

It has been a busy year for the Friends of the Ferguson Forest Centre (FFFC) or "Friends" for short. The first FFFC Board of Directors had to deal with the mechanics of getting the organization up and running.

The Board elected in October 2006 decided that the Friends needed to get out more. The Ferguson Forest Centre (FFC) is a unique community asset and the purpose of the Friends is to promote the FFC and to let residents of North Grenville know what they can do to keep their municipality "green and growing". To do this, the Friends have put together a portable display that can be used at various events, the first of which was the Winter Woodlot Conference held on February 20, 2007. This conference attracts people involved with trees, including growing, harvesting and conservation. The Friends also had a booth at the Dandelion Festival, held in June, and at the Forest Fair, which is always held on the last Saturday of September.

The display features information about the Friends, upcoming events, and individual and corporate membership. Art Cards, Friends T-shirts and buttons are also for sale as part of the display. The display has attracted considerable interest and gives members the opportunity to answer questions about the Ferguson Forest Centre and the purpose of the Friends.

On April 28th 2007, about 45 Friends spent the morning working on the trails in the Nursery Forest picking up the winter's accumulation of bottles, garbage and smaller debris. The volunteers were rewarded with profound thanks, the camaraderie of like-minded neighbors, and free hot dogs and drinks. Student participants received a letter documenting their volunteer hours. Among those who turned out were Councilor Tim Sutton, Karen Dunlop, Director of Public Works, and Joanne Moss, also from Public Works. Thanks to their efforts, the trash and recyclables were conveyed to the dump, which, of course, is where they should have gone in the first place.

The Friends also put together a float for the Canada Day Parade. The theme was "Bears in Treeland". The float was constructed using a wagon and a wide selection of the larger planting stock from the Nursery. It also used most of Colleen Morris-Wilson's vast collection of white teddy bears. Many thanks to all of the Friends and the FFC who helped to make the float a success.

The Friends held a successful membership drive at Jonsson's Independent Grocers on May 5th and added 25 new members. Many thanks to Jonsson's for supporting our cause. The "Friends" have now established a corporate membership so that local business can also show their support. Corporate membership includes:

- Acknowledgement of the corporate member's support on our web site;
- Posting of the corporate member's logo/electronic business card on our web site;
- Active links between our web site and their web site;
- Acknowledgement of the corporate member's support in our semi-annual newsletter.

Our first corporate sponsor was Tom Graham and Associates. Tom has also designed a new logo for the Friends and we sincerely thanks Tom and his organization for this generous support.

Our next outing was at the Forest Fair of Eastern Ontario held on September 29 at the Ferguson Forest Centre. The Forest Fair and Log and Lumber Auction has become a well known annual event in Eastern Ontario with family fun attractions such as Jim Davis' B&H Train, the Reptile Rainforest and displays geared to understanding the importance of trees to the environment. For dog lovers, Shake-a-paw held dog obedience seminars and "Gloria", from the movie "Snowdogs" was back. FFFC was a sponsor of the Forest Fair and had a booth in the exhibit area where promotional items and memberships were for sale. The Friends also had information on dangerous plants and our organization.

The Friends has to raise money to finance its activities in support of the nursery. Memberships bring in some funds, as do sales of coffee and baked goods at the Forest Fair. This year, the Friends will be selling T-shirts and buttons with the new FFFC logo, as well as art cards showing scenes from the nursery. The art cards come in three styles, plain note cards, Christmas cards and large size note cards.

Eastern Ontario news media have been very helpful in carrying information about the FFFC and its activities. Special thanks to the EMC, the North Grenville Community Newsletter and the Kemptville Advance and Weekender. This article is the first in a series that will become a regular newsletter feature. Keep watching for more news about the Ferguson Forest Centre and activities of the "Friends".

Tree Pruning

By Mark Mason

Pruning helps maintain the health and shape of a plant by directing and controlling its growth. It is essential to successful tree growing, and it is important to understand how and when to prune.

Pruning should be performed sometime after the first year of planting a tree or shrub, and it should be done with great care. The rules for trimming conifers and deciduous trees are different. The first pruning is mainly to develop the plant's structure, and consists of removing branches with narrow crotches, while ensuring an even distribution of the main branches required for future top growth. Trees and shrubs should be inspected annually, and any dead, damaged, diseased, or awkwardly growing branches should be removed. As a general rule, you should not remove more than 20% of the live branches at any one time.

Many homeowners are unsure about what time of year to prune, and this is understandable as the preferred time is very much dependant upon the variety of plant to be pruned. Deciduous trees, such as Maples, which have a heavy flow of sap, should not be pruned in the spring, as excessive bleeding of sap will occur. Thus it is best to prune these species after they started their summer growth. For flowering trees and shrubs you need to know when the plant flowers and whether it flowers on first year or second year growth. Trees and shrubs that flower before July, should be pruned after they are finished flowering. However, those that flower in July or later should be pruned early in the year; these plants form buds as the season progresses, and pruning in early spring before the new growth begins will encourage better growth and flowering.

It is important to know that coniferous trees do not take well to pruning and when a branch is cut, the forward growth of that branch is terminated. Having said this, pruning can be used very effectively to shape and manage conifers to promote growth and good health. You can obtain information about tree pruning, including illustrations, in various gardening books and on the Internet.

The Friends thank Mark for taking time to write this article for us. If you would like to talk to Mark about your trees, he can be reached at Treeman Tree Service (613) 448-4040.

Gifts Available

The Friends now have T-shirts and buttons available, with our logo, for purchase. We also have limited edition art cards showing pictures of the Ferguson Forest Centre and depicting scenes from logging in the early 1900's. For more information contact Colleen Morris-Wilson at 613-258-4400.

Art and Photo Challenge

The Friends have launched their second Art and Photo Challenge. The challenge is open to everyone and will close on March 31, 2008. There are two categories: **A Walk in the Forest** and **A study in Black and White**.

All photos must have been taken in the Ferguson Forest Centre (FFC) and artists' submissions must relate exclusively to the FFC.

Selected prize winning entries will be reproduced and sold to raise funds for the FFFC. For more information visit our web site at: www.friendsofthefergusonforest.ca

Upcoming events

Trail Clean-Up Day

October 13, 2007 9:00 am to 12:30 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 at: www.friendsofthefergusonforest.ca

Annual General Meeting

October 25, 2007 at the Ferguson Forest Centre board room, starting at 7:30 pm.

Walk in the Woods

November 3, 2007 starting at 10:00 am. This is a special fun and educational event open to all members of the Friends and their families and friends. The walk will last about 90 minutes and food and hot drinks will be served afterwards.

Membership

Individual - \$10.00

Family - \$ 15.00

Corporate - \$50.00

Visit our web site at:

www.friendsofthefergusonforest.ca

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

T.D Graham & Associates
Kemptville, Ontario

Podium Promotions
Winchester, Ontario

Long Island Marine, Inc
Kars, Ontario