



THE SPOTTED TURTLE



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR POINT PARK *“Naturally Connected”*

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Presidents Message
- 2 Look Up Into The Winter Sky
- 3 Upcoming Events at MacGregor Point
- 4 10 Things About Snowy Owls
- 5 Current Board of Directors
- 5 What Am I? . . . Tree Bark
- 6 Book of the Issue
- 8 A Guide to Snowshoes



Photo: Friends of MacGregor Point Park

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE . . .

Hello to all Friends of MacGregor Point Park! I would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy new year.

The fall of 2014 has seen the trail signs manufactured and adhered to sign posts to help all who use the Park. The trail signs will aid them in their walks, hikes, bike rides, skiing and snowshoeing while using the Park. The new signs will go hand in hand with the new bicycle maps of last year, within the Park.

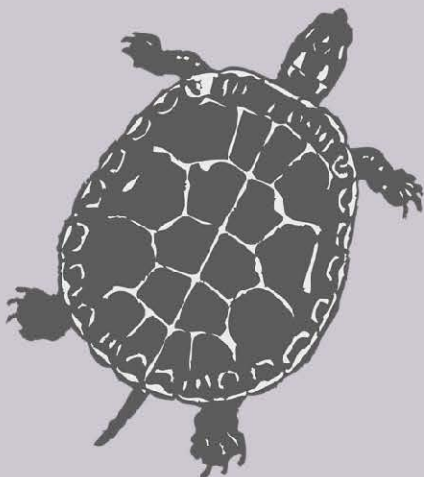
The Friends Board are in the preliminary plans for making a way station and a garden for Monarch Butterflies near the Visitor Center, and in Southampton on the Captain Spence Trail between the Flag and Pioneer Park. Board member Kerry Jarvis is spear heading this project.

The Friends Board is employing Matthew Cunliffe during the winter months. He is applying for several different grants, working with Kerry Jarvis on the Monarch Butterfly project, the Visitor Center enhancements and other projects for the Friends.

Cornia and Kevin Wain will be the new managers of the Huron Fringe Shop in July 2015. They will be attending the Toronto Gift Show with Andrea and me.

Our next board meeting for the Friends will be March 16, 2015. As always, all are welcome.

Sincerely,
Michael La Blance
Friends Board Chairperson



LOOK UP INTO THE WINTER SKY

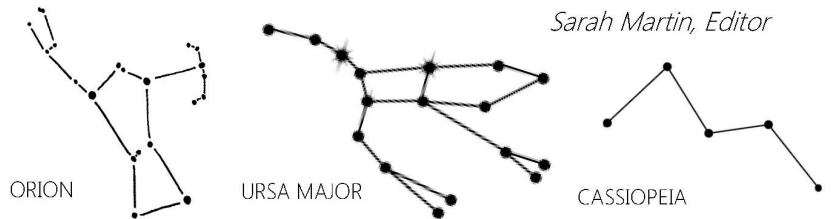


During the winter months the world around us changes. Winter signals the end of another productive year, food resources become scarce, plants shut down, and many animals migrate to warmer climates. It is also the season when most humans would prefer to stay indoors opting for warmer surroundings. Rather, winter is the time to look up to the skies!

Seasonally, winter is the best time to go stargazing as the night sky darkens earlier, the nights are crisper, and the stars and constellations often appear brighter and are easier to see. This is when a star chart, similar to the one here, is a useful tool. Star charts quickly and easily show you how the sky will look during a certain time of year. Star charts are based on compass direction and latitude, as well as specific charts depending on the time of year you are observing. Star charts also show the relative pattern, and brightness of stars which is useful in identifying constellations. In the winter, the most prevalent constellations are Orion, Gemini, Taurus, Cassiopeia, Pegasus, Ursa Major (the Big Dipper) and Ursa Minor (the Little Dipper).

MacGregor Point is a great area to take in some winter stargazing. The Old Shore Road Trail boardwalk near the Visitor Centre is often a very dark area with a clear view over Lake Huron. So grab a star chart and head out with your eyes to the skies!

Sarah Martin, Editor



Some general tips for stargazing

1. Find an open area away from obstructions like trees and buildings as this gives you the largest, clearest view.
2. Try to find an area away from bright lights as this diminishes the visibility of many objects in the night sky.
3. Binoculars are not just for birding! Use a pair of binoculars to see even more stars and constellations.
4. Bring a star guide, nature book, compass, flashlight, lawn chair, hot chocolate and friends, and be ready for a night of new wonders.

Information and resources compiled from "Sky and Telescope", "Sky News", and personal interest in Stargazing.



Photo: Sarah Martin

UPCOMING EVENTS AT MACGREGOR POINT

Family Day Weekend and Snowfest

February 14th, 15th and 16th, 2015

Come out to the Park for some family fun winter activities! Winter fun activities include an indoor presentation on the bizarre world of animal courtship and parenting practices, a Family Winter Triathlon of snowshoeing, skating and cross country skiing. Family fun also includes a Meet the Naturalist on animal hibernation and winter survival skills and a snowshoe hike along the oldest trail of MacGregor Point Park while you take a closer look at the winter wildlife.

To sign up in advance for the Winter Triathlon call 519-389-6231.

Algonquin Campground Skating Oval

Open during the Winter Season - Weather Permitting

Loop C of Algonquin Campground transforms into a 400m outdoor skating loop! A hockey pad is also available, as well as a heated dressing area. Cross-country skiing enthusiasts will also enjoy the 7km set track cross-country ski loop. Snowshoers can also walk over 20km of unplowed trails!

Friends of MacGregor Board Meeting

March 18, 2014

Come join the board members of the Friends of MacGregor at their regular meeting. The public is welcome.

Weekly Events at MacGregor Point Provincial Park

Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre is closed for the winter season, but be sure to come back in the spring for a series of interpretative programs including: Meet the Naturalist, Children's Programs, Guided Hikes, Outdoor Recreation, Guest Speakers and Special Events as scheduled.

For more information and full program details visit www.friendsofmacgregor.org e-mail us at fmpp@brns.com or call us at 519-389-4292

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE SPOTTED TURTLE

If you have a photo, story, memory, newsletter idea, event, advertisement, etc. you would like included in the Spotted Turtle Newsletter please send it to the attention of Sarah Martin at friendsofmacgregor@gmail.com and you may be featured in an upcoming issue! All submissions are greatly appreciated!

Snowy Owls mainly eat mammals, ranging from small rodents to large hares. They are also known to eat birds including small songbirds, and even geese.

An adult Snowy Owl may eat around three to five small rodents each day, that's about 1,600 per year!

Clutch sizes depend on availability of food. During times of limited food, a clutch of 3-5 eggs is standard, while 7-11 eggs is common when food is plentiful.

10 things about SNOWY OWLS

Sarah Martin, Editor



Photos: Anne Marie and Bob Taylor, Members of Bruce Birding Club, December 2014

The young owls begin to leave the nest around 25-26 days after hatching. They are not able to fly well until at least 50 days of age. They continue to be fed by their parents for another 5 weeks after they leave the nest.

The feathers of Snowy Owls have no pigment. This leaves more space for air which helps to keep them warmer because air is such a good insulator.



The breeding range of the Snowy Owl spans the northern regions of Greenland, Scandinavia, Russia, Alaska and Canada.

Snowy Owls have few predators but must still be watchful of foxes, wolves, and other animals during the nesting season.

Snowy Owls are diurnal, which means that unlike most other owls they are active and hunt during the day and night.



During the nesting season males defend the nest by standing guard watching nearby. When a predator approaches both parents will dive-bomb to distract it away from the nest.

A group of owls has many different names, including a bazaar, glaring, parliament, stooping and wisdom of owls.

CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD MEMBERS

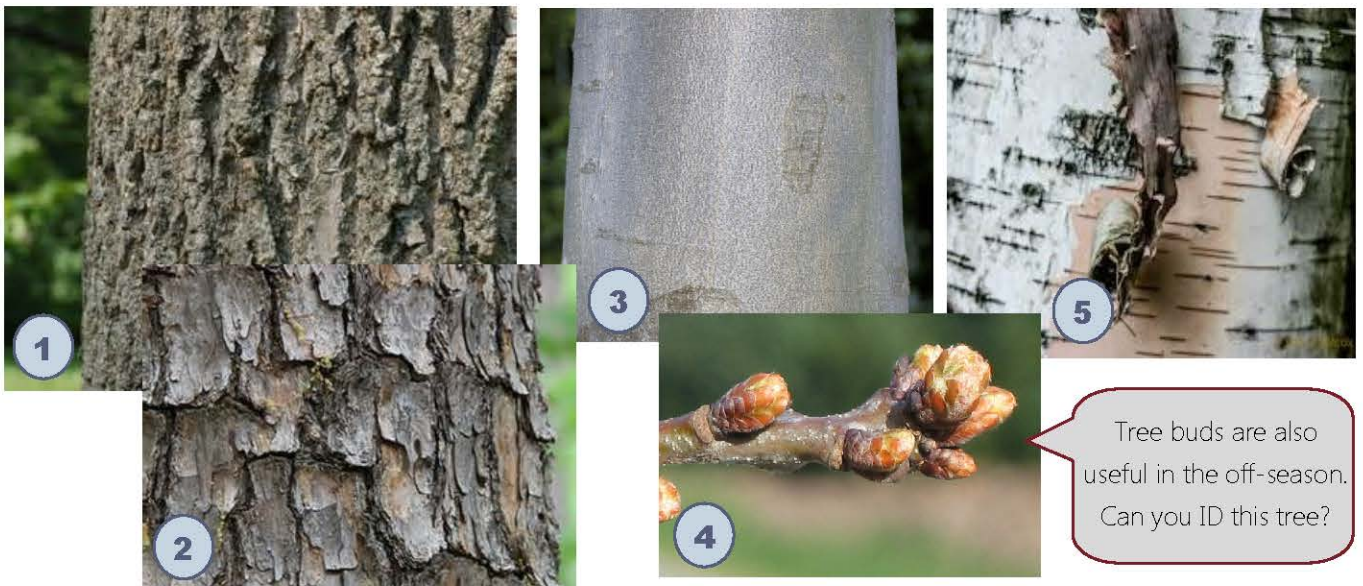
Michael La Blance <i>President</i>	malablance@bmts.com
Jim Coles <i>Projects Committee</i>	jcoles@gbtel.ca
Lana Baldwin <i>Corresponding Secretary</i>	klbaldwin@bmts.com
Bruce Mc Kechnie	bmckech@bmts.com
Sara Dolbeck <i>Treasurer</i>	sara.dolbeck@hotmail.com
Linda Mason <i>Memberships</i>	masonfam@bmts.com
Kerry Jarvis <i>Marketing Committee</i>	kerryjarvis@kerryjarvis.com
Andrea La Blance <i>Store Manager</i>	malablance@bmts.com

MEMBERS SUPPORTING THE BOARD

Matt Cunliffe <i>Park Liaison</i>	matthew.cunliffe@ontario.ca
Norah Toth <i>Ex-Officio, Recording Secretary</i>	ntoth@rogers.com
Sarah Martin <i>Newsletter</i>	friendsofmacgregor@gmail.com

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS? EMAIL A CURRENT MEMBER , OR fohpp@bmts.com FOR MORE INFORMATION.

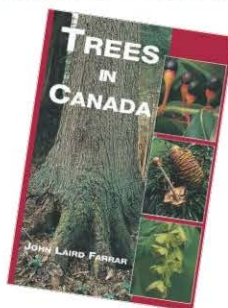
WHAT AM I ?



Tree buds are also useful in the off-season. Can you ID this tree?

CONFIRM YOUR ANSWERS ON PAGE 7

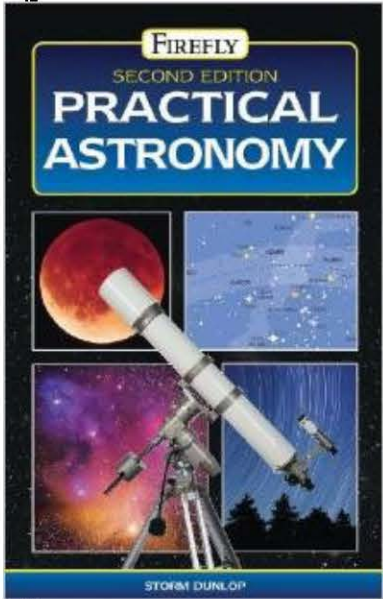
Interested in learning other useful methods of tree identification . . . Try "Trees in Canada"



Deciduous tree identification in general can be tricky, especially in the winter when this type of tree loses its leaves. Luckily tree bark is another great identification tool of some common tree species. For a great tree identification guide try "Trees in Canada" written by John Laird Farrar. This book is a great resource of pictures, range maps, habitat and reproductive structures. It also includes a handy Identification chart in the back with various methods of identification, including buds, leaves, etc.

BOOK OF THE ISSUE

Firefly's Practical Astronomy by Storm Dunlop



The snow has fallen covering the ground in a blanket of white, hiding much of our plant and animal life making winter the perfect time to turn our attention to the skies.

For our winter edition of "Book of the Issue", I'd like to present *Practical Astronomy*, a Firefly publication by Storm Dunlop. *Practical Astronomy* is an accessible guide to all kinds of night-time phenomena, from detailed information about stars and planets, to constellation information, to how to use your favourite birding binoculars to look at stars. Of particular interest to me was the information about the Aurora Borealis and the phases of the

moon.

Some of my fondest memories of my childhood consist of my mom waking me up in the middle of the night to go look at the stars, a meteor shower, or the northern lights.

A guide like *Practical Astronomy* provides all the basic information needed in order to understand the incredible night sky above us. *Practical Astronomy* is sold at the Huron Fringe Gift Shop for \$16.95 or \$14.40 with your Friends Membership card.

Bookworm Kathleen
2014 Visitor Centre Staff

Be sure to check out Firefly's other guides on Astronomy, including the "Encyclopedia of Astronomy", "Stargazing with a Telescope", and other useful items including a Planisphere Star Chart.

HELP US PROMOTE THE FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR

We are trying to make the Friends of MacGregor, and the work of the Friends better known amongst campers, Park visitors, naturalists, nature enthusiasts, surrounding communities, and all throughout Ontario who have a vested interest in MacGregor Point Provincial Park, Ontario Parks, and nature.

We are asking every reader to help us do this by spreading the word about the Park and the work of the Friends by promoting us in your community, online, and at any event you attend.

We have flyers and newsletters of the work and message of the Friends we can make available to you. Please feel free to pass on the friends website, and encourage those you know to become a member of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park.

<http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org/>

[NEW MEMBERS CAN FILL OUT THE ENCLOSED MEMBERSHIP FORM]

CONNECT WITH THE FRIENDS



<http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org/>



NEWSLETTER | friendsofmacgregor@gmail.com
FRIENDS | fompp@bmts.com



FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR
1593 BRUCE ROAD 33, RR#1
PORT ELGIN, ONTARIO
N0H 2C5



VISITOR CENTRE | (519) 389-6232



"@ FOMPP "



"The Friends of MacGregor
Point Park"



The Friends of MacGregor Point Park are looking for Volunteers!

If you are interested in getting more involved with **The Friends of MacGregor Point Park** we are looking for eager individuals to help! For 2015 we are looking for various Friends of MacGregor Board Member positions. We are always looking for eager volunteers to help with Wild for the Arts, Huron Fringe Birding Festival and other events and nature activities put on at MacGregor Point.

Not local? Don't worry! We are happy to correspond through email! Help your local park, help with a local arts festival, network with interesting people, hone and develop a whole new set of skills and best of all have fun!

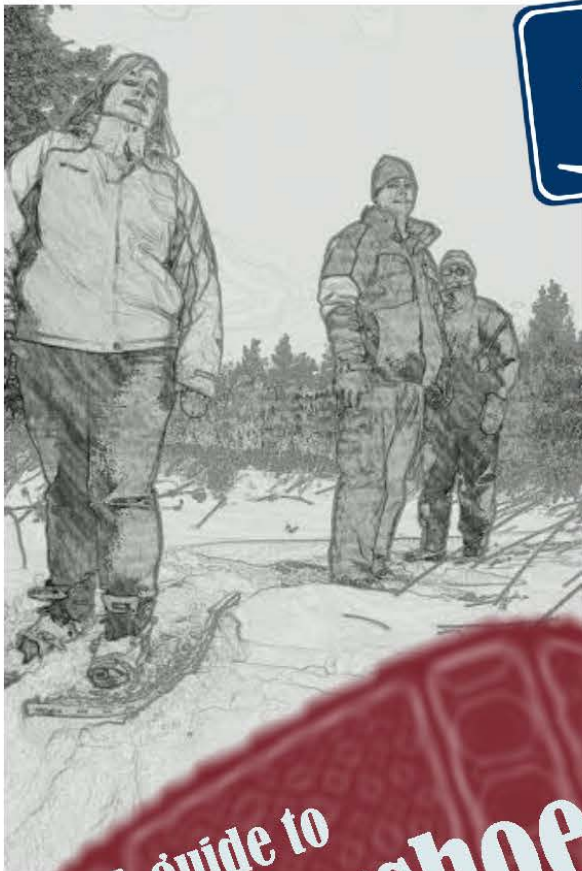
If you are interested and would like more information please contact Matthew Cunliffe @ 519-389-6231 or email fompp@bmts.com – even if you are not interested in the positions above, we are always looking for new help!



LET US LOVE **WINTER**
FOR IT IS THE
SPRING OF GENIUS.

~ Pietro Arentino

WHAT AM I? ANSWERS: 1 WHITE ASH 2 BLACK CHERRY 3 AMERICAN BEECH 4 WHITE OAK 5 WHITE BIRCH



Winter is a great time to try winter sports and snowshoeing is a sport growing in popularity for all ages. Snowshoeing has been around for thousands of years but has remained relatively unchanged over time except for some technology advances in equipment and accessories.

The sport is very easy to learn, inexpensive compared to other winter sports, and can be targeted to those who hike trails for pleasure, backcountry enthusiasts and even race competitors. You don't need any special clothing or expertise, and your body will generate plenty of heat to keep you warm. Snowshoeing is also a great form of effective low impact exercise which burns between 420-1000 calories per hour. Selecting the right pair of snowshoes can be a bit daunting so this article has been prepared to give a few pointers geared towards this popular winter sport.

If you've never been snowshoeing, I suggest you give it a try! It's a great way to get outside on a winter day and enjoy the solitude of the winter woods with nothing but critter tracks around.

Sarah Martin, Editor

A guide to Snowshoes

Styles Snowshoe

TRADITIONAL

Wood frame with rawhide lacing. This laced snowshoe comes in a variety of models and can be passed down from generation to generation. This style takes a little bit more care and maintenance to preserve the natural rawhide.

HYBRID

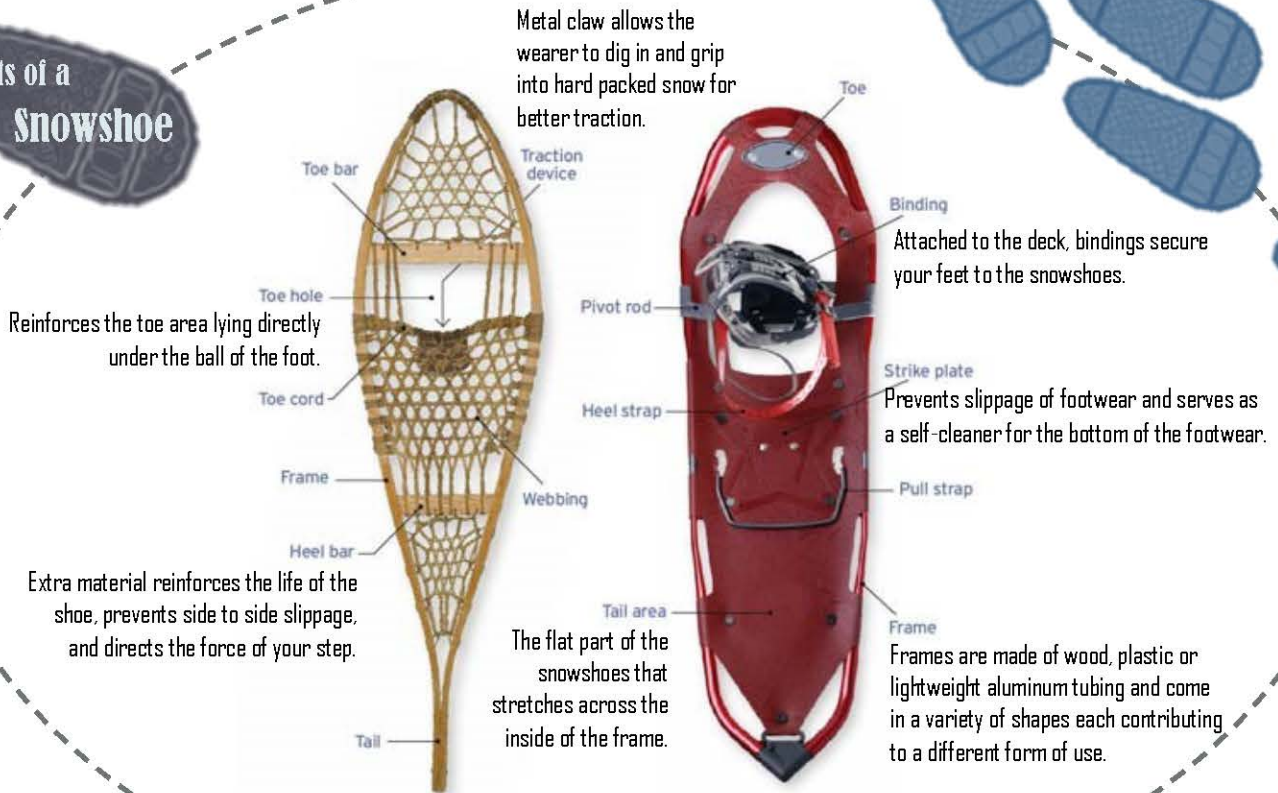
Wood frame with high tech decking. This shoe has been designed to maintain the traditional look and feel but offer a more modern look with waterproof and maintenance free webbing. The broad decking and bindings located in the middle of the base add to the

ALUMINUM

Aluminum frame with high tech decking. These models introduced a light weight shoe meant for all terrain use. This shoe is also maintenance free and waterproof. The bindings are located near the front of the shoe with design geared towards reducing the overall size of the frame. At a sleek size, these shoes also offer good flotation in deep snow.



Parts of a Snowshoe



Information and resources compiled from "Snowshoe Magazine", "Faber", Sierra Trading Post and "Cabelas Outfitters"

Snowshoe Weight Guide

The main determination of snowshoe size is the total weight the shoe will carry. The correct shoe size allows a comfortable walking stride and proper floatation in snow. Be sure to add about ten pounds to your base weight for clothing. These are general guidelines. Due to modern advances, aluminum shoes are meant to offer more coverage and floatation in a smaller size. It is always best to consult an expert when purchasing snowshoes.

	weight											
	-80	100	120	140	160	180	200	220	240	260	280	300+
20-22"	OK	OPTIMAL			OK							
25-26"		OK	OPTIMAL		OK							
30"			OK	OPTIMAL		OK						
35-36"				OK	OPTIMAL		OK					
Race	OPTIMAL						OK	OPTIMAL		OK		

DID YOU KNOW ???

MacGregor Point has over 20 km of unplowed trails that are great for snowshoeing. Come hike MacGregor Point and try your hand at snowshoeing our beautiful trails!

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS

for **May 22 to May 25, and May 28 to May 31, 2015**
for next year's Huron Fringe Birding Festival.

Registration starts on February 1st, 2015. Program details are available online by January 15th, 2015 on the Friend's website: www.friendsofmacgregor.org

Visit our blog for more information on the festival:
<https://huronfringefest.wordpress.com/>



Photo: Huron Fringe Wordpress Blog (Ed Nanni)



Photo: Friends of MacGregor

Park Visitors enjoying the groomed ski trails, and unplowed snowshoe trails amid the winter season at MacGregor Point..



Photo: Sarah Martin



Photo: Sarah Martin

VISITOR CENTRE & HURON FRINGE SHOP

The Visitor Centre and Huron Fringe Gift Shop is now on fall/winter hours, open for special events only. Be sure to check back in the spring for new exhibits and information about MacGregor Point!



Huron Fringe Birding Festival

One of Ontario's Top 100 Festivals & Events



More than 80 individual events featuring
Birding, Botany, Photography,
Nature Hikes and More

Online Registration Begins February 1, 2015
Events Fill Quickly - Register Early for Best Choice

www.friendsofmacgregor.org

MacGregor Point
Provincial Park

Saugeen Shores (Port Elgin) Ontario

May 22 to May 31, 2015



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR

The Friends of MacGregor Point mission is to be "Naturally Connected", while believing in the support of the values of Ontario Parks, and those of MacGregor Point Provincial Park, the preservation of natural, historical and cultural aspects of the MacGregor Point environment, and the basic principles of environmental conservation.

The projects and programs provided by the Friends help ensure that the natural legacy of MacGregor Point Provincial Park will remain for future generations. Projects are undertaken with funding from membership fees, donations from individuals and various fundraising projects. The Friends of MacGregor are proud of the projects undertaken with the help of many supporting partners.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS INCLUDE . . .

- The seasonal Spotted Turtle Newsletter
- Notice of special and "Member Only" events
- A 15% discount at the Huron Fringe Shop (nature gift shop located in the Visitor Centre)
- Free access to WIFI at the Visitor Centre

Please complete the form below and MAIL to: FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR 1593 BRUCE ROAD 33, RR#1, PORT ELGIN, ON, N0H 2C5
 You can also renew your membership ONLINE by visiting: <http://friendsofmacgregor.org/page/join-the-friends>

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

PROVINCE: _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: () _____

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS * * In order to keep membership costs down and to be environmentally friendly, our newsletter is distributed to members via email. Alternate arrangements for members who do not have internet access can be made by contacting the Spotted Turtle Editor, or Membership Chairperson

EMAIL ADDRESS 



WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE CONTACTED TO VOLUNTEER AT FRIENDS EVENTS? _____ YES



MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY _____ INDIVIDUAL (\$20) _____ FAMILY (\$30)

DONATION \$ _____ OFFICIAL TAX RECEIPTS WILL BE ISSUED FOR ALL DONATIONS

TOTAL \$ _____

PAYMENT: _____ CHEQUE _____ VISA _____ MASTERCARD

CARD NUMBER: 

EXPIRY:  20 

SIGNATURE: _____