

'Friends' group cherishes Salmon River

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IN mid-October the board of directors of the 'Friends of the Salmon River' toured the watershed to learn about its landscapes and attributes and to identify problems that could affect the health of the river. Beginning in Tamworth, the tour travelled to Story Lake in the northern part of the watershed and south to Shannonville near the river's mouth at the Bay of Quinte.

Formed in early 2004, the Friends hope to raise awareness of the condition of the entire watershed and enlist the energies of all residents to care for the healthy river we have today, increase our pride in the watershed and work to protect the river and its valley for future generations.

The tour group saw the great variety of landscapes and activities in the watershed, from forestry and tourism on the beautiful granite rocks and lakes in the north to agriculture on the limestone plains in the south. It was noted that throughout the watershed we have active small communities with a surprising number of artists and craft persons making a living here.

The tour passed through parts of the Kennebec Lake Wetland Complex and many other marshes and swamps, principal-



The Salmon River at Lonsdale, west of Napanee.

ly in the north. Natural processes cleanse the water as it passes through these wetland areas. They also act as giant sponges to slow down the rate of runoff and lessen the problem of flooding. After the recent record heavy rainfall, the water volume on the Salmon rose and fell more slowly than in neighbouring rivers.

On the Canadian Shield, in the northern part of the watershed, some highlights of the tour were the access point (on

the Tamworth-Arden Road) for the new Puzzle Lake Provincial Park and the beautiful Kennebec, Big Clear and Story Lakes. Highlights on the southern limestone included Beaver Lake, waterfalls and the provincially famous Salmon River alvars.

Two major issues were identified. We believe the proposed areas for spreading manure from a large new industrial pig farm are located too close to the Salmon River and Beaver Lake.

Runoff from these areas would contaminate the river with bacteria and excess nutrients. We also believe the proposed expansion of the Richmond dump would, among other problems, add huge volumes of leachate every day to the river in an area where the summer flow, often as low as nine cubic feet per second, would be unable to process this amount of pollution.

The beauty of the Salmon River watershed was visible everywhere, notwithstanding a few areas where old cars or garbage littered the roadside. The Friends hope that fostering a better understanding and appreciation of the Salmon River valley will result in people treating it with more care and respect.

The Friends of the Salmon River plan to offer a bus tour of the watershed in spring 2005. Printed information will be supplied and knowledgeable people will offer running commentaries on the geology, ecology, economy and other attributes of the watershed. Information about the Friends of the Salmon River is available from Nathalie Sorensen at (613) 542-0398 or Gray Merriam at (613) 335-3589.

Aileen Merriam,
Arden

N. Beaver - Oct. 24/2004