

# Meet Bill Royds of the Greenspace Alliance

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by Jacquie Johnson

**B**ill Royds joined the Greenspace Alliance when it was formed in October 1997. He was asked to join because he had been active in a study of the Southern Corridor. He was also a member of the Public

Advisory Committee for the Hunt Club Neighbourhood Plan and the Public Advisory Committee for Confederation Heights.

He says he was drawn to the group because "an alliance of community members committed to preserving greenspace seemed the best way to channel all the interest in greenspace and

environmental protection found in Ottawa's communities. Often communities feel lost when fighting the juggernauts of land speculators and developers through the planning process. By having a group that would link up community associations and local environmental interest groups, we thought that we could ensure that the green voice of neighbourhoods could be more fairly represented in the planning and development debate in Ottawa."

Royds is an internet security manager with a federal government department with a degree in Statistics and Computer Science from the University of Waterloo.

At the Alliance, Royds is the vice-chair and also webmaster and mailing list moderator. He also represents the group at the Friends of Leirtrim Wetlands working group. "We have an email list of over 60 people to allow members to keep informed of activities at City Hall, the National Capital Commission (NCC) and other neighbourhoods," he says. "The moderator's job is to handle membership on the list and to prevent junk email or viruses from being forwarded to list members."

Outside the Alliance, Royds volunteers for the Conservation Committee of the Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club. He has been a director of the Hunt Club Community Organization and a director of Quarry Housing Co-op. He is also a member of the advisory board for certifying Internet Intrusion Detection professionals.

Royds describes himself as a fairly typical resident of Ottawa since he has both a high-tech and a government job.

For his hobbies, Royds is an avid wildflower observer, which

is why he wishes "to guarantee that the wonderful mixture of urban and natural places in this city is not lost. The National Capital area is ecologically quite special because it is at the boundary between the Laurentian and Boreal Eco-Zones so there are unique micro-environments found nowhere else."

Royds says the Alliance "has been very effective for the three-and-a-half years of its existence. The environmental planning staff of the old City of Ottawa singled out the Greenspace Alliance as being very helpful in ensuring that the Natural & Open Spaces Study (NOSS) was thorough and well reviewed and that the bylaws and Official Plan amendments balanced protection and effectiveness. Allowing communities to help each other is one of the most effective ways to empower citizens."

For the future of the Alliance, Royds is looking forward to seeing some of his projects coming to fruition. "We called ourselves the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital so as to include all the National Capital Region," he says. "Projects like the destruction of Leamy Lake Ecological Park affect both sides of the river. One of our projects is in support of John Almstedt and George Brown to create an Ottawa Riverkeeper to act as an ombudsperson for our most important waterway. We are going forward on the Poets Pathway, on the preservation of the Leirtrim Wetland, on development of an Official Plan for the new City of Ottawa. Only by working together can we ensure that the National Capital neighbourhood stays green."

*Jacquie Johnson is on the PEN editorial committee.*