

TOWN and COUNTRY
Cleaners
DRY CLEANING
SAME DAY DRY CLEANING SERVICE
MONDAY TO FRIDAY
877-0387
HALTON HILLS SHOPPING CENTRE

FAMILY

the HERALD
Home Newspaper of Halton Hills • Established 1856

SECTION

CANADA'S LARGEST LEATHER GOODS STORE
the olde Hide House

SECTION B, THE HERALD, Wednesday, May 15, 1985 - Page 1

Use of farm up for study by Heritage Foundation

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff

A study into how the Ontario Heritage Foundation can make the best use of 540 acres of property bequeathed to it by Stewart and Letty Bennett has begun.

The four month feasibility study is being undertaken by Sears and Russell Consultants of Toronto.

Located in Ballinafad, Scotsdale Farm was left to the Foundation three years ago when the Bennetts died.

Since then, a number of studies have been conducted on the land north of Georgetown.

In 1983, George Cordner did an earth sciences study of the landforms, topography, soil types, bedrock and Niagara Escarpment features of the land.

Jocelyn Webber did a life sciences study of the plants and animals living there and regional archaeologist Bill Fox did a preliminary archaeology study.

Last year, the cultural, historical and architectural evolution of the buildings at Scotsdale Farm was studied by consultant Barbara McPhail.

"All these studies are background material to help us decide how to manage the property in the future," Natural Heritage Co-ordinator Bill Sargent said.

The Foundation has spent \$6,000 for those studies so far, he said.

The current feasibility study will invite public comments on options for the property, and after being reviewed by the Foundation's board of directors, plans should be underway by the fall for Scotsdale Farm.

Sears and Russell planner Jane Holmes said right now background information and the studies are being reviewed by the consultants.

"We haven't really started into proposing other options," she said.

Options for the property will try to preserve the environmentally sensitive areas, and be compatible with neighboring property uses and the Niagara Escarpment Commission, she said.

Two public meetings are planned. The first one is to inform the public a feasibility study is being conducted and to ask for public input as to how the property should be used.

A second meeting will identify recommended options for using the land and get feedback on them.

"It sounds like we're studying the thing to death, but this is the normal route before we venture into capital expenses," Foundation property administrator Brian Rogers said.

Farm manager Emmerson Clark was left the farm animals by the Bennetts in their will.



Scotsdale farm lands a naturalist's wonderland



Photos by Ani Pederian

By ANI PEDERIAN
Herald Staff

Nestled in a swampy area shaded by evergreens grow seven orchid species on Scotsdale Farm near Ballinafad.

The 540-acre farm, eight kilometers northwest of Georgetown, is a haven for many other rare plant and animal life.

Unknown to many travellers who speed down Trafalgar Road past the property formerly belonging to Stewart and Letty Bennett, these lands are home to over 73 species of birds including the Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and Red breasted Nuthatch.

Belonging to the Ontario Heritage Foundation since Mrs. Bennett died in 1982, the property's most significant area is the conifer swamp.

Located on either side of Trafalgar Road, the evergreens swamp is on the southwestern part of Scotsdale Farm. It makes up 20 per cent of the property, or 108 acres.

According to a recent study of the flora and fauna on the Bennett estate by Jocelyn Webber, the conifer swamp is the best example of this type of vegetation seen by the Credit Valley Conservation Authority in Peel or Halton. The lands are under the Authority's

jurisdiction.

Ms. Webber's study was done for the Heritage Foundation which is responsible for the use of the property.

Her inventory showed nearly half of the plant life that can be found in Halton region occurred at Scotsdale Farm. A total of 504 species of plants were uncovered, including 51 species of trees, 30 species of shrubs and 28 species of ferns.

In fact, two plants found at Scotsdale Farm are considered rare in Ontario - the ebony spleenwort fern and the walking fern. Ms. Webber also discovered a species of Virginia Creeper which may be added to the provincially

rare list in the future.

The conifer swamp provides a habitat for smaller birds like the Nashville Warbler and the White Throated Sparrow.

There is a dense growth of White Cedar, Balsam Fir, Larch and Black Spruce growing there, making walking difficult because of many fallen trees.

As well, this area contains a diversity of herbs rarely found in Southern Ontario, Ms. Webber noted.

Altering the drainage in the area would have serious environmental consequences on the vegetation and animal life in the swamp, as would removing the trees that have been

blown down by the

If the area is to be used for nature walks, Ms. Webber recommends a narrow boardwalk be built, as the regionally significant orchids and other small herbs won't survive trampling.

The Niagara Escarpment forms the backbone of Scotsdale Farm, which is neighbor to the Authority's nature centre at Silver Creek.

At present, approximately half the farm property has been cleared for agriculture and about one-third of the remaining forested portion has been subjected to selective cutting or has been grazed by cattle.

Mr. Bennett's prize winning shorthorn cattle

regularly grazed on the pasture lands which make up 243 acres.

Before settlement and clearing of the land for agriculture, some 100 to 150 years ago, Scotsdale Farm was mainly covered by deciduous and coniferous forest.

At present, 12 vegetation types occur on the property, and 12 kinds of mammals including white tailed deer, red fox, coyote, porcupine and striped skunk.

Although the agricultural value of the lands isn't high, the real estate value is likely to increase due to encroachment of estate development in the Georgetown area.

An equine research centre operated by the University of Guelph has been suggested earlier when the bequest was made, but that idea has been dropped as the University is far from the property, Mr. Rogers said.

"We have to be careful what we put there, because it will have future consequences and could work against the Foundation in the future," he said. "We also have to be careful we don't put a use in there that's too active and would bother the neighbors."

The Foundation wants uses that are economically viable as well, and don't require a lot of ongoing upkeep, Mr. Rogers said.

"We won't be tearing anything down," Mr. Rogers said. "It's not our intention to tear anything down unless it's falling down."

The study of the buildings on the large property showed them to be of local and regional interest, "nice, typical rural Ontario farm buildings," Mr. Sargent said.

The Bennetts were using it as a retirement farm, and the Foundation isn't looking at turning it now into a working farm, Mr. Rogers said.

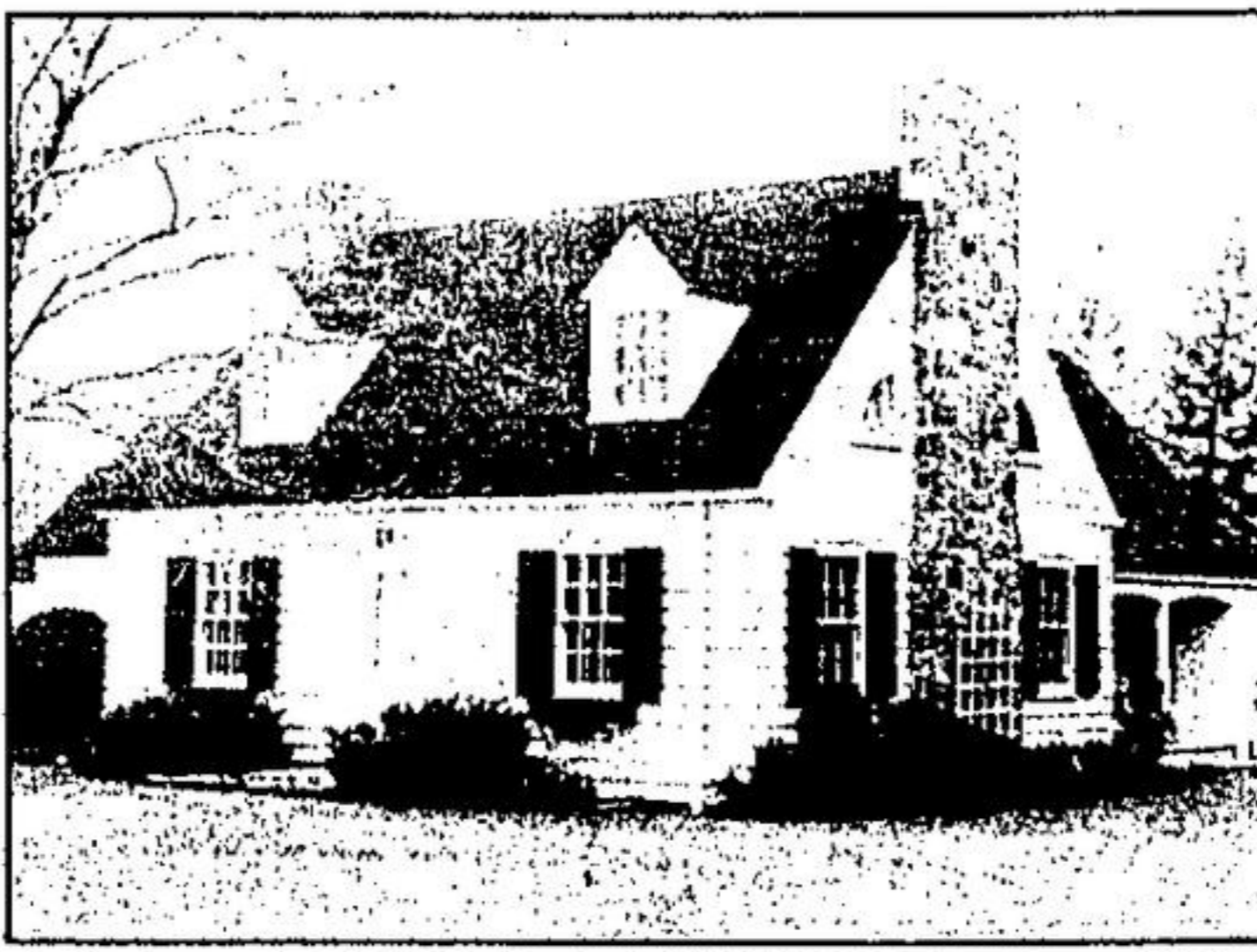
It could be developed into a tourist attraction, he indicated.

The bequeathal, the property has been used by "horsy" groups like the Pony Club, Rockwood Trail Riders and the Ontario Equestrian Federation.

Mr. Rogers said the Ministry of Natural Resources has also used the property as a conference centre on many occasions.

The Field Botanists of Ontario and the Halton Field Naturalists have taken walks on the property.

"It's public property," Mr. Sargent said. "We're not encouraging a lot of use because there aren't the facilities there in terms of parking, washrooms or trails. Also, we don't want people tramping through the area and destroying what's there."



BRAND NEW  **YOUR FORD STORE HAS MORE... TO OFFER!**  **BRAND NEW**  

DRIVE TODAY TO OUR LOW OVERHEAD PRICES!

CAPITAL FORD
SALES LTD.
361 Guelph St., Georgetown
Corner Guelph and Dufferin
873-1626
Your Best Deal... is a Capital Deal.

THUNDER-BIRD **AIR** **LTD**

- AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION
- POWER STEERING & BRAKES
- ELECTRIC DEFROSTER
- REMOTE CONTROL MIRROR
- BODYSIDE MOULDINGS
- SPLIT RECLINING SEATS
- ELECTRONIC DASH
- FULL WHEEL COVERS

NO CHARGE AIR CONDITIONING
SEE US TODAY FOR DETAILS

WE WELCOME A-PLAN

TEMPO PLUS NO CHARGE AIR CONDITIONING

9.9% ANNUAL PERCENTAGE RATE
SEE US TODAY FOR DETAILS

ESCORT

1985 1/2 MODEL ALL NEW EUROPEAN DESIGN

- FRONT WHEEL DRIVE
- 1.6 L ENGINE
- STEEL BELTED RADIALS
- POWER DISC BRAKES
- ELECTRONIC IGNITION
- SEMI-STYLED STEEL WHEELS

HAVE YOU DRIVEN A FORD... LATELY?

* Tax, Freight, Licence Extra