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Hart's-Tongue Herald

The Newsletter of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists Spring 2010
Volume 23, Number 1

Box 401, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 5P7
Website: owensoundfieldnaturalists.ca

Editor: Lorraine Brown



Ice and rock dwarf a lone hiker at the Grotto, Bruce Peninsula National Park in mid-February.
(Willy Waterton)

Butternut: A disappearing tree

Recently placed on the endangered species list, butternut trees are in great danger of becoming extinct. Unlike most other endangered species, the butternut is not suffering due to a loss of habitat or human interference, but rather because of a deadly fungal disease called Butternut Canker.

Although genetic immunity or resistance to the disease has never been proven, a small number of trees have been found in the province that have not been infected with the disease or have the disease but are vigorously surviving despite it. These disease-resistant trees will be the key to the butternut's future.

The Grey County Forest Stewardship Network, Bruce Resource Stewardship Network, MNR and the Forest Gene Conservation Association are working together to try and locate and evaluate the butternut trees of Bruce and Grey Counties. Our goal is to try to identify some trees in the region that are either disease-free or have the disease but are vigorously surviving in spite of it. Eventually we would like to collect seed from these trees to propagate seedlings that have the best chance of survival.

If you think you have butternut trees in your woodlot in Grey County please contact Grey County Stewardship Coordinator Jason Ritchie at 519-371-8468 or jason.ritchie@ontario.ca. If your woodlot is in Bruce County, contact Bruce County Stewardship Coordinator Craig Todd at 519-371-8465 or craig.todd@ontario.ca. If you'd like to learn more about the butternut tree, the Butternut Canker and how you can help please consider attending our Butternut workshop on April 13th 2010 (see notice on this page) or visit <http://www.fgca.net>.

*Jason Ritchie,
Grey County Stewardship Coordinator*

The pictures to the right are much better in colour, as they are in the electronic version. If you would like to receive the newsletter via e-mail rather than snail mail, please contact Lorraine, 372-0322 or lorraine@apropos.ca

The Endangered Butternut Tree: A FREE Workshop for landowners

If you think you have butternut trees on your property please consider attending this free workshop.

You'll learn about: The tree, the disease and how you can get involved with its recovery.

When: April 13th 2010 7 -8:30 PM

**Where: Grey County Agricultural Services Centre
206 Toronto St. South, Markdale**

Please pre-register with the Grey County Forest Stewardship Network at 519-371-8468.



Peter Middleton took these three photos of the famous butternut tree in a small, doomed, woodlot in the midst of big box stores on Hwy 26 on the east side of Owen Sound.

Left: healthy butternut bark

Bottom left: first signs of internal infection - opening lesions

Bottom right: full blown lesion with characteristic "weeping"
The tree is done for!



Joe Johnson - OSFN's newest honorary life member

Joe Johnson is a naturalist who pursues knowledge and the understanding of nature for its own sake. In Nova Scotia his mother nurtured his love of nature by taking him and his younger sister out for walks in the nearby woods and up a local escarpment-like mountain. It wasn't until he took biology at Acadia University that Joe's knowledge of plants finally exceeded that of his mother. Joe won a medal for being the top student in his class at graduation.

After graduation, Joe headed west and worked in western Canada, then at Long Point Bird Observatory where he heard about the naturalist and botanist's paradise that was the Bruce Peninsula. He made Wiarton his home and worked mostly on contract for the MNR and as a Naturalist for Cyprus Lake and Inverhuron Provincial Parks and did studies for the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. During this time, he embarked on a remarkable career of community and professional contributions. Joe is now the recognized expert on the vascular flora of Grey-Bruce.

For OSFN, Joe has led nature hikes and worked with the Plant Committee on five of OSFN's landmark publications including A Checklist of Vascular Plants For Bruce and Grey Counties, A Guide to the Orchids of Bruce and Grey Counties, The Asters, Goldenrod and Fleabanes of Grey and Bruce Counties, A Guide to the Ferns of Grey and Bruce Counties and Rare and Endangered Species of Grey and Bruce Counties. See Publications on the OSFN website for more information.

Joe's community contributions are considerable. He has been involved in 175 Christmas Bird Counts, which must be some sort of record for our area. His list of involvement in many nature

surveys goes on and on with Joe putting in long-term commitment in many activities. For 16 years, he was the compiler in 2 different sessions for the CBC in Wiarton, the Breeding Bird Survey for the Bruce, and the Forest Bird Monitoring Program. He spent 14 years monitoring an Amphibian Road Call Count, 12 years in the Red-shouldered Hawk and Spring Woodpecker Survey, Shorebird Survey - 11 years, Nocturnal Owl Survey - nine years, Red-necked Grebe Survey - seven years, and a plant watch survey for blooming dates to keep track of global warming for six years and at the

major contributions, which hopefully will have an effect on the way the Province of Ontario treats nature. He did numerous and very intensive life science reports for MNR that included 20 ANSIs (Areas of Natural Scientific Interest) plus two other ANSI equivalents for MacGregor Point Provincial Park and Oliphant plus many environmental impact assessments. However, Joe's finest achievement was compiling a major report on the vascular flora of Grey-Bruce. This MNR report was divided into 3 regions emphasizing locally and provincially rare species and is remarkable for both its completeness

and vastness, and for displaying Joe's expertise.

Joe's future has him returning to Nova Scotia as soon as he finishes his book on the Vascular Flora for the Bruce Peninsula outlining status, distribution, habitats and blooming dates. Joe is truly one of the great all round naturalists found in our area and a worthy recipient



Joe Johnson, left, receives an honorary life membership to OSFN from president Fred Jazvac at the annual general meeting, March 11, 2010. (Lorraine Brown)

same time being a diligent participant in the Ontario Nesting Record Scheme. Some of Joe's accomplishments are measured in areas covered as well as years. He has been involved in two Ontario Breeding Bird Atlases covering 13 squares where the typical involvement was one or two squares. He has done 10 squares for the Ontario Tree Atlas. A square is usually defined as an area 10 X 10 km.

In his professional life, Joe has made

of OSFN's highest award.

Fred Jazvac

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Meeting and Field Trip Reports

OSFN Cross-Country Outing to Bruce National Park—Sunday, February 28, 2010

Winter skiing and hiking in February at first sounded like an adventure, and then sounded like a daunting challenge, but in the end was an exhilarating experience thanks to Willy Waterton and Audrey Armstrong! When I first contacted

about 14 of us rendezvoused with Willy and Audrey at the Cyprus Lake campground in Bruce National Park. Our challenge was to ski across Cyprus Lake taking a hiking trail out to the Georgian Bay shoreline, then “drop” off our skis to continue on foot (really on cross-country ski boot feet) to Little Indian Cove, then the rock bridge, and finally to the Grotto.

As we were admiring the spectacular

that dolostone is harder than limestone due to a high percentage of dolomite. Differential erosion over time has produced the Niagara Escarpment because dolostone is less soluble than limestone. “Angel-wing” ice formations were admired. Overhead, a bald eagle glided on a thermal of air past us, eyeing the edge of the ice for fish.

What was remarkable about our outing, was the pristine sunshine, the clear blue sky, the amazing aqua-marine shades of blue in the water, and the breath-taking views of the ice and snow blankets on the escarpment. Our day was so picture-perfect, that we could see Flowerpot Island, Bear’s Rump Island, Otter Island, and even the southern tip of Manitoulin Island.

The sunshine warmed us as we sat on rock slabs protected from the wind, and ate our lunches—a time to meet new people and make new friends.

On the way back to Cyprus Lake, there were some interesting turns in our ski trail. I for one wiped out! But no one was hurt. Some chose to walk down one hill. Back on Cyprus Lake, we observed the tracks of an animal that were later identified by Willy as the tracks of a fisher.

A couple of ice fishermen had augured holes in the ice, which was about 16” thick. They were fishing for pickerel and perch.



OSFN members enjoy brilliant sunshine after a mostly gloomy February at the outing to the Bruce Peninsula National Park. (Willy Waterton)

Audrey about this outing, she asked, “Do you have rock skis?” Rock skis are well-used skis that are like a comfy pair of track pants: you use them when you don’t care if you traverse over dolostone rocks! I replied to Audrey, “Yep. I have just the pair.”

And so began the adventure. A group of

winter beauty of Little Indian Cove, Victor Last, a retired teacher, was invited by Willy to talk about the rock formations. We learned

If you ever have the opportunity to explore the Bruce on skis during the winter, try it! Our day was an incredible outing. Many thanks go out to Willy Waterton and Audrey Armstrong for their preparations for our outing, knowledge, pleasant company, and expert care!

Dian Woods

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Your new executive

This year, we are welcoming three new members to the OSFN executive.

Moving from vice-president to president is Peter Middleton. A retired principal and outdoor education teacher, Peter travelled the world leading birding excursions for Quest Nature Tours for a

Stew runs his own company, Synergistic Solutions, which is devoted to the professional growth of individuals, teams, and organizations. But in our area he is probably better known as the central figure in the efforts to protect the Piping Plovers that arrived at Sauble Beach and Oliphant to nest in 2007 and 2008. Thanks to Stew and the army of

Currie. A farm girl from Bruce County, Beth Anne has a Masters in Environmental Science. She is an expert on topics related to green and living architecture and has played a significant role in the formation of public policy towards implementing green roofs in urban areas throughout Ontario and Canada.



OSFN's new executive, from left to right: Andrew Koshan, Jim Duncan, Judy Duncan, Anne Cathrae, Marg Gaviller, Lynne Richardson, Lorraine Brown, Jim Ansell (outgoing membership chair), Beth Anne Currie, Fred Jazvac, Stewart Nutt, Peter Middleton. (Photo by Jan Middleton)

Dian Wood, after several years bringing us an excellent program both indoors and out, is now leaving us to do more travelling and international aid work with her church. We are very happy to have Andy Koshan coming in as our new program co-ordinator. Andy teaches grade 4 at Derby School in Kilsyth, and enjoys

few years, and has now settled back into life in Owen Sound. He is currently drawing huge crowds with his Birds in Our Lives lecture series, part of the Bluewater Association of Lifelong Learning's program. We look forward to working with him to make OSFN even better than it is.

Stewart Nutt is our new vice-president.

volunteers he co-ordinated, this endangered species is now a little further away from the brink of extinction.

After several years of a stellar job running the OSFN membership, Jim Ansell is now stepping down, and handing the reins over to Beth Anne

bringing nature into the classroom. He grew up in Warton and knows Grey and Bruce very well. He is interested in learning more about local flora, birds, and the Niagara Escarpment.

Fred Jazvac moves into the past-president position after two very productive years. Fred's major legacy is a new, greatly improved website. Visitowensoundfieldnaturalists.ca often, to find out what's new, hear of changes to OSFN programs, learn about rare bird sightings in the area, and lots of other good information relating to nature.

Lorraine Brown

OSFN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010

President: Peter Middleton, 376-3242, peter.middleton@sympatico.ca
Vice-President: Stewart Nutt, 797-5490, saubleplover@gmail.com
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Rhubarb Leaf Insecticide

Steep 6 rhubarb leaves in 5 pints of boiling water. Strain when cool and spray on to plants suffering from aphids, Black Spot and other fungus diseases. (from Joan Crowe)

Where am I? Where is it?

Locating, mapping, and monitoring flora and fauna can be greatly simplified using GPS. GPS is in regular use by organizations such as the NHIC (National Heritage Information Centre - Ontario) and the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Ontario.

GPS stands for global positioning system. Satellites send information to a small hand held receiver called a GPS or a GPS unit. The GPS unit interprets this information and is able to tell you where you are located - anywhere on earth.

The purpose of this article to suggest how use of GPS can be simplified for use in Grey and Bruce.

Let's first look at a GPS readout taken at my front door. 17 T 508758 E 4933657 N. Basically the numbers mean that my front door is 4,933, 657 metres north of the equator and 8,758 metres east of Longitude 81 degrees West.

However just for use in Grey and Bruce we do not need all of this information.

In fact, Grey and Bruce falls within parts of five 100 kilometre square blocks. The blocks are named ML, MK, MJ, NK, and NJ. Their general locations and abbreviated readings are as follows:

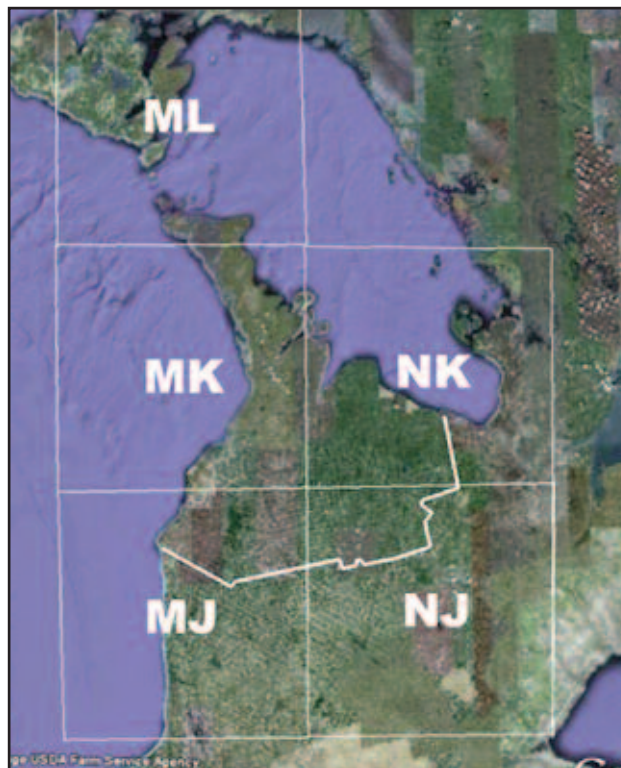
- ML the top of the Bruce
4***** 50*****
- MK mid Bruce
4***** 49*****
- MJ south Bruce
4***** 48*****
- NK north Grey
5***** 49*****
- NJ south Grey
5***** 48*****

For example, anywhere in Grey and Bruce where your first GPS number starts with 4 and your second number starts with 50 you know you are in zone ML and so on. My front door lies within NK (17 T 508758 E 4933657 N).

There are also protocols to identify 10 kilometre square blocks and one-kilometre-square blocks. (The normal method that NHIC uses to publicly report locations of rare species is the one-kilometre-square block. The Atlas of Breeding Birds of Ontario uses the 10 kilometre square block)

The Canadian Topographic Maps are overlaid with a one-kilometre-square grid. If you look at the Owen Sound Canadian Topographic Map (41 A/10), you will see that it lies entirely within NK (in the notes along the bottom).

To find the one-kilometre-square that contains my front door, go to line 08 along the bottom and then up to line 33



(17 T 508758 E 4933657 N). Actually this is just a point on the map and is actually the southwest corner of the one-kilometre-square within which my front door is located. My front door is 758 metres east and 657 metres north of this point (17 T 508758 E 4933657 N).

Searching the

NHIC site, I find that in the one-kilometre-square within which my front door resides, the following provincially rare species have been reported:

- o Hart's-tongue Fern
- o Northern Long-eared Bat
- o Ocellated Darner
- o three mosses
- o Jefferson X Blue-spotted Salamander.

Part of the Bruce Trail Boyd Property lies within this square. (We could call it 08NK33.) Anyone who has visited this property will understand why this square has had relatively more reports of rare species.

If you would like to learn more about GPS please visit my website and follow the "GPS" link. Also please feel free to send questions or comments to bill.mosesos@gmail.com.

Bill Moses

Welcome New Members

- GOLDSMITH, Marian and Ken
- VICKERY, Karen / PICKERING, Betty Anne
- ROBINSON, Judy
- HOPPS, Hillary
- BAKER, Donna & John
- ROWLAND, John
- STONEMAN, Irene

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- how to identify them (How good are you?)
- why we can't get along without them
- why they can get along without us
- why natural landscapes are important
- where to buy local native woody plants

Interested in Astronomy?

The Bruce County Astronomical Society has started up a program of public night sky viewing at Grey Roots on Saturday nights.

All dates are Saturdays. Participants should arrive at dusk and dress suitably, including footwear, for cool night temperatures and dew. Also, flashlights covered with red plastic help to walk around once the sky is totally dark. If the sky is clouded over, the event is cancelled.

For 2010 these events will take place on:

- April 17
- May 8
- June 5
- July 3
- Aug 7
- Sept 11
- Oct 2

Joan Skelton
BCAS Outreach Chairman
phone: 376-9554
e-mail: andromeda@gto.net

Spring Roadside Clean-up - Volunteers Needed

Joan O'Reilly has kindly agreed to take over the organization of our bi-annual roadside cleanup along Highway 6 through the Malcolm Kirk Provincial Nature Reserve (the Long Swamp).

The clean-up will take place on Saturday April 10 with a rain date of Saturday April 17. Bring your own gloves. All other equipment will be provided. If you would like to help out, please call Joan at 519-370-2177 or e-mail her at ashwood@bmts.com.

The Great Backyard Bird Count

Every year, for 4 days in February, people all over North America count all the birds they can see, and report their findings to Bird Studies in Canada, and to the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in the US.

As a long time participant in Project Feederwatch, I decided to take part in this second bird-counting program this winter. It wasn't much different from a Feederwatch, but it was nice to know that people were doing the same thing all over the US and Canada during those four days.

This year, the Northern Cardinal was the most-reported bird across the U.S. and Canada, as it has been for the previous five years. In Canada alone, the Black-capped Chickadee tops the list. The American Crow is higher on the list of most-reported birds (number 3 right now) than it has been since the West Nile virus appeared in North America and took such a toll on this species.

Another American Robin roost topping one million birds has taken up residence near Saint Petersburg, Florida, pushing the city (and the state) to number one for reporting the most robins so far.

Next year, perhaps OSFN can participate as a club. We can get as many members as possible participating, and let the media know that we're doing this.

Monarchs: A hard winter in Mexico

In December 2009, the World Wildlife Fund Mexico issued a report concerning the number and sizes of the monarch overwintering colonies. The report is very concerning.

The total area occupied by Monarchs in December was 1.92 hectares and only 7 colonies were found.


This is an all time low. The numbers this winter may be lower than any year since the

overwintering colonies became known to science in 1975. Cold weather in Mexico was responsible for the losses. Experts were hoping that normal winter conditions would prevail for the rest of the winter.

2010 Grassland Bird Survey - Volunteers Needed!

Wildlife Preservation Canada is seeking keen birders to volunteer for the 2010 Grassland Bird Survey (GBS) and would like to invite your participation! This survey is a joint effort between Wildlife Preservation Canada, Bird Studies Canada and the Canadian Wildlife Service. The main goal of the project is to locate Loggerhead Shrike and incidentally, a suite of grassland bird species in Ontario mainly on habitat that has been previously identified through associated recovery activities.

Grassland birds have demonstrated more significant and widespread population declines than any other group of North American birds. Given its need for large areas of suitable habitat, the Loggerhead Shrike serves as a flagship species for grassland birds in general. The GBS will focus on short-grassland habitats in these key areas: the Carden, Napanee and Smiths Falls limestone plains, the area around Pembroke/Renfrew, Grey and Bruce Counties and on Manitoulin Island. The survey will provide important data on a variety of grassland bird species currently undergoing serious population declines, with special emphasis on the Eastern Loggerhead Shrike. Data gathered on Shrikes will be used to assist field staff with carrying out recovery activities (e.g. accurate broad-scale population counts) and data gathered on other species will provide information on the abundance, distribution and diversity of grassland birds in these key areas. If you are interested in participating in this project and would like to receive a volunteer kit, please contact the GBS Coordinator at Wildlife Preservation Canada by phone at 519-836-9314 or 1-800-956-6608 (toll free) or through email at gbs@wildlifepreservation.ca.



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The Spring Program

Sunday, March 28, 2010
HULLET MARSHES:
WATERFOWL IN SPRING
with Peter Middleton

Celebrate the return of spring as migrating waterfowl feed and rest on the waters of these superb interior wetlands south of Wingham, for an all-day outing. Bring lunch, waterproof footwear, field optics.

Meet: 8:00 a.m. - parking lot of Foodland 10th St. W., Owen Sound to car pool. Limit: 20 participants
Please contact Peter at 519-376-3242 or peter.middleton@sympatico.ca

Indoor Program

Thursday, May 13, 2010

PLANTS OF THE BRUCE PENINSULA - WHERE NORTH MEETS SOUTH AND EAST MEETS WEST

with Joan Crowe

The Bruce Peninsula is in a unique position in Ontario, close enough to the north to harbour species common in the Boreal Forest and close enough to the south for more Carolinian species to move in. Its complex geological history has created a variety of habitats and past climates have established species commoner further west. Since the early days of European colonization it has been a mecca for botanists, especially for orchids and ferns.

Saturday May 15, 2010
NATIVE WOODY PLANTS
with Bill Moses, 1 pm to 4 pm

This event will begin with a tour of the Arboretum Nursery at Grey Sauble Conservation headquarters. The importance of native trees and shrubs to our environment will be discussed. Following this there will be an opportunity to tour a few local properties to see how native trees, shrubs and vines can be incorporated into the landscape.

Saturday, May 22, 2010
BIRD WATCHING
with Alfred Raab.

Afred, a veteran OFO hike leader will take us to areas in Wiarnton, Sky Lake, Isaac Lake, Oliphant and North Sauble Beach searching for spring migrants.

Meet at Tim Horton's at 8:00 AM in Hepworth. The tour will last about 4 hours. Limit - 15 people. Please contact Fred Jazvac at 519.797.3332 or jazvacfb@bmts.com.

Indoor Program

Thursday,
April 8, 2010

BIRDWATCHER'S STEW!

with Fred Jazvac

Join Fred for an overview of the many ingredients that make up a recipe for more successful bird watching.

Sunday, April 11, 2010, at dusk
SONGS OF SPRING... FROGGIES AND WOODCOCKS IN LOVE
with Lorraine Brown

Limit: 20 people. We'll visit the woods of Hibou Conservation Area at dusk to listen to spring amphibians, and watch the courtship flight of the American Woodcock.

Please register with Lorraine at 519-372-0322 or lorraine@apropos.ca

Sunday, April 19, April 26, May 3, May 10, May 17, May 24, 2010
NATURE HIKES with Dave Fidler and others @ 6:00 p.m.

Come join Dave and other leading birders for nature hikes on Dave's wooded property called Fidler's Green. No registration is required-just show up!

Directions to Fidler's Green from Owen Sound: Turn right at Jackson on Hwy 21. Go one block north and turn left at the "T" junction. Go one block west and turn right on Old School Road. Fidler's Green is about 1 km on your left.

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Indoor Program

**Thursday, June 10, 2010
AT 6:00 p.m.
ANNUAL POTLUCK
DINNER**

at St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church,
865 2nd Ave. W, Owen Sound (near
the Library). Bring your own plates &
cutlery.

POLAR BEARS IN ONTARIO with Alistair MacKenzie

Join Alistair MacKenzie, Natural
Heritage Education and Resource
Management Supervisor for Pinery
Provincial Park and travel to the
Hudson Bay Lowlands to visit
Ontario's northernmost Provincial
Park, the land of the Polar Bear.

Saturday, June 12, 2010 ORCHID TRIP TO FLOWERPOT ISLAND with Scott Currie

Bruce National Park naturalist,
Scott Currie, will lead us on a
tour of the orchids of Flowerpot.
According to Scott, the 'showy
stuff' is at Dorcas Bay, but the
'rare stuff' is at Flowerpot. We'll
car pool up to Tobermory and
take the Blue Heron II over to
Flowerpot. Cost per person will
be in the range of \$35 to \$40. If
weather prevents us from getting
to the island, we'll focus on
Dorcas Bay instead. Limit of 20
people. This is a popular outing
so register early.

Please contact Dian Wood at
saublebeach@hotmail.com or
519.422.1514.

Saturday, July 3, 2010 (rain date of July 4, 2010) NABA BUTTERFLY COUNT at MacGregor Point Provincial Park.

This is like a Christmas bird count for
butterflies. Please join us for this
enjoyable event. Experts will guide us
through the procedures. You don't have
to be an expert.

For more info:
<http://friendsofmacgregor.org>

Young Nats Report

The Young Naturalists have been busy!
In January, we enjoyed our annual
snowshoe at Bognor Marsh Management
Area and participated in games
facilitated by our new volunteer, Amber.
Our parent volunteers assisted Krista in
building a fire so that we could all enjoy
hot chocolate and bannock. (Special
Thanks to Elaine for providing the sticks
to cook our bannock.) February
provided excellent weather for
snowshoeing and building
quinzees.

Congratulations to Amy
Blackwell, the lucky winner to
experience Camp Kawartha's
Nature Camp in September!!!
Upcoming Events - special guest
Verle Barfoot, building toad
houses with Kate MacLaren and
riverbank cleanup.

*Krista McKee
Community Relations
Coordinator
Grey Sauble Conservation*

Bird Studies Canada has
recently released a new tool
within eBird Canada that
shows locations of all recent
sightings of interest across
Canada. To get the tool, go to
<http://ebird.ca/sightings>.
jSP.



The Young Nats snowshoed at the Bognor Marsh Management Area on January 31st. The adults started a fire so that the Young Nats were able to cook bannock and have hot chocolate! (Susan Thompson)

News from Ontario Nature

By declaring 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity, the United Nations challenged us to do our part to chart a new course for protecting our natural heritage. With this in mind, Ontario Nature is excited to announce the release of our Green Way Forward report, which examines provincial policies aimed at natural heritage protection in southern Ontario relating to biodiversity, planning, aggregate extraction, environmental assessment, and land use.

This comprehensive report is a milestone in our campaign to protect Ontario's rich diversity of plant and animal life; it puts forward our vision for policy reform to support a Greenway of interconnected natural areas across southern and eastern Ontario.

Why is a Greenway important? A Greenway will conserve sensitive ecosystems, protect waterways, improve air and soil quality, protect and restore natural areas for wildlife and species at risk, enhance human health and well-being and, critically, enable wildlife to adapt to the anticipated impacts of climate change.

In the Green Way Forward, Ontario Nature presents 24 recommendations that address the problems underlying current provincial policies aimed at natural heritage protection. According to the report, Ontario can no longer afford, either economically or ecologically, to use a piecemeal approach to natural heritage protection. As the province's human population grows, and the likelihood of negative impacts from climate change increases, we need courageous and forward thinking initiatives like the Greenway to

safeguard the biodiversity of southern and eastern Ontario.

Chromite Mine in Boreal Ontario

In July 2008, Premier Dalton McGuinty said, "Although the Northern Boreal has remained virtually undisturbed since the retreat of the glaciers, change is inevitably coming to these lands. We need to prepare for development and plan for it. It's our responsibility as global citizens to get this right, and to act now."

Now, U.S. iron-ore giant Cliffs Resources, together with Canada Chrome, plan to develop a \$1.5 billion chromite mining operation in the Ring of Fire, which will make this the largest chromite mine in the world - chromite is used to make stainless steel.

We want to keep you informed about this extremely important issue. Last month, Ontario Nature staff met with Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and also with his senior policy advisors. We appreciate that the Minister took the time to talk to us about the Ring of Fire, an approximately 20,000-hectare area in the James Bay Lowlands where more than 8,000 mining claims have now been made.

Local people report that the exploration camps are littered with garbage and dozens of fuel tanks have disappeared into the surrounding bogs.

The James Bay Lowlands are a wildlife sanctuary, home to many at-risk species such as lake sturgeon, bald eagles, short-eared owls and woodland caribou. The northern boreal is now the primary habitat for many species that have been pushed out of more southern regions

because of industry - logging, mining and hydro development. The boreal ecoregion is also a huge carbon storehouse. Unchecked development here would destroy wildlife habitat, contaminate nearby lakes, rivers and soil, and damage a

globally-significant carbon bank.

What we have learned so far: Neither the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry nor the Ministry of Natural Resources has overseen or coordinated any planning for the mining activity in the Ring of Fire. Exploration activities have been allowed to proceed before the government and partner groups can determine which parts of the boreal region will be protected and before plans for sustainable and equitable projects can be formulated.

First Nations communities mounted a blockade in January on two airstrips used by mining companies in protest of the exploration activities on traditional lands.

At least one lake in the area, McFauld's Lake, has been contaminated from mining companies dumping raw sewage, grey water, fuel and chemicals into the water.

Why has the Province allowed mining companies unfettered access to pristine habitat that is supposed to be part of a larger region considered for protection?

On your behalf and on behalf of Ontario's wild species and wild spaces, we will continue to monitor the situation in the Far North. We are determined that the provincial government protect the northern boreal as promised. Sustainability and conservation, not large-scale industrial projects without meaningful oversight, must guide land use in the James Bay Lowlands.

We will continue to speak up for nature.

Newer OSFN members may not know...

Our club is one of many federated clubs of Ontario Nature - formerly the Federation of Ontario Naturalists. Hence our inclusion of their news.

ON holds regular regional meetings. The next meeting takes place in Southampton on April 10. If you are interested in attending, please contact OSFN's president, Peter Middleton.

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OSFN VOLUNTEERS MEMBERS WORKING ON BEHALF OF OUR CLUB

Adopt -a-Highway Committee - Joan O'Reilly (2009 -)
 Auditor - Karen Saliwonchyk (2007-9)
 Baillie Birdathoners - Judy Duncan
 Ontario Nature Rep - Glenda Clarke
 GSCA Arboretum Alliance - Merle Gunby
 Grey County Forest Stewardship Network - Dave Taylor
 Hart's Tongue Herald Mailing - Monica Starr
 Junior Naturalists - Krista McKee (GSC), Elaine Van den Kieboom
 Nominating Committee - Lorraine Brown, Dian Wood, Monica Starr
 Plant Committee - Joan Crowe, Orris Hull, Ellen Hull, Bob Gray, Torbin Hawkesbridge
 (& various others have assisted with the seven books)
 Rankin Resource Management Committee - Jamie Fay
 Shallow Lake Advisory Committee - Freeman Boyd
 Website Committee - Fred Jazvac, Lorraine Brown

A Good News Story

Ron Reid and Janet Grand, who live in Washago and are members of the Orillia Field Naturalists, are currently doing a big birding year to raise funds to buy the Wolf Run Alvar, part of the Carden Alvar in Victoria County. This limestone plain has become a major target area for the quarry industry. As environmental regulations have tightened on the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine, areas such as Carden are new priorities for the industry. At the same time, the Carden Plain is a top-ranked natural area that should be set aside and preserved. Ron and Janet have been working hard to see every bird they can, with pledges totalling about \$50 per bird.

Recently, a major new funding opportunity has opened up for them. Someone who lives in their area won \$1 million on a hospital mega-lottery. These people have decided to donate a substantial portion of their winnings to Ron and Janet's efforts. But rather than simply hand over cash, they have issued a challenge. They will match, dollar for dollar, every new pledge that Ron and Janet get. Those donations, in turn, are matched by a federal acquisition grant. So the returns are good. If you would like

to help Ron and Janet protect Wolf Run Alvar, contact them at bobolink.reid@mail.com.

Lorraine
Brown

Please Support our Sponsors!

We'd like to thank the following companies for advertising in the Hart's-Tongue Herald, and helping to offset our printing costs.

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The Spring 2010 Program at a Glance

Indoor Programs

All indoor meetings will take place in the auditorium of the Owen Sound and North Grey Union Public Library at 7:00 pm. Following a social time and announcements, the speaker of the evening will present at 7:30, followed by club business, sightings and reports.

Thursday, April 8 BIRDWATCHER'S STEW!

Thursday, May 13 PLANTS OF THE BRUCE PENINSULA

Thursday, June 10, ANNUAL POTLUCUK DINNER AND TALK: POLAR BEARS IN ONTARIO

Outdoor Programs

The outdoor program of the Owen Sound Field Naturalists is designed to help members discover new areas, add to their knowledge of natural history, or just to enjoy a "stroll in the woods" with like-minded people. Note that each trip has its own specific time and meeting place. Registration is required for most outings. Please call the contact person indicated about a week before the outing.

Saturday, April 11 SONGS OF SPRING... FROGGIES AND WOODCOCKS IN LOVE

Monday, April 19 & 26, May 3, 10, 17, & 24 NATURE HIKES with Dave Fidler and others, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, May 15 NATIVE WOODY PLANTS

Saturday, May 22 BIRD WATCHING

Saturday, June 12 ORCHID TRIP TO FLOWERPOT ISLAND

Saturday, July 3 (rain date July 4) NABA BUTTERFLY COUNT

Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone..... E-mail.....

Check here if renewal..... (for OSFN e-bulletin and last minute notices)

Membership Category: Single (\$20)..... Family (\$30) Return with cheque to:
Owen Sound Field Naturalists, P.O. Box 401, Owen Sound, ON N4K 5P7

By signing this form, I am agreeing that OSFN may contact me by phone or e-mail.
We hereby confirm that e-mail and mail lists will not go beyond the OSFN. (See privacy policy at osfn.ca)

Signature: