

Residents save Wakefield forest



Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment board member Bronwyn Rayfield and land trust director Olaf Jensen signing the deed of sale for the Hundred Acre Wood near Wakefield on March 31. Hunter Cresswell photo

By Hunter Cresswell

Action Chelsea for the Respect of the Environment officials signed the deed of sale to protect Wakefield's Hundred Acre Wood in perpetuity on the afternoon of deadline day.

On March 31, ACRE president Stephen Woodley, land trust director Olaf Jensen, and board member Bronwyn Rayfield met in notary and legal advisor Megan Throop's Chelsea office to sign the deal. They invited the Low Down to tag along to witness history.

"It's a bit surreal," Jensen said.

The \$1.5 million fundraiser began in March 2021 and now the 100-acre parcel just east of Chemin Rockhurst near Wakefield will be protected as greenspace for non-motorized recreational use in perpetuity. Private donations and pledges

total over \$500,000, while grant funding, including a municipality of La Pêche grant of \$16,080 from its municipal Green Fund, and the National Capital Commission's \$100,000 grant, and others totalled \$865,000, Jensen said.

A stewardship committee is being formed that will advise the ACRE board what decisions to make about the land's use.

One of the biggest questions that community members have asked about the fundraiser is access.

For decades Chemin Rockhurst residents have walked paths through their neighbour's properties – with permission – to access the forest. The land can be accessed by parking off Hwy 105 near the former Jean Burger, but that parking is private, so one of the first subjects the stewardship committee will tackle will be access, Woodley explained.

Hundred Acre Wood – formerly known as the Minnes Lands – is home to at-risk species, including western chorus frogs, monarch butterflies and bobolink blackbirds, as well as eastern white cedars – rare in this area due to centuries of logging. The land is also identified by the National Capital Commission as an important ecological corridor for wildlife moving throughout Gatineau Park.

The land has been in the Minnes family hands since they purchased it in 1973 from the Trowsse family. In the past, owner Chris Minnes sought to develop the land, but couldn't find a residential development partner that shared his values. In total, his property is 160 acres.

Following the Hundred Acre Wood sale, the 60 remaining acres will continue to be used by Minnes' business, Eco Echo, which provides environmental education programs.

In 2013, then-La Pêche mayor, now-Gatineau MNA Robert Bussière, wanted to expropriate 20 to 45 acres of Minnes' land for development.

The Hundred Acre Wood brings ACRE's number of land trusts to seven.

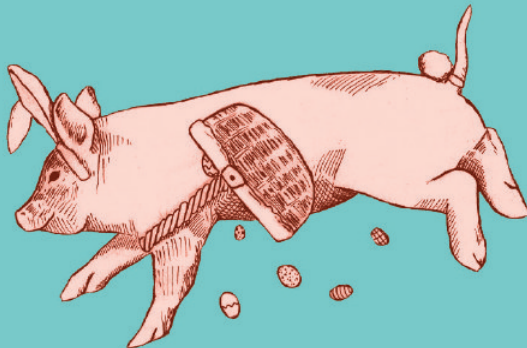
Last year the Gatineau Hills pooled \$850,000 to purchase 57 acres of undeveloped forest – now called Forêt aux étangs – in Chelsea near the Musie Loop neighbourhood for conservation purposes with ACRE acting as the land trust.

ACRE is also currently fundraising to buy 70 acres of undeveloped forest land in the Larrimac area of Chelsea, which will be known as Forêt Jolicœur-McMartin. According to the fundraiser Facebook page, \$475,000 out of the \$950,000 goal has been raised or pledged. Do donate, email jolicœur.mcmartin@gmail.

For more information on ACRE, visit acrechelsea.qc.ca.

EST. Peabody FARM 2012

MARCHÉ DE PÂQUES FERME PEABODY FARM EASTER MARKET



SATURDAY APRIL 16TH 2022 10 A.M. – 2 P.M.
26 CHEMIN SULLIVAN VENOSTA, QUEBEC

– *Featuring* –

PEABODY FARM • FERMESOL • WAKEFIELD APPAREL • BIG ROCK FARM • PRIESTCREEK FARM
VOX KOMBUCHA • ELDON'S PANTRY • CHESLOCK MAPLE SYRUP • LITTLE RED WAGON WINERY
MICHAELKINGHORN BLACKSMITH • KIRKVIEW FARM • KATE DOUGLAS POTTERY • ST. MIKES HIGHSCHOOL
SAF • ANDREA HUGHES FABRICS • APPLE ROAD SOAP • BOUCANERIE CHELSEA SMOKEHOUSE
POTTERY LM SERAFIN • FERME MOUFLON • NORTHERNSEEDS • COUTURENATURE • BOREAL FARM
RICE HOGAN FARM • MAX BLACK ARTIST • CINDY MULVIHILL PHOTOGRAPHY • MARIBELS ALMONDS

• *And* •

FARM BABIES • PEABODY BURGER CANTEN
UKRANIAN FUNDRAISER FEATURING AUTHENTIC GOODIES

SANDRAMARSTERS@YAHOO.CA • PIERRE 613 558 4517 • PEABODYFARM.CA