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New Species on the Oak Ridges Moraine.....Mo-Rangers!

(Toronto, July 15, 2008) Conservation groups working on the Oak Ridges Moraine have access to a new hive of worker bees to assist them with environmental protection and restoration projects.

Four youths, all 17 years old, will be spending the summer undertaking conservation projects, supported by a grant of \$30,000 from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation.

Dubbed the “Mo-rangers”, the crew is modeled after the Ministry of Natural Resources longstanding Stewardship Ranger Program. This crew is dedicated to working specifically along the Oak Ridges Moraine.

While swarming Oak Ridges Moraine sites with eager hands-on activity, these young conservationists will learn that what they do connects to the important ecological functions of the moraine. The Mo-rangers will help out with invasive species removal, making snake pits; Oak Ridges trail maintenance, mapping habitats, fish hatchery maintenance, native shrub planting, seed collection and other valuable tasks.

The Oak Ridges Mo-Ranger crew, consisting of Holly Campbell and Erin Nicholls (Whitby), Ryan Thoret (Ajax) and Andrew Cottreau (Bowmanville) are guided by crew leader Matt Hubert (Peterborough). All have received standard safety training and orientation and their busy schedule continues to incorporate learning activities specific to natural resource management.

Kate Potter, Project Coordinator for the Caring for the Moraine project that involves 30 environmental partners says, “When the call went out to identify tasks for the Mo-Rangers, the calendar quickly filled. Our partners and their committed land-owners often lack the hands to get work done. This is a real bonus.”

To date, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation has approved 146 grants totaling \$12.6 million to conservation protection and enhancement across the Moraine. The Foundation’s core purpose is to provide support and encouragement for activities that preserve, protect, and restore the environmental integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine and support a trail along it.

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*Stretching 160 kilometers from the Trent River to the Niagara Escarpment, the **Oak Ridges Moraine** has long been recognized for its importance as wildlife habitat and a source of groundwater. It is the starting point for 65 rivers flowing into Lake Ontario, Lake Simcoe and the Kawartha Lakes, and is the source of drinking water for over 250,000 people.*
<http://www.moraineforallife.org>

***The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation** operates primarily by funding the work of others and offers leadership or coordination for Moraine-wide activities. The Foundation is also a convener, bringing people and interests together to identify common ground. To date, the Foundation has committed over \$12 million to 146 projects across the moraine.*
<http://www.moraineforallife.org/about/index.php>

***The Ontario Stewardship Ranger Program** is an eight week work program for environmentally minded 17-year olds. Participants have the opportunity to work outdoors, gain knowledge of important environmental issues affecting their community, and acquire valuable work experience and skills which may be highly applicable to their future careers.*
http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Youth/2ColumnSubPage/STEL02_163380.html

Contact:

Kate Potter, Caring for the Moraine Project Coordinator
905-579-0411 ext 106

Kim Gavine, Executive Director
Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation
905-833-5733