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## **MEDIA RELEASE *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

March 28, 2007

# **Community Invited to East Cross Forest Update**

BLACKSTOCK- Kawartha Conservation is inviting the community to come out to an information session about the future East Cross Forest Conservation Area, and to get involved in the environmental restoration project. The conservation authority hopes to pack the Blackstock Community Centre on Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

Kawartha Conservation will present an update on progress in the East Cross Forest and will present its plans for 2007, including details about a major onsite clean up scheduled for June. Public feedback, issues and suggestions are an important part of the evening event.

"We want to ensure that this is an open process, and that anyone who wants to get involved in this restoration effort is welcome. The more participation, the more likely we are to reach our goal of opening the conservation area in 2009," says Kristie Virgoe, Kawartha Conservation's manager, environmental protection and restoration. "Already, user groups are coming forward to donate time and equipment to help clean up the area."

Contrary to the popular belief that the area is Crown land, it is in fact all privately owned but largely uninhabited. For several decades the area has been the site of unauthorized hunting, offroad trucking, motorcycling and ATVing. Illegal dumping, abandoned vehicles, tree poaching and other destructive activities have left portions of the land degraded.

In early 2002 the Township of Scugog and Region of Durham gathered a taskforce of organizations and individuals to look at ways to deal with the issue. In 2005, it was determined by the task force that Kawartha Conservation would lead the initiative to acquire properties and manage them as a conservation area. In October of 2006, Kawartha Conservation received its first donation of over 500 acres of land and closed the property to the public in order to begin restoration work. Since then, other area properties have been purchased or donated and more are being sought to expand the conservation area to about 1,000 acres.

For more information about the upcoming meeting or the East Cross Forest project, call Kristie Virgoe at 705 328-2271 ext 223 or toll free 1 800-668-5722 ext 223, or visit the Kawartha Conservation website at [www.kawartha.conservation.com](http://www.kawartha.conservation.com). Links to the East Cross Forest section are available under Quick Picks or Conservation Areas. To be added to the East Cross Forest mailing list, phone or email Catherine Hennings at Kawartha Conservation 705 328-2271 ext 211, or Toll free 1 800 668-5722 ext 211.

Kawartha Conservation is a watershed-based environmental organization focused on providing abundant clean water within a healthy landscape. It is one of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario providing natural resources management. The Kawartha watershed intersects portions of the City of Kawartha Lakes; Township of Scugog; Township of Brock; Municipality of Clarington; Township of Galway-Cavendish & Harvey; and Township of Cavan-Millbrook-North Monaghan.

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***For more information please contact:***

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