



FERGUSON FOREST CENTRE (FFC) REPORT

Ed Patchell (Ed), the Chief Operating Officer at the Ferguson Forest Centre (FFC) was very busy in 2010. Along with the regular nursery activities, he has made several improvements to the trails and the parking lots at the FFC.

Several of the parking lots have been graded and spread with fresh gravel, making parking your car less risky, and Ed has also made repairs to some of the bridges on the trails. Because of on-going garbage issues and damage to the trails, Ed has placed more boulders around the centre to block access to prohibited vehicles.

The Friends only had one clean up day in April 2010, because the use of boulders has greatly decreased garbage dumping in most areas. There are still people who feel free to dump garbage and furniture on FFC property, but Ed is continuing to find way to limit this damage.

Work continues to be done in the Arboretum/Recreation area. Part of the area was seeded in 2010 and large calliper trees and potted stock were planted in the area to help expand the green cover.

The nursery purchased a boom mower in 2010 and this has made a significant difference around the nursery. This mower allows for easier mowing of the ditches and helps prevent growth from crowding over roadways and trails.

One of the main functions of the FFC is to develop and maintain a local seed source for specific species native to Eastern Ontario. Plans are in progress to thin out the White Pine Seed Orchard, which will promote improved seed production. This should be done on a regular basis, and has not been done in the last 5 to 10 years. Walkers in the woods will notice several holes in the White Pine Orchard once this work is completed. In order to promote healthy growth and good crown development, it is necessary to remove weak and poorly developed trees, which in turn will allow improved access to light and air for the remaining trees.

The large earth pile that was created when the municipal centre was built has been mostly relocated. The earth was used to cap off the landfill site, and whatever remains will be used for landscaping at the Nursery. The brush piles have also been removed and the area has been partially graded. More will be done in these areas, once spring arrives.

There are plans to install split rail fencing around the Arboretum/Recreational area, which will further enhance that area.

While trail damage and unlawful garbage disposal has greatly decreased, more still needs to be done. Ed plans to assess the nursery roads and trails and to install more boulders to further reduce access. The hazardous trees that were identified during a recent review of the trails will also be removed.

Upcoming Events

North Grenville Earth Day Fair
April 17, 2011 – 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The Friends participate in this fair to raise awareness amongst the community about the Friends and its goals and objectives.

Spring Trail Clean-Up Day - April 30, 2011 – 10:30 am to 1:30 pm.

Hopefully the snow will have melted by then! Clean up will start at 10:30 am and volunteers will meet at the FFC office to receive their work assignments. Workers should come dressed for the weather (warm clothing, boots and work gloves) and students will be given credits for community service hours. Free hot dogs and hot drinks will be served after clean up. Bring shears, Robertson screwdrivers, and clippers if you have them. For more information visit our web site at: www.friendsofthefergusonforest.ca

Spring "Walk in the Woods"
May 15, 2011, 1:30 pm to 3:30pm.

Tentatively, this fun and educational walk will focus on spring wildlife activities. The event is open to all. Participation is free for members and their families, and there will be a nominal fee charged to non-members who attend, to cover the cost of food.

Membership Drive – June 18th, 2011 - 8:30 am to 12:30 pm.

The FFC will be holding a spring membership drive on June 18th at Jonsson's Independent Grocers. Volunteers will be needed to staff the booth in two-hour shifts between 8:30 am and 12:30 pm. If you can help, please contact Colleen at 613-258-4400.

There are also some plans for improved signage in the parking lots and on the trails. The FFC will hopefully be working with the Ministry of Natural Resources in 2011 to develop a Management Plan for the Crown Land portion of the FFC. Once this is complete, work can begin on actual trail marking and identification,

If you identify a hazard on the trails or wish to make any suggestions for improvements, please contact Ed Patchell at 613-258-0110

FFFC VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the backbone of any organization, and the Friends of the Ferguson Forest (FFFC) is no different. Every year the FFFC stages several activities. These include clean-up days, walks in the woods and working at local fairs. There are two clean-up days, one in the spring and one in the fall, to remove the garbage dumped by irresponsible people and to cut back brush that has overgrown the trails. The FFFC also hosts two walks in the woods with a naturalist expert in some aspect of the forest. These walks are free to members and a nominal fee is charged to any of the public who wants to participate.

All of our activities are organized by volunteers. The FFFC puts out two newsletters each year, and these articles are written by volunteers; and the newsletter is prepared by a volunteer. Volunteers take the FFFC display to events in North Grenville to promote the Ferguson Nursery Forest as a local treasure worthy of protection and care. Without volunteers, the FFFC would not be able to fulfill its purpose to preserve the natural integrity of the forest and to raise awareness of its value as an educational and recreational resource.

The number of active FFFC volunteers, that is people who organize events and do the prep work on their own time and for no other reward than the satisfaction of doing a useful job, is relatively small. The same eight or ten people show up regularly, and a few more show up for clean up days. We are immensely grateful for the hours these people put in. However, we need some new blood to inject new ideas and energy into our activities.

There are some projects Friends' volunteers cannot take on. The forest is provincial crown land, for which the Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible. And while Ed Patchell, the Chief Operating Officer of the Ferguson Forest Centre is responsible for all of the leased land, the liability issues associated with amateur volunteers cutting trees or building bridges gives both Ed Patchell and the Ministry staff a bad case of the queasies. That being said, there must be ideas out there for recreation activities, education activities or promotion activities that would enhance our purpose and still be within acceptable guidelines. Put your thinking hats on and share your ideas.

Membership in the FFFC IS voluntary, so every member is already a volunteer. We need more members to become active volunteers. So please, get involved, with the activities that are already established and bring on some new ideas.

And remember, if there is a student in your family needing to earn some volunteer hours, helping out at FFFC activities qualifies.

Forest Fair – September 24th or October 1st, 2011 - 9:00 am to 3:00 pm.

The final date is still to be determined, but come out and enjoy the fun. Forest Fair hosts the largest lumber and wood auction in Eastern Ontario. There will be dog and horse demonstrations and of course the Friends will be selling their now famous coffee and home baked cookies. We will also have an information booth and be selling memberships and gifts. We will also have information about Poison Parsnip.

Fall Walk in the Woods September 25th, 2011 – 1:30 pm to 3:30pm.

This is a special fun and educational event that is open to all. Participation is free for members and their families, and there will be a nominal fee charged to non-members who attend, to cover the cost of food.

Fall Trail Clean-Up Day November 5th, 2010 between 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Workers should come dressed for the weather and students will be given credits for community service hours. Free food and hot drinks will be served after clean up. For more information visit our web site in September at:

www.friendsofthefergusonforest.ca

Annual General Meeting – November 17th, 2011 – 7:30 pm.

Ferguson Forest Centre board room.

The Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre would like to thank our corporate members for their support.

**T.D Graham & Associates
Kemptonville, Ontario**

**Ecogen Energy, Inc
Kemptonville, Ontario**