



# Mississippi Valley Conservation

## **Purdon, Not just for Orchids**

When you think of Purdon Conservation Area your first thought is... well, orchids. While there is no denying the awesome beauty of the thousands of Showy Lady-slipper Orchids that inhabit the Lanark Highland Fen, there is a lot more to the site.

Mississippi Valley Conservation and the Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation recently officially opened the Ted Mosquin Highland Trail, a stunning new trail that meanders through the fen, marsh, swamp and into the highland deciduous forest beyond.

The trail is the culmination of several years of work. In recognition of his tireless efforts, and devotion to the orchids at the Purdon Conservation Area and his role in its ongoing development, the new trail was named the Ted Mosquin Highland Trail.

“Joe Purdon took action to nurture the Lady-slipper colony for the benefit of future generations and, with a passion and determination second to none, Ted Mosquin has taken up the challenge to ensure that the colony continues to thrive. And he went further to spearhead the development of this new uplands trail to extend the opportunities for visitors to appreciate the birds, wildlife and interesting vegetation beyond the fen” stated Mary Vandenhoff, former Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation President.

A large variety of bird species call the site home. In fact some thirty seven different species were recently spotted on site. A dozen species of warblers visit during their spring migration. The Mississippi Valley Conservation Foundation installed birdhouses this past winter for over ten species of cavity nesting birds in locations well off the trail, in an effort to recreate nesting habitat similar to that which was present in the old growth forests before much of Lanark County was developed for farming. The boxes are being monitored to determine nesting success.

The flora and fauna on the trail include a wide variety of wildflowers, trees and shrubs. Plans for the trail to be a self guided route are progressing and interpretive signage has been installed along the trail to point out species of interest. Some of the more common species include Hepatica, White and Red Trillium, Bellwort, Mitreworts, Blue Cohosh, Clubmoss, violets, sedges, Helleborne Orchid and many more.

The trail is roughly a forty five minute walk at a leisurely pace. To truly appreciate all the trail has to offer allow yourself a couple of hours and pack a picnic lunch to enjoy at the gazebo overlooking Purdon Lake, located off the short trail at the upper parking lot entrance.

For more information on the site please visit the Purdon page of the Mississippi Valley Conservation website at [www.mvc.on.ca](http://www.mvc.on.ca). Or call 613-259-2421.