

Oh deer!



wildlife centre. Lynne Rowe, owner of the Galloping Goat Farm, is holding an open house on April 10 and 11 to raise funds for the Constance Creek Wildlife Refuge, which she is building. There will be a petting zoo, tours, pony rides and face painting at the fundraiser. *Jessica Cunha*
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The closest wildlife centre that takes injured or orphaned deer is in Napanee, Ont., over two hours away from West Carleton.

This realization spurred Lynne Rowe, owner of the Galloping Goat Farm on Dunrobin Road, to begin work on building the Constance Creek Wildlife Refuge.

"Someone brought me a little fawn last summer and I found out you can't keep them," said Rowe.

"So I frantically started phoning around and found out the nearest place that could take them was Napanee. And yet there are so many collisions with deer around here that I'm sure there are lots of orphan deer out there that it would be nice to give them a chance, or else they starve to death."

Rowe still needs to raise a minimum of \$30,000 to get her clinic up-and-running in order to meet the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource standards.

To help her reach her goal, she will be hosting an open house on April 10 and 11 to celebrate National Wildlife Week.

"April 10 was the birthday of Jack Miner who was a great Canadian naturalist and spearheaded many programs watching migratory birds," said Rowe. "So we're going to celebrate by having a big open house here. I have the petting zoo so we'll have lots of entertainment, as well as pony rides and tours."

Both West Carleton Coun. Eli El-Chantiry and Kanata North Coun. Marianne Wilkinson are planning to attend the festivities, said Rowe.

"There's a huge demand for this area," she said about the need for a new wildlife shelter. "The region for this branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources reaches all

the way down to Brockville and Renfrew County. That area is covered by six authorized organizations.

"One is the Wild Bird Care Centre so it's exclusively birds. There's the Turtle SHELL (Safety, Habitat, Education, Long, Life) program which is just turtles. (Little) Ray's Reptiles does rehab work with reptiles so that's three that are very specialized. This is a huge region to cover and the resources aren't nearly enough."

Rowe plans to fence off the back half of her large plot of land, where the deer can roam and pass the winter.

"I have part of my backyard that I hope to divide off," she said. "You have to have solid fencing so the deer aren't exposed to domestic animals too much. You don't want to give them any habits that will increase their conflicts with humans in the future."

Rowe also needs a clinic to assess and treat animals that are sick or injured.

"I'm trying really hard to get some donations, such as construction site trailers that could be an all-in-one clinic and an all-in-one isolation unit," she said. "We'll need to expand quickly and if we have these donations of units they can be moved somewhere else."

Although she does not yet have a clinic, she does have a veterinarian.

Rowe's friend, Dr. Anne Downes, has stepped forward and volunteered her veterinary services for the new wildlife centre. Downes teaches the veterinarian technician program at Algonquin College.

"For the authorization you need to have a veterinarian who will sign to say they will work with you," said Rowe. "You need a veterinarian to access all the medications you'll need and provide euthanization services and consult on cases. I'm fortunate I have a wonderful friend."

In order to operate smoothly, Rowe is hoping to have 10 solid volunteers who are willing to donate a few hours a week to the upkeep of the centre, as well as some who will help build the fencing required.

"There are so many different tasks that need to be done on top of feeding the animals," she explained. "There are a lot of rules, where you want to prevent any transfer of diseases. There's lots of cleaning and maintaining of enclosures that have to be done."

Rowe said she is, however, up to the task. It's easy to see she is an animal lover through her interactions with her own animals, which include goats, ponies, cats, dogs, chickens and pot-bellied pigs.

Her philosophy on living with animals is simple; humans need to alter their thinking.

"When I first started farming and wasn't enraptured by goats, they drove me crazy, I was frustrated," she said.

"And then I realized, I had this big shift in my brain, and I realized the goats are just being goats. That's what they do. They're not trying to cause me trouble. It's me who has to adjust and now I love my time in the barn with the goats. They crack me up when they do silly things. It reminds me to laugh and relax and not hurry. It's like therapy at the end of the day."

The same goes for human interaction with wildlife – animals are just doing what they were made to do.

"People get frustrated because there's deer on the road," she said. "You can get angry about that or just accept that the deer are just being deer. The raccoons in your garbage are just being raccoons, trying to get food. We're the ones with the big brains so we have to come up with solutions if there's a conflict."

"I think it's just realistic, and to me it's less stressful to think that way then getting angry about it. I think when human development is encroaching on natural territory of animals and resulting in these conflicts, we have to take responsibility for that."

Rapid suburban and rural expansion are pushing animals out of their natural habitats, causing a surge in human-wildlife interaction.

"Maybe when places like Kanata, which is expanding very rapidly, as part of the planning process we should be building animal rehab centres," said Rowe. "It's a necessary resource when there's such rapid expansion because there are going to be conflicts and you need some place to deal with them in a humane way."

For more information about the Constance Creek Wildlife Refuge, visit www.ccwr.ca.