

## SHARED OWNERSHIP IN 200 ACRE EARLCROFT WOODED ESTATE

### **General Description of the Property History**

The property was purchased by Earlcroft Ltd. in 1978. Earlcroft Ltd. is owned by 11 of the cottagers along Four Mile Lake. The property was purchased to protect some of the area surrounding Four Mile Lake from development and environmental degradation.

Part of the property (lot 18) was a homestead many years ago. The land was cleared and remained as open farm field for many years. Parts of the open fields have since seeded in naturally. The remainder of the forested area consists of a natural hardwood forest type. There is evidence that harvests have taken place in the past. The last harvest was approximately 40 years ago.

The property borders Four Mile Lake. In the past there has been development in the area, and cottagers have claimed much of the shoreline of Four Mile Lake for residential property. Part of Lot 17 of the Earlcroft property consists of undeveloped shoreline. Since the property has been owned by Earlcroft, the forest and open areas have been left to grow naturally for the most part, with the exception of periodic spraying for gypsy moth.

### **Importance of Property to the Surrounding Landscape**

The surrounding landscape consists of cottages to the south east (along the lake shore of Four Mile Lake), the western boundary of the property is bordered by old fields, and the southern boundary of the property borders cottage areas along the lake shore, patches of forest, and some open fields. The areas to the north and east of the Earlcroft property consist of environmentally protected forests and wetlands. There is also a corridor of forest reaching out from the north west corner of the property.

The property is important to wildlife as it forms part of a continuous forested area, in a landscape of fragmented patches of forest and open fields. The property plays an important role in the ecosystems of the surrounding environmentally protected forests, locally significant wetlands and the lake itself. These protected areas provide nesting habitat for herons, a deer yard, and habitat for rare or threatened species. No hunting or major timber harvesting is currently allowed on this property, thus it serves as a safe nesting area and refuge for wildlife.

This property also provides environmental protection to the abiotic components of the natural ecosystems of the surrounding forests and the lake. The trees and forest plants stabilize the soil to prevent erosion during periods of high runoff. The surface soils absorb water and contribute to the quality of the ground water system which also feeds Four Mile lake. The trees also absorb significant quantities of water, minimizing the surface runoff into the lake. The trees also serve as a wind break, and the forest contributes to the air quality at a global level, and locally.

The property has great aesthetic value the cottagers of Four Mile lake, and some recreational value as well. The cottagers enjoy the presence of natural forest areas and wildlife surrounding their properties. Occasionally some of the property owners will venture into the forest for a casual walk or forest inspection.