

Clarksons recognized for work to restore stream

By Bill Rea

David and Faith Clarkson have been busy for the last several years working to restore a watercourse on their Kennedy Road property, and those efforts were rewarded last Friday.

The Clarksons were presented with a Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation. The presentation was made by Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell at Queen's Park.

The Clarksons have been working on the project at their Applegarth Farm in partnership with Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) since 2012, to study, design and restore the watercourse. They opened their property to neighbours, councillors, municipal employees and environmental organizations, and attended various meetings. The result, according to Ontario Heritage Trust, has been the restoration of a cold water stream, valley, wetland and grassed area that has benefitted several species of fish, amphibians, insects and birds.

It takes up about 800 metres of stream flowing into the East Credit River.

Dr. Clarkson, a retired family doctor, said they learned of the award in January.

‘It was a pleasant surprise,’ he remarked, adding he was taken by the quality of other projects that were recognized at the ceremony.

‘It was a bigger deal than I first anticipated.’

‘There were some wonderful projects,’ Mrs. Clarkson observed, adding she was taken with the Lieutenant Governor. ‘She’s a lovely lady.’

They both added the contribution of CVC couldn’t be understated.

‘We worked with very professional people,’ Dr. Clarkson remarked.

‘They were so respectful of the property,’ his wife added. ‘They did such a good job.’

She also said a lot of heavy machinery was required to do the work, but one going to look at the site now would see no indication that such equipment had been there.

Mrs. Clarkson also observed there had been marshland there, but it has been replaced by a running stream.

Dr. Clarkson observed the water is ‘undoubtedly cleaner now.’

Mrs. Clarkson said there are apparently little fish there now, although she said she hasn’t seen them yet.

A tile drain was installed on the site in the early 1970s. It was eight to 10 feet under the ground. It was made of concrete, and Dr. Clarkson said it was broken and serving no good purpose. They worked with CVC to have the drain and associated fill removed to restore the flowing water.

Dr. Clarkson said his father Grant farmed the property in the 1970s and ‘80s. He was also a mechanical engineer who chaired the local conservation authority. He added his cousin was former Caledon mayor John Clarkson.

Mrs. Clarkson said this is the first year after the construction was completed, adding it will take about three years for the project to mature.

She also said they are looking forward to seeing what birds stop there in their spring migration.

The Bruce Trail Conservancy was another recipient of an award last Friday. This was in honour of the Conservancy’s unique and lasting conservation work over the past 50 years.

‘These exceptional individuals, organizations, and communities are champions of our past and architects of our future,’ Dowdeswell commented during the ceremony. ‘On behalf of a grateful province, I thank them for their exemplary achievements in conserving the best of Ontario from which we may learn and mature.’

Bruce Trail Conservancy Board Vice-Chair John Grandy, who accepted the award, reflected on its significance.

‘For over 50 years, the Bruce Trail Conservancy has been committed to protecting the natural land along the Niagara Escarpment,’ he said. ‘The Bruce Trail and the tremendous conservation work done by the Bruce Trail Conservancy results from the dedication of volunteers, landowners, members, donors and communities, and we are pleased to see this exceptional commitment recognized.’



Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell last Friday presented a Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation to Caledon residents David and Faith Clarkson at a ceremony at Queen's Park. Also on hand for the presentation was Ontario Heritage Trust Chair Harvey McCue. Photo by Ian Crysler, courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust



David Clarkson stands over some of the work that contributed the restoration of the coldwater stream on his property. Photo by Bill Rea



Lt.-Gov. Elizabeth Dowdeswell and Ontario Heritage Trust Chair Harvey McCue took part in the presentation of the award to Bruce Trail Conservancy, which was accepted by John Grandy. Photo by Ian Crysler, courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust