

# CAROLINIAN CANADA COALITION

*Collaborating for a Healthy Ecoregion*



## MEDIA RELEASE

November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, London, ON

### ***Caring for Species at Risk* Stewardship Workshops for Southern Ontario Rural Landowners**

For the past 2 years the Carolinian Canada Coalition and partners have hosted a series of “*Caring for Species at Risk Workshops*” including ones in the counties of Norfolk, Lambton, Middlesex, and Elgin, as well as the Regional Municipalities of Hamilton-Wentworth and Niagara. These unique workshops, geared to the rural landowner, provide participants with an opportunity to learn about species at risk found in their area, learn about local habitat stewardship projects that are underway, learn how they, as landowners, can initiate projects on their own land to create natural habitat and conserve biodiversity, and receive information on sourcing financial incentives and expert advice.

Carolinian Canada is the southernmost region of Canada and contains more rare and endangered species of plants and animals than any other part of Canada. Over 125 species have been identified at risk and over 400 others are considered rare. Forest cover has been reduced from 80% to 11% and in some places is less than 3%. Wetlands once covered 28% of the land but now are reduced to 5%. Fragmentation of remaining habitats into very small remnants is a further threat. The Carolinian zone occupies only 1% of Canada's land area, but is home to 25% of its people. It's not surprising that the Carolinian zone is Ontario's most threatened ecological region.

“Private landowners who practice sound land stewardship on their own land support biodiversity and are protecting air, water and soil quality for everyone,” stated Michelle Kanter, Executive Director of the Carolinian Canada Coalition. “This workshop is a tool to helping private individuals in proactively leading the way in helping provide habitat for species at risk and other wildlife.”

Workshop participants will be introduced to *The Rural Landowner Stewardship Guide*, developed by the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, along with a newly developed module on species at risk. The guide is fashioned after the successful Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) for agricultural landowners but it is aimed at engaging rural non-farm residents in the protection of their natural environment through individual actions. “These small, individual actions can bring about positive changes and improvements in our Carolinian zone and the Stewardship Guide is an excellent starting point to begin that change,” said Bernie Solymár, Workshop Coordinator with Carolinian Canada.

Workshop participants will also receive a colourful and informative resource package, providing information on a wide variety of stewardship topics, as well as contact information for local agencies and resources to help them implement some of the recommendations outlined in the guide. In addition, local representatives from the Carolinian Canada Coalition, the local Stewardship Council and Conservation Authority, local naturalist groups and other organizations have been invited to be on hand to answer any questions participants may have and for individual consultations and follow-up plans. Funding for this project is provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Parks Canada, and local conservation partners.

**Tentative Dates and Locations are:**

Saturday, January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – Burford Community Centre (Brant)  
Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012 – Quality, Woodstock (Oxford)  
Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – Ruthven Park, Cayuga (Haldimand)  
Saturday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012 – Ridgetown College (Chatham-Kent)

All workshops run 9 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

To sign-up for a “Caring for Species at Risk” Workshop please e-mail [monarch@carolinian.org](mailto:monarch@carolinian.org) to reserve a spot or call Bernie at 519-426-7124 for more information. There will be a nominal registration fee of \$10 per person, payable on the day of the workshop. Lunch is included. Participants that pledge to conduct an SAR Habitat Plan for their property receive a \$25 gift certificate for a local native plant nursery.

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The Carolinian Canada Coalition ([www.carolinian.org](http://www.carolinian.org)) is dedicated to stewarding a healthy ecoregion in collaboration with a wide range of public and private stakeholders. CCC programs have been focusing on research, awareness and effective action by connecting people who care for nature since 1984.

**For more information please contact:**

Bernie Solymar, Workshop Coordinator, Carolinian Canada Coalition  
519-426-7124, [solymar@nornet.on.ca](mailto:solymar@nornet.on.ca)

or

Michelle Kanter, Executive Director, Carolinian Canada Coalition  
519-433-7077 [mkanter@carolinian.org](mailto:mkanter@carolinian.org)