



Hamilton-Halton
Watershed Stewardship Program

A Program of:



THE REWARDS OF LAND STEWARDSHIP

By John and Margaret Lawrence

We purchased a 60 acre parcel of land in North Flamborough in 1986 near the head waters of Fletcher Creek. The land, which is of marginal quality from an agricultural stand point, had originally been farmed but since the 1960s it had not been worked and considerable scrub and wild vines had become established. There is a small pond on the property and approximately 8 acres of mature cedar wetland in the southeast corner with a scattering of white birch and tamarack. This wetland portion of the property forms part of a wildlife and ecological corridor between Fletcher Creek to the north and the Beverly Swamp to the south and eventually drains into Hamilton Harbour and Lake Ontario. The wetland portion of the property is registered for the 'Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program. We have participated in the Stewardship Program since 1995.

With a commitment to preserve and protect the environment for the benefit of future generations, the purpose of our own personal land management project over the years was to enhance the natural landscape by reforestation, provide prime habitat for wildlife, develop a series of nature trails and start a small Christmas tree business. Twenty five acres were planted in 1988 under the Woodland Improvement Act Agreement with 7,000 white pine, 10,000 Norway spruce, 800 white spruce and 5,000 European larch. The drought of that year resulted in almost total loss and complete replanting took place in the spring of 1990. Since 1990 losses have been minimal. Many of these trees are now 10 to 12 metres tall (particularly the larch and pine) and reaching 20 to 25 centimeters in diameter. As the conifers grow and mature, there is evidence of hardwoods establishing themselves demonstrating the natural evolution of forests from softwood to hardwood species.

Landowners Sharing their Stories

Written for our 2010 Landowner Contact Annual Newsletter, this story is one in a series of stories told by local landowners who have a passion for protecting the natural features on the land they steward and for protecting the water that flows through that land. Many of these landowners are recipients of the Watershed Stewardship Award. The award is a sign that landowners proudly display on their property acknowledging their commitment to be good stewards of land and water.



'Before', showing planted seedlings, 1990.



'After', 20 years later.

Starting in 1989, 10 acres have been successively planted with Scots pine and white spruce for Christmas trees. The seedlings are carefully nurtured for the first couple of years and then pruned annually in mid summer. The first batch of trees was ready for marketing in 1995.

While this project has, and still does, entail a significant amount of work, the rewards have been well worth it as demonstrated in the 'Before' and 'After' pictures on the previous page. An extensive trail system provides much personal enjoyment and is used frequently by wildlife as well as people. White-tailed deer winter in the wetland and browse in the open spaces throughout the property. In addition to deer, foxes, coyotes, porcupine, skunks, raccoons, squirrels and rabbits are frequently seen or heard. A wide variety of song birds, hawks and more recently Wild Turkeys make their home on the property.

Photographs by John and Margaret Lawrence.

Interested in learning more about natural features on your property? Call to arrange a free on-site consultation!

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c/o Hamilton Conservation Authority and Conservation Halton

www.hamiltonhaltonstewardship.ca

Hamilton Conservation Authority: 905-525-2181, Extension 181

Conservation Halton: 905-336-1158, Extension 2263

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