

*For immediate release*

## **High Park Nature Groups to Receive Award**

**Toronto, ON, October 17, 2011** – High Park Nature and the High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program (VSP) are being jointly honoured this Saturday at the annual general meeting of the North American Native Plant Society (Saturday, October 22, 12 pm at the Markham Civic Centre, [www.nanps.org](http://www.nanps.org)). NANPS has announced that they will be presented with a 2011 Paul McGaw Memorial Conservation Award “in recognition of your organizations’ amazing work protecting and improving the urban forest at the community level.” Each year this award is given out by the NANPS to honour individuals and/or organizations demonstrating significant contributions to conserving, protecting or restoring the natural heritage / native flora of North America.

“We are thrilled to accept this award on behalf of all the dedicated volunteers who have worked for years to restore and protect the very special natural heritage of High Park,” said Karen Yukich, co-chair of the High Park Natural Environment Committee, which, together with the VSP, makes up the umbrella group, High Park Nature. “We also want to take this opportunity to recognize the invaluable role of City staff who have welcomed our input and helped make our volunteer stewardship efforts possible,” added Sharon Lovett, who leads the VSP group as well as sharing the leadership of High Park Nature.

The Natural Environment Committee focuses on “speaking up for nature” by advising the City on restoration plans and other park projects. Then the Volunteer Stewardship Program helps make these plans a reality through hands-on work, such as planting, weeding and seed-collecting, as well as increasing the stewards’ expertise through educational programs. The VSP also runs an annual spring native plant sale to help spread the native plants of High Park throughout the surrounding community.

The two groups jointly established High Park Nature and its website [www.highparknature.org](http://www.highparknature.org) to promote awareness and respectful enjoyment of the natural heritage of the park. The website is loaded with information about the park’s wildlife and plant species, the rare Black Oak Savannah, Grenadier Pond and many other park features. It also includes the area’s geological origins, its more recent history, and ongoing restoration efforts. There are photo galleries, species checklists, resource documents and links to other useful sites. The home page, which is updated frequently, features upcoming volunteer events and walking tours, along with seasonal highlights.

More information about High Park Nature and the Volunteer Stewardship Program is available at [www.highparknature.org](http://www.highparknature.org).

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For more information please contact:

Karen Yukich – Co-Chair, High Park Natural Environment Committee & High Park Nature  
(416) 769-4344, [mail@highparknature.org](mailto:mail@highparknature.org)

Sharon Lovett – Chair, High Park Volunteer Stewardship Program; Co-Chair, High Park Natural Environment Committee & High Park Nature (416) 535-7740, [stewards@highparknature.org](mailto:stewards@highparknature.org)