



2010 WINTER WORKS

By: **Simon Connell**

Winter works is the term used by The Friends of the Osprey to describe our annual program of maintaining our artificial Osprey nesting platforms. These Platforms are built by boring through the ice and inserting 18 foot long cedar poles which are then driven into the mud for about three feet. The poles then angle into an apex upon which the wooden platform will be built, eight to ten feet above the ice surface. The platform must be slatted as opposed to solid. If the platform is solid there is a good chance that the geese will claim it instead of Osprey, as geese can't build a nest on slats. The osprey will build on this aerial platform as the gathering of sticks and nest building is a part of their mating ritual.

This work can be very strenuous, as the poles have to be cut out of the forest, usually in the winter as we find that easier than fighting the bugs and vegetation earlier in the year. The poles then have to be hauled to the road, loaded, and transported along with our tools. When we arrive at the work site everything is hauled across the ice to the spot where we have decided to ice-auger the holes. We use a large poly sled to haul our several hundred pounds of tools, chainsaws, auger and post driving devices. The poles go onto the shoulders of our volunteers. This is all very physical and could not be done without the help of our volunteers from Sir Sanford Fleming College, particularly those from the Earth Workers group.

Some of these students are only with us one year as they graduate and move on, others we know for several years. This is the Third year that Phil Shaw has been with us as our SSFC liaison. Our other student volunteers this year are: Ashlea Veldhoen, Greg Chappell, Rebecca Lewis, Hilary Watson, Jacob Speck, Alexa Small, and Linda Macleod. Our member volunteers were Dave Robertson, Ed Lawson, Simon Connell, Steve Abercrombie, Jim Chappell, and Leanne Wallis.

We work only on Saturdays as that is when the students are available. Our projects started January 9th this year. We repaired and de-goosed three platforms on County Road 24 between Bobcaygeon and Dunsford and one at Charlore Park on Pigeon River, north of Cowans Bay. On Jan. 16 some of the students did the de-goosing in the Kenrei Park area. De-goosing is the term we use for removing the Ospreys nesting material from a platform that has been taken over by geese. This deters the geese but not the Osprey.

Feb. 6th was a great day. We rebuilt a platform on the Mill Pond at Omemee and then returned to the forest where we were to cut our poles. There was a shack in the forest with wood fire blazing and a great meal of chili, bakery bread, salads, and ice cream awaiting our arrival. It was hard to leave and go back to work. We thank Pat and Stephen Connell for their help with poles, lumber and use of the shack.

We had another big day on February 16th, at which time we built a brand new platform in the backwaters at Hargrave Rd. Kirkfield. This was a situation we had never seen before as the lake had been drained so low that there was no water, just mud covered with a thin layer of ice and snow. We thought we were beat but proceeded out several hundred feet until we started falling through into the mud, thus no auger needed. We just drove our poles directly into the mud and erected the platform. We finished around 1 PM and just in time as the ice was getting too rotten to work on.

We always provide lunch for the volunteers which this time was provided by the Shalamar Restaurant. From their dining room window you can see our new platform.

That concluded our work for this winter. The tools were unloaded, cleaned, dried and placed in storage until next year.