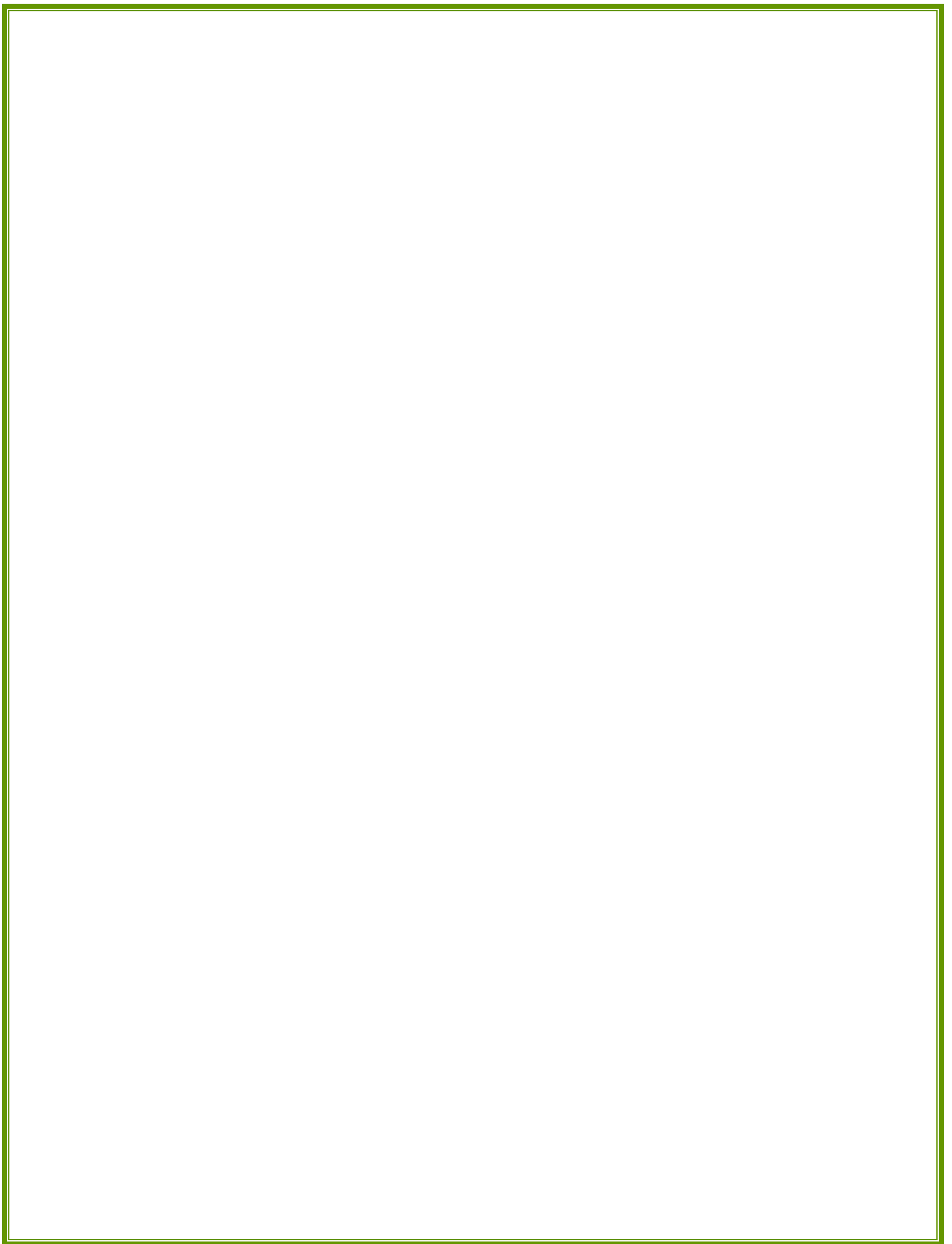




**ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD FROM
APRIL 1, 2012 TO MARCH 31, 2013**





Huron Stewardship Council Strategic Priorities

Vision

A healthy natural landscape that is:

- valued by the Huron County community;
- managed sustainably by landowners and other partners, and;
- utilized in a balanced way for multiple benefits to the Huron community (e.g. economic, human health, recreation, etc.).

Mission

To advocate and implement responsible ecosystem-based management of our natural resources, through cooperative efforts of the Huron County community.

Principles

We believe...

- in fostering a stewardship ethic among members of the Huron community (i.e. we have a responsibility to future generations to provide them with a healthy natural ecosystem);
- natural ecosystem features provide multiple benefits to the Huron community and we should be committed to their protection, enhancement and restoration;
- we can accomplish more by developing partnerships (i.e. by working together with others) and by fostering cooperation and networking between interested organizations and individuals;
- we should endeavour to build local abilities to work towards ecological sustainability (e.g. by providing educational opportunities and information, as well as promoting awareness, knowledge and appreciation for natural resource features).

Resource Priorities

Natural Areas (particularly Woodlands)

- Improve quality of existing natural areas
- Where possible, increase amount of natural area or linkages between them

Wildlife (and Fish)

- Create and enhance habitat
- Maintain and restore species diversity

Water

- Maintain or improve water quality and quantity



Huron Stewardship Council – Members 2012 - 2013

The Huron Stewardship Council is composed of people from within the Huron County Community who have an interest in stewardship of land, water and other natural resources. They represent a diversity of landowners and land interests in Huron County. Members participate on the Huron Stewardship Council as volunteers out of their personal concern about land and resource stewardship issues and their interest in working cooperatively with other organizations and individuals in the county towards common stewardship goals.

The Huron Stewardship Council is incorporated as a Not For Profit Corporation.

The following people served on the Huron Stewardship Council over the past year:

Ian Koetsier (Chair)

Donna Taylor (Vice Chair)

Jim Ginn

John Haak

Marg Kroes

Myles Murdock

David Perrie

Bob Smyth

Jennette Walker

Klaus Seeger

Huron Stewardship Council – Activities 2012 - 2013

Youth Initiatives

The Huron Stewardship Council supports several youth related initiatives, including:

Huron Perth Regional Envirothon Competition



Envirothon is a competition for high school students to test their knowledge of natural resources and presentation skills. Alongside the Perth Stewardship Network, HSC co-chaired the regional committee, composed of local partners (CA staff, MNR staff, County of Huron staff, Friends of Hullett Wildlife Area staff and volunteers) in delivery of a preparation workshop and the regional competition. Our regional competition took place at the Pinery Provincial Park in April of 2012. The winning team from Central Huron Secondary School then attended the Provincial competition and placed seventeenth overall.

The Huron Perth Agriculture and Water Festival

This event is a fun and educational event that provides grade four students hands on learning opportunities about agriculture and water; their importance in our local environment and role in our everyday lives. Participating students spend a half day in each of the water and agriculturally focussed activities. We are hopeful students who participate will become better stewards of our water resources and more aware of the agricultural community that plays such a prominent role in Huron and Perth Counties. 620 students from 18 schools attended this event in the spring of 2012. The Huron Stewardship Council plays an active role in planning and delivering this event.



Photos: (top left) Student competitors test water quality at the Envirothon Competition, (bottom right). HSC Council member Donna Taylor leads an activity at the Huron Perth Agriculture and Water Festival

Huron Stewardship Council – Activities 2012 - 2013, continued

Species at Risk

The Huron Stewardship Council has had the opportunity to work with landowners and a number of other partners on projects that support recovery and protection of species at risk. HSC has been fortunate to receive funding support through Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program and Ontario's Species at Risk Stewardship Fund. Projects have included a variety of activities, ranging from population inventories to habitat creation and restoration, as well as outreach and education to increase awareness of local Species at Risk. Work in 2012 included assessment of Queen Snake populations in the Maitland River.



Photo: HSC staff Susan vander Vaart holds Queen Snake on the Maitland River.

Huron Stewardship Council – Activities 2011 - 2012, continued

Natural Area Restoration: Trees Beyond Goderich

The Huron Stewardship Council has been able to facilitate access to a variety of funding sources and assistance from other partners to help landowners implement projects that restore or enhance natural areas. In 2011, an F3 tornado devastated 225 acres of woodlot in a 20 km rural corridor from Goderich to Hwy 4, north of Clinton. Trees Beyond Goderich is a project that aims to preserve damaged woodlands by complementing the regeneration that would naturally occur with planted stock. In its pilot year, 2700 trees were planted in 28 acres of tornado-damaged woodlots, and approximately 250 enthusiastic volunteers from the community assisted us with planting trees, hammering tree stakes, spreading mulch, watering newly planted trees, and pulling the invasive Garlic Mustard. We were fortunate to work with neighbours and friends of those affected by the tornado, local school groups, nature enthusiasts, and even a volunteer group from abroad (reTREEt America).



Photos: Volunteers help plant seedlings at Dan Burns property on the floodplain of the Maitland River, at Benmiller Bridge.

Huron Stewardship Council – Activities 2012 - 2013, continued

Other Community Initiatives

The Huron Stewardship Council participates in a number of other initiatives within the Huron Community. A few of them are:

Lower Maitland Stewardship Group

The Huron Stewardship Council plays an active role in this partnership initiative of landowners, organizations and agencies interested in maintaining and enhancing the natural ecosystem of the Lower Maitland River Valley. Activities of the group are carried out in the interest of encouraging responsible stewardship of resources in this special area by both owners and users; in part by helping them learn about resources in the area and developing a sense of community along the river. This year LMSG hosted an event to clean up the banks of the Maitland, and also produced a newsletter for distribution to landowners along the river.



Photo: Tom Lobb, Beth Ross, Rachel White and Courtney DesLauriers show off the ‘treasures’ they found on the shores of the Maitland River, including a fishing rod and 30 golf balls!



Huron Stewardship Council – Activities 2012 - 2013, continued

Other Community Initiatives, continued

Maitland Watershed Partnerships

The Huron Stewardship Council is one of a number of groups represented on the steering committee for this project, which is geared towards developing a sustainable, community-based stewardship process. The MWP Terrestrial Team and the MWP Water Action Team continue to meet, plan and implement initiatives as part of the Maitland Watershed Partnerships project.

Water Protection Steering Committee

The Water Protection Steering Committee is a group of partner organizations, within Huron County, working together to protect the quality of our water - both groundwater and surface water. HSC is represented on this multi-stakeholder group, which has undertaken and supports many projects ranging from research studies, planning initiatives, monitoring, outreach and education.

Huron Community Stewardship Web Portal

A web site is maintained by the Huron Stewardship Council to assist local community based stewardship related groups and initiatives to achieve an internet presence and to profile the organizations and their activities. The site is located at www.huronstewardship.on.ca.

Huron County Natural Heritage Plan

The Huron Stewardship Council is participating along with other partners on this very worthwhile project that will map natural heritage features and assign parameters for measuring their significance. It is hoped this will provide a science based means of recognizing significant natural features and protecting them in future.

Thanks to Our Partners

The Huron Stewardship Council acknowledges the support of our many partners and thanks them for their time, input and financial contributions. Most of all, we appreciate the opportunity to work with them cooperatively towards common stewardship goals.