



## The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Limerick Forest Advisory Committee, Friends of Limerick Forest, Grenville Land Stewardship Council, and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville - 2010 Conservation Award (Non-member)

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The Conservation Award for a non-member is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District.

The 2010 award recognizes the work of four groups who have worked together successfully to ensure ecologically sustainable stewardship for the Limerick Forest. These four are the Grenville Land Stewardship Council, the Limerick Forest Advisory Committee, the Friends of Limerick Forest and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

The Limerick Forest is a large, 5,782-hectare tract in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (UCLG). It contains provincially significant wetlands and is home to several species of at risk flora and fauna. In 2001, the Grenville Land Stewardship Council (GLSC) (which has recently been incorporated into the new Leeds and Grenville Stewardship Council) set up the Limerick Forest Advisory Committee (LFAC). LFAC and the Stewardship Council worked closely with the UCLG during the transition of responsibility for the forest from the province to the county. At this time, there were no permanent staff to oversee the forest.

The LFAC, an entirely volunteer run organization, proved invaluable. Members dedicated countless hours to preparing a Long Range Strategic Plan and Terms of Reference to guide forest management in an ecologically sustainable direction. They also chaired sub-committees (including an ecology sub-committee), performed on-the-ground work (clearing trails, removing garbage, etc.), supervised volunteer days, monitored invasive species, and undertook wildlife enhancement projects. The feeling was, and is, that Limerick is very much a community forest.

Therefore, recreational opportunities were promoted, and parking areas, picnic sites and trails were developed or repaired, and the forest headquarters were fixed up. Detailed maps of the forest were also prepared. Open houses were well attended. Participants enjoyed guided walks, displays, horse-drawn wagon rides, and barbecues. Brochures about Limerick were

later produced, and a website was set up, all with the aim of promoting the forest as a community resource to be used wisely, cherished, and protected.

The UCLG hired a consultant to prepare a Twenty year Forest Management Plan, which a sub-committee of LFAC reviewed and offered comments on. Such collaboration is typical of the cooperative efforts that characterize the relationship between volunteers and the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

More recently, the LFAC was dissolved, to be replaced by the Friends of Limerick Forest. Many of the same long-serving volunteers are active on this new committee, which carries on the tradition of committed volunteer work and cooperation with the UCLG to enhance and maintain Limerick Forest.

The work performed by volunteers, the County and the Grenville Land Stewardship Council is remarkable. It is truly thanks to all of them that the Limerick Forest today is a fine example of what an ecologically sustainable forest can and should be. For all these reasons and more, these four organizations are worthy recipients of the Conservation Award (Non-member) for 2010. Congratulations!

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