

Community Tree Hunt - Alliston

Dedication ~ September 3, 2005
175 Year-old Bur Oak ~ The Sitting Duck

On behalf of the Ontario Heritage Tree Alliance I congratulate all those of you who took one step ~ ONE BIG STEP ~ to save one of nature's treasures ~ Shauneen MacKay, Paul Cadieux, Aiden Whalen, George DeGroot, David Pearl, Mr. Somerville, the Arbour Committee, the Ministry of Transportation and all those of you as yet unknown to me, for your initiative.

You are contributing to what we hope will become a treasure chest of Ontario 's most significant trees. This Bur Oak will join only a few others that have to date been protected by whatever means possible e.g., Comfort Sugar Maple in Pelham (Niagara Region), Carolinian Oak Tree in Colborne Township in Huron County, Black Walnut trees in Scarborough.

Currently the OHTA is developing a toolkit to assist communities like yours to find other trees that, subject to an evaluation process, will be added to Ontario 's heritage tree inventory (database). Simcoe County is contributing greatly to this project because of its practical experience with the community tree hunt. Paul Cadieux is a vital member of the committee. David Pearl is one of our "shadow" members.

In addition to developing an inventory we are also working on legislation that would protect those heritage trees that have been identified ~ specifically, municipal bylaws. We will be working with Municipal Heritage Committees across Ontario to help us in this regard since they advise city councils on heritage matters. We are fortunate that one of OHTA's parents is Community Heritage Ontario, an organization that fosters and supports the work of these municipal committees.

We expect to launch our toolkit in 2006. Information about OHTA and our work can be found on our website, on our postcards, and at the workshop to be held by the Ontario Urban Forest Council on October 20 th at Black Creek Pioneer Village. The program will showcase six tree champions and their stories of survival.

Once again, thank you for your courage and persistence in saving **The Sitting Duck** ~ imagine, moving a road to save a tree. You are unique in this. You listened to nature and did what was right. You are in good company. The famous Canadian architect Douglas Cardinal (York Region Admin Office, Newmarket & Museum of Civilization) said that he receives his inspiration for architecture from what nature tells him, as well as the wise counsel of his elders.

We look forward to this Bur Oak's 175 year-old story ~ What were its surroundings like? What kinds of people did the oak see? What activities occurred under its protection? A mystery yet to solve. Well done.

Fran Moscall on behalf of the Ontario Heritage Tree Alliance