

Post Annual General Meeting

On May 16, the Ottawa Valley Chapter held its 38th Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the National Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa. During the course of the meeting, members were updated on the various activities of the chapter, the successes and the challenges faced and they proceeded to elect a new Board of Directors. Re-elected board members are Ken Buchan, Doug Anions, Ian Whyte, Jay Morrison, Muriel How and Stephen Knowles. Two new members joined the Board, Marc Gravel and Rick Mutzke, while Julie Caron-Beauregard and Leigh Hann retired.

Following the meeting, Senator Tommy Banks gave a presentation on the need for legislated protection for Gatineau Park and how this could be accomplished by a bill currently before the Senate. Visit our website for a transcript of the Senator's speech/presentation.

Duncan Marshall, an aerial photographer from Chelsea gave a slide presentation consisting of images taken while flying over Gatineau Park at various times of the year. While the images underscored the beauty and diversity of the park, they also showed the extent to which it is fragmented by development (roads and housing) and, thus the need for legal protection to prevent further degradation of the park's ecosystems.

CPAWS Ottawa Valley would like to take this opportunity to thank Senator Banks and Duncan Marshall for their contribution to the event.

CPAWS Member Completes Epic Canoe Journey across Canada

This Spring CPAWS-OV board member Jay Morrison finished his 8,000 km solo canoe trip from the Atlantic to the Arctic Ocean. When he set out in April 2006 in the salt water of Les Escoumins, Quebec, Jay intended

to attempt to paddle the entire country in one season to promote wilderness conservation on behalf of CPAWS. In the early days he realized that the value in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was not in setting a paddling record. Instead, the focus included meeting Canadians of diverse experiences and learning about social, political and economic issues as well as raising awareness of the need to conserve our landscapes and rivers.

Jay followed the traditional fur trade route up the Ottawa River and past the Dumoine River where the Quebec Government has recently announced interim protection of nearly 1,500 km², a CPAWS-OV campaign Jay has been most involved in for the past five years. The route turns west up the Mattawa River, across Lake Nipissing and down the French to Georgian Bay and on to Lake Superior. Winding through a chain of small lakes and rivers into the Hudson Bay watershed, Jay arrived at Lake of the Woods and paddled the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg.

He ended the 2006 journey...

Read the full article about Jay's amazing journey across Canada as well view some of his personal photographs of this memorable trip at

http://www.cpaws-ov-vo.org/big_wild_e.html.

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It Sometimes Pays to Bellyache!

THE GATINEAU PARK COMMITTEE has been vocal after learning that a development of 18 houses would be constructed within the Park's boundaries.

We also joined up with other conservation groups, met with the National Capital Commission (NCC) and with the Minister responsible for the Park (the Honourable Lawrence Cannon) to stop the desecration of public land for this and future developments within the park.

We were delighted when the NCC's new Chief Executive Officer, Marie Lemay, announced on June 3, that they would be acquiring the 35.64 hectares of private property on Carman Road slated for development.

The Gatineau Park Master Plan clearly states the NCC will "Pursue the acquisition of private properties, subject to the availability of resources". However, this is the first time the NCC has indicated they are serious about this policy. We understand the NCC is now developing an updated inventory of the 605 hectares of privately owned land within park boundaries with the objective to acquire land when the NCC's budget envelope allows.

Fortieth Anniversary - Parks for Tomorrow Conference

In early May of 2008, I had the opportunity to attend the fortieth anniversary edition of the Canadian Parks for Tomorrow Conference held at the University of Calgary. Being relatively "new" to the conservation field, this conference proved invaluable, as a considerable amount of time was spent looking back on Canada's network of parks and protected areas and how the existing network came to be.

There was also a realization that we must work even harder at establishing new parks and protected areas, as development pressures increase and threaten areas that were once seen as "protected" due to their isolation. A case in point is the unprecedented development in the Northwest Territories and the need to establish a network of protected areas before large scale industrial development occurs (especially in the Mackenzie Valley). I would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of Calgary for providing me with a free

conference registration and the Eleanor Luxton Historical Foundation for their financial support to cover my travel expenses.

You can learn more about the conference by visiting <http://www.parks4tomorrow.ucalgary.ca>.

– John McDonnell, Executive Director

Quebec Protected Areas Strategy: Finally some movement!

On May 13, CPAWS-OV welcomed an announcement from Quebec's Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, Line Beauchamp to set aside some 18,000 km² of the province in new protected areas. This announcement includes about 1000 km² in the Vallée des Montagnes-Blanches – an area in which the CPAWS Quebec Chapter has been actively involved for several years.

In the Ottawa Valley, 9 areas were announced, the largest being the Dumoine River watershed at 1440 km² in size, protected as an Aquatic Reserve. An Aquatic Reserve functions much the same way as a Biodiversity Reserve, in that this status prohibits industrial scale activities, such as logging, mining and hydro-electric development while allowing recreational activities such as hiking and paddling to continue as well as traditional First Nations activities that are not considered to be of an industrial nature.

CPAWS-OV maintains that even at 1440 km² in size, the Dumoine protected area is still too small to properly protect the region's rich biodiversity and act as a corridor between the mixed and deciduous forests of the Ottawa Valley and the Boreal forest to the north.

This summer, we plan to continue to meet with local stakeholders in the Outaouais and Abitibi-Témiscamingue regions to build support for an enlarged protected area as a lead up to the public hearings where the permanent boundaries will be set.

CPAWS-OV also has serious concerns about the size and design of the Mont O'Brien protected area. At 24.1 km², it is among the smallest biodiversity reserves announced and the shape of protected area, essentially three separate blocks, is not conducive to the maintenance of biological diversity, especially since the areas surrounding the protected area are currently under contract to forestry companies. Much like the Dumoine, we will continue to advocate for a much larger protected area at Mount O'Brien over the summer months.

While CPAWS-OV is very excited with this news, much remains to be done to adequately protect western Quebec's wilderness. For example, the province's goal of protecting 8% its landmass in woefully inadequate, we argue that a 12% target is needed as a bare minimum. In a 2005 report (a French version is available on our web site at http://www.cpaaws-ov.org/pdfs/dumoine_2006_snap-proposition_fr.pdf), CPAWS-OV outlined several areas to be protected and while we are now able to cross a few off the list, several critical areas remain.

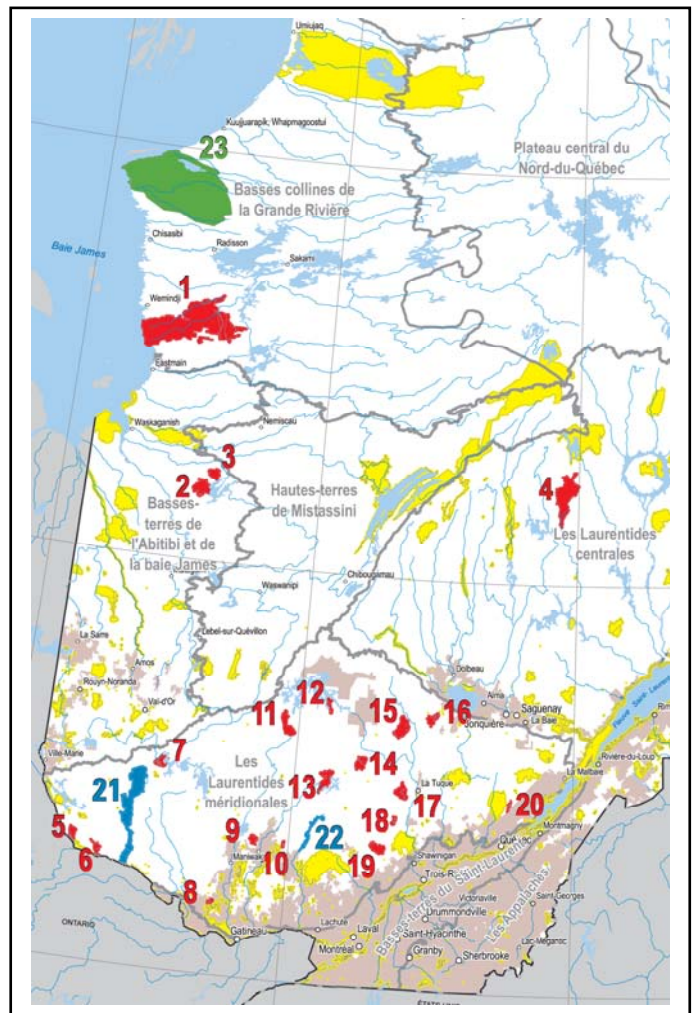
CPAWS-OV maintains that when establishing protected areas, governments must go beyond protecting relatively small representative samples of the province's wilderness, but rather look at large, interconnected protected areas. To that end, we will continue to advocate for large protected areas on the Dumoine's sister rivers, the Kipawa, the Noire and the Coulonge as well as the establishment of protected areas in the Gatineau River area as a north-south corridor.

New protected areas in the Ottawa Valley *.

(All are protected as "Biodiversity Reserves" except for #21, which is an "Aquatic Reserve".)

- ◆ 5 – Basses Collines du Ruisseau-Serpent (112 km²);
- ◆ 6 – Vallée de la Rivière Maganasipi (89.6 km²);
- ◆ 7 – Wanaki (73 km²);
- ◆ 8 – Mont O'Brien (24.1 km²);
- ◆ 9 – Montagne du Diable (80.4 km²);
- ◆ 10 – Iles du Kiamika (15.9 km²);
- ◆ 21 – Dumoine River Watershed (1445 km²).

* Numbers refer to areas on adjoining map.



Ottawa's Greenbelt Threatened by Residential Development Proposal

The Ottawa regions' public green spaces have come under threat in a recently-released City of Ottawa white paper which proposes residential developments for much of the Ottawa Greenbelt. The Greenbelt circles the original city on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River. It provides an irreplaceable connection for the movement of wildlife through an ever-expanding urban landscape. Residential development of selected portions of the Greenbelt would destroy this connectivity, which is important at both the local and at the broader eco-region scale.

CPAWS-OV strongly opposes residential development anywhere in the Greenbelt, and calls for a comprehensive study on how the Greenbelt can best serve to protect the areas wildlife and wildlife connections.

Call for volunteers

“A volunteer is someone who works for a community or for the benefit of environment primarily because they choose to do so. The word comes from Latin, and can be translated as “will” (as in doing something out of ones own free will).” – *Wikipedia*

Everyone has their own reasons for volunteering, and whether you choose to help out or not is, of course up to you. Consider the following - CPAWS-Ottawa Valley has a number of campaigns going, such as the Dumoine River, Algonquin Logging, Eastern Wolf, Quebec Protected Areas Strategy, Algonquin to Adirondacks, Gatineau Park, Parks Management Planning, and the upcoming Rural Lands. Each of these campaigns involves wilderness areas that likely affect every single CPAWS member, yet the number of people actively volunteering to help is only close to a dozen. Clearly, more help is needed - with these numbers; our current group of volunteers is severely limited in what they can accomplish. Most people assume that ‘something is being done’, when there is barely enough time to address their most basic needs. It’s time, then, to do something, rather than complain that something should be done.

The good news is that becoming a volunteer doesn’t need to take up all of your spare time. By definition, you only volunteer as many hours per week/month as you have time or interest for. Consider, too, that you get to meet like-minded people who truly believe in a worthy cause.

What type of effort does that involve? The Eastern Wolf committee, for example, is currently one of the more-active groups, with over 7 members (locally and abroad), and its work is described elsewhere in this newsletter. In brief, the Eastern wolf once occupied a range throughout much of eastern North America, but now has somewhat-stable populations primarily only in protected lands, such as Algonquin Park and a few other provincial parks and game preserves in Ontario and Quebec. Linda is one of the volunteers on the wolf committee, and she joined in order “to ‘help give back’ to a cause that preserves a Canadian wild area that brings me such bliss and pride: Algonquin Park. I want to help conserve these environments with all species intact and establish a healthier human

relationship with them.” Marc, the committee’s chair, wants to “contribute directly to the conservation of wilderness areas, and parks in western Quebec and eastern Ontario”.

On the flip side of focusing on a single cause, you don’t even need to choose, as there is always a need for general help. Hours are flexible, with as little or as much human interaction as desired. Keep in mind that committees typically meet once a month.

The idea of ‘giving back’ is pretty much at the centre of many volunteers’ motives. And helping attain a worthy goal is the reward for this sometimes daunting effort. CPAWS-Ottawa Valley, in particular, has had many successes, namely a permanent and effective wolf protection zone around Algonquin Park and its surrounding townships for Eastern wolves, as well as being on the cusp of winning protection for the Dumoine River watershed in the province of Quebec. The attention currently being focused by Parliament on obtaining full protection of Gatineau Park is also the direct result of CPAWS-OV volunteers’ efforts.

Convinced yet, or sitting on the fence? Check out our partial list of volunteer needs at <http://www.cpaws-ov-vo.org>. If you think you can help out in some other role, let us know too!

Donations are Most Welcome

The Chapter needs funds to operate its conservation campaigns. Please consider making a special donation. Mail donations to CPAWS, 601-250 City Centre Ave., Ottawa, ON, K1R 6K7. With your cheque made out to Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS).

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We thank you for supporting the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and for helping protect wilderness in Canada!