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UPCOMING SPEAKER

Join us March 26th for a presentation by Meaghan Mechler on a closer look at soils.

See waterlooregionnature.ca for details, and pg. 14&15 for information on more upcoming speakers!

OUTINGS, OUTINGS, OUTINGS

Read inside for more information on upcoming outings, and check your email for further updates, cancellation information, and new outings added.

ANNUAL NATIVE PLANT EXCHANGE: MAY 28

See details on pg. 15 and share your love of gardening with fellow club members.

THE HERON

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The Hickories

By Wayne Buck

Last October, Ken, Fraser and I went for a walk to try our legs out after a summer of not hiking the Bruce Trail. We parked at the Bannister Lake parking area on Wrigley Road, and proceeded to walk on the trail bordering Wrigley Lake towards The Dickson Wilderness C.A. When we got to the open tallgrass prairie area on the north side of the Dickson, we encountered a Pignut Hickory tree. We were not sure which species it was but a nut on the ground confirmed our thought that it was Pignut Hickory. On our walk through the Dickson we encountered both Bitternut and Shagbark Hickory, giving us a trifecta of Hickories.

My first encounter with hickories came while I was in high school and courting Lynda who I later married. Her father took us out to Poplar Hill one Saturday following a heavy frost to gather Shagbark Hickory nuts. This was a new experience for me having never tasted the sweet nut meat this tree provides. My father in law took the husked nuts and placed them on the furnace pipes in the basement to dry. Around Christmas, he took a hammer and broke the hard shells releasing the sweet meat. Ahhh, ambrosia. Lynda and I have endeavored to keep the tradition alive by introducing our children AND grand children to this native plant delight.

Continued on pg. 9

From L to R: Bitternut Hickory, Shagbark Hickory and Hickory nuts (Bitternut, Shagbark, Pignut). Photo: W. Buck.

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Fall Issue

July 15th

Winter Issue

October 15th

Spring Issue

February 15th

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All WRN Club
meetings are held
in the Reception
Hall of the
Waterloo Knox
Presbyterian
Church

50 Erb St. West

Regular Meetings
begin at 7:30pm.
Doors open at
7pm.

**All parking is
FREE**

All parking access
is off Dupont
Street.



Yesterday, I heard my first Northern Cardinal of the year. He woke me up at the crack of dawn, but it was still a real pleasure to hear the familiar song once again!

Spring is about to spring, and it's one of my favourite times of year. The Red-winged Blackbirds will soon add their voices, then in a growing chorus the Song Sparrows, Ruby- and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Yellow-rumped Warblers and the rest. The annual joy of rediscovering these familiar and not so familiar friends, sporting their fanciest plumage, is surely the greatest benefit of the dramatic shift in our seasons; those whose interests are more botanical or entomological are in for a similar treat!

My own migration to Canada was over a decade ago. The most striking and enduring pleasure has been finding myself immersed in a whole new ecosystem – new trees, new birds, new mammals. It was something of a return to childhood – discovering chipmunks, groundhogs, blue jays and chickadees for the first time. Cardinals were an early favourite. Re-experiencing this each spring is a real delight.

One small step the club has taken this last year towards protecting migrating birds was approaching the City of Kitchener regarding their new urban design manual. The City has now introduced new guidelines for developers of tall buildings, and in part thanks to the lobbying efforts of WRN members, bird friendly design has been included as an explicit

consideration. We hope that by minimizing the use of reflective glass and night lighting, and introducing visual markers, developers can reduce daytime window strikes, which account for tens of millions of bird deaths in Canada every year (per Environment Canada).

In parallel with Waterloo and Kitchener's Earth Day celebrations over the weekend of April 27-30, WRN Kids will be sponsoring and helping organize a tree planting event at Laurel Creek Nature Centre. All our members young and old are welcome to join in, as we work to repair some of the damage caused by Emerald ash borer beetles in recent years, and strengthen the forest border ahead of possible residential development nearby.

At the same time, Waterloo Region will also be competing in the 2018 City Nature Challenge, as cities across the world indulge in 'competitive' citizen science to see who can identify more species. We'll share more information closer to the event, but amateur herpetologists, mycologists, ornithologists, botanists, mammalogists, and (especially if we're feeling competitive) microbiologists should mark their calendars!

It seems odd to acknowledge this as the last column I'll write as President, but so it is. Let me express my profound thanks to all of you for your contributions towards the club's success. At the end of April, we hope to launch a new recognition scheme, as a small but more personal expression of WRN's appreciation for our volunteers. But until then – hopefully long before then – let's all enjoy Spring!



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The following outings are confirmed for Spring 2018. In the event of change or cancellation, WRN members will be notified by email. Outings are free unless otherwise noted. **WRN thanks the various property owners for so generously sharing nature on their land.**

North Shore of Lake Erie for Early Migrants

When: Saturday March 17, 2018. All day beginning at 8am until approximately 4pm.
Where: Meet at Fountain Street carpool lot, SW of HWY 401
Who: Jim Burrell

This is an all-day outing that will take us to Aylmer Wildlife Refuge and then to the shore of Lake Erie. We will concentrate on early northern migrants and whatever jumps out in front of us. Bring binoculars, scopes, field guides, water and a lunch. We should return by 4pm.

Weekly Wander in Stamm Woods

When: Thursday April 5, 2018 at 10am for 1-2 hours; and weekly thereafter until interest wanes.
Where: Park on Lake Louise Boulevard near Sandbanks Crescent and Rock Point Crescent. The entrance to the woods is near there.
Who: Julie Arnold 519-505-5582 julie.arnold222@gmail.com

This is a casual walk: meet and greet your fellow members and guests, share your knowledge and interest in nature. Come to experience the woodlot awoken with weekly visits in early spring. Stamm Woods has 9 regionally significant plant species, many species of ferns, and of course, your typical abundance of spring wild flowers. First the wild leek appears as a green carpet, with Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot and hepatica. The marsh marigolds are not to be missed as they cover a large swampy area in the northeast side. Choose a date or attend weekly. No RSVP necessary.

Raised Bed Gardening

When: Friday April 13, 2018 from 2 to 4pm.
Where: North House and Springbank Gardens, 681 Blair Rd.
Who: Taryn Jarvis 519-650-9336 x115 taryn.jarvis@raresites.org

This presentation will explore a variety of raised-bed garden styles, how to construct a wooden raised bed garden and the benefits of this style of gardening. After the presentation we will tour the Springbank Community Gardens, visiting the raised beds and Hugelkultur gardens. This event has indoor and outdoor components so please come dressed for the weather and comfy shoes for a limited amount of walking. Washrooms are available on site. RSVP welcome but not essential.

Baden Sandhills Walk

When: Thursday April 26, 2018 at 6pm for about 1.5 hours.

Where: The Cappleman Property, 2774 Sandhills Road, Baden. Meet at the Beer Store at the corner of Fisher Hallman & Highland Road

Who: Jim Burrell and Jim Cappleman

At 6:30 pm, Jim Burrell will lead this leisurely walk through the wooded, hilly, terrain of a glacial kame, with particular interest to emerging woodland flora and migrating birds. Some refreshments to follow.

City Nature Challenge at SpruceHaven

When: Monday April 30, 2018 from 7am to 10am.

Where: 2005 Notre Dame Drive, St. Agatha, ON

Who: David Gascoigne theosprenest@sympatico.ca
Jenna Quinn jenna.quinn@rarsites.org

Which city has the most nature? The City Nature Challenge 2018 will help us find out! This exploration of nature at SpruceHaven will track species observations using iNaturalist to contribute to Waterloo Region's effort to show the world how biodiverse our region is. This is also an opportunity for participants to see the important work that is being done at SpruceHaven as the owners of the property undertake significant environmental stewardship. Plants, birds, salamanders, insects and more: we will be on the lookout for as many species as possible!

RSVP required! Please RSVP to theosprenest@sympatico.ca. This event cannot accommodate more than 20 people.

Voices of the Night at Laurel Creek Nature Centre

When: Monday April 30, 2018 at 8pm for approximately 90 minutes.

Where: Meet at the gates to Laurel Creek Nature Centre, Beaver Creek Rd., Waterloo.

Who: Fraser Gibson 519-576-9287 fn.gib@sympatico.ca

Experience the Voices of the Night as we focus on American Woodcock, but also listen for and identify amphibian and possibly owl calls. In April and early May the American Woodcock partakes in an interesting flight and sound mating display. The old fields at Laurel have been favoured by this species in the past, so hopefully this late evening ritual will again be observed. The nearby wetlands should provide the habitat necessary for a variety of singing amphibians and the woodlands are known to be home territory for owls. Foot paths with some uneven terrain. Bring binoculars, a flashlight and dress warmly. No washrooms available

HAVE AN OUTING SUGGESTION?

Contact outings@waterlooregionnature.ca

Next outing deadline is July 15, however ideas are welcome at any time!

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Spring Flowers in Steckle Woods

When: Tuesday May 15, 2018 at 9:30am for approximately 2 hours.

Where: Meet in parking lot off Bleams Rd near corner of Bleams and Homer Watson.

Who: Fraser Gibson 519-576-9287 fn.gib@sympatico.ca

April showers bring May flowers. Come for a stroll through Steckle Woods as we search out and appreciate our spring ephemerals. Steckle Woods has long been known for its show of trilliums. Wear sturdy shoes and bring binoculars as warblers will likely be moving through. Our walk will follow the formal and informal trail system which climb some small hills. No washrooms available. No RSVP required.

Wednesday Wanderers– Sudden Tract

When: Wednesday May 23, 2018 at 9:30am.

Where: Meet at the carpool parking lot just south of the 401 at Fountain Street (Homer Watson)

Who: Marco & Donna DeBruin 519-658-5372

Join us for a walk through the Sudden Tract. We'll try to find a variety of species of flora and fauna. Spring migration should be well under way at this time. The Sudden Tract has a number of trees and plant species that are at the northern limits of their range. Wear sturdy footwear and don't forget your binoculars and field guides. Be prepared for the possibility of biting insects.

Laurel Creek Nature Centre

When: Saturday May 26, 2018 at 8:30am for approximately 2.5 hours.

Where: Meet at the entrance to Laurel Creek Nature Centre on Beaver Creek Rd in Waterloo

Who: Dale Ingrey 519-884-3667

Join Dale for a leisurely hike through the fields and woods around the Nature Centre property. We'll do some wildflower identification as well as some spring birding - probably some late migrants and others who have recently arrived for breeding. If time permits, we'll check out the wooded area on the other side of Beaver Creek Road where some warblers nest and wild turkeys and deer sometimes forage. Terrain is fairly flat with one or two easy hills in the wooded area. Bring binoculars, hiking poles, field guides if you wish, and a drink for refreshment. No washrooms available unless the Nature Centre is open. However, the Waterloo Y and library are close by.

Fern Hike at Laurel Creek Nature Centre

When: Saturday September 8, 2018 at 9:30am for approximately 2 hours.

Where: Meet at the entrance to Laurel Creek Nature Centre- Beaver Creek Rd in Waterloo

Who: Fraser Gibson 519-576-9287 fn.gib@sympatico.ca

Join Fraser on a leisurely walk through the Nature Centre's beautiful hardwood forest. The focus of the outing will be learning to identify some of Waterloo Region's common ferns. We should be able to find about 10 species on the property. We'll be on the lookout for any other objects of interest so bring your sharp eyes and curiosity. The walk to the forest, as well as in the forest, will be on foot paths that are part of an established trail system. No washrooms available. No RSVP required

WRN Photo Gallery



Great Backyard Bird Count. Photos: P. Bigelow.



WRN Holiday Party. Photos: P. Bigelow

Do you have nature or event photos to share? Send them to editor@waterlooregionnature.ca

BRUCE PENINSULA – NATURE WEEKEND

May 25 – 27, 2018

BIRDING FIELD TRIPS
GENERAL NATURE FIELD TRIPS
BUCKET RAFFLE AND BIRD QUIZ

Limestone cliffs and sand beaches, hardwood forests and cedar swamps, fens and alvars – this variety of ecosystems on the Bruce Peninsula makes it a special place for naturalists.

South Peel Naturalists' Club extends an invitation to join us to explore the Bruce Peninsula. This annual weekend event provides the opportunity to see the best of the Bruce with expert leaders and in the company of fellow naturalists.

The cost per person for the weekend:

- \$20 registration fee to cover cost of bucket raffle prizes and lodging for volunteer leaders
- \$236 (+ 13% taxes) for two nights' accommodation at Evergreen Resort, Mar, ON (includes all meals and snacks)

For further information: mail@spnc.ca or contact Donna at 905-815-0933 or Audrey at 905-820-2571

January “Dirt Time”; Notes from an Apprentice Tracker

By Anita Smith

Over the past year I have had the pleasure of apprenticing with a master tracker who guides me one weekend a month in various ecosystems across Ontario. Below I have shared some of my “homework”, reflections of time spent looking for tracks and sign on my own.

Getting out for dirt time (or should I say snow time) for a few hours each day I have been seeing a lot of tiny tracks which I decided must be mice tracks. They are all over the fields behind my house arising and ending in snow holes which are about an inch in diameter. Many of the tracks also follow and circle the trunks of saplings (perhaps for cover). Yesterday I was startled to see a short-tailed shrew pop out of a hole, travel 8 or 10 inches and then do a quick about-face as it heard my foot-fall in the crunchy snow.

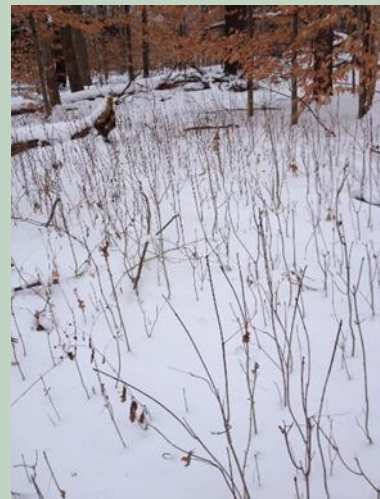


In the past few months I have also encountered 4 dead shrews, in varying habitats but always in the middle of a foot path. I have been researching and was stunned to discover they have venomous saliva which they use

to paralyze their prey (preferably worms, slugs and other invertebrates). Because of their hyperactive metabolism (heartbeats of up to 1300 beats per minute!) they need to eat around the clock. Apparently, their typical activity pattern is 5 minutes of eating followed by 25 minutes of sleep, with a slight preference to nocturnal activity. Finding the shrews on the middle of the paths got me wondering about predators. Foxes will pounce on moving rodents but once the shrew is in its mouth the shrew's bite with its venous saliva would feel like a bee sting. They also have musk glands on their rear and underside which make them foul tasting, so I'm guessing the dead ones I have found were discarded after being preyed upon.

Because of their fast heart beat it is also stated that they often die of heart attacks due to stress and starvation is another factor due to their need to eat so frequently. Who knew?!

As deer are my target animal for the apprenticeship I have been a little frustrated by the lack of tracks in their “usual” spots over the past week or two. I did notice these evenly grazed maple saplings and noted that they had been browsed. Given the extreme cold temperatures I



speculated the deer needed to leave the deciduous forest to find the added shelter provided by an evergreen forest. Walking over a frozen wetland (not normally accessible when warmer) I discovered a cedar stand and then a stand of mixed evergreens. Jackpot! I found lots of deer tracks, some very recent. I noticed also that a pile of scat was often within 6 or 8 feet of a urine patch. I have learned that does leave a puddle, where bucks leave a trail (apparently they like to keep moving!)

In this same general area I also came upon these large bird tracks. I didn't have my tape measure with me, but I expect they are turkey tracks.



On my way home I back-tracked some coyote tracks. Over the past few weeks I have been finding all kinds of their tracks, scat and kill sites (mostly eastern cottontail). *Continued on next page*

As I followed the tracks through snow covered tall grass I noticed an area that had been disturbed, thinking perhaps the coyote had lain down in the snow for a while. It was at the top of a hill and would have been a good lookout. As I followed along further I discovered another disturbance that happened to have rodent hole entrance in it. And then another disturbance and another. It finally dawned on me that the coyote was pouncing on rodents it discovered under the snow!

My last stop before home was an evergreen stand behind some homes edging the park. There I found another disturbance in the snow surrounded by squirrel tracks. Imagine my surprise to find an intact black walnut lying right in the centre! I wondered why the squirrel would go to all the trouble of

locating his cache and then just leave it there.

After taking the picture, I decided to pick up the nut to have a closer look, thinking perhaps it had been chewed open on the other side. Then I had my answer! The

nut would not budge! It was frozen solidly into the ground! After taking a closer look I saw a tiny area where it looks like the squirrel started to chew but probably gave up because of the position of the nut. Guess he'll have to come back on a warmer day!



The Hickories continued

By Wayne Buck

There are 4 species of hickory in Ontario: Shellbark, Bitternut, Pignut and Shagbark. Only the latter 3 are native to Waterloo region.

Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*): Occurs in S. Ontario on rich, moist soils, often mixed with other hardwoods; 5-7 leaflets on single central stalk; fruits, almost globular, wider than long; thick husk; long shaggy bark, often free at both ends, very distinctive.

Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*) also called Red Hickory: This tree is rare in Canada, being found only in scattered locations in S. Ontario, so the fact that we have it in Waterloo Region makes it somewhat special. I have spotted them in the Cambridge area in The Dickson Wilderness C.A., the Drynan Tract and the Waynco Prairie. The bark is grey, with shallow ridges that seem to criss-cross; very different than Shagbark. The shape of the fruit is also different and distinctive, being somewhat flattened and pear-shaped. The husk is thin and the kernel is bitter and inedible (to humans!).

Bitternut Hickory (*Carya cordiformis*) also known as Swamp Hickory: This is the most abundant and widespread of the Canadian Hickories being found farther from the Great Lakes than any of the other 3 species although it is still found only in S. Ontario in Canada. I have found this species growing in woodlots in the New Hamburg area. I remember finding a good number growing along the Avon Trail that passes through the Kahki Club just outside Wellesley. It can also be found in our WRN Montgomery Property along the Nith River. The bark is a lighter shade of grey than the previous species, being somewhat flattened. Young trees bear irregular lines or stripes on the trunk which makes them easier to recognize. The fruits are globular, thin husked, and yellowish with 4 distinct ridges. As the name suggests, the nuts are very bitter. This was a year for bumper crops of Bitternut Hickory nuts in our area. Bitternut Hickory is easily recognized in the fall and winter in that their winter buds are sulphur yellow.

Hickories are notoriously slow growers, spending a lot of time and energy in their formative years putting down a large tap root. This large tap root allows them to withstand fast-burning fires and droughts, allowing them to resprout before shooting up at a rapid rate using this stored energy to rise above their neighbours. However, I think the unusual appearance of the shaggy bark makes them a very attractive tree in a naturalized setting.

Successful Nesting of Bald Eagle in Waterloo Region, Part III

By Bill Wilson

Prior to 2009, Bald Eagle was listed as an Endangered Species and was protected under the Endangered Species Act and the Provincial Policy Statement under the Planning Act. Bald Eagle is currently a Species of Special Concern with a provincial management plan. By the mid-1990s, local birders, including members of KWFN (now WRN), were well aware that this species utilized portions of the Grand River during winter in the Cambridge area.

In 2001 and 2002, OMNR (now OMNRF) published a report and addendum, "Protection of Bald Eagles in the Grand River Valley" in which it identified five reaches of the Grand from Kitchener, upstream of the 401 bridge, to downstream of Footbridge Road, North Dumfries that warranted consideration as habitat for wintering eagles. Three of these reaches, extending from north of the 401 bridge to approximately the outflow of Devil's Creek, were designated "High Risk" of disturbance to wintering eagles and their habitat. Given that two of these reaches flowed along the border of **rare Charitable Research Reserve**, **rare** posted trail closure signs on their River Trail for the period mid-November to mid-March, a practice that continues. The designation of "High Risk" was based upon recorded observations of eagle sightings from the mid-1990s through the early 2000s by local birders and from sightings obtained by the OMNR; a review of the scientific literature, of which there was considerable given Bald Eagle is the most studied bird in North America; and, dialogues with eagle experts throughout North America.

To develop a complete picture of Bald Eagle use of the Grand River within these reaches, OMNR solicited further information by (1) requesting KWFN members and the public to submit sightings on a Bald Eagle Reporting Form; and, (2) supporting an initiative to co-ordinate simultaneous reporting by volunteers. See Bald Eagles in the Grand River Watershed, Timmerman and Wilson 2008, at http://raresites.org/pdf/research_reports/research_bald_eagles.pdf



Observing a juvenile Bald Eagle (17 August 2017) perched along the Grand River is no longer unexpected in any season. Photo: Dave Stafford.

The data compiled 2003 to 2011 led to significant findings about wintering eagles: arrival and departure dates; estimated ratio of subadults to adult birds; nocturnal roost sites; continual use of hunting perches and foraging sites; feeding activity; travel corridors and regular use of other reaches.

After nine years of monitoring wintering eagles within the Grand River watershed, more than 50 volunteers had undertaken 60+ early Saturday morning bi-weekly eagle watches. Such watches, coordinated by Bill and Heather Wilson, between Kitchener and Glen Morris/Spottiswood, extended over the nine year period. Bob Scott coordinated monitoring for five years between Paris and Brantford.

Continued on next page

Following his monitoring efforts along the Grand, Ken Dance coordinated monitoring along the Nith River in 2009 and 2010 while Art Timmerman and Andy Steinberg reported from Conestogo and Glen Allen, respectively. An example of Saturday morning eagle monitoring took place on March 7, 2009, 0620h to 0900h, when 50 volunteers stationed at 36 locations between Kitchener and Brantford along the Grand River and upstream on the Nith, estimated that 15 Bald Eagles were present (from report compiled by Josh Shea).

Club members, past and present, were significant volunteer contributors to this collaborative effort with OMNR: Marilyn Armstrong; Jim, Ken and Mike Burrell; Janet, Ken and Kevin Dance; Donna and Marco DeBruin; Linda Dutka; Randy Fowler; George Greer; Ruth Kroft; Bill and Cheryl Lucas; Barb and Glenn Mockford; Anna Muss; Josh Shea;

Doug Snyder; Neil Taylor; Claire Wehrle; Bill and Heather Wilson. Club members Marilyn Armstrong and Don Thomas together with other Preston residents, Larry Allen, Andy Kelly, Michael McKeown, Klaus Mohn, Hugh Pogue, Paul Vautour and Dave Stafford, regularly reported eagle activity within the High Risk Zones along the river corridor adjacent to *rare*.

A search of club archives by Betty Cooper in the early 2000s, provided reference to a club outing to a Bald Eagle nest at Spottiswood in 1949 which led to my search of club bird records for Bald Eagle sightings prior to 1990 and a visit to the 1949 nest site. In the next issue of *The Heron*, I'll provide an addendum to *Successful Nesting of Bald Eagle in Waterloo Region, Parts I, II, III*, that will examine this historical information.

YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR MARK!

THANK-YOU

To all of our Waterloo Region Nature members who took the extra step to help out with a club activity, event or position this year.

No Effort is Too Small
and
No Action Goes Unnoticed!

Ontario Nature Report

By Fraser Gibson

2018 Annual Gathering

Ontario Nature's 2018 Annual Gathering will be held June 1-3, 2018 at Isaiah Tubbs Resort in Prince Edward County. Visit Ontario Nature's website for further details.

Who Are Your Nature Heroes?

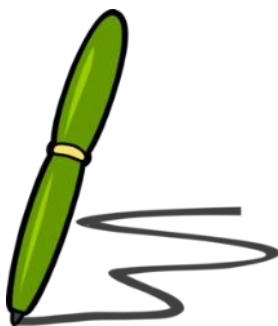
Help recognize Ontario's nature heroes by submitting nominations for the 2017 Ontario Nature Conservation Awards. These annual awards recognize excellence by honouring individuals, groups, government agencies and corporations who have worked to protect nature in Ontario. The deadline for nominations is March 26, 2018. Visit the [Ontario Nature website](#) for more information about the award categories and submission guidelines.



Another Youth Summit Success

Ninety-eight youth from 50 communities across Ontario came together in September for the eighth Youth Summit. The weekend featured 14 nature-focused workshops and a welcome address from Mark Douglas, a Rama First Nation elder. This year, 40 Nature Network groups sponsored youth to attend. WRN sponsored two youth to the event and will do likewise again in 2018.

Sign Ontario Nature's Protected Places Declaration



Ontario Nature is inviting its members to endorse the [Protected Places Declaration](#). The declaration urges our governments to protect at least 17 percent of land and inland water by 2020, in accordance with a target set under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. It is a key element of a collaborative protected areas campaign, and will help us to build and demonstrate strong public support for achieving this goal in Ontario. Visit Ontario Nature's [website](#) to learn more about the Protected Places campaign and the declaration.

Ontario's Endangered Species Act failing to protect at-risk species after 10 years of implementation: report

Ontario's 2007 Endangered Species Act (ESA) isn't protecting at-risk species because the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) is failing to effectively implement it, according to a report released in December 2017 by the David Suzuki Foundation, Ecojustice and Ontario Nature.

The report highlights broad exemptions granted to industry from prohibitions, major delays in the development of recovery strategies for at-risk species, and a complete lack of public transparency about harmful activities occurring in at-risk species' habitats.

(continued on next page)

Ontario's Endangered Species Act (continued)

The report identifies a problem inherent to the MNRF mandate: that it is responsible for both protecting biodiversity and “promoting economic opportunities in the resource sector.”

Sarah McDonald of Ecojustice said: “As the regulatory exemptions indicate, MNRF has put the interests of industry first, and the recovery of Ontario’s most imperilled species second.”

As of October 2017, there were more than 2,000 registered activities exempted from ESA prohibitions against harm to species at risk and their habitat, for which no information has been publicly released. It is uncertain if the MNRF is monitoring these activities or the mitigation measures that proponents claim they will complete. In most instances, the MNRF requires that mitigation plans be developed, but not that they be submitted. Under the exemption regulation, there is no approval process.

“The world is facing an unprecedented loss of biodiversity and yet we continue to waste precious time,” Anne Bell of Ontario Nature said. “We have a law to protect our most vulnerable species, and should be able to expect our government to implement it properly.”

Nature Network News

Ontario Nature publishes a monthly Nature Network Newsletter from which I draw material for the Heron. If you wish to see each newsletter they are posted on the Ontario Nature website at: [Nature Network News](http://www.ontariounature.ca/nature-network-news).

Membership Director's Report

By Anne Godlewski

Thank you to our donors:

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Welcome, New Members!

Agnes Arthur
Doug Arthur
Jim Bowman
Steph Ekmanis
Emily Leslie
Jennifer Marshman
Sean McCammon
Heather Polan
Michael Ptatschek
Kirk Swanson

Upcoming Speakers and Meeting Programs

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:30pm. Meetings are free and visitors are always welcome.
Meeting Location: Reception Hall, Waterloo Knox Presbyterian Church, 50 Erb Street West, Waterloo

Read full presenter biographies at waterlooregionnature.ca/meetings

MARCH

March 26, 2018

What Lies Beneath: A Closer Look at the Universe of Soils

The Presentation: There are more living organisms in a handful of soil than humans on our entire planet. Though soils seem inert, with a closer inspection we find that they are actually thriving universes of their own! Soils have strong interactions with our globe's hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere and exploring their complexity is key for understanding and protecting terrestrial systems. Come out to March's meeting to be introduced to the wild world of soil life and explore ways you can continue to steward the land from the ground up.

The Presenter: Specializing in soil science, Meaghan Mechler is a graduate student in the Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo. She promises that the interactions happening below our feet will be far more thrilling than you imagine!

Meaghan Mechler



APRIL

April 23, 2018

Protecting Biodiversity in Ontario: The Environmental Commissioner's Perspective

Ellen Schwartzel

The Presentation: Ellen will share how Ontarians can use the Environmental Bill of Rights to strengthen environmental laws and policies, including protecting natural heritage. Biodiversity highlights from the Commissioner's recently released report – especially the province's track record on species at risk and protected areas – will also feature in her talk. Don't miss this informative and engaging presentation!

The Presenter: Ellen is currently the Deputy Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. One of her current priorities is to help Ontarians use their citizen engagement toolkit under the Environmental Bill of Rights. Prior to joining the ECO, Ellen spent several years in advocacy for environmental organizations and research support for Ontario's Environment Minister. Her academic background is in botany.



MAY

May 28, 2018

Annual General Meeting: NOTE EARLY START TIME OF 7PM

Annual Nature Plant Exchange: Share your love of gardening this month and bring along plants from your own garden to share with other members. An area will be set up outside to the right of the church entrance where you can set up your pots and browse for a plant or two to bring home. No invasive species please and labels are greatly appreciated!

Building Biodiversity with Native Plants

Paul LaPorte

The Presentation: During this month's presentation, Paul will explore the definitive role that native plants have in the life cycle of insects/pollinators and the successive food chain that is supported by this relationship. He will also discuss the definition of a native plant, provide an example on how to establish a native plant garden and give a brief overview of the North American Native Plant Society. A perfect pairing with our Native Plant Exchange event!

The Presenter: Paul LaPorte is the owner of Ephemeral Ark Nursery (specializing in native woodland species). He is the past President & past Vice-President of the North American Native Plant Society and has had the pleasure of presenting for numerous Horticultural Societies, Nature Clubs and in partnership with several Conservation Authorities. He is a current member of the Scugog Environmental Advisory Committee and Kawartha Conservation's BlueScape Steering Committee.



Waterloo Region Nature Kids Update

Waterloo Region Nature Kids would like to thank Waterloo Region Nature (adults!) for sponsoring a club for families who love nature! We're having a great time! We have 28 Kids from 22 families who come out to Laurel Creek Nature Centre once a month for a nature adventure led by naturalist, Garrison McCleary, from Grand River Conservation Authority.

Our latest accomplishment is using very basic materials and our amazing problem-solving skills to build winter shelters. At the end of February, we'll have an evening meeting so we can try talking to the owls who call the Laurel Creek property hooooome!



Photo: Marg Paré

Read more about us on our blog: <https://wrnatureclub.wordpress.com/blog/>

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Sept. to August; Memberships
1/2 price after January 31st
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**WRN is a registered
charitable organization.
Membership fees and all
donations are tax
deductible.**

Objectives of WRN

TO acquire and disseminate knowledge of natural
history.
TO protect and preserve wildlife.
TO purchase and hold appropriate parcels of land for
the advancement of conservation.
TO support public interest in nature and its preservation
by supporting the enactment of wise legislation and by
other means as falls within the scope of the
Corporation.

General Information

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month,
September to May with the exception of December.
Our meetings are free and visitors are always welcome.
Outings are scheduled almost every month.

Advertising Rates for The Heron:

Advertisement Size	Per issue	Full year (3 issues)
Full Page	\$200	\$520
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One-tenth Page (business card)	\$25	\$65

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