

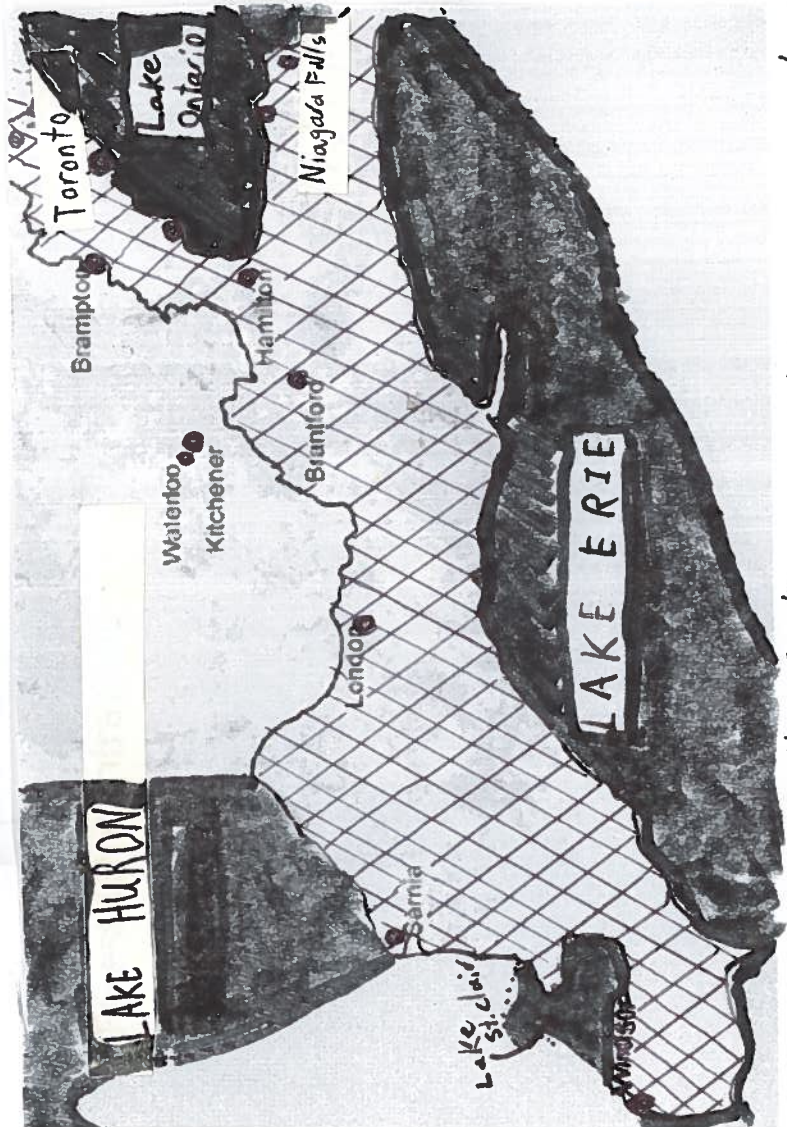


Knowing the
Land is
Resistance



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Cross-hatched area is the Carolinian Zone. Dark areas are water.

-A tree cut at Cathedral Grove, in British Columbia. This site is home to a stand of Douglas Fir more than 800 years old, and was to be demolished to make way for a parking lot. Land defense was ultimately successful and the site is now safe.

-Some eastern white cedar that were cut at the Hanlon Creek site before it was occupied by activists. These trees were around 300 years old. The Hanlon Creek site is home to some of southern Ontario's last old growth forest.

-A clearcut at Grassy Narrows. Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation struggle to defend their land from destruction, because their survival literally depends on it. Unfortunately, in spite of vigorous resistance, much of the contested land has been destroyed. But the struggle is ongoing! www.freegrassy.org

-A red squirrel at Cathedral Grove. Squirrel!



Guide to Cover Pics

...taste of what those images represent. From left-to-right

-Harriet Nehanee, a Squamish elder, being arrested for her participation in land defense at Eagleridge Bluffs, resisting the Sea-to-Sky highway project that was being built for the Vancouver Olympics. She spent two weeks in jail where she contracted pneumonia and died shortly after her release.

-The lookout tower at the Hanlon Creek land defense site in Guelph. Flying are the Mohawk Warriors Society flag, the Two-Row Wampum, and a black-and-camouflage flag.

-One of the cuts torn through the Redhill Valley in Hamilton. Activists from Six Nations worked alongside locals to prevent the destruction of this important river and forest, but after years of struggle, many people were arrested and the project went ahead.

-The pines at Kanesatake, the site of the so-called Oka crisis. A cop was killed here during an attempted raid against Mohawk land defenders who preventing the pines from being cut. This sparked an intense escalation in conflict at both Kanesatake and nearby Kahnawake that resulted in a months-long standoff with the military.

-The first morning of the Hanlon Creek occupation. About sixty people marched onto the site at dawn, capturing the site of the proposed business park as well as some construction equipment. The site would be held for more than three weeks and development stopped for the next year.

H

ello! Welcome to the first compilation of Knowing the Land is Resistance. This is a project based in the remaining Carolinian forest nestled between the limestone cliffs of the Niagara escarpment and the water of Lake Ontario. We spend a lot of time playing in the forests, marshes, rivers, meadows, scrublands, lakes, and cliffs of this land. While we're there, we try and keep our minds open and inquisitive, to observe everything we can, and to ask ourselves questions that lead to questions that lead to more adventures. This is the knowing the land side of our work.

Some of the questions that lead to these articles are: Why is there so little forest left? Who benefits from this? What do healthy natural communities look like in this area? What roles do the various plants and animals play in these communities? How do disturbed wild spaces heal themselves? How can we, humans raised in this constrictive colonial, capitalist system, participate in that healing?

Through our exploration, we've developed strong relationships with the wild spaces here, and we've come to believe that active resistance is necessary to prevent them from being destroyed. By understanding the forces that threaten wild spaces, we can more effectively challenge and dismantle them. Active participation in social struggles is the other side of this project.

The six essays in this zine first appeared in Mayday Magazine in Hamilton, Ontario between February and September in 2010. Each month, we explore a different wild space in the area, examine some of its interesting features, and discuss how deepening our knowledge of this land can advise our work as activists. Two of the articles have been expanded since their original publication -- Winter Wondering, and Don River 2.

We also keep a blog at knowingtheland.wordpress.com. Check it out for new writings, commentary, local resistance news, and for notice of upcoming events.

If you want to bring a Knowing the Land is Resistance workshop to your community, write to us at knowingtheland@gmail.com. We specialize in the Carolinian zone (the eastern deciduous forest, if you're south of the border) but we can do further north too...

with love and rage,

the KLR collective



Winter Wondering

The idea behind the Knowing the Land is Resistance Collective took shape after a Hamilton Freeskool class called Winter Wondering. A group of about 30 local folks gathered for a walk through Cootes Paradise forest.

During the walk, many interesting questions were brought up about the land, its history and what threatens it. We decided it would be worthwhile to write up an article describing the class and some of the discussions that came out of it. It was through the process of writing this initial article that the project of Knowing the Land is Resistance was born.

Winter is a great time to appreciate bark. Every tree species has a different strategy for how to lay and shed bark, creating unique patterns. Here are a few of the distinct bark-types we wondered about on our wander through Cootes Paradise:

On January 17th a group of about thirty gathered to go explore the forest in Cootes Paradise, for the Winter Wanderings freeskool class. The forest is full of mysteries. But most of us were not brought up to appreciate or even notice these mysteries, and so going for a walk in the woods is like trying to read a book without knowing the language. We can look and appreciate the beauty of the shapes, but we can't really understand what we're seeing.

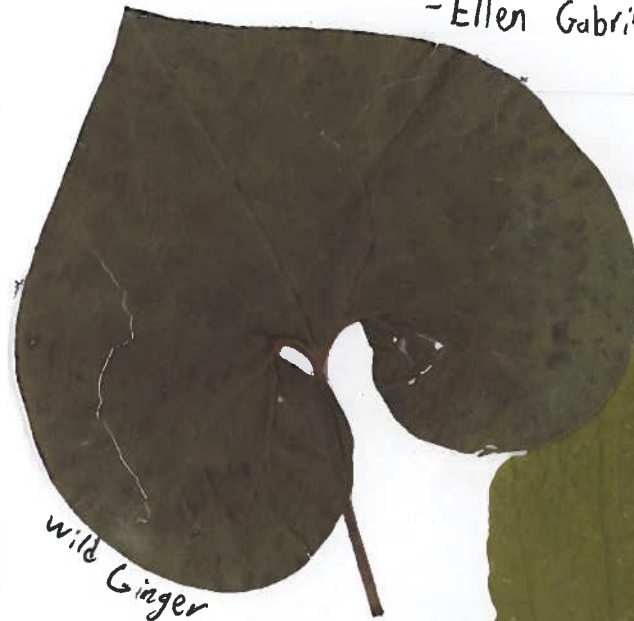
The goal of the freeskool class was to find 'wonders', as in 'I wonder what tree this is?', 'I wonder what that fungus is doing on that tree trunk?' and 'I wonder who left these tracks?' It can be fun to try and answer those questions, but the questions are more important than the answers when you're trying to learn to understand the forest. It's about what you can notice – your powers of observation.

For most of us, it won't be easy to begin to observe the forest. For one, as city dwellers, we can go for days without seeing something that wasn't made by a human, so we aren't in the habit of understanding non-humans. For another, our senses are deadened by the urban environment, and for many of us, the urban



"We are not a minority to be seen as a problem. We are a sovereign nation, and our identity is linked to the land. That is why the government has tried to hard to break us, so that they can fully exploit our land.

-Ellen Gabriel, Mohawk Nation





'To know, to truly know the forest is to love it, and whoever loves it will fight for its welfare. Therefore we invite all to spend great amounts of time in the woods, doing nothing in particular but wandering about or just sitting still.'

— Steve Comer, Mahican Nation

environment is so horrible and abrasive that we withdraw ourselves from what we see and hear. A third reason is that we have been taught to seek answers to questions that are posed to us by some authority, not to seek out questions ourselves.

And so, to begin the class, we did some simple exercises to open up our senses – to appreciate all we can hear, all we can feel, all we can smell, all we can taste – then opening our eyes, trying to soften our vision, appreciate how much we can see. And of course, taking a minute to cultivate some mental stillness.

In the winter, the cold strips away a lot of the most visible life in the forest, and in doing so, it makes other aspects of the forest more prominent. For instance, the bark of trees and animal tracks! Some trees are easy to identify, even without their leaves. For instance, the smooth grey beauty of a Beech tree, or the patchwork bark of a Hickory. But can we find the diamond pattern in the bark of the Ash that distinguishes it from the Sugar Maple? Or can we see that the twigs of the Maples are always paired?

Some trees, like the hemlocks, keep their green through the winter, and so the ground is free of snow beneath them. Here, we can dig into the leaf litter and soil to feel how deeply the cold penetrates into the earth. Or we can peel back the bark of fallen trees to see the dead fungus that helped the tree access nutrients while it was alive, and the living fungus that will digest the tree now that it's dead.

Many people who went down in the forest with us knew some things about the plants, animals, and natural communities we were encountering, and between us, we could piece together some pretty interesting stories about what we were

Sycamore trees lose their bark in thin plates. One freeskoiler described the appearance of this rather awkward and conspicuous shedding as "camouflage-style" bark. Beneath the dark reddish scales a smooth, light grey bark is revealed. Another clue that you have found a sycamore are remaining winter buds. These are large, slightly stinky, spiked spheres. Look up and enjoy the decorated canopy against the bright winter sky.

Sassafrass. You may know this famous native tree as "the mitten tree" for the distinct mitten-shaped leaf – one of three leaf types which can all be found on the same tree. But enough about leaves! It's the winter, and there is plenty to appreciate about Sassafrass bark. These trees begin their life with a shrub-like strategy, growing up in thin, green-gold stalks. Their stalks are yummy deer snacks all winter long. The mature bark is a reddish dark brown. Sassafrass can propagate from existing roots, meaning that a stand of sassafrass trees in close proximity may be one big organism.



Ash trees have a distinct diamond shaped bark pattern. A young Ash will have relatively smooth bark, as the diamond fissures deepen with age. If you are in a highland portion of the forest, you have likely found a White Ash. Red Ash are most often found in a low lying swampy habitat. Learning to recognize communities in different parts of the forest can be a rewarding way to anticipate which friends you will find where.

Beech trees, alongside maples, make up the majority of our mixed deciduous forests. Beech have a smooth light grey bark which wrinkles just slightly near points of branching. Look up and appreciate the beech's twisted, gnarled structure.

↳ a beech leaf.
i wonder why young beeches often hold onto their leaves late into winter

encountering. By asking questions, we could put our heads together and come up with answers, which lead to more questions. But even with thirty of us, our knowledge felt small compared to the beautiful, subtle, complexity of the Cootes Paradise area. How is it that we can live on this land and yet know so little about it?

It is not by chance that we are so alienated from nature. Colonization is a process of taking people who are independant and part of strong communities and making them totally dependant on the colonizer for all their physical and emotional needs. We are colonized people, and we are also colonizers in turn. The destruction of the wild has long been a deliberate tactic used to subjugate people who would otherwise be free. It is a tactic that continues to this day. The profession of the powerful is maintaining power, and keeping us alienated from natural communities is one way they do that.

Knowing the land is resistance. Taking the time to connect with the wild is an important step in decolonizing our minds and healing from the wounds of colonization that cause us to do the same to others. To that end, let's try and learn about the land in the place where we live – to be firmly rooted in this place, so that when we take a stand, we'll know what we're standing for.



Directions: Take King st W into Westdale. Look for Marion dr, the first street east of the westdale theatre. Take Marion North to where it ends at Dromore cresc, and just off the road there will be a wide trail descending into the woods. From there, explore!

The Last Stand, by Peter Kelly and Douglas Larson – The last remaining old growth forest in southern ontario can be found along the niagara escarpment, untouched thanks to vertical precarity of the limestone cliffs. This book is a beautiful tribute to the few twisted, ancient white cedars that have stood over this land for more than a thousand years. Also a great guide to the escarpment cliff-face ecosystem.

Into the Forest, by Jean Hegland – In this novel, two sisters live in their family cabin out in the woods as industrial civilization collapses beyond the trees. It happens slowly, and slowly they become more isolated and self-reliant, learning to depend on the land and on eachother. How good this book is, we can hardly even say.

Days of War, Nights of Love, by crimethinc – Classic Crimethinc from back in the day. This is a book about living uncompromisingly, daringly, with hearts full of love and rage and curiosity. It is an impassioned callout to no longer wait for the better world, but to go out and create it with our bodies, hearts and minds. Contains some dangerously practical advice for doing so. If you have never read this book, go to crimethinc.com and do so.

500 Years of Indigenous Resistance Comic Book, by Gord Hill – There are a lot of myths about the colonization of north america, and one of the big ones is that the native peoples just sort of got hopelessly overwhelmed or just dissapeared somehow. Well, this book explodes that idea. From the very first incursion by aggressive european settlers, Indigenous Peoples across this landmass have been actively fighting back to defend their communities and land. Now in a comic book!

The Fifth Sacred Thing, by Starhawk – A glowing vision of spiritual, eco-utopia exists alongside a starkly dystopic remnant of this current culture. What happens when they collide? And what would the governance of a non-hierarchical, land-based culture look like anyway?

Get Into the Forest Again – This is a zine by a friend of ours about his experiences with keeping a sit-spot for a year. He is a very wise and knowledgeable person who put a lot of his learning at our disposal. This short zine is a fine introduction to a simple yet profound technique for deepening yer connection to the land. Say hi to him at squirrelhandys@yahoo.ca



KLR Book Club !!!

These are some books that are fun to read and talk about! We'll be making posts about some of them on our website, so if you read them too, come there and talk with us about the ideas and questions that they raise.

Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature, by Jon Young, Ellen Haas, and Evan McGown – From the crew at the Wilderness Awareness School, this book is designed to help mentors, so it's a guide for those who guide others towards a deeper connection to nature. It's full of games, activities, resources, and stories that will expand your awareness and multiply your joy. We steal a lot of stuff from it.

Arboretum America, by Diana Beresford-Kroeger – Basically, nobody loves trees more than Diana. This is a source of much rare and wonderful knowledge about the major tree families of this continent, with everything from medicine, to history, to cultivation advice. Her idea of the bioplan is a form of permaculture based on natural forest communities, but is guided and cultivated by humans for their nourishment and health. Towards a tree-centric worldview!

Global Forest, by Diana Beresford-Kroeger – This is a series of stories inspired by the old Celtic storytelling traditions, where each one explores one aspect of the deeply interconnected and various forest communities worldwide, which Diana calls the Global Forest. Excellent for bedtime stories.

Trees of the Carolinian Forest, by Gerry Waldron – This book is a stunningly complete and definitive guide to the native tree species of the carolinian forest. Gerry's really into the idea of restoration, and so he provides information about how each tree species can be useful for that goal. The book also has some interesting essays about restoration and the various niches and communities that exist in the carolinian. Although he doesn't give cedar trees the respect they deserve, this is a kickass book.

People of the Pines, by Geoffrey York and Loreen Pinder – Subtitled "The Warriors and Legacy of Oka", this book offers a thorough description of the resistance to the destruction of the sacred pine forest by the Mohawk people of Kanesatake and their warrior allies from throughout the Mohawk nation.

Wild and Free: Food in Toronto – This is a lil zine published (as far as I can tell) anonymously by some wonderful person in Toronto. It is an extremely beautiful and detailed guide to some of the most common, delicious, and medicinally useful weeds that push up from the Toronto streets. There's no contact info in it, but maybe look for it on zinelibrary.info, or drop us a line and we can try and hook you up with a copy.

ideas



of
Owls & Resistance



If you do down in the woods today..." – We found these words spraypainted inside a culvert at the bottom of a marsh, where the Coldwater Creek is collected underground to cross main street west towards Cootes Paradise. We were out in the evening to explore the marsh and the hills around it, to see what we could learn. And of course, the next line of that childhood rhyme is "...you're in for a big surprise."

Heading west from Westdale along the rail trail, just before you get to university plaza, a long wooden bridge crosses a beautiful marsh, part of the Dundas Valley. Straight downhill from the bridge is the culvert, and from there we followed the creek upstream, keeping to trails made by the many deer who live in the meadows.

The creek lead us through the low marshy lands where the skunk cabbage grows in spring and the cattails stand dead and collect frost on cold mornings. We followed it to slightly higher ground where we could forage horseradish from under the snow. And beyond that was a meadow of tall, dry grasses, where the deer trotted away from us to hide among the ancient, crumbling willows. It lead us to a beaver's lodge and through the first of the hemlock groves we would explore that day.

Winter is the best time for exploring such areas – all off-trail adventures should be left for days where the frost and snow protect the soil from being compressed underfoot. The topsoil in these areas is very delicate and erosion is a problem, especially on the slopes around the marsh where, tiny hemlocks can rest dormant for 200 years in the delicate, spongy soil of the hemlock groves, patiently awaiting their chance in the sun.

Soon, the creek lead us to a special place where three creeks joined to form the one we'd been



Photo by Rachel Nolan

keys to making the modern city of Toronto possible. But it is perhaps better known as a site of death – the Bloor Viaduct has the honour of having hosted the most suicides of any site in the world. At its peak in 1997, one person killed themselves there every 22 days. Now, the bridge is adorned with a series of fences designed to make this more difficult, and these fences transform the massive bridge into a grim statement on the misery and isolation of city culture that it helped to create. Only by understanding what this land once was can we understand what has been done to us and what we have lost. The mindset of the golfers and of the clever urban planner represents a gap— a fundamental alienation from the natural world.

What strategies can we learn from the wild communities along this urban river? Spending time sharing the path of the resourceful raccoon, the joy of the family of geese, the cedar stand's strength, and the selfless giving of plants in the meadow are all ways to unlearn the profound sickness of this culture's association with the land. As we play in wild spaces with patient and open hearts, these friends whisper their wisdoms to us. True play asks for nothing from a place. Instead, to play is to find joy in that place without trying to control or change it.

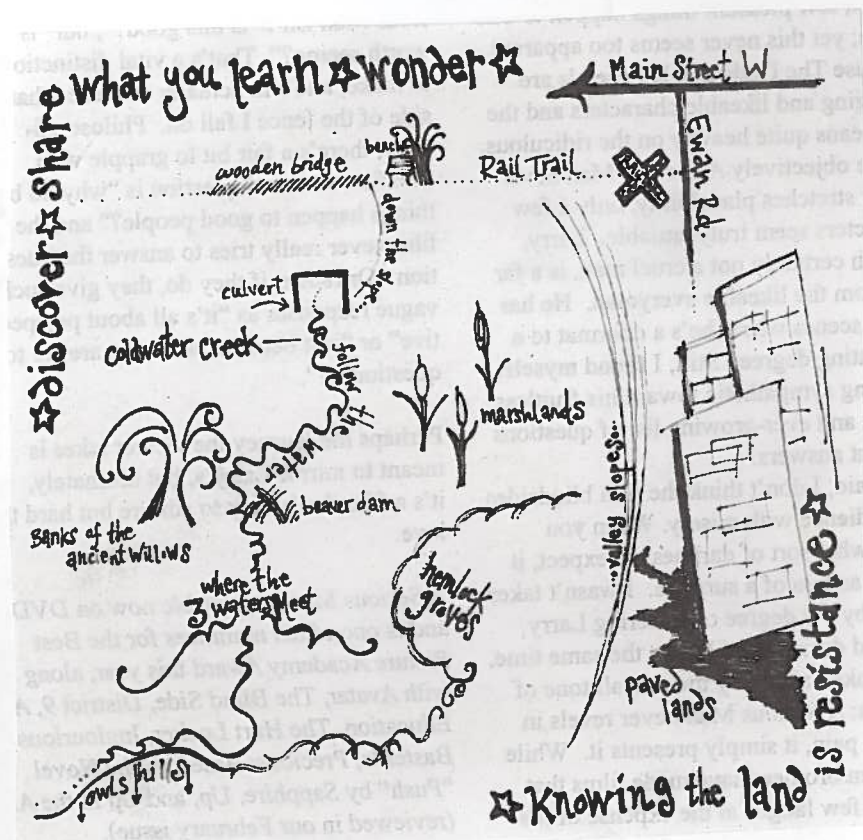
If we love the land and recognize our survival as humans depends on the health of the wild, then we must act in all ways as allies with the earth. We can start by carefully listening to what the land needs, and observing the ways it is already healing and already resisting destruction. We must plant the seeds of these joyful secrets deep within our own

communities. The consequences of committing to a process of listening closely and knowing the land can only be to encourage the healing of both the land, and of ourselves.

following. We sat on a fallen willow over the water and considered what we could see. Creeks carry all sorts of things down into marshes – they bring down nutrients and minerals that nourish the rich ecosystems there, and the marsh also filters out much of the toxins and sediment, reducing the amount of those things in Cootes and in Lake Ontario. Each of the three streams was a different colour, and each contained the story of the land it crossed to get there. Two of the streams came to the meeting point through the Dundas Valley and agricultural land. But one, to follow it upstream, came through a suburb, crossed under hwy 403, and spilled down from the endless developments of the escarpment. Its water was a murky yellowish brown, which means it was much more charged with sediment than were the other two. But we'll think more about that later, because, as we sat there, we heard an owl's voice drifting over the marsh.



Ow/s!



Great Horned Owls

Pairs mate during late January to early February within stands of old trees offering cozy hollows... Listen for the ho-ho-hoo hoo hoo of the Great Horned Owls. The call is a distinct 4-5 syllables.

The female call is higher pitched and rises at the end. Pairing of mates begins in December, so listen for the song between owl lovers on your winter walks.

The large yellow eyes of a Great Horned Owl are fixed and cannot move; they move their necks instead. This helps to explain some of those quirky looks an owl has given you. Another reason is that the owls right ear is set higher and at a different angle than the left, enabling them to find the direction of sound through further dramatic head tilts.

Moving as quickly and as quietly as we could we followed the owls' call. They led us through the marsh to a small creek, and we followed it uphill along the valley it had created. And there, calling to each other from opposite hilltops over the creek, were two great horned owls. They flew higher as we neared, and we moved quietly behind

The owls led us up above the marsh to a very wonderful place. As we described last month, this area is mostly covered by mixed deciduous, which is largely beech and maple trees. And on the secluded plateau to which the owls lead us, there were the largest beech trees we had ever seen. Beech trees can get to be 400 years old, meaning the old ones today survived the massive deforestation of the 1800s, when the british stripped this area to build ships, routinely shipping out ancient trees weighing 60 tons or more. We also found oak trees there that were larger than two people could put their arms around.

What can we learn from this? What is it the owls showed us, by guiding us from the place where the three waters meet (where we could see the silt build up and see apartment buildings looming over the treeline) into the old thick forest?

Knowing the land doesn't just mean knowing the land in the present moment – change is constant. We must understand the past and the future of this land. We must remember the time when we could drink the water in the streams, when the forests covered this area, and when ten-foot-wide trees were common, holding the soil steady with their vast root systems. To the trees and the forest, this is not so long ago – 200 years is half the lifetime of an old gnarled beech, and forests change slowly, over many generations of trees. And we must look to the future – In october 2007, the Spectator reported on a study by the Royal Botanical Gardens that found that Cootes Paradise would be entirely filled with sediment within 90 years. There are fourteen creeks that run into Cootes, and each year they bring 14 000 tons of sediment downstream from the rapidly urbanizing areas of Dundas, West Mountain, Ancaster, and Waterdown. The creek we followed is one of those fourteen.

becomes more expensive, the places that were once undevelopable become opportunities. We imagine the glee of the clever, near-sighted urban planner who realized they didn't need to take up valuable downtown real-estate with hydro towers – they could just put them out of sight beside the river, which is just an open sewer anyway, right?

But even here, the land is recovering, shooting up fields of wildflowers – the Milkweed is just beginning to bloom, and we see our first monarch butterflies of the season. Tangled Willows break under erosion pressure from the damaged banks; they fall and re-root themselves, forming a dense hedge along the river and preventing further crumbling. Higher up, Staghorn Sumac grows tall alongside Manitoba Maples and Trees of Heaven creating shade and beginning the transition from meadow to forest. It is haunting to remember that this meadow and scrubby forest is what the Meadowlands shopping centre in Ancaster looked like, before it was paved over and strewn with big box stores.

At last we reach the Bloor Viaduct. As we stare up at this terrible, awesome structure, we connect the history of the land to the history of our culture. The Bloor Viaduct is a bleak and fitting monument for where the Don River enters the downtown. Where it stands, the Don Valley is almost a kilometre wide and quite high. For a long time, this valley divided the city of toronto and limited its growth, because there was no reliable or fast way to cross it. In 1918, the Bloor Street Viaduct was opened, a massive bridge spanning the valley and opening the possibility of mass transit. This colossal piece of infrastructure was one of the

About five years ago, the Don experienced record flooding. Two squatters drowned and others were evacuated by the police. This was used by the state, in conjunction with the recently passed Safe Streets Act, as an opportunity to repress and destroy these communities. Their shelters were dismantled, many were jailed or institutionalized, and others were scattered into subsidized housing in remote corners of the city, from where many would eventually end up in the streets again. On the edges, there is a constant battle between the city and the wild...



History of Squatters on The Don

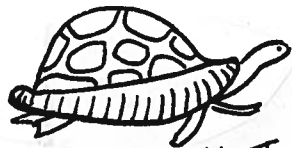
The Don River Valley is known for its community of squatters, ('squatters' meaning people who do not have the permission of the rich and powerful to live where they are living). This Valley is healthy today because it has little economic value since it is very hard to build in, partly because of the river's cycle of flooding. At times, there have been hundreds of people living down in the valley, people with no economic value who are forced physically to the margins of society, onto the land where no one else wants to live. Many kinds of communities have sprouted up down here over the years, but they've all shared extreme precarity. At any time, they could be driven from their homes by the police, or the river could flood and force them to evacuate.

Below us, closer to the water, the cedars mingle with then give way to twisted old hemlocks. We find a faint raccoon trail sloping back towards the river. There, we run into a fat old raccoon coming towards us – he's pretty surprised to find such big scary giants using his trail, and stares at us a moment before stepping off to watch us pass.

We find wonderful dense patches of Stinging Nettle, and Flox. Everywhere we look there are flowers in bloom – we examine them carefully, then try and close our eyes and picture them, in hopes of remembering them well enough to identify later. Cow Parsnip is one delicious new friend we would learn this way. After the recent rain, mushrooms are bursting from every fallen tree, drawing air into their deep soil, transforming toxins into nutrients, and teeming with every kind of insect. We walk more and more slowly, trying to take it all in – everything we see or hear sparks into a dozen questions, as the things we know quickly give way to the endless volumes of things we don't.

The Forks of the Don is a place of humble significance. Very close to the parkway, the West Don tumbles off an artificial weir to meet the East Don flowing under bridges among concrete banks. Startling a turtle who splashes into the strong current, we try to imagine the stories of the two arms of the rivers, mixing here and traveling together now, faster and faster towards the downtown.

Beyond this point, the character of the Don Valley changes rapidly. On the Don's west bank much of the land seems to have been recently cleared to accommodate electrical and railway infrastructure – as land in Toronto



↳ Stan the Turtle

Change is constant, but when the changes are more rapid and violent than the plants and animals in those areas can adapt to, it can be catastrophic and damaging. Even this beautiful marsh is suffering. The willow trees that filter toxins are dying with no young ones replacing them. Housing is encroaching from all sides, polluting the runoff that makes up the marsh water. And the frequent damning and culverting of the creek upstream kills fish and stifles biodiversity. Its ability to respond to change has been damaged. And with almost all the wetlands

and forests gone in this area, it would be impossible for this vulnerable land to recover from a sudden catastrophe.

The death of Cootes Paradise is not natural or inevitable. Even though Cootes itself is protected, even though the Dundas Valley is protected, they are still threatened because the lines we draw around them are illusions. We live in watersheds and bioregions, not properties. When land is developed, it is not simply killing that piece of land, it is damaging the entire watershed – toxic runoff doesn't respect property lines.

Conservation means asking the powerful to protect certain pieces of land while allowing the rest to be devastated. This strategy would make tragic museums of what's left of the wild and is doomed to leave us with nothing. If we want to live in a healthy, thriving watershed, we must transition from simple conservation to defending all land as we would our own bodies. This means understanding that it's not just a question of the airport sprawl being unsustainable, or the redhill expressway being irresponsible – it means realizing that ALL development in this area benefits a tiny class of land owners and politicians at the expense of every other living thing.

If we want to ally with the owls and with the streams, we need to resist the power of the political and developer class, and reject their perceived right to decide how land is used -- if it is to be 'used' at all.



Remaining
old
growth

respect ancient wisdom.

Trees

of all life.

Birds

messengers of
the wild.

Forest
communities

how it all works together.



Hazards

call for awareness.

Plants

food & medicine.

Mammals

tracking.

Motivations

things to catch,
climb, eat & learn.

8 Directions

Towards Wild Knowledge

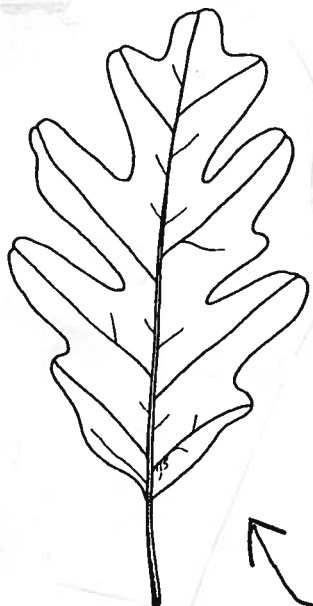
is joined by more and more streams. We come to a steep muddy incline, and the narrow path is blocked by a happy family of geese we don't want to disturb. So we pick our way up the hill to walk under the Red Oaks at the forest's edge, in the shadows of enormous apartment buildings. We can still hear the river below, and we are anxious to return to its side. A promising trail back down into the forest ends up just leading to an accumulation of old couches and broken appliances from the transient flow of humans in and out of the apartments. But we go past the wreckage and lower, running steeply down, bouncing from tree to tree, falling into the arms of a wonderfully healthy grove of Eastern White Cedars.

This grove is big and old, many with trunks much wider than our bodies. Almost all of the ancient cedar forest has been harvested from the great lakes region, a community that had been growing here since the 15th century. A few specimens of the oldest generation remain in Ontario. Yet the spared trees—some more than 1200 years old—are dwarfed, clinging to rock faces along the Niagara Escarpment, out of reach from the relentless saws of colonial lumber barrons. We try to imagine giant Cedars, and our minds wander to the massive west coast Sequoia, of which a few protected stands still remain—these ancient trees offer a starting place for imagining the wildwoods of the west. But here, not one ancient tree remains after over 195 million cubic board feet of cedar lumber was extracted from this land. And yet, in this unassuming place between burdened river and apartment buildings, we stand among hope for a return of the giants of the east.

Healing Cedars:

Summer is the very best time to spend a day among the eastern white cedars. When the temperature sits above 25 degrees and the sun shines brightly, a bit of magic takes place in a cedar grove. Look closely at the underside of a cedar frond. Tear-shaped glands along the scaley leaves are found, just barely visible to the eye. Within each of these glands there sits a tiny dewdrop of oil. A hot summer's day offers the right conditions for a kind of solar distillation of a cedar's living pharmacy. The warmth stimulates

the release of an aerosol mist of interesting chemicals into the grove environment. This atmospheric concoction contains medicines acting as a cardiac muscle stimulant and bronchodilator. In other words, while playing beneath the cedars, our hearts will slow and strengthen and our breathing will deepen.



here are two basic
types of oak. White Oak,
with rounded leaf lobes
and new acorns every
year and...

and Garlic Mustard, build up soil, taking on disturbed sites and contributing to the re-accumulation of biomass. In fact, many of these first-succession plants native to Europe have the longest experience of healing land that's been damaged by industrial civilization. In the tiny wild pockets bordering the golf course, these familiar foreign species enthusiastically grow among the litter of golf balls, water bottles and styrofoam. Here, the presence of these oft-hated plants seems hopeful, little pockets of health and sanity. The creation of landscapes like a golf courses shows just how alienated our culture is from the land it depends upon.

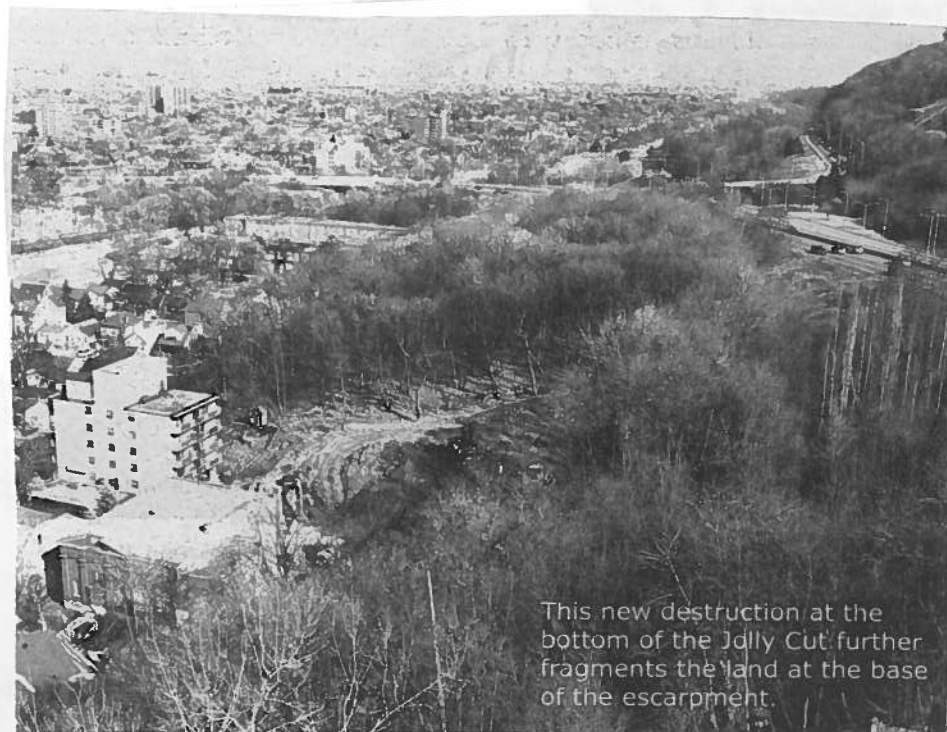
We breathe out our frustrations and move deeper into the thicket, connecting once again to the joyful spirit of the wild. Is golfing with your officemates play? What game is so great to necessitate scarring the earth so? The golfers offer an example of a bad relationship with the earth. But in the forgotten corners and scrublands of the city the resources for games and play are plentiful! One of the most wonderful secrets is that playing can provide us with what we need—we realize this as we round the corner and find a glorious wild asparagus plant. The need to reconnect with the land is fueled by the need to restore what spirit and autonomy has been taken from us. But what role can we play in a process of healing the land and ourselves? We move forward, inspired to seek a path towards this goal through some good ol' playing outside.

Keeping low in the valley, we cross under a giant cloverleaf of Don Valley Parkway, a noisy dirty parody of a plant's shape. Beyond this, the Don Valley gets wider and deeper, and the river

... Red Oak with pointy
leaf lobes and acorns
that take 2 years to
mature.



The Story of a Scar.



This new destruction at the bottom of the Jolly Cut further fragments the land at the base of the escarpment.

Slow trickles of water seep out of the softened soil from everywhere in our watershed. Drops collect and build in power. Water bursts from long-frozen escarpment rocks, racing towards the lake. Spring is here, and so let's walk towards the limestone cliffs of 'the Mountain'. The perfect place to celebrate the melt of winter.



Wandering from the downtown, energized by the sunshine, we move against the flow of the watershed, heading south on Ferguson street. At the very south end, we come to a place where, until just a few days ago, an old pumphouse stood surrounded by a patch of forest. But over those few days, a large chunk of the forested hillside there was torn out as the pump station was demolished. Among the debris, a starling stands on the body of a member of its flock, pressing down with strong claws and relentlessly pecking the weaker bird's eyes. Two giant yellow machines knock around clumsily, compressing the soil. They dig a deep hole in the hillside, leaving behind an unstable, crumbling cliff more than ten feet high.



Today, the exposed earth is still damp and cool and alive with the billions of microbes, nematodes, and fungi doing the work of filtering, fixing and cycling all that is essential to life on earth. But with trees removed and roots upturned, life in the soil cannot last. Soon enough this land-- a large section of the two remaining patches of forest left on the east side of St. Joseph's Hospital-- will be trapped beneath a new water processing facility.

Seeing this destruction, the murder of some of the only wild land left at the escarpment's base in this area, our first reaction is anger. Anger is a healthy and natural reaction to seeing things you love be destroyed, and anger can be an important first step and a useful guide in learning. So we sit

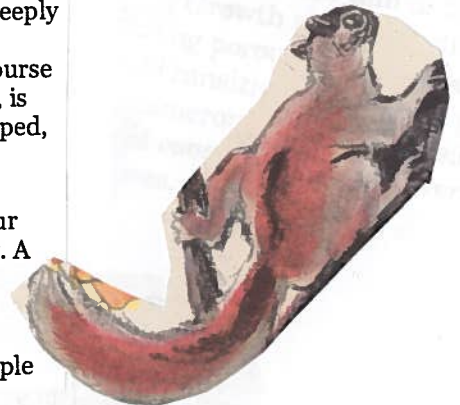
When trying to understand the history of the land around us, it's valuable to connect with people who've lived on that land longer than we have.

Karen, Jason, and Rachel are a local family who have cultivated a deep connection to this land for many years. Here are some of their observations of the patterns of change over more than 40 years of wondering in their neighbourhood natural space, Cootes Paradise.

J: The birds have come back. They'd disappeared while DDT was being used, but after it was outlawed, they began to repopulate. It was the orioles that came back first. Redwings, indigo bunting, cedar waxwings...

— Play is Resistance —

Dear readers, how wonderful that you have rejoined us to continue the quest to discover the patches of life that cling to the Don River! We left off last month knowing many reasons to celebrate a faint pulse returning to this river that was once deemed dead. But our commitment to staying by the river's side means we must also face the horrors the river run through. Our story left off as we entered a golf course, ever nearing the downtown. So have courage friends, as we step into the openness of the golf course, towards the fate of this water...



After following a raccoon trail, these neat, paved paths feel strange underfoot, and the suspicious eyes of the golfers make us aware of our tangled muddiness -- as if we're the ones behaving strangely! The Donald Golf Course seems to strangle the river forever. At last, we reach welcome shade at the end of the course, but what we find certainly offers no relief for the river. Just out of view from the golfer's world, the ground is carelessly flooded with a blue liquid -- the infamous Monsanto's Roundup. Beyond the spill our feet sink deeply into a sod graveyard. Weak mats of grass cannot survive long in the desolate golf course environment. Here, right beside the river, is where the used-up bits of greens are dumped, forming huge mounds of rotting topsoil.

One inch of topsoil, the vital essence of our land, can take centuries to form naturally. A sickening feeling washes over us in confronting this abuse of such a precious resource. Even the invasive plants we considered last month, like Manitoba Maple

of the most effective care humans can offer to remove invasive species. Intuitively, it feels right to allow land time and protection in order to heal. The logic of the colonizer is that land must be managed by humans, and we must be wary of this rhetoric whether it's coming from a developer or from a conservationist.

Just beyond the old dam, the river enters a tunnel to cross under a busy intersection near North York General Hospital. There is no space for us to follow the river bed, and so we are faced with the same dilemma that all the creatures who live here must face – crossing the sixteen lanes of traffic at the intersection of Leslie St and Sheppard. We make it to the other side, and once we descend to the river again, we find the home of a creature we would never have thought to find so close to a busy intersection: a beaver's pond! Just to the east side of the trail, its dam has flooded out some forest and transformed a meadow into a teeming, rich marshland.

Soon the human trail ends, but feeling inspired by the amazing creatures who find a way to live in these thin edges of wild space, we follow a faint raccoon trail along the slopes of the valley. Walking the path of the raccoons, we also have to move like raccoons, down right low to the ground among branches and roots, keeping quiet and hidden from the roads and properties nearby. The far bank of the river becomes a golf course, and with raccoon-eyes, we spy on these golfers from among the boulders.

Compare the life strategy of even an invasive species like the Buckthorn to the strategies these golfers pursue! They blanket the earth in a sickening, artificial green right up to the banks of the river. The river banks are stripped of all natural vegetation, and so are eroding rapidly. As well, golf courses are exempt from the provincial pesticide ban, so this course is literally dumping

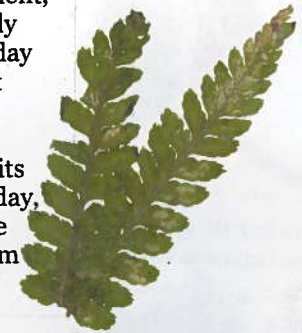
poison into the river every day. Soon, the river fully enters the golf course. Swallowing our disgust, we emerge from our cover and enter it as well.

on the escarpment watching the machines below. We sat with our anger, then try to transition into questions:

Who owns this land? Why do they think that this destruction is ok? Who else, besides these traumatized starlings and soil bacteria, lived here until just a few days ago? Should we even care about sixty or so trees? What is the history of this land? How does this new destruction fit into that story?

Before long though, we decide to leave that sad scene. We find the Bruce Trail at John St, then move south and west and higher up along it. But there is not much forest left here now, so before long, the trail leads us to an overpass, at the top of the James St stairs. This stretch of pavement is the only path between two disconnected sections of forest. We stand looking down from the guardrail to the stand of trees left untouched only because of their usefulness in holding back the erosion that would cause the collapse of the overpass. Imagine this land before the shorelines became manufactured rectangles. The inlets from Hamilton harbour used to stretch past Burlington Street, spilling into wetlands all throughout what is now the lower city.

We transition from standing on pillars of the overpass, the backbone of industrial civilization-- to a wall of escarpment limestone, the beautiful backbone of our watershed. The city and the wild are two competing forces along the escarpment, their interests are not the same and probably never will be. The forested trail we walk today was once called the Beckett Dr. Escarpment Access, built in 1894. The Bruce Trail from Queen St to West Fifth follows the route of Beckett Dr – it has turned back into forest, its route flows with meltwater. In the forest today, as the sound of the road fades behind us, we imagine the days when the forest will reclaim too.



like this. I think of this as a place to find quiet inside and out. To observe. We

K: Another big change came with the fishgate. The populations of little fish that feed the egrets increased, and the herons came back too.

R: The frogs went away too. McMaster dumped a bunch of sewage that got into the water, and all the frogs vanished, but they're back now.

K: The behaviour of the people in the woods has changed. There are clear signs posted at the beginnings of the trails saying NO dogs off lead, running, bikes. Everyone seems to think it is still okay. I see dogs chasing deer. The compaction of the earth is a real problem. I was surprised to see people using the trails

transition when we enter the woods. If you are going to be your same 'city self', talk about the same old things, you might as well go up to Limeridge and get a coffee. Most people have lost their sensibility about these spaces. I hope this is not a one-directional change.

J: Are we at the end of the cycle of maples growing in the woods here? In 'Westdale proper' maples are dying. In the woods I can see a huge die-off. Perhaps this is a natural cycle, or it is affected by forest management practices. I worry about the soil erosion consequences of the loss of these old trees. I worry that this is such a small area that it might not be able to manage or support these natural cycles.

J: There are not two sides to the argument around development. No one is arguing against protecting natural spaces, it's just greed. When people are earnest about preserving habitat, they reasonably assume that the people they're in conflict with also

As we continue along the trail, we come to waterfalls – their sound rises through the trees similar to the road sounds before, but these sounds indicate a rushing of life, a powerful rebirth and reawakening. Soon we crest the hill, and can see the water in the gorge below, water running fast and high with the spring melt. There, watching the water, we remember something we heard from some of our friends and mentors – they had told us to remember to play, to find joy. So we take off our shoes and wintery clothes, and play in the water and climb the boulders. To play is to form a relationship and connection with the land. Because the land does not heal out of bitterness or anger, but out of bottomlessly, exuberant joy.

All the land here has been hurt and recovered so many times. The hill being dug out where the starlings fought was formed artificially during the construction of the Claremont Access, and was the site of an even older pump house, dating 1878. But after that building was removed, the forest reclaimed the hill as part of itself. Before destroying that site yet again, the city conducted an 'archaeological assessment' of the site. They came to the decision that the land there had been disturbed so many times that it was insignificant, and therefore unworthy of being simply left to heal again.

The anger we felt at that destruction has been carried away by the river, leaving us glad and calm and curious. As we sit on the rocks and dry in the sun, we watch the water swirl intricate patterns, watch the clouds wander above, and we consider how the pumphouse development fits into the larger pattern of colonial destruction of the wild in this watershed.

When the colonizers set out to exploit the land and drive back the humans and non-humans who live in it, they seldom do so all in one blow.

offer substantial cover, but native Elm and Sugar Maples need shade to grow. Along the trail, we find many instances of these trees growing in the shade of hearty, fast growing invasives. It was good people with good intentions who set about poisoning these trees here, but is it just another example of humans trying to control a wild space?

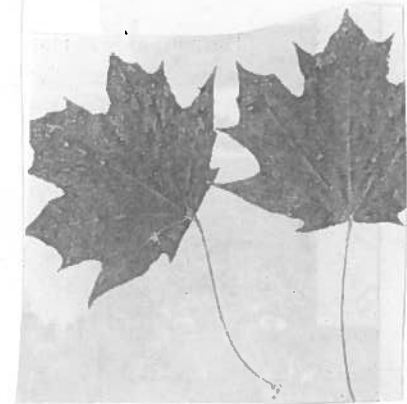
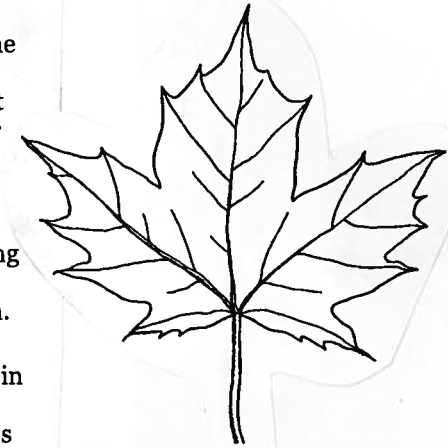
What is the role that invasive species are playing in this ecosystem at the present moment? This question follows us as we continue downstream.

We find many small outcrops of healthy forest, in the untouchable places made by the playful swerving of the river, away from the trail. Here's a stand of sun-loving Poplars, all growing from a single root. Given time, this initial stand will gradually become a rich, climax forest. And here's a grove with a few old Oaks, a giant Sugar Maple, a Beech, an Ironwood, and even a healthy Hemlock grove along the shore – a forest community that we recognize from our walks in Cootes Paradise in Hamilton.

This is one of the few pockets of mature forest we find. Almost all of the Don Valley is more like the ecosystem found at a forest's edge, scrub-lands bordering on endless city. Edges are by definition unstable, and on an edge between forest and city a battle is taking place. The forest pushes out, trying to re-wild the urban spaces, and the city pushes back, sprawling and trying to dominate wild spaces. These scrappy, ragtag bits of land are doing important work, and fast growing, sun-loving invasive trees are often the first to re-establish open land, beginning the slow process of healing.

Many land reclamation projects worldwide are proving that a policy of least intervention, that is to allow natural succession to take place, is some

Sugar Maple



Norway Maple

We enter the forest and soon reach a bridge where Patterson Creek joins with German Mills creek to form the East Don. But the pattern remains the same – we are surrounded by trees that are called invasives, meaning that their ancestors evolved far from here. We human settlers pause, watch the muddy water flow below us, and consider these settler trees: Manitoba Maple, Buckthorn, and Black Locust. Thinking back to those suburban streets, it's not hard to guess how they came to grow here.

Common wisdom holds that invasive species are bad because they threaten to choke out native species. From where we stand, we can see the tops of tall buildings looming over the valley, threatening to choke it out as well. Wild lands overtaken by invasive species are often deemed worthless, and worthy only of either further destruction or of intense human intervention. We recall the lands beside the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area, that are considered 'disturbed' and therefore suitable only for a subdivision. And, as we continue along the trail here, we see intervention by humans. Here is a meadow where small Dogwoods have been recently planted among sickly looking Manitoba Maples. One strategy that is used to prevent the spread of invasives is to poison them, and that is being done here.

It will be years before these tiny dogwoods can



Silver
Maple



Red
Maple



Manitoba
Maple

Colonization is a death of a thousand cuts, with each little piece fully justified, even though the whole is unjustifiable. The Haldimand Tract, given to the Six Nations, was originally more than 950 000 acres, but was leased out or given away by bureaucrats or was outright stolen, in tiny pieces at a time over a hundred years, until only 48 000 acres remain in their control today. Should we care about the death of sixty or so trees? Yes we should, because it's sixty trees today and sixty more tomorrow, each time with a study showing its economic necessity and the insignificance of the land in question.

We must know this land as it is now, and we must defend it. It is true that the land is disturbed, that the water and soil are poisoned, but it is alive and is doing the important work of healing, for the good of us all. The forest reclaimed that that hill and old Beckett Drive, and someday it will reclaim the Queen St. access and the pumphouse. If we want to ally with the earth, we must learn to see that the way the land heals itself – relentlessly, yet joyfully -- is a form of resistance. It is the land's way of pushing back against the city.

It can be easy to accept seductive excuses for the 'development' of wildlands. Allow yourself time to work through questions, talk to friends and mentors, and decide what matters. If you feel angry, let that anger guide you towards learning about the land. One thing we've been doing, like in the interview alongside this article, is to connect with people who've lived here longer than you. To quote my self-proclaimed 'radical octogenarian' Grandmother, as she looks down over the pumphouse site from her apartment window, "well, I don't know what's going on down there, all I know is we need those trees."

have a reasonable position, but they don't. They don't disagree with you. It's just greed.

you need to protect nature. We can develop an emotional and academic understanding of why we need natural spaces, and once we do that, we'll do whatever we can to make sure it stays".

Karen says, "people are uncomfortable with speaking out. It's considered rude to actually say what you mean. A long time resident of our neighbourhood once whispered to me, 'You know, it's very... unusual that you just speak your mind'. But we must advocate for time and space in our city and in our lives to wonder".

Karen and Jason have mentored their daughter, Rachel to understand that knowing the land is resistance. She says, "it helps us to see ourselves as part of nature, not ruling over it. We need to understand things in terms of systems, like ecosystems, and when you do that, of course

Water, Limestone, and Suburbs

KLR at the Eramosa Karst

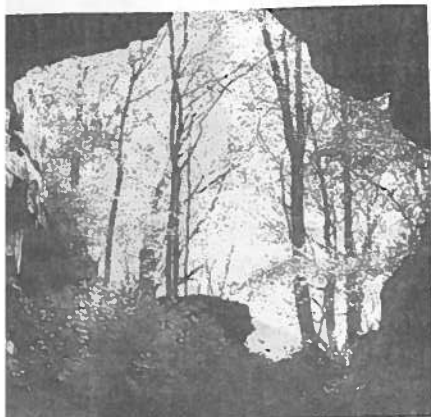
On the surface, we see only the beautiful, strangely pitted and patterned limestone outcrops known as karren, and the occasional grassy, bowl-shape in the ground -- a sinkhole. But from this, we can imagine the water moving through the rock below, and know that we are in a very special sort of landscape: a karst.

We make our way out to the suburbs at Upper Mount Albion Rd and Rymal Rd to go visit Hamilton's newest conservation area, called the Eramosa Karst. Rita, of the Friends of the Eramosa Karst (FEK), and her little dog Fidel meet us there. Rita's been spending lots of time exploring this piece of land here over the last several years, and she has kindly offered to share her knowledge and experience with us, to introduce us to the karst. Karst, she tells us, is all about water acting on rock -- the distinctive landscape and underground features are the result of rock being dissolved and swept away by water over many years.

She takes us over to a big map of the site and explains that the current parkland was part of a much larger area that was deemed to be of scientific interest. But in time, most of that was sold to become subdivisions and malls by the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), which deals with property owned by the province. The Eramosa Karst Conservation Area was created because the top soil was thin here, under three metres deep. Developers would have needed to blast into rock to create the foundations of buildings, which on karst terrain would likely have caused a cave-in. So the bureaucrats drew a line around the area where the topsoil was less than three metres deep and made a park out of it -- evidence of this process can be seen in the

The history of this region is tragic. This area of the city, where the Don flows into the Great Lakes, was once Ashbridges marsh. At the turn of the century, the already heavily polluted marsh was filled-in under the 'Don Improvement Project'. This was done in the name of public health concerns surrounding the pollution from 31 sewage facilities and 21 landfills adjacent to the river. Even today, you will still hear the Don referred to as an open sewer. Yet what drew us here are the tales from local residents of the hopeful transformations they have seen during their lifetimes, like the recent return of spawning salmon and the presence of beavers and snapping turtles.

We reach the beginning of our walk out in the suburbs, seeking the narrow wild spaces that cling to the headwaters of the East Don. The trees planted in this neighbourhood, as in most of Toronto, are almost entirely species from far away, like Manitoba and Norway Maples. These tough trees are chosen for their ability to survive in front-lawn environments, something that more sensitive native Maple species are unable to do.



Potruff Cave

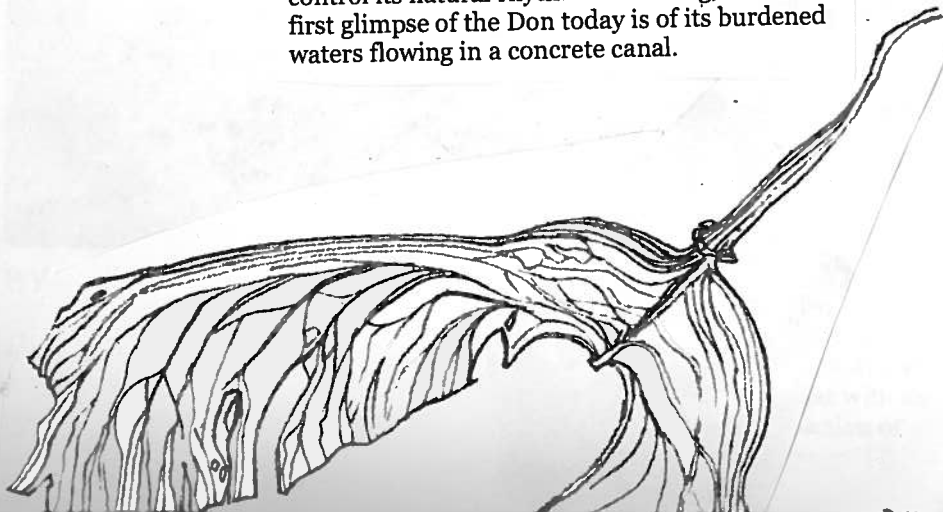


Of Settlers and Foreign Maples

W

e enter the Don River Valley at the end of three days of storms, and the river runs high and full. In most river systems, this new surge of water would be a re-energizing gift, full of nutrients swept in from the land. But the Don River's watershed is 90% developed, making it the most urbanized river in Canada, and water that passes through an enormous city like Toronto is a whole different story.

Our intention is to hike the river from its beginnings in the north end of Toronto towards the downtown. But to get to our starting point at Garnier Park, just south of Steeles Ave, we needed to drive along the Don Valley Parkway. This massive highway follows the river for most of its length, its overwhelming presence defining the Don and making a healthy valley almost impossible to imagine. Stuck in traffic, we consider the rainfall of the past few days. Water leeches too quickly through the bare ditches of roads like this one, as sewers overflow and city streets dump their grime directly into the river. South of Gerard St, the river was straightened to control its natural rhythm of flooding, and so our first glimpse of the Don today is of its burdened waters flowing in a concrete canal.



oddly shaped property line of the park's eastern edge.

That eastern edge, Rita tells us, borders currently on abandoned farm fields that have been renaturalizing for many years. Currently, the FEK is working to have that land added to the current conservation area.

As we approach the forest along the right-hand trail from the parking lot, there are outcroppings of karren all around. Most of the stone is in its natural state, but some of it has clearly been cut – Rita explains that the shallow top-soil here was ideal for early settlers trying to get at stone for their dwellings. It's ironic that the condition that today has caused this land to be preserved in the past made it desirable. She tells us that the only mandate of the ORC is to 'maximize the value of its holdings'. To them, the word 'value' refers only to money, and this land was protected only once it was deemed to have no financial value.



But how do we define value? Rita poses us this question as we enter the forest, and it sticks in our minds as she shows us the land she has committed to defending.

We follow the line of the Eramosa escarpment, which is a smaller escarpment about two metres high that runs just south of the Niagara escarpment. We pass by a deep sinkhole where the motion of water through the karst is dragging down the forest floor, and Rita tells us that it wasn't there at all when she first started walking here. She takes us to where a spring emerges from the base of the escarpment – it runs all year long, proof of its origins in the deep earth where the temperature doesn't vary. In the melt season, Pottruff Cave up beyond the escarpment fills up and overflows in a joyful spring cascade down the slope to join with the spring here.

Rita excitedly describes how the underground caves fill and overflow. Once water has filtered through the soil down into the karst, it moves very quickly, filling the caves and seeking any possible path, pouring in and out of the subterranean, water-carved mazes. Rita explains to us that, since water moves so rapidly through the karst, the filtering action of healthy soil in the lands nearby is essential for maintaining and increasing the health of this land. The hundreds of plant and animals species living here – including two species of owl that were thought to be locally extinct – need the land around this conservation area to filter the water that passes through here on its way into the great lakes.

And with that, Rita and Fidel return towards the parking lot, while we explore further. On the edge between the meadow and forest, we stop to pick apart some coyote poop and examine the bones of a rabbit. As we follow the Nexus creek upstream into the meadows, we can see the subdivisions close on all sides of us. It lead us to the mouth of the Nexus Cave, where we crawl down under ground. Here, in a little refuge out of sight of suburbia, we relax, and think about what we've learned.

Karst Terms

Soil Pipes: Holes in the rock shaped like narrow tubes which conduct water from the surface down through the bedrock below. Some advise for life: Always look in holes.

Suffosion Dolines (or sinkholes): Above ground they appear as depressions in the forest floor. They are a sign that a cave or cavity lies beneath, sinking lower as water works its way in to the unsettles rock below.

Sinking Streams: Streams flowing both above-ground and below at different points. IN the karst, sinking streambeds are often dry until heavy rain forces water from systems below to flood the stream. We followed one of these dry bes, appreciating the cracking pattern in the dried mud. These streams are important for the distribution of nutrients from the soil to all the areas of the karst.

River



Ashbridges Marsh once extended as far east as Leslie Street. Photo circa 1909.

The Fukkan

Don



Last month, we reflected on change, and about how knowing the history of the colonization of land can help us to better understand its present. When we protect land, we don't just want to simply preserve it as it is now — we want to encourage this land back towards the peak diversity and health it knew before colonization. Two months ago, we thought about how the conservation approach is inadequate, because the health of a given site is completely enmeshed with the health of the land around it.

How do we define value? When early settlers built their homes nearby, they cleared the land in order to demonstrate their ownership over it. If the capitalist system values you, it means you are a resource. If it calls you a resource, it means that it intends to kill you and sell your parts. Can we reject the thinking of colonizers and understand the land a different way?

Along with the owls, two other species of birds that have returned to this area: the Lagerhead Shrike and the Northern Shrike. Shrikes are attracted to this area because of the dense thickets of Hawthorn trees. They love to catch small rodents, then hang them from the sharp spikes of the Hawthorn to strip their flesh with curved beaks.

In this region, Hawthorns have an unparalleled ability to reclaim land where the topsoil has been cleared -- in this case, scoured away by the last glaciers. If it's possible to recover from the weight of a glacier, then there's hope for even the saddest lands. The Hawthorn's strong roots are adapted to find holds in thin, nutrient-poor soils. Once the tree is established, it forms a damp pocket where its trunk meets the soil. This pocket catches the flying seeds of the Sugar Maple and holds them in the renewed soil at its base. As the Maple grows, the Hawthorn dies and gives the sapling protection; and interestingly, the Hawthorn's thorns become even stronger in death. By nurturing Maple trees, Hawthorns can be thought of as the mothers of mature forests.

Karst Windows: Like Potruff's cave, a place where a cave's roof has collapsed, offering a glimpse into the underground world.

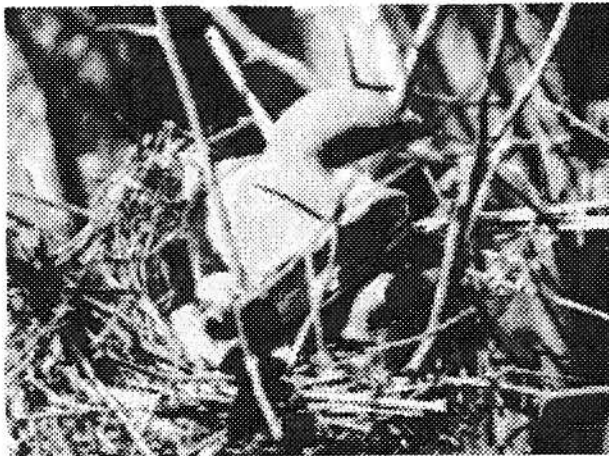
Caves: Are underground spaces! There are five caves big enough to fit inside and explore in this area. The largest is Nexus cave.

Glacial Till: A collection of rocks, earth and sediments a retreating glacier deposited.

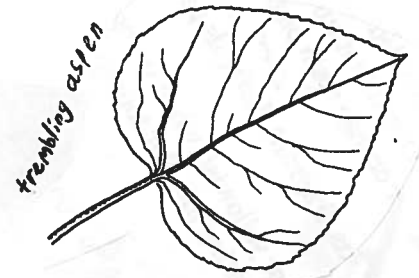
Karren: The patterns, pathways, cracks, and holes formed in limestone by water.

The succession of growth on the land teaches us respect for future generations. All life is connected, across property lines and across species. The way colonizers think is deeply linked to the way they use land: the histories of the forests are the histories of colonization. Values based on property and profit only encourage death; they are not in line with a forest surviving. In order to reshape our values to include life, we must seek to understand the complex interdependencies that will reform as the land

heals and biodiversity increases. If we want to protect areas like the land around the Eramosa Karst, we must resist the logic of colonialism and capitalism and find new ways of understanding value.



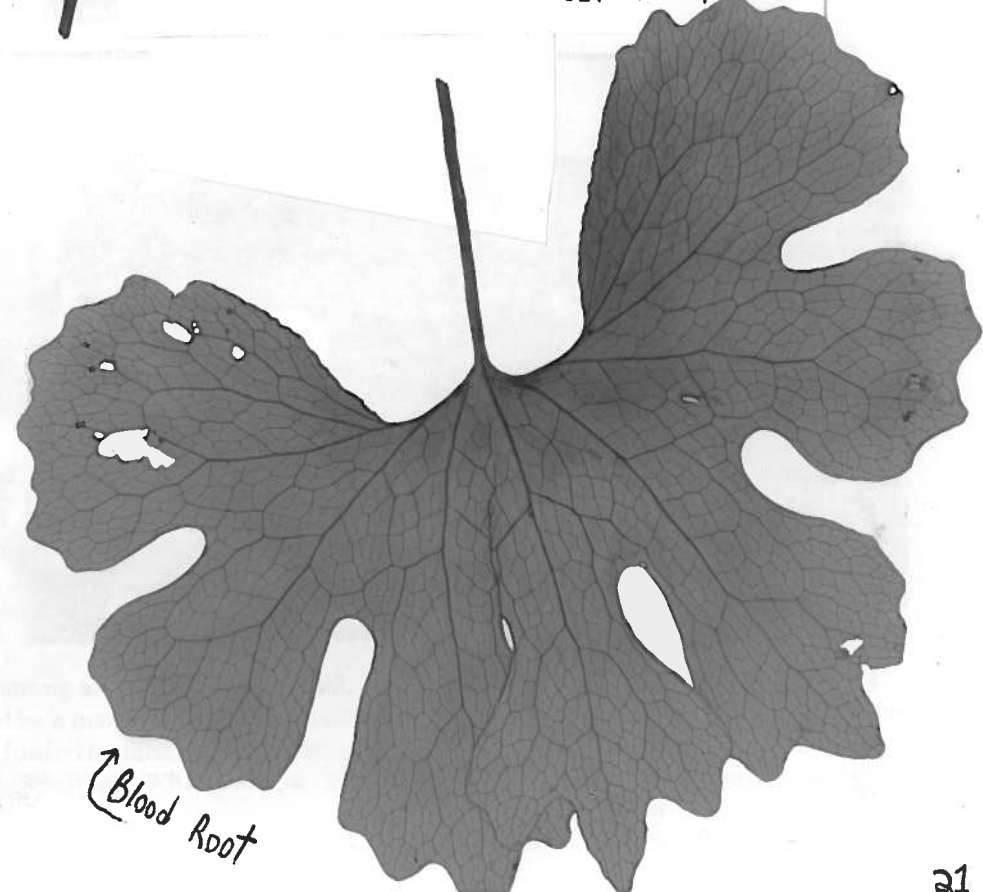
↑ Lagerhead Shrike
in Hawthorn tree



"Protest is when I say this or that doesn't suit me.

Resistance is when I ensure that what doesn't suit me no longer occurs."

-Ulrike Meinhof



↑ Blood Root