affected area was agricultural or otherwise "undeveloped" so the damages to human structures were much, much less than if the storm centre had shifted a couple of kilometres northward.

The 350 Committee has been pointing to the impacts on food security and circulating a petition calling for serious government action from all levels of government. It is also mobilizing to challenge plans to send diluted tar sands bitumen (dilbit) along a 37-year-old pipeline that runs through Hamilton on its way from Sarnia to Montreal.

On October 17 a committee representative will join First Nations and several other delegates speaking to city council about the dangers involved with this proposed shipment, as well as the unacceptable effects on the global climate of continuing tar sands extraction. Then on October 21, the 350 Committee is organizing a bike ride to the Enbridge pipeline hub in Westover (Flamborough). Get in touch with them at info@hamilton350.ca for more information.

The Committee is also organizing a climate change fast on Friday, November 24. That's the day after the US Thanksgiving and thus the biggest shopping day of the year so it's long been designated internationally as "buy nothing

Continued...

day". In Hamilton, we are being asked to both "buy nothing" and "eat nothing" in the climate change fast.

Buying nothing highlights the major role of overconsumption on global climate and other degradation of the planet. Eating nothing expresses solidarity with those around the world being driven to greater hunger by the effects of climate change, and warns all of us about the real threat to our food security. Contact the committee to participate or help out. www.hamilton350.com.

Get involved with the Conserver Society!

In addition to the opportunities on this page, we are looking for board members and are actively searching for youth members.

**If you know a young person between the ages of 20-30 that would like to gain experience on a friendly board and help improve the quality of our community, please have them contact us—
contact@conserver.scoecity.ca**



Photo: Near King and Dundurn, Hamilton350 volunteers take action on March 24 against the tar sands. It was the anniversary of the crash of the Exxon Valdez oil tanker. The action was specifically against the Northern Gateway pipeline - also an Enbridge project.

Have you seen our website lately?

Yes, it needs updating.

Steven Nagy is our web-site manager and we would like to support him with someone who can provide updates to its contents and linkages to appropriate groups and interests. Familiarity with the Conserver Society is an asset unless you are a quick study. Please contact Christine at 905-648-3391 or cebrown@cogeco.ca

Hamilton Naturalists' Club's Regeneration Project

Jen Baker—Hamilton Naturalist Club

Thanks to support from the Conservator Society through the Ed Smee Environment Fund, the Hamilton Naturalists' Club (HNC) is bringing nature back to the city. More than 100 hard-working volunteers planted over 3,000 native plants to expand the Land's Inlet Nature Corridor located in Hamilton's North End.



Ed Smee Funding Recipient!

The Land's Inlet Nature Corridor project began six years ago with a goal of creating a wildlife corridor within the City while helping to connect people with nature. Numerous community groups, neighbours, youth groups, and corporate partners came together to implement this vision by planting over 100 trees and almost 2,000 native wildflowers.



After a few years the trees and plants are well established and many species of butterflies and birds depend on the site. With the success of the initial project, the HNC and community partners felt the time was right to expand the corridor through the Regeneration Project.

A prominent article in the Spectator helped to attract many hard-working volunteers for the large planting project that occurred the week of June 10. In all over 100 volunteers, including

14 ESL students from Dr. Davey Elementary School, 5 neighbourhood youth, youth from the John Howard Society, and 8 youth from a faith-based group, along with numerous neighbourhood volunteers, planted over 3,000 native wildflowers and spread more than 15 yards of mulch. The soil is extremely thick clay which is very hard to dig in. Fortunately, one of the volunteers was able to donate a backhoe to help dig holes for the volunteers to plant in.

Even with the drought over the summer, many of the plants are becoming established and this will increase over the next couple of years. Over the fall we will be transplanting 5 to 6 trees and shrubs from a nursery created for the project. The shade provided by the trees and shrubs will benefit the grasses and wildflowers that were planted.



We are creating a team of Volunteer Stewards to care for the site. Youth from the John Howard Society continue to be involved in the project, as do youth from the

Mr. Ed Smee was the founding Chairman of the Society and served not only as a leader and mentor in his work as a volunteer with the Society, but also by example through his personal life working on environmental issues. Ed Smee is credited by his friends at the Society with helping to create the first action plan for the Bay.



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Conserving the environment since 1983

The Environmental Advocate is published by the **Conserver Society of Hamilton and District Inc.**, a non-profit, non-partisan citizen organization concerned with the environment in the region at the western end of Lake Ontario.

Editor: Pete Wobschall

Submissions for the Newsletter are invited and should be sent to the mailing address or to the editor at contact@conserverociety.ca (*Email submissions preferred, please*)

local neighbourhood. The ESL students from Dr. Davey Elementary School will also be continuing to help care for the plants. Students from Bennetto Public School and St. Lawrence Catholic School will be growing native plants from seed and will be planting them at the site next spring. Volunteers are also being engaged for the stewardship team through the North End Neighbours.

With the success of the first stage of the corridor, we are confident that this stage of the corridor will be as successful and that we will continue realizing our goal of creating wildlife habitat. We're thrilled with the success we've had connecting people, particularly youth, with nature.

For more information about this innovative project, please contact Jen Baker at 905-524-3339 or land@hamiltonnature.org.



Call for Nominations

The Conserver Society Board is seeking Board of Directors members.

If you are interested and able to contribute, please contact Alison Healing, Nomination Committee at contact@conserverociety.ca.

Being a board member involves spending between 5-6 hours a month to prepare for and attend meetings in the Hamilton area and contribute to projects that the Society plans and implements.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Your membership enables us to have a stronger, more effective voice for a healthy, sustainable environment in Hamilton and the surrounding area.

As a member, you are entitled to receive *The Environmental Advocate* (our newsletter), participate in Society activities, and vote at our Annual General Meeting.



The most important role of the Conserver Society is our partnership with like-minded organizations. Our sponsorship with individuals and groups facilitates access to necessary funding. Without this, crucial work in our community would not be done.

The Conserver Society is a non-partisan, registered charitable organization. We gratefully accept donations above the basic membership fee. You will receive a **tax receipt** for your membership and any donation you choose to make.

Name:		Phone:	
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Annual Membership*:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$10 <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> Organization - \$40		
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**Individuals or families on low incomes are entitled to a 50% reduction in fees.*

Donations can also be made to the Conserver Society online at: www.canadahelps.org

Please mail your completed form and cheque* to:

Membership Director
Conserver Society of Hamilton & District
Box 89002, 991 King St. West
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**Cheques should be made payable to the Conserver Society of Hamilton & District.*

Thank you for supporting environmental action in your community.