

THE SPOTTED TURTLE



The Newsletter of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park

Volume 19 Issue 4

December 2013



**Participants in 2013 ONTARIO NATURE YOUTH SUMMIT FOR
BIODIVERSITY, Orillia**

COMING

EVENTS

January 2, 2014 -

Saugeen Shores

Christmas Bird Count

January 31, 2014 -

**Deadline for Spotted
Turtle**

**February 1 - Huron
Fringe Birding Festival
Registration Active**

**February 17—Family
Day**

**May 23-26 & May 29—
June 1, 2014 - Huron
Fringe Birding Festival**

PRESIDENTS'S MESSAGE - Doug Martin

Now that the snow has arrived, I hope you had an opportunity to experience the pleasures of fall. There is something peaceful about the Park in the autumn. When the weather cooperates with a sunny day and a warm southerly breeze there is nothing more relaxing than a walk or bike ride through the trails of MacGregor Point as the leaves turn colour and start to fall.

The Board has been active through the summer. We recently finalized the updates to our Strategic Plan and have prepared an Annual Report highlighting past performance and future prospects of the Friends. Both documents have or will shortly be posted on the Web Site for all to see. We are also in the process of reviewing the new Friends Agreement that was prepared by Ontario Parks. We anticipate signing this five year agreement shortly.

As many of you are aware, the Friends have been providing internet service for Visitor Centre staff as part of the telephone service required for our Point of Sales machine in the Friends store. To help recoup some of these costs Park visitors can obtain a weekly internet pass for \$5.00. Friend's members get internet access for free. This new policy gives Friend's members a direct benefit, and results in a fairer sharing of the internet costs amongst the non-members rather than the previous volunteered donation amount.

As far as projects are concerned, we are happy to report that the two new Bulletin Boards have been installed just outside the Visitor Centre entry doors. One panel will be for Friends announcements and activities, the other for park related bulletins and program details. I am sad to report that two other projects anticipated for completion this fall have experienced funding setbacks. The Watersnake Pond Observation Platform did not receive the full funding amount previously pledged and installation issues related to the Trail Signage project have resulted in costs to date that have exceeded the amount originally budgeted. These challenges are being dealt with by the Board as alternative funding measures are pursued. If anyone would like to assist financially with either of these projects, donations would be gratefully accepted.

On a more positive note, Wild for the Arts was a success again this year (many thanks to the committee, volunteers and participants); the Huron Fringe Birding Festival Committee has distributed rack cards for next year's event and has hike leaders and events tentatively confirmed; ticket sales went well for the canoe in our annual raffle; the Friends and the Park will be part of a feature article in an upcoming issue of the local news magazine Marketplace; and, as this newsletter is gearing up for distribution, we are anticipating another successful display again this year in the OPG tent at Pumpkinfest. So remember, enjoy the Park, and tell your friends.

ONTARIO NATURE'S YOUTH BIODIVERSITY SUMMIT

September 20 – 22nd saw the third year that Friends of MacGregor sent 2 high school participants to this weekend. I will let the words of the students explain the impact of their experiences!



Keynote speaker, Rob Stewart

Heather Kozak The summit has definitely opened my eyes to so many new opportunities to help out around our community and I can't wait to share them with the Planeteeers at Saugeen District. I had an amazing time getting to experience the amazing workshops, hear other people's stories including Rob Stewart's who was an amazing speaker and lots more. I already want to go back and relive all the incredible moments that occurred over the weekend such as learning First Nation culture, photographing the beautiful scenery and meeting all the other people who have the have so much heart towards the Earth and our environment. I do have to say though I think my favourite part was hearing Rob Stewart speak in person. We got the chance to watch Sharkwater the day before and that movie already motivates me yet seeing him in person I think made all of us want to go out and change the world right then and there. Overall, the weekend was amazing and mind-blowing, just plain incredible.

For more pictures visit: <https://www.facebook.com/NatureGuardians>

Bronwyn Barry

September 20th-22nd was one of the most memorable weekends of my life. Myself (a grade eleven student at SDSS), along with another grade eleven student, were given the opportunity to spend the weekend at the Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Green Solutions in Orillia. We met so many amazing like-minded youth, were given new vantage points to view old issues from, and learned how to take a leadership role in the matter of protecting our Earth.

The summit was so enlightening and fun, and the messages so powerful. We were reminded that someone has to do something about saving our Earth, starting now--and that someone is every single one of us.

Friends of MacGregor Point Park are hopefully supporting more students for the 2014 Youth Biodiversity Summit. If interested please contact one of the executive. fompp@bmts.com or Linda Mason masonfam@bmts.com

Behind the Scenes preparing for the Huron Fringe Birding Festival

Here it is fall and yet, the Huron Fringe Birding Festival committee has started to work on the program for the spring of 2014!

The committee consists of 10 people. We all enjoy birds, but to varying degrees.

I would like to introduce them to you: Jim Duncan is the co-chair as well as the Treasurer for the Festival. We put his organizational and strategic thinking skills to work each time we meet. We are thankful that he is able, most of the time, to pull us back to reality! Fred Jazvac is a retired school teacher. He loves to teach and is the driving force behind the Bruce Birding Club from which many of our volunteers come. Fred chairs the Publicity Committee and is an active member of our Program Committee. He reminds us regularly that we need to ensure that people have good dollar and educational value while attending the festival.

Carole Lupton and Norma Nanni look after recruiting volunteers for the events. Each hike has a volunteer attached to it who ensures that the leader is properly introduced, that the group stays together and many other fine details that might get lost. These ladies ensure that the hike coordinators understand their roles and have all the tools they need.

Arlene Richards, Margaret Anderton and Liz Addison do a multitude of jobs. They proof read, look after finding honorarium gifts or saleable items and help the various committees. Arlene's attention to detail and perfection is a great help with the Silent Auction and Margaret and Liz are contributing members of the Program Committee.

Bette Jean (BJ) Martin spends some of her time trouble shooting the on-line registration program. Without her persistence and desire for perfection, each person's registration would not flow nearly as smoothly. BJ and Anne Cathrae ensure that all registrants' needs are met on-site as well. They have some very long days often starting at 5:30 am and finishing after 7:30 at night. Our registrants certainly benefit from their commitment.

Stew Nutt really keeps us entertained and likes to think of himself as the "do it now or it won't get done" type of guy. Give him a task and it will be done - almost immediately.

Judy Duncan looks after our stomachs. She coordinates all the meals and liaises with the groups who barbeque lunches at the Visitor Centre.

Matt Cunliffe looks after on site set up and take down and his presence ensures that we remember we are connected to MacGregor Point Provincial Park and the Friends.

And finally, there is me, Norah Toth. I am the co-chair of the Festival Committee and chair the Program Committee. Ensuring we meet deadlines with the program and offer a program that we all can be proud of and that meets the needs of both casual and experienced birders and naturalists is my forte.

Some dates to remember:

Huron Fringe Birding Festival - May 23 - May 26 and May 29 - June 1, 2014

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival program will be available on the Friends website on January 16, 2014

Registration will begin on February 1, 2014

Norah Toth

Follow the Huron Fringe Birding Festival's blog: <http://huronfringefest.wordpress.com>

VISITOR CENTRE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

February will bring some cosmetic improvements to the interior of the Visitor Centre, while we are on the 10 year list for capital expenditures for a new Visitor Centre. New flooring , paint and some displays will hopefully brighten the atmosphere.

Volunteers will be needed beginning in February to : 1. remove furniture 2. paint 3. remove old carpet 4. install click flooring 5. replace furniture & displays

If you are willing to assist with any of these jobs or have questions please contact Andrea or Michael LaBlance: malablance@bmts.com or 519-797-3822



SUMMER STAFF, 2013 From left to right (looking at the middle row): Cayly Bellan, Kathleen Chayer, Sarah Szabo and Alicia Fortin. Behind is Kailyn Nutt and laying on top of everyone is Matt Cunliffe

Why we need a national Lyme disease strategy

by Craig Cantin | October 7, 2013 9:14 pm

(reprinted with permission from Elicabeth May's office)

I know a health policy briefing should touch on all areas of [health policy](#). We have critical issues ahead as we work to protect universal access to top-notch health care, reduce wait-times and drug costs, and meet the growing challenges of an aging population. The deficits in our mental health programs alone could occupy the House of Commons for the fall session.

That I write now about [Lyme disease](#) is because it is timely and urgent. One of the first private member's bills slated for second reading in the next session will be [Bill C-442](#). It calls for a National Lyme Disease strategy, and, while I am the author of the bill, I hope it will not be seen as "my bill," but rather as a bill every Member of Parliament, regardless of party affiliation, can champion.

At least for those MPs representing regions of Southern Canada, we hear from constituents suffering from Lyme disease all too frequently. We know that Lyme disease is a spreading threat and that one tick bite can lead to potentially devastating illness. It is hard to diagnose. Some conventional testing methods miss the diagnosis. Most Canadians are unaware of the risk of exposure to a tick bite.

Others are aware of the risk, but rely on the conventional wisdom that the presence or absence of the "bull's eye rash" is a reliable way to know if the bite was dangerous. It is not. Diagnosis is difficult. Many are unaware that the tick bite could lead to permanent disability if not diagnosed correctly and treated promptly. We need to do more, recognizing that the delivery of health programs is a provincial matter.

Bill C-442 calls for the federal minister of Health to convene a conference to gather together "best practices" across the provincial and territorial jurisdictional lines to improve three areas of Lyme disease policy for all of Canada. It calls for better programs for public awareness, improving prevention of Lyme disease. Secondly it will allow the sharing of approaches for improved diagnosis and treatment, and, lastly, it identifies the need for a national strategy to find a cure.

Former Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq, stated the "Government of Canada recognizes that Lyme disease is a serious infectious disease in Canada." She confirmed that the government "is committed to minimizing the public health risk of this disease...."

Canada is not alone in confronting the growing threat of Lyme disease. In August, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia made a startling announcement.



Deer tick

It raised its estimate of Lyme disease diagnoses annually from 30,000 to 300,000. Chief of epidemiology and surveillance of the CDC Lyme Disease program, Dr. Paul Mead, stated “we know that routine surveillance only gives us part of the picture, and that the true number of illnesses is much greater...this new preliminary estimate confirms that Lyme disease is a tremendous public health problem in the United States, and clearly highlights the urgent need for prevention.”

We cannot assume that the U.S. experience holds true in Canada, but it is certainly the case that I hear from health practitioners across Canada expressing the concern that the number of Lyme patients far exceed the official reports.

It breaks my heart to see families struggle with the costs of going to the U.S. to get treatment for family members with Lyme disease. Even worse is hearing from people suffering from Lyme who cannot afford treatment in the U.S. and are unable to find care in Canada. Many doctors are working hard, as are many provinces. Surely sharing best practices to decrease the extent of Lyme, the reliability of diagnosis and the research work toward improving treatment regimes is in all of our interests.

Originally printed in the [Hill Times](#). Source URL: <http://elizabethmaymp.ca/national-lyme-disease-strategy/>

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NEEDED

STORE MANAGERS FOR HURON FRINGE SHOP- begin your training with current managers , January 2015, travelling to gift show, then taking over store in June 2015. email Michael or Andrea LaBlance for details, malablace@bmts.com

SPOTTED TURTLE EDITOR - beginning June 2014

Contact Linda Mason, masonfam@bmts.com

History of the Friends – Part 3

Friend's Projects:

Well, enough of the socializing and fun stuff *we talked about in the last issue*; it was time to get our hands dirty and start with something of lasting substance. Chris Tomsett, Park Superintendent at the time, had a wish list of projects that he was having difficulty convincing head office were worthy of funding support with the limited budget available.

Our naive board, only in its first or second year of operation latched onto one of the items on the list. Let's build a Viewing Tower at the Ducks Unlimited Pond! Our enthusiasm overcame what many could have seen as reality and we started off on our first major project. We prepared some conceptual drawings and our first annual report entitled "An Assessment of Performance and Prospects". The projects and fund raising committees headed off with these items looking for support from the community and beyond. In a very short time, we had the committed funds in place and were ready for the tendering, contract award and construction process.

This experience proved one thing: If you have a project in hand and clearly show that you are a dedicated, viable group; people are willing to provide support. Considering we had virtually no money in the bank when we started, we were able to fund the tower project and saw it completed during our fourth year of operation. It was something our fledgling organization could truly be proud of.

The Viewing Tower is a destination point for many park visitors. Its construction was followed with required trail upgrades sponsored by the Friends that included boardwalk construction and placement of interpretive signs. The recent construction of the Friend's sponsored Bird Blind on the Tower Trail adds a different element to the birding experience for those who have the patience to truly enjoy nature close-up.

Boardwalk construction was a true hands-on activity for the Friend's members. Work days were held for volunteers to assist with construction of the boardwalk segments on the westerly leg of the Tower Trail. This combined the social aspect of the day with the feeling of accomplishment. Similar opportunities were provided more recently when volunteers were assembled for construction of two bridge and boardwalks segments on the Rotary Way Trail.

Other notable accomplishments have been made through multi-use trail expansion and enhancements. These projects include the Deer Run Trail, Rotary Way Trail and the Townline Bridge on the Old Shore Road. As a result of our work, the Park now features a bicycle trail network that is used by many off-road bicyclists; both campers and day-use visitors from the community. Riders from outside the Park can access the trails through one of the many connecting trail links and designated routes located in the community.

When you participate at an event held in the amphitheatre, be sure to take special note of the newly constructed stage area that was sponsored by the Friends. The old facility could hardly be called a stage and was severely lacking for presentation purposes and audience participation events.

Project construction now has a few more hurdles to jump with the implementation of environmental assessment (EA) procedures for virtually all work in the park. While work in the past was performed in an environmentally sound manner to minimize impacts, many current projects are in the wings having just received or are in the process of obtaining EA approval. These include an observation platform on Watersnake Pond that will replace the boardwalk and pod that had to be removed because of its severely deteriorated condition and a new observation deck on Seiche Pond that will provide viewing opportunities of this picturesque pond in an accessible area along the pond fringe that was disturbed as a result of tree blow-down.

As always, the Friends Project Committee has a list of future projects that they would like to see completed. The Friends accomplishments are many when you look back over the years and we haven't even touched on the assistance the Friends have provided at the Visitor Centre. This will be our topic in the next issue of The Spotted Turtle.

Don't Let Your Kids Suffer From "Nature Deficit Disorder"

Posted: 11/06/2013 5:22 pm (published with permission from Ontario Nature Conservatory)

To witness a deer in full flight is astounding. It's particularly impressive when you are standing only a few feet from its flight path.

I was walking with friends and their one-year-old son at the back of their farm on the Niagara Escarpment near Mansfield, Ontario a few days ago. We were making our way downhill, into the shaded cedar forest that leads to the Boyne River.

The yearling deer bounded past us, scared up by our presence. It was so nimble and in those few seconds, it appeared to be more a creature of air than land. It was a brief moment of wonder in the cedars. None of us had ever been that close to a deer on its best move before.

In general, forests house endless opportunities for wonder. But cedar forests are special places to me all on their own. There was one behind the house where I lived in until I was seven. It was a small clump of trees but its offerings were boundless. Even though the address was Hickory Street, the cedars are the ones holding tight to my memory, to my makeup.

My friends and I spent countless hours building forts, unearthing treasures like snail shells and climbing up on the huge lone stone that proved the glaciers must have passed through. That was what my neighbour's dad told us and how could I not be compelled by the idea of a giant ice sheet dragging boulders for thousands of miles before dropping one on my street? It was more than a decade later that I learned about glacial erratics, but as a young girl, I was captivated by nature's clues to a time I couldn't see. It was a story about my home that was way older than me and it made me curious.

But these types of childhood experiences are now fewer and farther between. Last month, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) [released a report](#) stating that only one in five children in the U.K. have a "level of connection to nature that can be considered 'realistic and achievable' for all children." The report speaks to a growing global concern that children have diminishing connections to the natural world and that this lack of engagement isn't good for anyone.

The impacts of this disconnect are sobering: the [absence of nature](#) in early years has been linked to a loss of emotional and physical well-being, impaired social skills, poor memory and declining academic performance, to name a few

This lack of connection between youth and nature is not only a Pandora's Box for our children but for the natural world itself, say the authors. While we spend less and less time in nature, the number of threatened or endangered species grows and habitat loss continues at an alarming rate. With a loss of connection comes the loss of bearing witness, of understanding, of personal motivation to respond.



Personal observation and time in place play a critical role in learning. Actually seeing, smelling and feeling pine cones, millipedes, frogs and fossils for example allows children to learn on a whole different level. Learning about forests within a forest habitat, learning about wetlands by standing on the edge of one, and seeing a salamander under a log for the first time -- these are the kinds of experiences that we hope inspire lifelong learning and curiosity about the natural world.

Back on Hickory Street, under the forest's cool and lacy canopy we dreamt up games and imagined history -- who had walked through this forest before us? What animals had lived there or just passed by? The odd deer bone provided hours of speculation. Even now, when I find myself wandering through a stand of cedars, like that day at the Boyne River, I feel at home in that coolness. I remember pieces of my childhood amidst the shaggy reddish brown bark, the sideways swinging trunks and moist soils. And like that deer, wondrous things still happen when I spend time outside.

Initiatives such as the RSPB's, aimed at "putting nature back into childhood," are burgeoning all over the world as collective response to what Richard Louv calls a "nature deficit disorder" amongst our children, amongst ourselves. In my home province, the Ontario government recently announced the [Ontario Children's Outdoor Charter](#) in an effort to encourage discovery, play, learning and education in nature.



effort to encourage discovery, play, learning and education in nature.

If the connected futures of a healthy natural world and healthy people are dependent upon an engaged citizenry with personal connections to place, how do we get there? It's an important question to me, as my son will turn six years old next month. How will I help him find his special places, like my cedar forests? We get outside, one wonderful adventure at a time. Who knows what we will see, what we will find together.

Written by Erica Thompson, national conservation engagement manager for the Nature Conservancy of Canada and contributor to [Land Lines](#) (the Nature Conservancy of Canada blog).

**Peter Harrison & John Cummings
show off the 1st Prize Canoe at
Wild for the Arts.**



2013 FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR RAFFLE WINNERS

1ST PRIZE—Canoe, paddles & life-jacket— Tiffany Wilson

2ND PRIZE— Bicycle Hydration Pack & tools— Greg Durst

3RD PRIZE—Ontario Parks gift certificate - Randy Tavener



Please complete your membership renewal and mail to :

The Friends of MacGregor Point Park, R. R. 1, Port Elgin, ON N0H 2C5 . The Friends membership extends one year from the month you join. _

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

****PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR E-MAIL AS IT HELPS DECREASE MAILINGS ****

E-mail: _____

Would you like to be contacted to volunteer at any of the builds or fund-raising functions(i.e. BBQ's)
_____?

Payment by: Cheque _____ Visa _____ Mastercard _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____

Signature: _____

Membership Category:

Individual - \$20 _____

Family - \$30 _____

Donation in addition to membership _____

Total _____

Official Tax receipts will be issued for all donations.

TO HELP CELEBRATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR POINT PARK A COLLECTION OF RECIPES ARE BEING GATHERED AND WILL BE SOLD AT THE HURON FRINGE GIFT SHOP NEXT SEASON. Email Recipes to Andrea LaBlance malablace@bmts.com

