



Wildlife refuge looking to refresh

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The Constance Creek Wildlife Refuge is in the running for a \$25,000 grant from the Pepsi Refresh Project.

Although the Dunrobin centre did well when it ran for the grant in the fall of last year, finishing 11th, it couldn't secure one of the top two spots needed in order to claim the money.

"It was encouraging because we got up to number 11 out of 77 ideas in our \$25,000 category," said CCWR founder Lynne Rowe. "I was very encouraged we did that well the first round. We're hoping we can spread the word further – we have to get in the top two in order to win the money."

So far, the centre is ranked 14 out of 87 ideas in its category.

"I'm very optimistic this year," said Rowe.

The Pepsi Refresh Project calls for individuals, businesses or not-for-profit organizations to submit ideas that will benefit their communities. The public votes for their favourite ideas and the top-ranked ideas in each monetary category are awarded to help fund their proposals.

"If we get the funding for this, it will make a huge difference on how quickly we're able to answer the needs for wildlife services in the area," said Rowe. "We'll be able to get up and running that much faster."

Rowe said she signed up for the \$25,000 grant because the amount will help get the wildlife refuge up off the ground.

"We really felt that that's the amount it would take to get us up and running quickly," she said. "That's a breakthrough amount for us to be well set up to begin taking in animals this summer."

It's Rowe's goal to have the Ministry of Natural Resources approve the CCWR and be able to foster wildlife this coming summer.

"That's a hard position to be in," she said about waiting for ministry approval. "I know there's going to be a huge need for animals. I'm hoping we can get enough money to complete what we need to do."

She said people can vote for the CCWR everyday under the heading "open a wildlife rehabilitation centre for fawns and other wildlife."

"This is a totally different approach; getting your community caring about your project and wanting to help out, getting them excited about us," said Rowe. "It's a very easy way for them to help us out. They don't have to fork any money over to us themselves but just vote. We're asking people to try and find two friends to vote as well."



Wildlife refuge looking to refresh. CCWR outreach co-ordinator Melissa Kerr, right, and volunteer Terry Pedwell help Magnus the Raccoon vote for the centre on the Pepsi Refresh Project page. The refuge needs to place in the top two in order to win the grant. *Submitted photo*

Volunteer Melissa Kerr started a Facebook photo project with Magnus the stuffed raccoon to help remind people to vote everyday.

"I wanted to give daily reminders to people to vote for us that didn't feel pushy," said Kerr, who lives in Katimavik. "Get them excited about voting."

She chose a raccoon because they are one of the animals that have a hard time in Ottawa.

"I chose Magnus the Raccoon because I feel that he really embodies an animal in Ottawa that is having a really rough time," she said. "Often raccoons are in need of rehabilitation and have no where to go."

She said it's fun thinking up concepts for where to photograph Magnus voting for the refuge, such as in bed, while eating and even during a visit to Parliament Hill.

"I thought taking photos of plastic wildlife would be something fun and a reminder that people wouldn't feel uncomfortable with," said Kerr.

She said she hopes the refuge makes it into the top two because as Ottawa keeps growing, so will the need for wildlife rehabilitation.

"There is no plan for wildlife in Ottawa and we're constantly growing as a community. It leaves us with displaced wildlife," said Kerr. "This is important to me because it think wildlife deserve a hand – we live where they live."

FUNDING

Last year, the CCWR managed to raise enough funds to do a 100-foot portion of solid wood fencing for the beginning of an outdoor enclosure.

If the centre wins one of the top two spots, the \$25,000 will go towards:

- * Finishing the wooden fence enclosure.
- * Build more individual wildlife enclosures for different species.
- * Outfit the clinic with an electrical connection.
- * Start up a wildlife hotline.

"I recently attended the national wildlife rehabilitators' association conference in the states," said Rowe. "I was really sold on the huge benefit that a wildlife hotline can provide so we'd really like to get something like that up and running. A lot of wildlife issues can be resolved as long as someone is there over the phone."

Rowe said she has a few fundraisers in the works for the centre, including an event for National Wildlife Week, which is in April, and a baby shower event for spring birth season.

Voting ends on April 30. To vote for the CCWR, visit www.refresheverything.ca/constancecreek. For more information on the CCWR, visit www.ccwr.ca, like them on Facebook or follow them on Twitter.

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