

Pen Lake Farms Nature Reserve:

### **How It Came To Be .....**

#### ***Dan McKeon & Wim Magee***

For the past 20 years the Lamon and McCann families have owned the 125+ acres of land between Maplehurst Road and Shaws Road. Their intent has been to keep this property in its natural state, permitting no development.

One evening, about one and a half years ago, Dan McKeon and Chuck Lamon attended a gathering and a conversation ensued – that the Lamons and the McCanns wanted to place this property into a trust. After further discussion it was suggested that the Peninsula Lake Association might like to be involved as the caretaker/steward of this trust, to be called the Pen Lake Farms Nature Preserve. Dan contacted Wim Magee to see if he would work with him to achieve this goal.

We contacted our lawyer, Tom Pinckard, who came up with three or four scenarios as a way to complete the plan. After many meetings with the three of us and the owners, we presented the various possibilities to the P.L.A. Board. The board accepted involvement in the recommended plan. This was to partner with the Muskoka Heritage Trust and proceed, pending the approval of the Lamon and McCann families.

After many further meetings with Tom Pinckard, the donor families, Russ Black of the Muskoka Heritage Trust, the Lake of Bays Council, Janet Peake, Mayor, and Stefan Szczerbak, the Township Planner, the desired format was finalized and enthusiastically accepted by all. The property was surveyed, an appraisal was completed, a technical advisory site visit was conducted, and the information obtained was shared. A review by the working group led to a viable proposal acceptable to the Lamons and McCanns. This plan was presented to the P.L.A. Board. There was unanimous agreement to move forward and complete the process.

A suggestion had been made at the onset that the families might wish to provide ownership of a piece of the property to the P.L.A.; this would be separate from the land owned by the Trust and not subject to the very limited and restricted use of the Nature Reserve. The Lamons and McCanns have now separated and given approximately 2 acres to the Peninsula Lake Association. The remaining 124

acres is owned by the Muskoka Heritage Trust with a 25-year renewable agreement that the P.L.A. will act as the stewards of their land. The property will be a protected private nature reserve, which may be enhanced with trails and tree planting etc. A board, with representatives from the donor families, the Muskoka Heritage Trust, the P.L.A. and the Township will manage, review yearly, and report on the reserve. This has been a win-win for everyone involved!!

On November 20th, 2007 the Lake of Bays Council met and approved the severance, providing the Peninsula Lake Association with 1.8 acres of land. The conditions attached will be resolved very shortly, and this portion of the process will be completed.

We are pleased to have handled this process on behalf of the PLA members. We are overwhelmed at the generosity of the Lamon and McCann families in their vision to protect this area for the benefit of the residents of Peninsula Lake.

A final report will be completed for the Spring Pen Notes. Further information is available from Dan - [annedan@vianet.ca](mailto:annedan@vianet.ca) or Wim- [wimagee@sympatico.ca](mailto:wimagee@sympatico.ca)