

# FRONTENAC NEWS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF FRONTENAC PARK

## Wolf or Coyote?

by Carolyn Bonta, Special Projects Volunteer

One of the most frequent questions asked of me by Park visitors is whether the wild dogs in the park are wolves or coyotes. It's a good question... while we know there are Eastern Coyotes (which are actually Western Coyote/Eastern Wolf hybrids, *Canis latrans x lycaon*; another name is the "Tweed Wolf") in this part of Ontario – and can comfortably say that this species is the most likely wild dog to occur in Frontenac – we are less sure of whether the Park supports wolves.

Historically, the Eastern Wolf (*Canis lycaon*) was also present in Eastern Ontario, but their range has been reduced to 1 per cent of its original distribution since European settlement. Eastern Wolf populations have since been more or less limited within the boundaries of Algonquin Provincial Park – hence the reason this species is also known as the "Algonquin wolf". Recently, however, a small population of Eastern Wolves was found in the northern part of Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park south of Bancroft, despite an absence of wolf packs in unprotected areas between the two parks.

Researchers are now wondering whether small populations of Eastern Wolf have become established in other protected areas south of Algonquin Park. In Eastern Ontario, Park staff and research volunteers have recently begun collecting DNA samples from individual coyotes at Bon Echo, Puzzle Lake and Frontenac Provincial Parks. Here at Frontenac, this collection will be ongoing until spring 2013, as we attempt to gather as many samples from as many areas of the Park as possible. Genetic analysis will then determine whether the wild dogs at Frontenac are Eastern Coyote, coyote/domestic dog hybrids and/or Eastern Wolf.

In addition to DNA sampling, researchers are also interested in what the Park's coyotes are eating. Typically, Eastern Coyotes feed primarily on small mammals



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and carrion (i.e., dead animals), and to a lesser extent on deer, birds, insects and plants. For this, scat samples are being collected throughout the Park in all four seasons. Diet analysis will tell us what Frontenac's coyotes are feeding on at different times of the year,

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## President's Message

By the time you read this message, fall is near and the Frontenac Challenge will be underway. Fall colours should be out early, as trees are highly stressed following the unusually hot and dry early summer. The combination of a nearly snow-free winter, low spring rainfall and the summer drought has not only lowered local lake levels but caused significant groundwater shortages that have become a concern for well users even in my neighbourhood in Kingston east. So, whether we like it or not, we need a wet late fall and a snow-rich winter to replenish our water resources.

As usual, the Friends' spring and summer schedule of events proceeded as planned. Volunteer training in



New boardwalk on East Arkon trail

March was well attended and the trails were swept in April. Spring work day saw our trusty volunteers build several boardwalks and a small bridge on East Arkon trail, south of the Bufflehead junction. Following Park Superintendent Peter Dawson's suggestion, we experimented with a somewhat simpler and less costly, but hopefully



New boardwalk on cross-country ski loop east of East Arkon trail

equally functional type of boardwalk consisting of three 2" x 6" boards nailed length-wise on 6" x 6" cross beams. A wider boardwalk was built on our cross country ski trail loop, just east of the East Arkon trail.

Long-time Friend Jerome McDuff was so kind to again hold his historical hike along the Salmon Lake Road this Spring, making the area come alive by pointing out remnants of the farms of the Kemp, David, Babcock and Sigsworth families, showing photographs

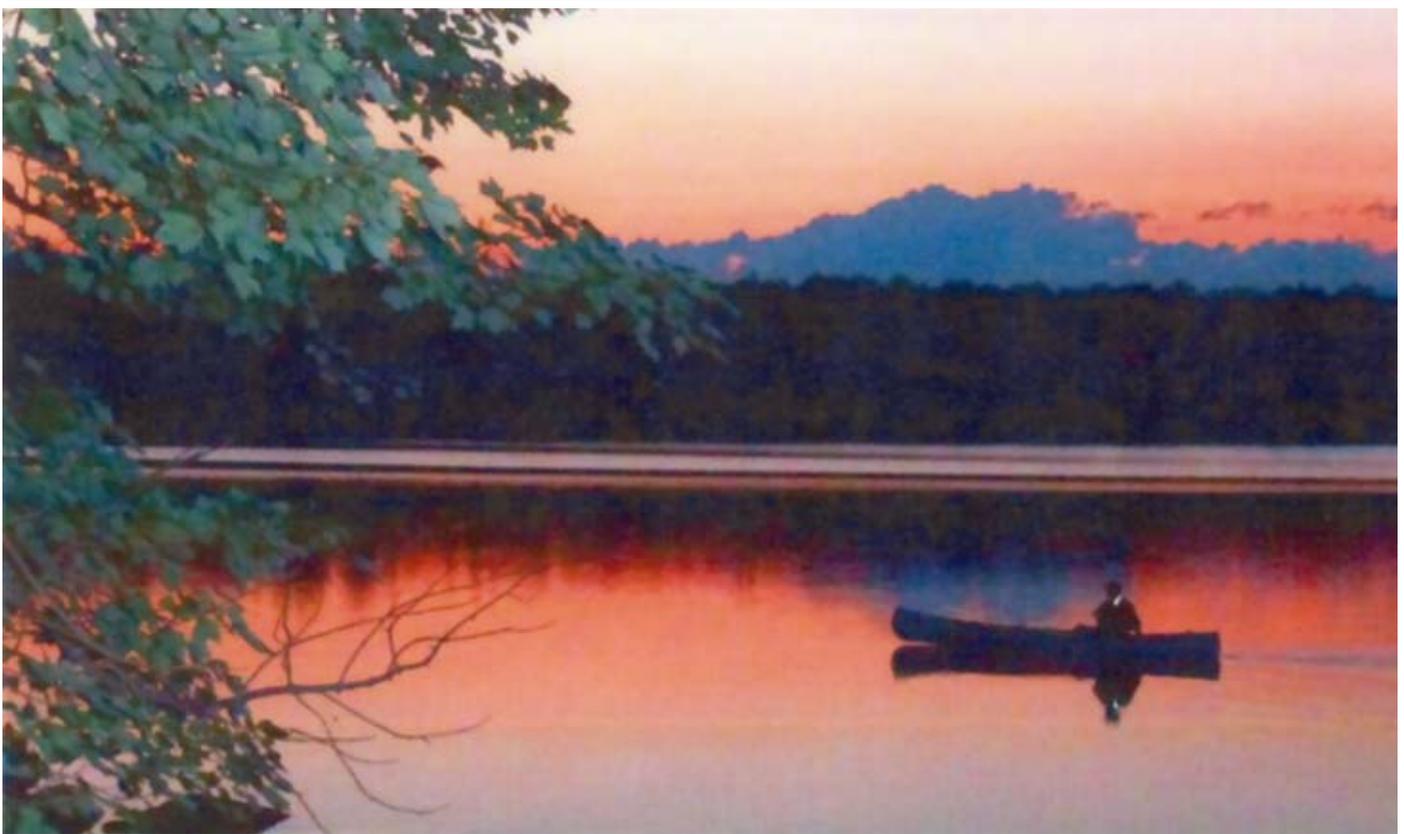


Jerome McDuff on historical walk, April 22, 2012

of the original homesteads and relating stories about the hard lives of their occupants. The hike began with looking at photos of the Vanluven cottage which stood at the site of the present Park Office and served as first head quarters of the Park. We ended at the site of a former hunting camp located near the Big Salmon Lake boat launch. It was my first opportunity to join this hike, but ever since, walking or driving down Big Salmon Lake Road has not been the same. Instead of looking out for deer, I imagine coming through the thriving farming community of yesteryear, and I marvel at how quickly nature has reclaimed the area after the farmsteads were abandoned about 60 to 70 years ago.

Although our newly planned workshop "Introduction to back country camping", scheduled for mid-May, had to be cancelled, the two levels of "Wilderness Navigation using map and compass", scheduled back to back on weekends in early June, were once again well attended. As we had several requests for an introductory back country camping course, we will schedule it again for next year, hoping to introduce more people to the joys of camping. Thanks are due to Don Stables for taking the lead in organizing these events.





Sunset over Big Salmon Lake, June 23, 2012

The President's Paddle in June to camp site #4 on Big Salmon Lake was held in splendid weather and, for the first time, saw a significant contingent of young people (aged > 1 to 18 years) among the participants. Highlights were a hike to the Mink Lake lookout, swimming at Devil's Oven rock, glorious sunsets with loon concerts and, a rare treat at Frontenac Park, hearing a pack of wolves howling right across the lake from our camp fire.

We are very happy that more than 30 hardy souls have already signed up for the Friends' newest challenge, to camp overnight in the Park at least once a month for 12 consecutive months. This challenge was proposed by Simon Smith and Don Stables who also produced the design for a "Friends of Frontenac Park — All-Season Camper" crest to be given to those completing it. We just received the beautifully embroidered crests from Villager Custom Screenprinting & Embroidery and have reproduced the design in this Newsletter. It is our hope that once people see the crest, they will not be able to resist taking up this new challenge.

I wish you a pleasant autumn season and hope to see many of you at the Challenge BBQ and Annual General Meeting in early November.

*Herb Helmstaedt*



New All-Season Camper crest

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### **Wolf or Coyote** - from page 1

giving Park managers a better understanding of predator-prey dynamics.

More information on the Eastern Wolf Survey is available on the research project's website: [www.easternwolfsurvey.ca](http://www.easternwolfsurvey.ca). Results are anticipated to be available by 2014.

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# TIO WULF RAMBLE

by Larry Gibbons

*But above and beyond there's still one name left over,  
And that is the name you will never guess;  
The name that no human research can discover-  
But THE CAT HIMSELF KNOWS, and will never confess.*

T. S. Eliot

I was struck by an idea while we were hunkering down in Cape Breton. It came right out of the western sky. Why not unite, in my mind anyway, a wild area in Cape Breton with our own wild Frontenac Park?

Kingston, Ontario did it and twinned up with two cities: the Cuban city of Cienfuegos and the American city of Scottsdale, Arizona.

Anyway, why couldn't I do a little bit of match-making in my own mental landscape? Specifically, why couldn't I mentally join Frontenac Provincial Park with the Middle River Wilderness Area, a rugged space which is located about ten miles north of the other side of Hunters Mountain? I think the two are made for each other and would be a fine pair.

And why would I want to do this? Why not? And spiritually, I figure it will make me feel closer to the Frontenac Provincial Park when I'm in Cape Breton and vice versa when I'm in Ontario.

And here's another one of my bright ideas. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all the wild parks, reserves, preserves and whatnots were literally stitched together with a network of wild trails? They could be the 401s of the natural world. Then a bear who was tired of his neighbourhood could just pack up his honeycomb and fur coat and move to the other side of the tracks.

This linking up would surely remove some of the pressures that currently exist on individual wild areas. They would stop being lonely islands of natural sanity in a sea of often very crass development. Instead they would be connected wholes, enriching and supporting each other. Sounds good to me.

Anyway, back to my wilderness matchmaking. What got me thinking on this line was the size of these two wild areas. Frontenac Park has 5,214 hectares of turf and the Middle River Wilderness Area has 5,620 hectares.

However, they have enough differences that I think this wedlock would work because, as you know, opposites attract. Frontenac Park is a child of the Canadian Shield. It is loaded with intriguing valleys, harsh cliffs, seductive ponds and thousands of chattering streams. And it is home to quite an assortment of threatened plants and animals, like the Blanding's turtle, the black rat snake and the eastern cougar.

The Middle River Wilderness Area is a child of steep, talus-covered slopes. It's a honey, with a landscape gowned with mature deciduous forests, drop dead canyons, curvy valleys, deep faults and roaring river systems. It too, harbours threatened species such as the American marten, the wood turtle and the Canada lynx.

Last spring, when we returned to Ontario, I was soon hiking in the Park, being much relieved to see that everything was still where it was supposed to be. Because, the way people are thinking these days, well, nothing wild can be taken for granted. The Park didn't let me down. Its power batteries were still energized and I believe there is more magic in a Park tree's leaf than in some entire sections of this fine country of ours. Oh, and have you noticed there seem to be more bald eagles in the Park?

There was a surprise waiting for us too. Last winter, while we were in Cape Breton, my wife had a confab on the phone with a fellow who lives close to Frontenac Park. He phoned to tell us that our cabin was safe and during this conversation he suggested that we should be careful when we get back because he had seen a big cat. When Sue mentioned this conversation to me I assumed he was talking about a lynx or a bobcat. That was exciting enough.

However, one fine April morning, while I was hiking on a trail which leads into Frontenac Park, I ran into a neighbour. We stopped to talk. He told

*Continued on page 7*

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# Is It A Journey or the Destination? Come Make a Memory at Frontenac!

by B. Korporaal

A visit or trip to Frontenac for most is quite an experience. For many, it may be their first visit to the Park and therefore it would be a great experience to come here and explore the many day hike and backpack trails, canoe routes and backcountry camping opportunities. The landscape of the Park is varied from heavily forested, low rolling hills, swamps and beaver ponds to rugged granite rock ridges, interspersed with Canadian Shield lakes. Frontenac has a lot to offer the back country traveller and explorer in all seasons. The Parks' outward 'mood', wildness and experiences changes with the seasons.

A good number of folk who come to the Park are from urban areas and therefore this could be the nearest experience they get to wilderness. When they are here they have their eyes opened to see another type of Provincial Park. Others have been coming here for many years, or for some, even before the Park was created and managed as a Provincial Park! These people have seen many changes over the years.

For some people it is the anticipation, the trip planning, and the trip itself of coming to the Park which is the experience they are looking for. For others it is not the trip getting here, but rather the destination of the Park or the destination of the

chosen campsite or trail to be hiked, which is what they are looking for. And for others it is the whole experience that enthralls them. Hiking in the invigorating brisk fall or spring air or slipping a canoe over mirror-calm waters or sitting by a campfire listening to the call of a far off loon or coyote, or laying in your four season tent in a thick down sleeping bag, in the crisp winter, listening to a barred owl hooting nearby, or the lake ice rumbling in the cold.

For the day visitor, their best Park experience may be hiking a trail and seeing a deer as it stands as still as a statue or feeling the tug of a nice bass at the end of your line or taking a picture of an orchid or a maple tree in its bright fall colours. It is an all encompassing experience when visiting Frontenac Park.

With having a fairly large Park with 160km of trails and travel routes, on the rugged Canadian Shield with 28 lakes and 48 interior campsites, and open all year, so close to the larger urban centres, it all makes Frontenac a true gem to come to and experience during any of the four seasons. Come and experience one of Eastern Ontario's best kept secrets.

Frontenac, a new experience with each visit!

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## Remembering - from page 8

abundant beaver. It is whatever inspires you to seek out. For us on this day, it was the mining industry. The campsite clusters are never far away. All are accessible by hiking in or by canoe if you are willing to portage. We came across three such clusters.

As we ate our lunch at the Tetts Mine site, several eastern phoebes cavorted about beside us, likely nesting in the mine entrance. Down below in the deep ravine lay reminders of the mining days - a few artefacts scattered about, small carpets of mica and an old boiler that has not operated or moved since the mine closed in 1924. It was used to provide the steam that ran the drill and the water pumps. Profound memories of what life might have been back in those days. The drilling was likely difficult and dangerous. There were no hard hats, goggles or electric lights and likely little thought to safety, but

the dollar a day they earned fed their families. For almost 90 years, the boiler has served no purpose except to house a porcupine who made use of the once open door to gain access and used the structure as a convenient outhouse, the woody pellets spilling out the doorway.

There was a lot to see on this hike – a few sprigs of courageous spring beauties showcasing their delicate flowers, the cry of a red-shouldered hawk, and the distant call of a pileated woodpecker, sounding like a flicker on steroids. Five hours later, hot and weary, we stumbled back to our car, tired, but filled with a special kind of exuberance that will draw us back again another day. And that day will be in the fall of 2013 when I offer this hike as part of my program of outdoor events. Stay tuned for that announcement.

# OUTSIDE

New programs and events may be added to the Official Schedule – please check the website at [www.frontenacpark.ca](http://www.frontenacpark.ca) for the most up to date information and details on specific programs. Programs presented by the Friends of Frontenac Park are identified with the Friends logo 

-  Frontenac Challenge – Sept 1 to Oct 31
-  Bring a Friend to the Park – September 1-3
-  Fall Work Day – September 29 – 08:45 to 16:00
-  Frontenac Challenge BBQ – November 4 – 10:30 to 12:30
-  Annual General Meeting – November 4 – 12:30 TO 13:30

## Friends of Frontenac Park

The Friends of Frontenac Park is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to develop programs and materials that enhance the public's awareness, education and appreciation of the natural environment and human history of Frontenac Provincial Park.

### 2012 Board of Directors

President	Herb Helmsteadt	hhelmst@kingston.net	613-542-6455
Vice-President	Simon Smith	sjsmith@kos.net	613-541-3964
Secretary	Martha Whitehead	martha.j.whitehead@gmail.com	613-548-1087
Treasurer	Guy Thorne	gthorne@kingston.net	613-548-1857
Membership	John Critchley	sharjohn.critchley@sympatico.ca	613-634-5475
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Member At Large	Heather Jamieson	jamieson@geol.queensu.ca	613-533-6181

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The Friends of Frontenac Park publishes the Frontenac News three times annually. The views expressed in the Frontenac News are not necessarily those of the Friends of Frontenac Park or the Editor. Some articles are published to give the viewpoint of an author or to incite discussions.

We welcome articles, notes, stories and photographs for the newsletter. Your ideas, suggestions and constructive criticisms are always encouraged. Material accepted is subject to editing and revision. Next deadline for submission of newsletter materials is December 15, 2012. Copy should be mailed to Friends of Frontenac Park c/o Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 2237, Kingston, ON K7L 5J9 or sent by e-mail to [frontenacpark@gmail.com](mailto:frontenacpark@gmail.com).

Visit us online at [www.frontenacpark.ca](http://www.frontenacpark.ca). Follow us on Facebook /Frontenacpark and Twitter @frontenacpark

## The Cataraqui Trail

by Guy Thorne

Members of the Friends' who arrive at the Park from Kingston via County Road 10 or the Sydenham Road may have noticed the former railway line which crosses your route, and some may have stopped to explore this right of way. For those who have not, it is well worth a look, for this is the route of the Cataraqui Trail.

The CP line between Strathcona, near Napanee, and Smiths Falls was closed some years ago and the tracks and sleepers were removed. For some time the future of the track bed was in doubt, but it is now the site of a recreational trail used by hikers and cyclists in summer and by snowmobiles and cross-country skiers in winter. The trail runs through a varied landscape, with some of the most striking scenery lying quite close to Frontenac Park – the section between the Perth Road and Chaffey's Lock passes among lakes, creeks, cliffs and forests and is particularly attractive. The trail surface is being steadily improved year by year.

The trail is owned by the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, managed by a volunteer board and financed by donations. You can find out more about the trail at [www.cataraquitrail.ca](http://www.cataraquitrail.ca), where you will find maps, photos and other details.

A good introduction to this resource and the people who use it is the annual Bike and Hike event which this year takes place on Saturday, September 22. This is a fundraiser and a good way to see what the trail has to offer, as part of a cheerful social occasion. There will be group hikes and bike rides over various distances, finishing with a barbecue lunch at Chaffey's Lock and including a bake sale, silent auction and prize draw. Details have been posted on the website (check the link to Bike and Hike 2012), so mark it on your calendar now. You might just meet some of your friends from Frontenac Park!

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## Tio Wulf Ramble - from page 4

me he had seen some mighty big cat tracks around his place. He, too, thought the tracks were made by a lynx or a bobcat. However, when we got to meet with the cat fellow and he described in more detail what he had seen, well, he wasn't talking about any lynx or bobcat. His description of this specific kitty was that it was very large, was brownish in colour, joggled a long tail and had the gall to spit, hiss and growl at him. That last detail was the one that had sent this guy scurrying for his truck, with a new tale to tell and with a few years of his life fleeing the tunnel of light.

There is only one cat I know who fits his description. A right intelligent cat too, because without the benefit of my trail hook-up theory being implemented, this pussy was able to slip into our area on its own, thus adding more magic and mystery to the Frontenac Provincial Park.

So, there are still plenty of surprises to be found in Frontenac Park and I'm sure this is also

true for the Middle River Wilderness Area. Insects, wild plants, eagles, cougars: a mighty list of wild creatures and experiences that will add layer upon layer upon layer of mystery and intrigue to my fine couple's lives. Long may they remain together. Amen.



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**THE ADVENTURE:**  
go overnight camping in the Park every month of the year within a one-year period.

**THE REWARD:**  
you will be recognized for your commitment to all-season outdoor adventure and receive public accolades, your name on a plaque, and the official emblem of the **Ultimate Camper** to sew on your pack.

THE FRIENDS OF FRONTENAC PARK  
**Ultimate All Season Adventure**

Return a Favour to Nature @ [www.frontenacpark.ca](http://www.frontenacpark.ca)

 FrontenacPark  @FrontenacPark



Friends of Frontenac Park

# Remembering Their Enduring Spirit

*Written and republished with permission of Terry Sprague*

We could hear them as soon as we crossed the dam, and we continued to listen to them for five hours that day. Frogs – choruses of them – little coveys of wood frogs quacking from the wooded edges of ponds, chorus frogs stroking the bristles of a comb, snoring leopard frogs, and amongst them, spring peepers announcing their presence with high pitched peeps. We thought we heard mink frogs, but none of us was sure if they occurred this far south. A little research confirmed that they did. I have heard them before at Machesney Lake near Bon Echo and, of course, in Algonquin Park.

Although south of Highway 7, we were far enough north to find the 21 degree temperature a bit unusual for March 21st. It was early enough to escape the usual clouds of black flies that accompany hikers in spring at Frontenac Provincial Park. In fact, it was warm enough this day to make hiking downright uncomfortable at times. We started the 12 km Tetsmine Trail on the north side of the park at 9:00 a.m. in sweaters and long pants; by noon, we had stripped down to shorts and T-shirts.

The Tetsmine Trail is one of several long trail loops that provide outdoor enthusiasts access to all corners of this 13,000-acre park, set aside in 1974. You will not find cars much beyond the parking lot here, or motor homes or travel trailers. Although classified as a natural environment park, there is a feel of true wilderness here when you walk any of the 170 km of hiking trails. We had walked for close to five hours before we even spotted another human being on the trail! It is this remoteness that makes Frontenac a favourite among tent campers, hikers and canoeists. It is a different atmosphere here. The trails are clean and well maintained; for this we can credit the Friends of Frontenac, an active volunteer group who never cease their efforts in making improvements. There is no garbage and no mysterious doggie bags filled with excrement left on the path, like we see in so many public areas around the Quinte region. Visitors here care and have respect for their special place. That is why emergency barrels are often found along the trails, just in case someone needs matches or other emergency supplies. Nothing is ever stolen; indeed, hikers occasionally leave things in the barrel, in case it is needed by someone else coming along behind them. That is why I hike these trails, to get away, if only for a few hours, from the mind-set we encounter around here that everything for the public must be developed, defaced, littered with garbage

and covered in graffiti.

Frontenac is a different world, a location in which I would like my dusty ashes one day to be sprinkled down the rocky slopes of the Moulton Gorge where we stood in absolute silence, except for distant frogs, and stared at the indescribable beauty that lay before us. The Gorge is what drains Moulton Lake that rests almost dead centre of the trail loop. We didn't see it, for it was too far in. Eventually, we had to cross the gorge, to get to the other side and we were thankful that we had walking sticks and poles to ease us down to a lower level.

Access to this amazing trail is from the Park's north side, miles from the main entrance. Anyone unfamiliar with Canoe Lake Road which ultimately winds its way toward Westport could easily miss the tiny parking lot, tucked in amongst some trees off Devil Lake Road. From there, it is about a half kilometre walk across the Kingsford Dam to where the 12-km loop begins. Then a decision which direction to take. We always opt for clockwise as it seems more logical to travel with the clock rather than against it.

It is mining country here and scattered at the historic sites are traces of mica. But, not every trail is about mining. The numerous trails here feature granite outcrops, vast wetlands and mixed forests, plants and wildlife. Trails wind through rugged terrain to gorges, bogs, old homesteads and mines. Hikers and canoeists can head into the interior for glimpses of osprey and kingfisher, deer and black bear, coyote and fox, and

*Continued on page 5*



*Author Terry Sprague with Kathy Felkar*

MIKE BURG

# Frontenac Provincial Park Map

The Frontenac Park Map is available at the following locations:



## Kingston

Trailhead, Indigo Books.

## Sydenham Area

P.J. Trousdale General Store, Frontenac Outfitters, Snug Harbour Resort, Desert Lake Resort-Hartington, Frontenac Park Office.

## Out of Town

Mountain Equipment Co-op (Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa), World of Maps (Ottawa), Outdoors Oriented (St. Catharines), Novaks (London), Bushtaka (Ottawa), Friends of Kilarney Park, Adventure Guides (Waterloo), Trailhead (Mississauga and Ottawa), Running Free (Markham), Elstone (Burlington), Wild Rock Outfitters (Peterborough), Finlayson Provincial Park (Temagami).

**To order your copy by mail, send \$9 (plus \$1 for mailing) for paper map to: Friends of Frontenac Park, P.O. Box 2237, Kingston ON K7L 5J9**

Your membership with The Friends entitles you to a 15% discount at Novel Idea, a Kingston owned bookstore, located at 156 Princess Street.

## Join The Friends of Frontenac Park Now

In these days of government cutbacks and encroaching development, a semi-wilderness park needs all the friends it can get. Your membership in The Friends of Frontenac Park will put you in touch with other outdoor enthusiasts who have discovered one of Ontario's great natural secrets. Join today or sign a friend up. Everyone is welcome.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Category

(Membership year April 1 to March 31)

Family \$ 25.00

Individual \$ 20.00

Donation *(tax receipts will be issued for amounts exceeding \$10)* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Submitted \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques payable to:

**The Friends of Frontenac Park**

**P.O.Box 2237**

**Kingston ON K7L 5J9**

### Getting to Know You

Are you interested in participating in Friend's activities, as an organizer, Board member, workshop leader, project coordinator, writer/editor, naturalist or general volunteer?

Please indicate your interest below and we will contact you.

I'm interested in:

Helping with trail maintenance and work bees

Leading nature walks

Hosting at the Park Office

Being an ambassador in the Park

Serving on the Board of Directors

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



Breathtaking views, amazing fall colours, 11 hiking trails, and a lot of fun is your own reward when you accept

# The Frontenac Challenge



Tetsmine Loop Hike

An annual event since 1993, the Frontenac Challenge encourages hikers to enjoy the splendour of the fall colours of Frontenac Park by hiking each of the 11 hiking loops that form the Frontenac Challenge within the months of September and October. Over 168 people finished last year. Be one of them this year! Here's how:



Photo by Caitlin Cameron

- Register and pick up a log sheet at the Frontenac Park Office
- When you hike each of the trails, find the special Challenge sign and note what it says on your log sheet.
- Return your completed log sheet when you've hiked all the trails.
- Celebrate your feat (and your feet!) at a November barbeque, receive a Certificate of Accomplishment and have your name on a plaque at the Frontenac Park Office.

## JUNIOR CHALLENGE FOR KIDS 12 AND UNDER

Youth 12 and under are invited to complete the Junior Challenge by hiking any 6 of the trail loops in September and October.

✓ CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

For more information contact the Park Office at Frontenac Provincial Park at :



# 613-376-3489

[www.frontenacpark.ca](http://www.frontenacpark.ca)

 FrontenacPark  @FrontenacPark

