

## An Outstanding Example of a Personal Contribution to Wetland Conservation

While many of us contribute time and/or money to causes and organizations that support land conservation, it is also possible to go one step further by purchasing land for conservation and working with land trusts to protect land for future generations. Anyone working in wetlands should be familiar with Dr. Paul Keddy's contributions to science. He has over 150 publications to his credit, with his *Wetland Ecology: Principles and Conservation* winning the Society of Wetland Scientists' Merit Award in 2006. While recognized for his writings and teaching, Dr. Keddy has also practiced what he has preached in terms of wetland conservation. He has bought land...and given it away.



Long Pond is the largest pond in Keddy Nature Sanctuary, Drummond-North Elmsley Township, Ontario.

As Aldo Leopold wrote so many years ago in *A Sand County Almanac*, biologists spend too much of their life watching beautiful places ruined. Even in their twenties, Paul and Cathy were fed up at seeing natural places they loved, including so-called protected areas, being violated. They decided to buy at least one piece of forest that they could enjoy. As graduate students at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia in the 1970s, Paul and his future wife, Cathy found, a thousand miles away near Ottawa, 100 acres that included a great blue heron rookery. They decided to buy it. For years they camped on the land and explored adjoining lands. Of course, once you explore adjoining lands, you find new attractions. There was the source of the stream for the heronry, and a patch of orchids in a nearby seepage area. If only they could own that land too! But money was tight. The first of two parcels was purchased

only after it was logged, recognizing that the land, in time, would recover. The second parcel was purchased later after logging had commenced, but they were able to buy out one of the loggers to keep a portion of the land in its natural state. Eventually their property encompassed just over a square mile (about 640 acres). The full property included a wide array of natural features: a ridge with ancient hemlock trees, the northern-most occurrence in Canada of *Peltandra virginica*, nesting turkey vultures, and more than ten beaver ponds with populations of snapping turtles, bullfrogs and spotted salamanders.

Back when they bought the first property, there was little protection for wetlands, but now there is a wetland evaluation program in Ontario. Their property, and more adjoining land, has been designated a Provincially Significant Wetland Complex.

When Paul left his endowed professorship in Louisiana, he took up a new position — Independent Scholar ([www.drpaulkeddy.com](http://www.drpaulkeddy.com)) and forest warden. He says it's much like being a professor — but without the interminable meetings and without exams. Of course, the pay is minimal, but then St. Francis of Assisi lived in a forest for many years in similar circumstances. Paul's first project at this location was the new edition of *Wetland Ecology* mentioned above. He is now preparing a new edition of his other text book, *Plant Ecology*. Paul's office overlooks the property, and he can see beavers, muskrats, herons and kingfishers without moving from his desk!

But what happens to such properties when you die? Paul said that if killed by a logging truck on the highway, or swallowed by an alligator, he did not want his forest being wrecked. This is where a local land trust stepped into picture. The Mississippi Madawaska Land Trust (MMLT) accepted a gift combining property and development rights to establish the Keddy Nature Sanctuary which is now one of five properties under their stewardship. The effort of the Keddys is an excellent example of how you can take your commitment to wetland conservation to another level. Most regions of North America now have land trusts. For more information on the Keddy Nature Sanctuary, see the April 2014 edition of the MMLT newsletter (<http://mmlt.ca/wp-content/uploads/April-2014-Newsletter.pdf>). ■