

Rockwood couple want to preserve Ontario wetlands

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Rockwood Miller

Unhappy with existing wetlands protection legislation and skeptical of the sincerity of politicians, a local couple has formed a new environmental organization—the Forest, Wetlands and Wildlife Preservation Organization.

Founder Anita Welsh said they hope to raise enough money to buy environmentally sensitive lands to prevent further loss of wetlands and natural habitats.

“We started this organization when we realized that there is a lot of development being approved on environmentally sensitive land,” Welsh said in an interview on Saturday.

“Although the Province has recently implemented new regulations to protect wetlands, I’ve found that money talks and some development plans are being approved anyway. Someone with the right amount of money can do what they want.”

When asked for an example Welsh pointed to a Fourth Line estate development that was approved six years ago.

“Surveys and plans show that the land was marshy and under water and I don’t think that it should have been built on. The same developer is now trying to

build another estate subdivision on marshy land on the Fifth Line.

“If local councils and the Province keep approving developments on environmental sensitive lands then there won’t be any wetlands left,” Welsh stated.

Welsh said their long-term goal is to raise enough money to purchase wetlands so they can’t be built on.

“We hope to have a Board of Trustees that will oversee the purchased property so it can never be developed.

Welsh said they chose to start a new organization and not join one of the existing ones because they want action.

“In a lot of cases the existing groups are all talk and no action. Everybody says that they want to save sensitive land but you’ve got to beat the developers at their own game and to do that you’ve got to buy the land out from underneath them,” Welsh said.

“My father used to say to me that you have to put your money where your mouth is and if you are going to talk preservation then you must back up the talk with action.”

Welsh said they have about a dozen members so far and hope to attract more members and raise money with a marketing campaign this fall.



ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION!

Rockwood residents Anita and Tony Welsh have formed a new organization to battle environmental degradation and preserve wetlands. The Forest, Wetlands and Wildlife Organization hopes to battle unchecked development on the precious land. (Lori Frechette photo)

“We’ve sent hundreds of letters to local residents and big corporations asking for their moral sup-

port. We plan to hold an auction next month to raise some money.” Anyone interested in learning

more about the new organization can call Anita or Tony Welsh at 856-4550 or 1-800-361-1890.

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