



# The Environmental Advocate

[www.conserversociety.ca](http://www.conserversociety.ca)

October 2013

## Increasing Diversity in Hamilton's Conservation Community

*Jen Baker—Hamilton Naturalist Club*

Four of Hamilton's prominent conservation organizations have received a generous grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to help improve the diversity of our organizations. Over the next year the **Bay Area Restoration Council, Environment Hamilton, Green Venture, and the Hamilton Naturalists' Club** will be working to make our policies and programs more welcoming to newcomers in our community.

Each of the partner organizations felt they had limited diversity within their membership, Board, and volunteers and wanted to change this to better reflect the tremendous diversity that we are fortunate to have in our community.

Initial discussions with social service agencies provided the impetus behind the application to OTF. The project will begin with diversity assessments of each partner. The assessments will be led by the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and will provide each partner with practical tips they can implement to help to reach out to diverse audiences. They will also deliver sensitivity training to staff and volunteers of the partner organizations.

Through the project we are also able to

work with the Bridging Program for Environmental Occupations offered through the YWCA. This program helps newcomers who are environmental professionals to gain valuable Canadian experience which will aid in their job search. Our role will be to deliver workshops about our activities and about the local conservation landscape (habitats, policies, agencies, etc.). Partici-

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

pants will also be volunteering with our programs and activities, helping to provide the important Canadian experience they require.

At the end of the project we hope to be better able to connect with diverse audiences, to engage newcomers in our programs, and to attract new volunteers. We hope the newcomers will increase their awareness of Hamilton's environment and the local environmental groups.

If you have any questions or would like more details about this exciting project, please contact Jen Baker, Hamilton Naturalists' Club, at [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org) or 905-524-3339.



**Conserver  
Society  
of  
Hamilton  
and  
District**



## Accessible Outreach in Riverdale

*Elley Newman, Green Venture*

The Conserver Society provided generous sponsorship to Green Venture for a grant from the Hamilton Community Foundation. This grant allows Green Venture to offer free EcoHouse tours to Riverdale residents, with translation in languages commonly spoken in that neighbourhood. In an effort to make our programs more accessible to Riverdale residents as well as to address some of the goals outlined in the Neighbourhood Action Plan, Green Venture has been working with the Riverdale Community Planning Team and we have designed tours that add to our sustainability focus with an additional focus on food security, including interactive activities (which are the key to making EcoHouse tours

memorable!)

Green Venture recently participated in the Riverdale Fall Fest, which is one of the largest annual events in Riverdale and brings out hundreds of people to the community centre to participate in festivities. Green Venture's vermicom-

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posting worms were a big hit amongst the kids (and adults too!) and had constant traffic coming over to see the worms and learn about composting, with some impressive knowledge and interest in composting from some of the kids.

We have volunteers who speak a variety of languages who have generously signed up to help translate tours and materials, and to promote tours in Riverdale. Upon hearing that we want to offer our tours to Riverdale residents for free and want help translating in different languages, people were enthusiastic to help out. Having one of our volunteers help recruit new volunteers is a great example of the power of volunteering, and the importance that volunteers play in our programs here at Green Venture. We couldn't do it without you!

For more information contact Elley Newman: [elley.newman@greenventure.ca](mailto:elley.newman@greenventure.ca) or 905-540-8787.



*Photo: Visitors enjoy exploring indoor composting with worms at Green Venture's EcoHouse.*

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

## Local Food Initiatives

### A Conserver Sponsored Program!

With the financial assistance of the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF), the Conserver Society is continuing to partner with Environment Hamilton to support local food initiatives. Earlier this year, HCF provided \$12,174 for "Cooking with the Good Food Box", a project responding to pressing community needs. It provides educational opportunities to the residents of Hamilton's challenged Gibson-Lansdale neighbourhood and it also helps promote the Good Food Box program right across the city.

Environment Hamilton has created a series of cooking demonstrations that taking place between March and December of this year. The first step was a pilot for a proposed 30-minute cooking demonstration with a guest-chef format (with Project Manager Karen Burson assisting the guest chef and acting as a host), but it became clear that our limited resources would not enable us to create engaging programs spanning that length of time.

It was decided that we should return to our very familiar format: 3-4 minute cooking segments on Cable 14's "Hamilton Life" that was planned and executed last May. While the show took a break for the summer efforts focused on ways of better publicizing the cooking

demos and improving attendance.

We have a challenging schedule of eight shoots that will take place between September and December. Four of those demonstrations will be carried out with the assistance of City of Hamilton Public Health's Community Food Advisors. The other four demos will be given by Karen Burson and taped/broadcast by Cable 14. Articles are also being prepared for the South Sherman News and the Gibson Lansdale News to support the program, which will also be publicized in the monthly Good Food Box newsletters.

The Conserver Society also facilitated a donation of \$4,825 that came out of the much-publicized 30-day hike of the full length of the Bruce Trail. The funds are being used to extend the Good Food Box program through the end of 2013. The organizers of the Bruce Trail expedition wanted to raise funds for food-related projects for kids, so organizations such as Taste Buds (formerly known as Hamilton Partners in Nutrition) and Food4Kids also received donations. The funds raised came through the Hamilton Community Foundation.





## Fresh Air for Kids!

### **Green Venture's Mobile Air Monitoring initiative**

*Juby Lee, Green Venture*

From November 2012 to March 2013, Green Venture launched an exciting twist to the mobile air monitoring project, this time the focus was on schools and involving students in learning more about air quality.

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This project, called Fresh Air for Kids involved one class from Holy Name of Jesus School (HNOJ) and two classes from St. Lawrence Catholic School. In partnership with the Ministry of Environment and Corr Research, air quality samples were taken around the neighbourhoods of both schools to test the levels of vehicular emissions. From January to March, all three classes were part of the project. They toured the mobile air monitoring vehicle used to collect samples, recorded data from a portable hand-held air monitoring device, and learned more about what they can do to reduce air pollution in their community.

Thanks to Levitt Safety, who sponsored a portable Particulate Matter (PM) device which allowed the students to monitor PM levels in their neighbourhoods. This gave them

hands on experience in collecting real time data and afterwards, the students created graphs, using their math skills.

One of the main goals was to teach the students that they can improve air quality by simple actions such as walking to school, car pooling and discouraging idling.

While technically the project ended in March 2013, the excitement continued. Both schools participated in Bike to Work / School day and 40 students cycled to Gore Park on Monday May 27th.

There are two amazing videos that were created. For links and more information, visit Green Venture's blog (link below).

*Teachers' quote: It's very important that*



*Photo: Former Conserver Board Member Denis Corr leads students through field work measuring air pollution in Hamilton neighbourhoods.*

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@conserverociety.ca**

[www.greenventure.wordpress.com/2013/07/02/fresh-air-for-kids](http://www.greenventure.wordpress.com/2013/07/02/fresh-air-for-kids)





*Photo: Student proudly displays neighbourhood air quality data.*

*these positive changes and behaviour are extended into other areas, so I think other schools should adopt these campaigns as well. And furthermore the students learned that they can affect positive change in the world through their own actions.*

Special thanks to Healthy Communities Fund, Green Communities Canada and Clean Air Hamilton for their financial support. Thanks to Ontario Ministry of Environment, Rotek Environmental, Corr Research, Levitt Safety for their in-kind support. Thanks to both schools; the principals, teachers and students for all their support and time!

## A Fond Farewell!

The Conserver Board would like to wish Pete Wobschall a fond farewell as he steps away from his Board duties and moves on to new adventures.

Although the Conserver Board are losing Pete in his capacity as Chair, we are pleased that he will remain a member and continue to assist with day-to-day activities.

Remaining Board members will rotate Chair duties until a new Chair is established in the near future.

We are looking forward to making an exciting announcement soon and welcoming new members to the Conserver Board—stay tuned.

Others interested in an enjoyable, meaningful experience serving our community on the Conserver Society Board, please let us know: [contact@conserverssociety.ca](mailto:contact@conserverssociety.ca).



*"I will miss working closely with a group of dedicated, kind, and fun individuals facilitating funding for area organizations that wouldn't otherwise be available."*  
Pete Wobschall

## Board of Directors

### Chair

Vacant

### Vice-Chair

Vacant

### Treasurer

Warren Beacham

### Secretary

Don McLean

### Membership

### Director

Christine Brown

### Member-at-Large

Laurel Harrison



## Pipe Watching

The Pipe watch program, which was initially introduced by Environment Hamilton in 2002, is designed to engage community members in visual and hands on monitoring of water quality in local waterways. A partnership with the Conserver Society, and a \$5,000 grant from the RBC Bluewater fund, has allowed it to continue in 2013.

Environment Hamilton staff, having recently revisited the Red Hill Watershed and found high levels of e.coli and total

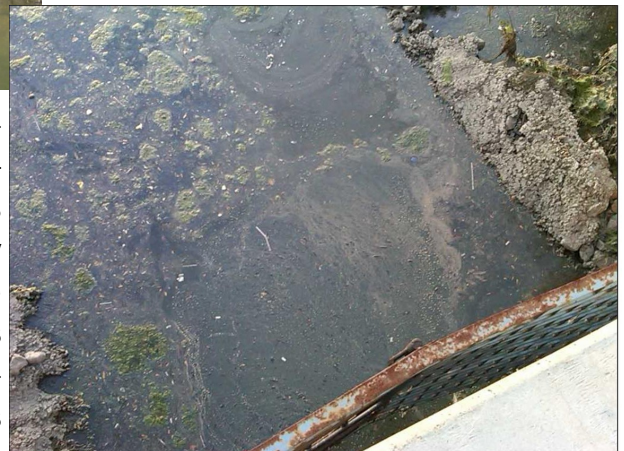
coming from storm sewers within Warden Park.

Additionally, residents will be given opportunities to help determine the health of watershed through participating in chain of custody sampling and benthic macro invertebrate (creek critters) monitoring. The project will ideally include a community forum where the health status of the creek will be publicly revealed to the greater Hamilton community and help to further generate discussion and action on the issue of creek contamination within the city of Hamilton.



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coliform contamination, are now exploring other watersheds within the Hamilton area to determine if similar issues exist. The current focus is on the Stoney Creek watershed. Working within the Riverdale community, the project aims to empower residents to identify, monitor, and report problematic discharges





## Going Downtown with the AGM

The Conserver Society rubbed shoulders with those Hamiltonians interested in getting more acquainted with downtown James Street North and its architecturally significant buildings. The excitement was with re-purposed buildings and the value of their original designs being dovetailed with retrofitting not bulldozing. We strolled along with Kayla Galvin Jonas, a well informed Heritage Planner, who could have filled many evenings with her knowledge and enthusiasm for how Hamilton urbanites are moving things along in a creative and more sustainable way in the core. As this energy continues to develop, I can see where we may revisit other streets and hopefully have Kayla return to engage us. Our business meeting took 1/2 an hour with an accompanying delectable supper-ette at the very accommodating Artword ArtBar. We shall return to their location next year on Colbourne Street, in the heart of Hamilton's renewal and art crawl district. See you there for good company, good food, one-stop membership renewal and updates, keeping the Conserver Society alive, and investing in the community of the downtown core.

Christine Brown, Membership Secretary

## Creating Wildlife Habitat

Conserver Society partnered with Earth Day Hamilton-Burlington (Hamilton Eco-Action Network) and its' partners, Royal Botanical Gardens and Bay Area Restoration Council to present the 2013 Earth Day Hamilton Tree Planting Festival. Major funding was received from the TD Friends of the Environment. Rotary Club of Burlington Lakeshore, Trees for Hamilton and local media sponsors also contributed.

The event was the end of April near Earth Day. Despite the brutal weather (bitter high winds and blowing snow) nearly 300 people came out to plant and enjoy the entertainment.

When the event was over, 400 native trees (12 of them large signature trees) had been planted at the Nature Interpretive Centre on Cootes Paradise, and a formerly barren area will be habitat for the wildlife in this very important area.



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**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.**



## Conserver Society of Hamilton and District

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### Conserving 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)

## Don's Longest Commute

Congratulations to Conserver Board member Don McLean for his recent fundraising efforts raising over \$9,000 for Environment Hamilton.

Don rode more than 600 km in 6 days and raised funds to support Environment Hamilton programs including Good Food Box, Greening Sacred Spaces, Fruit Tree Project, Rural Routes – just to name a few!

Visit [www.hamilton350.com](http://www.hamilton350.com) for more information. Way to go Don!



## Call for Nominations

The Conserver Society Board is seeking Board of Directors members.

If you are interested and able to contribute, please contact Pete Wobschall, 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.

**Call for  
Nominations**



## 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:	
Address:			
Email:			
Annual Membership*:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual - \$10 <input type="checkbox"/> Family - \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> Organization - \$40		
I would like to make an additional tax-deductible donation of:		\$	
I am submitting a total of:		\$	
I would prefer my newsletter by:	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Postal <input type="checkbox"/> Both		

*\*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](http://www.canadahelps.org)

Please mail your completed form and cheque\* to:

Membership Director  
Conserver Society of Hamilton & District  
Box 89002, 991 King St. West  
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4R5

*\*Cheques should be made payable to the Conserver Society of Hamilton & District.*

***Thank you for supporting environmental action in your community.***