

Society for Ecological Restoration Symposium in association with Toronto and Region Conservation Summary of Events Sept 30 – 1 Oct, 2016

Our meeting of 2016 proved to be one of challenges and great successes! Please see the program notes posted elsewhere on our site for more details! Black Creek Pioneer Village proved to be an ideal location, requiring some creativity on our part to negotiate periodic power outages and missing speakers! With good-spirited speakers behind us that didn't mind the juggle, and lots of good conversations to fill the gaps, the day went about as smoothly as it could, well-oiled with good food and camaraderie!

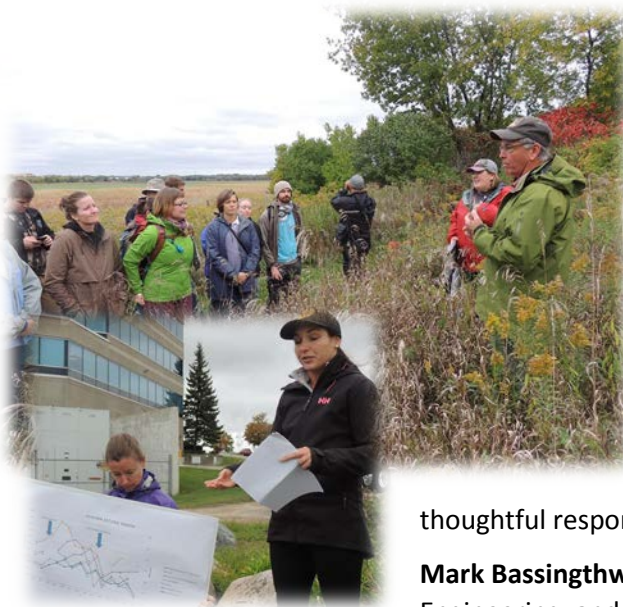
We were excited to have the venerable **David Crombie** open the session with his thoughts on the waterfront as aboriginal homeland. The coming of the Europeans led to the erasure of a belief system rooted in nature as central to community and survival. The eventual realization that we could not prosper unless nature was preserved was followed by conservation then the environmental movement: Rachel

Carson, Jane Jacobs and Gro Brundtland among others that laid the foundation for the Royal Commission on the Toronto Waterfront.

"Everything is connected to everything else", and morally we are responsible. David has just tabled *Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015-1041* aimed at refocusing provincial planning to achieve that better future.



Gord McPherson thanking David Crombie



Wayne Reeves, Chief Curator, City of Toronto Historic Sites followed with *Nature, Culture & the Waterfront: A Dip into Toronto History*. He tracked the changing waterfront through filling of Ashbridge's Bay, the largest wetland on the Lake Ontario coast, through economic drivers for harbour and railroad building, and transformation that created parks, beaches and wetlands.

Ken Dion, Senior Manager of Special Projects, Toronto and Region Conservation spoke on the challenges of *Setting Restoration Goals in the Context of Competing Interests*. It was a detailed review of the need for stakeholder support, the importance of listening and thoughtful response and the need for realistic goals.

Mark Bassingthwaite, Vice President, Water Management, Cole Engineering, and **Milo Strum**, Senior Engineer, Shoreplan Engineering

Oshawa Second Marsh with Dave, Jennifer and Robin

<http://www.ser.org/>
<https://trca.ca/>

discussed engineering challenges to *Reconnecting Floodplains and Restoring Watercourses*, and *Near-coast Naturalization* with restoration outcomes.

Gord McPherson, Senior Manager Environmental Monitoring and Habitat Restoration at TRCA spoke on the need to understand the ABC's of restoration: the Abiotic, Biotic and Cultural framework in *Bringing Back the Wetlands*. He set the stage for the tour of the Tommy Thompson Park wetlands on Saturday.

Sean Thomas, Professor of Forest Ecology and Silviculture, Faculty of Forestry, University of Toronto discussed successes achieved using *Biochar in Forest Restoration* and in a variety of other applications. He charted the chemical pathways that lead to fire-adapted species being advantaged and restoration success in harsh environments.



Restored Wetland with City Skyline

Moranne McDonnell, Associate Director of Engineering Projects, Restoration and Infrastructure Division at TRCA was unable to deliver *Managing Landslides*, however we have posted the presentation on our website – a critical skill in a changing climate that range from doing nothing to intensive engineering in an approach aimed at balancing risk with ecological integrity.

Ralph Tonniger, Senior Manager of Restoration Projects at TRCA, spoke on *adaptive water level management of coastal wetlands*. Key parameters are water depth and temperature, water quality

and turbidity, European Carp management and the need to maintain structural complexity and essential habitat. "If you have woody debris, add more!" was the battle cry that we heard repeated at Tommy Thompson Park the next day.

The day concluded with the effervescent **John Hall**, Coordinator of the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan who examined *Ecological Change in the Greater Hamilton area*, including discussion of the Cootes to Escarpment Ecopark System. His lessons learned include: use good science, act only when the reason is

compelling, cooperation is imperative and good timing yields greater success.



Ralph and Andrea at Tommy Thompson Park

The Coastal Wetland Tour on Saturday, started at Oshawa Second Marsh with **David McLachlin**, Biologist and **Jennifer Lavigne**, Conservation Specialist, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and **Robin Brand**, Wetland Biologist at Central Lake Ontario Conservation. They touched on the long history of the Second Marsh restoration and key factors in its success. **Ralph**

Tonniger, Andrea Chreston with Ryan Stephenson, Darren Bennett, Dean

Sterman, Scott Bolton, and Andrew Marshall from the TRCA restoration team, took us through the many facets of wetland restoration at Tommy Thompson Park. The day concluded with **Paul Biscaia**, Program Coordinator, Wetland Restoration at Credit Valley Conservation at Rattray Marsh – an example of wetland restoration through removal of contaminated sediments and carp control.



Paul Biscaia at Rattray Marsh

Many thanks to all who contributed to a remarkable two days of candid discussion and experience, including the Black Creek Pioneer Beer Tasting experience, the social, and the student posters. We appreciate the support from the **Society for Ecological Restoration - Waterloo University Student Association** for managing the poster session. And we thank **Rachel Voros** who introduced the work of our most recent SER-ON Scholarship, **William Twardek** from Queen's University. William could not attend due to research commitments, but he provided a few slides to illustrate his findings with respect to the impact of angling on fish aggression and nest guarding ferocity. Fascinating!

And finally a ***thanks*** to all our ***sponsors***,
whose help was invaluable in achieving our goals!
Thank you! Merci! Miigwech!

WSP

SLR

CLOCA

CVC

Ducks Unlimited

On behalf of the organizing committee:

- Dale Leadbeater, dleadbeater@slrconsulting.com
 - Jeff Warren, jwarren@wsp.com
 - Emma Followes, EFollowes@trca.on.ca
 - Kate Turnbull, kturnbull@trca.on.ca
- Robert Monaco, robertmonico@trentu.ca
Nigel Finney, nfinney@hrca.on.ca

