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**Waterloo Region Nature Teens***By Marg Paré**Photos: Marg Paré*

We are so very grateful to Dave Westfall, Sandy Hill and Jamie Hill for welcoming us to their farm, SpruceHaven. Their generosity and hospitality have allowed Teens to continue meeting when other community partners were not able to have volunteer groups like ours.

For "Launch Day" of our 4th year, we had guest presenters, Janet Ozaruk on skull identification and Graeme Smith on salamanders of Ontario. We also did a brief training session in preparation for our fall salamander monitoring that Linda Dutka coordinates. We check and record data for 46 boards in the beautiful old woods at SpruceHaven farm, sometimes seeing up to 40 Red-backed Salamanders. Teens are eager to do this weekly "real biology" job and are becoming very capable with the procedures.

Our much-postponed woodworking project, assembling nesting boxes donated by Peter Bisset, finally happened! Led by Peter and helped by Teens adult volunteers, each Teen drilled holes, attached hinges, and used a wood-burning pen to put their initials on the nesting box they assembled.

For our first project NOT at SpruceHaven in a year and a half, we teamed up with WRN Kids coordinator, Giselle Carter at the Forest Heights Pollinator Patch in Meadowlane Park. She and Amanda Farquhar instructed Teens in which less desirable plants needed to be removed to make space for an upcoming planting project.

We are very proud to have had two Teens attend the Ontario Nature Youth Summit in September. Taliah Chen and Tabitha Fischbach are very grateful to WRN for sponsoring them at a virtual version of the annual summit. See Taliah's thoughts about her experience on page 9.

Membership in WRN Teens is free for 2021-22 and new members are always welcome! See the WRN website for more information and registration or email Marg at teens@waterlooregionnature.ca.

WRN Directors

President

Janet Ozaruk
226-748-9905
president@waterlooregionnature.ca

Vice President

Jenna Quinn
519-362-7921
vicepresident@waterlooregionnature.ca

Past President

David Gascoigne
519-725-0866
pastpresident@waterlooregionnature.ca

Conservation Director

Levi Moore
519-501-4031
conservation@waterlooregionnature.ca

Treasurer

Paul Bigelow
519-888-7516
treasurer@waterlooregionnature.ca

Membership Director

Zack Stevens
226-929-9393
membership@waterlooregionnature.ca

Secretary

Hashveenah Manoharan
647-606-4607
secretary@waterlooregionnature.ca

Outings Director

Shannon Pennington
519-239-3015
outings@waterlooregionnature.ca

Program Director

Snehaa Suryanarayanan
416-816-0036
programs@waterlooregionnature.ca

Publicity Director

Jason Earle
519-505-3797
publicity@waterlooregionnature.ca

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

50 Erb St. West

A date for the return to in-person club meetings for the 2021-2022 season is to be determined.

Positions of Responsibility

Web Site Manager

Paul Bigelow 519-888-7516
web@waterlooregionnature.ca

Mailing Team

Rick and Jan Hook 519-742-7419
mailing@waterlooregionnature.ca

Archivist

Mary Ann Vanden Elzen 519-741-8272
archivist@waterlooregionnature.ca

Noteworthy Bird Sightings

Jim Burrell
birds@waterlooregionnature.ca

Ontario Nature Representative

<http://ontarionature.org/index.php>
Fraser Gibson 519-576-9287
onrep@waterlooregionnature.ca

Facebook Page Administrator

Cathi Stewart
facebook@waterlooregionnature.ca

WRN Kids Coordinator

Giselle Carter 518-584-2205
kids@waterlooregionnature.ca

WRN Teens Coordinator

Marg Paré 519-500-3450
teens@waterlooregionnature.ca

F. H. Montgomery Wildlife Sanctuary

Anita Smith 519-500-2676
montgomery@waterlooregionnature.ca

Kitchener's Natural Areas Program (KNAP)

Josh Shea 519-741-3400 ext.3349
knap@waterlooregionnature.ca

Other Inquiries

info@waterlooregionnature.ca

Heron Editor

Jenna Quinn
519-362-7921
editor@waterlooregionnature.ca

Submission Deadlines:

Spring Issue
February 15th-
Fall Issue
July 15th
Winter Issue
October 15th



A while ago, I had two major realizations. The first was that I am developing into a hard-core nature geek. I am not at the point – yet - of driving cross-country to chase a rare bird sighting, but I do tend to drift off from whatever I'm doing if a bird or squirrel happens by. Early on, I was happy just observing the backyard feeder birds, but then I became obsessed with warblers. Soon after that, it was waterfowl. I knew I had reached the next level in birding when I began being able to identify birds, not by relying on colour and field markings, but rather, by reading the clues of flight pattern, behaviour, habitat, and silhouette. Then I discovered the sound ID function on the Cornell Lab's Merlin app and my ability to bird by ear improved markedly.

Interacting with nature has brought me years of adventure, amusement, relaxation, and wonder. And this has led to the second realization ... that I can't take any of it for granted.

Our natural environment and the species and habitats within it are under constant threat. I've always tried to do the right thing on a personal level: commuting by bicycle, naturalizing my yard, recycling and green-binning faithfully and so on. And I've not hesitated to donate financially to worthy causes. But just as I've taken my nature observation to the next level, I've had to take my nature stewardship to the next level as well. And that level is advocacy.

I've always shied away from any encounter that could turn controversial or veer toward conflict. The thought of trying to persuade someone over to my way of seeing things, is miles outside of my comfort zone. But I knew I needed to step up.

My first foray into this arena was a tag-team effort with WRN's Conservation Director, Levi Moore. On behalf of WRN, we responded to Nature Canada's Fall 2020 campaign to encourage all government parties to make room for nature in the Federal budget as per the Green Budget Coalition's recovery recommendations. Nature Canada made sure that the participants were extremely well-prepared. Levi and I took part in a "Sharpening Your Lobbying Skills" training session and received a lobbying kit with a template meeting request email to reach out to our Member of Parliament, a meeting "rollout" with tips and key asks, supplementary facts and arguments to support the call for protected areas, a template letter for the MP, social media captions and a reporting sheet to submit after the meeting.

I sent out a meeting request to the local MP. I wrote and rehearsed my script. I reread my cheat notes as I waited for our scheduled Zoom meeting. And – I'm not going to lie – I was nervous! But, I reminded myself that my voice would have extra impact as I would be speaking as a representative of a nature organization with 300+ members. As it turned out - the MP was already on-board with my "asks" and confirmed that multiple ministries at the Cabinet table would be working with a "green" lens. Our conversation was lively and full of positive energy.

I realize that I got off lucky – my first contact was with an MP already sympathetic to the cause. I also realized that – hey, I can do this! And if we all do this, if we all advocate for the enactment of wise legislation - no matter how uncomfortable it may be at first — we can help to protect the natural environment that we all care for so deeply.

-Janet

Interested in helping WRN advocate for nature? Consider joining our newly established Conservation Action Committee. See the Conservation Director's article on page 8 for more information.

OUTINGS, ACTIVITIES, THINGS TO DO &

Monthly Member Meeting & Nature Presentations

Anyone with an interest in nature is welcome to attend our free monthly meetings. We start with a few announcements of noteworthy upcoming events, conservation issues or projects. We welcome new members and guests and we invite all to share their recent local noteworthy nature sightings. The main feature is a presentation by a guest speaker on one of a variety of interesting topics.

Details regarding monthly speakers and presentation topics can be found as they become available at waterlooregionnature.ca. Currently, meetings are being held virtually, however discussions on how to safely resume in person meetings are in the works. Register for each meeting online at waterlooregionnature.ca.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Monday, November 22, 2021 @7pm

Presentation: Salamanders with Don Scallen

For decades, Don Scallen has visited springtime ponds to witness the wondrous spectacle of Spotted Salamander and Jefferson Salamander breeding. He will share pictures and video of this special time of year. Don's salamander adventures are not limited to the spring however. In recent years, he has ventured into the woods in early autumn to document the nocturnal behaviour of various salamander Species. And in late fall of last year, he finally had the opportunity to meet and photograph a mudpuppy in a local stream.

Monday, December 13, 2021 @7pm

Join us for our Annual Holiday Social, online! We will welcome short (5 slide maximum) presentations from members to share nature and travel photos and stories. Contact vicepresident@waterlooregionnature.ca to sign up in advance if you would like to share. We will also take part in some nature trivia and socializing. Watch your email and the website for registration, opening soon.

Future meeting dates: Monday, January 24, 2022, Monday, February 28, 2022, Monday, March 28, 2022

Interested in Leading an Outing?

Please contact Outings Director Shannon Pennington at outings@waterlooregionnature.ca with your ideas.

Remember, you don't need to be an expert to lead an outing! Outings are a great way to get people together who have common interests and want to learn, share knowledge, and spend time together in nature. We will help to ensure that all outings follow the most up to date public health guidelines for Covid-19.

UPCOMING CLUB OUTINGS

Visit www.waterlooregionnature.ca for full outing descriptions. Registration is required for all outings. Please contact the outing leader to register and learn more!

Christmas Bird Counts 2021

2021 Dates	Location	Coordinator
December 18	Kitchener Area	Ethan Gosnell ethan.gosnell2@gmail.com 519-570-1256
December 19	Cambridge Area	Levi Moore levicmoore1@gmail.com 519-501-4031
December 28	Linwood Area	Ken Burrell kennth.gd.burrell@gmail.com 519-498-0605



If you would like to participate in any of these counts, please contact the Coordinator.

Hillside Park, Waterloo

Leader: David Gascoigne theospreynest@sympatico.ca 519-725-0866 226-747-7299 (C)

When: Wednesday November 24 and Saturday November 27 at 9am for approximately 2.5-3 hours

Location: Meet at the bottom of Blue Springs Drive

Description: This is an easy walk on level ground, with excellent viewing opportunities for a range of passerines, typical for the time of year. There is an excellent chance for five species of sparrow, finches, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy and sometimes Pileated Woodpecker, waterfowl, a Belted Kingfisher has overwintered here the past few years, Red-tailed Hawks roost in the park, and there is always the possibility of a Merlin, or accipiters. Both species of nuthatch often enliven the walk. Large numbers of American Robins spend the winter here.

Dress according to the weather, bring your binoculars, snacks if you think you need them, and lots of enthusiasm. Washrooms are not available.

Registration is required. **Contact David to register** (see contact info above). Non-members are welcome but they will need to sign an insurance waiver. This outing is predicated on COVID restrictions not becoming more dire. We will at all times be guided by current guidelines related to the pandemic.



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SUBMISSIONS NEEDED!

If you have any articles, photographs, artwork, reviews, outing recaps, etc. you would like to see in our newsletter, please submit them to
editor@waterlooregionnature.ca

Columbia Lake, Waterloo

Leader: David Gascoigne theospreynest@sympatico.ca 519-725-0866 226-747-7299 (C)

When: Wednesday December 8 and Saturday December 11 at 9am for approximately 2.5-3 hours

Location: Meet at parking lot near Brubacher House on Frank Tompa Drive

Description: This is an easy walk on level ground, with a short hill at the beginning, with excellent viewing opportunities for a range of passerines, typical for the time of year. The lake should be hosting a range of winter ducks, and there may even be a few late shorebirds. Exceptional gulls such as Great Black-backed, Lesser Black-backed, Iceland and Glaucous sometimes delight a visiting birder. Great Blue Herons often linger until freeze-up, Bald Eagles are commonly seen, raptors such as Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin and American Kestrel are not uncommon. Nuthatches, chickadees and woodpeckers are almost guaranteed. And who knows what else!

Dress according to the weather, bring your binoculars, snacks if you think you need them, and lots of enthusiasm. Washrooms are not available.

Registration is required. Contact David to register (see contact info above). Non-members are welcome but they will need to sign an insurance waiver. This outing is predicated on COVID restrictions not becoming more dire. We will at all times be guided by current guidelines related to the pandemic.



North Shore of Lake Ontario

Leader: David Gascoigne theospreynest@sympatico.ca 519-725-0866 226-747-7299 (C)

When: Sunday, December 19 and Wednesday, December 22 at 9am for the full day

Location: Meet at the commuter parking lot on Highway 6 just south of Highway 401.

Description: First stop will be at the DesJardins Canal (Dundas, ON) where a wide range of waterfowl is possible, including close views of Hooded Merganser. Carolina Wren has been present during recent visits. After leaving DesJardins we will check at Woodland Cemetery to see if the Eastern Screech Owls are cooperating, and make a stop at Grindstone Creek with a short foray into Hendrie Valley Sanctuary. Here you stand a chance to have a Downy Woodpecker feed from your hand.

We will then head to LaSalle Park (Burlington) where Trumpeter Swans are the star attraction, and many of the winter ducks such as Long-tailed Duck, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser and others may have taken up residence. American Coot is possible. A walk along the boardwalk through the wooded area might yield Carolina Wren, Northern Mockingbird, woodpeckers, sparrows and, for those who enjoy doing it, the chance to hand feed Black-capped Chickadees. We will then check out Paletta Park where the wooded area and the lakeshore often yield good birding.

If time permits we will check at Bronte Harbour (Oakville) and Lakefront Promenade (Mississauga) where both Horned and Red-necked Grebes are possible. Migratory Common Loons are sometimes present.

There is no shortage of washroom stops along this route and we will stop somewhere to have lunch together. This is a full day's outing so be sure to pack a lunch and snacks if you need them. Dress according to the weather, bring binoculars, a scope if you have one, a field guide and lots of enthusiasm.

Registration is required. Contact David to register (see contact info above). Non-members are welcome but they will need to sign an insurance waiver. This outing is predicated on COVID restrictions not becoming more dire. We will at all times be guided by current guidelines related to the pandemic.

Signs of Animal Life in Winter

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

When: Saturday January 8 at 9:30am for approximately 2+ hours

Location: At the gates to Laurel Creek Nature Centre, 525 Beaver Creek Rd., Waterloo.

Description: Come for a stroll around the Laurel Creek Nature Centre property while we search for signs of animal activity including tracks, scat, nests, etc. This 47 ha (120-acre) property includes mature woods, a swamp, stream, pond and open fields. We'll hope for an overnight dusting of fresh snow to add sparkle to our walk. Dress warmly and bring binoculars. Footpaths are part of an established trail system. Terrain is basically level but winter conditions can make trails bumpy and slippery. No washrooms are available.

This outing will follow COVID restrictions/guidelines in place at the time of the event and is being offered to those who are fully vaccinated. **Pre-registration is required. Contact Fraser to register.** Non-members are welcome but they will need to sign an insurance waiver.



WRN Nature Book Club

Leader: Lynn Conway **Email:** lynnconway@rogers.com

Time: Meetings start at 2pm and last approximately 1 hour. Meetings are monthly on the following dates:

Monday, November 15, 2021

Monday, February 14, 2021

Monday, December 13, 2021

Monday, March 14, 2021

Monday, January 17, 2021

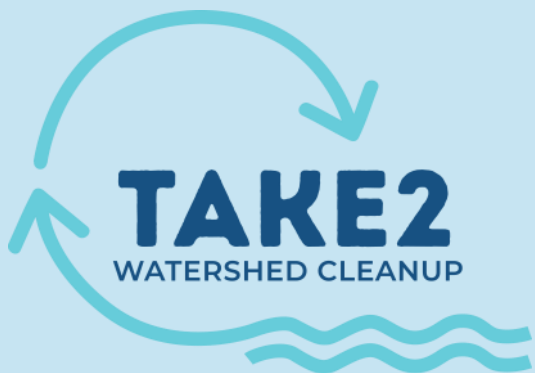
You are welcome to attend any number of these meetings.

Location: Zoom. Spaces will be limited due to nature of the platform.

Description: The WRN Nature Book Club will gather in the comfort and safety of our own homes via zoom again this year. This is a bit like show and tell for adults. Each of us will take turns to share briefly about a nature book. Choose a book that you have read: fiction or nonfiction, new or old, prose or poetry. The book does not need to be a book, but could be a nature article, nature talk you attended or even a nature themed piece of art or artifact. Maybe you have a favourite place you like to go to enjoy nature you would like to tell us.

Please sign-up for each meeting by email to lynnconway@rogers.com I will send you the zoom link a few days before the meeting. Happy winter nature reading everyone!

Take2 Watershed Clean Up



The Take2 Watershed Cleanup focuses on tackling the growing problem of waste on our trails. Take2 encourages individuals to take small actions to create big change, keeping our trails and watersheds clean! Take2 addresses both the symptoms and sources of pollution by cleaning up waste, engaging people to stop litter, and holding the companies creating polluting waste accountable. To participate, photograph and pick up two pieces of litter when out on local trails, then visit the site below to submit:

<https://take2cleanup.com/>

Be sure to indicate you are part of the Waterloo Region Nature team when you submit your photos!

WRN Conservation Action Committee (CAC)

You are invited! Be the voice for local conservation!

Our purpose: Advocacy, Outreach, Lobbying and Education.

Our focus: Conservation and environmental issues in Waterloo Region, supporting campaigns that have a broad impact (“sign ons” etc.) and issues that are broad but that affect our Region.

Our actions: Meet with local politicians, write letters, media releases, comment on local issues, support local conservation issues.

- ⇒ To monitor and address environmental issues, particularly in Waterloo Region and area.
- ⇒ To advise and partner with regional and municipal governments, and provincial ministries on environmental issues.
- ⇒ To network and partner with other local and provincial conservation groups.
- ⇒ To take informed positions on complex conservation issues and to summarize relevant research/information and advise the Waterloo Region Nature Board and membership on such matters (e.g. through direct reports to the board, Heron articles, announcements and General Meetings, and Conservation emails),
- ⇒ To advocate for good environmental practices in parks, Environmentally Sensitive Areas, and rural and urban development.
- ⇒ To share important calls to action with membership as necessary and appropriate.
- ⇒ To provide ample opportunity for participation by membership through at least annual calls to join the committee in the Heron and/or announced at General Meetings.
- ⇒ To lead and support public awareness and education on environmental issues.
- ⇒ To consult the Nominating Committee on the appointment of Waterloo Region Nature representatives / liaisons to conservation-related groups.
- ⇒ Annually recognize individuals and groups making positive contributions to the environment through the presentation of the Conservation award.

Please contact Levi Moore (conservation@waterlooregionnature.ca) if you would like to become a member or have a conservation action you would like assistance with.

YOUTH SUMMIT 2021

MY EXPERIENCE

TALIAH CHEN



The Ontario Nature Youth Summit is a conference that has been happening annually since 2010. WRN generously sponsors interested youth from our area or elsewhere to attend free of charge. This year, two of our own WRN Teens, Taliah Chen and Tabitha Fischbach, applied to attend (virtually) and were thrilled to accept WRN's support. Taliah was so inspired by her experience that she wrote this piece encouraging other young people to participate in the future.

What is the Youth Summit?

Every year, Ontario Nature with the support of other organizations unites Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth across Canada to discuss and learn about ongoing issues concerning the environment and Indigenous communities. I was sponsored by a local organization, Waterloo Region Nature, to participate in the online 2021 Youth Summit from September 25-26. At the end of the weekend, I found myself strategizing ways I can apply my new knowledge to become a leader in my own community.

Why Participate?

When I was first given this opportunity, I was unsure if I should sign up. Personally, I wasn't very involved in school clubs and didn't think I possessed the 'natural traits' of becoming a leader. But being a leader is rooted in all of us and unique to our own individual personalities. You simply have to find your strengths, work on them, and go beyond your comfort zone to make new discoveries about yourself.

I'm extremely thankful I participated in this year's summit. The keynote speakers and workshops were amazing. On Saturday, I had two workshops. The first workshop I did was called "Environmental Policies". I learned the basics of legislation, the importance of social and environmental justice, and ways I can get involved. Dr. Anne Bell and Jackie Ho also shared their experience as policy experts. In the second workshop, "Be the Change", Kale Black gave very insightful analogies and small steps we can do to make a huge impact. On Sunday, I attended my last workshop, "How to Be An Ally with Indigenous Peoples". It was especially eye-opening as Tia Kennedy taught me to view the world from a



community perspective and take a heart-centred approach to become caretakers for others and the Earth.

There are endless workshops, fun activities, and challenges you could participate in. This is an excellent leadership training and learning opportunity! It is also great on your resume. My experience helped me to develop a multi-dimensional understanding of our complex world and have a continued passion for the environment and Indigenous history and to be part of a life-changing movement. In such a crucial time in history, your voice is needed!

Betty Cooper

Sept. 3, 1927 – July 6, 2021

It is no exaggeration to say Betty Cooper was an icon in our club. She was a member for 62 years – 62 very active years of participation and contribution. But her actual connection with the club was much longer than that – from the present all the way back to its origins. No, Betty wasn't a member back then in 1934 but she was well acquainted with two of its founders.

One was Fred Montgomery. He was her biology and zoology teacher at KCI. She would accompany him to properties the club owned and act as his "secretary" to record his plant observations and build his inventories.

The other was the club's principal founder, Roy Dickson. The Dicksons and the Pierces (that's Betty's family) lived only a block apart. Roy Dickson's daughter, Margaret, was a childhood playmate of Betty's and they were classmates at Sunday school. Their families were great friends and often socialized together. Early on in her life, Betty joined Roy and others on informal nature outings.

Roy Dickson was a teacher at KCI and got several of his students – including Fred Cooper – to attend club meetings. Eventually, Fred and Betty met. They were married in 1952 and, the following year, moved into their newly constructed home on Highland Rd. Then, in 1959, at Roy Dickson's invitation, Fred and Betty joined the KWFN. They were quickly put to work. Both served on the Board: Fred as president, Betty as secretary.

Fred and Betty took on the responsibility of publishing the Heron. For years, the entire newsletter was cranked out on the old Gestetner machine down in their basement.

Betty also headed the Conservation Committee's Bluebird project installing over 200 nesting boxes.

In 1988, Betty joined the Peregrine Falcon Release Project coordinated by her very dear friends, Judy and Glen Moores. Six weeks of careful monitoring and rescuing saw four young birds successfully fledged.



These are but a few of Betty's involvements. More than anything else, though, Betty is identified as the archivist for our club. How did she come into that role? In the club's early days, Roy Dickson kept all kinds of books and records of relevance to the club and, when he moved to Guelph, he passed them on to Fred Cooper. Fred maintained these records and kept them up-to-date. When asked when she took over the club's records, Betty couldn't quite remember. In her words, she "...took up where Fred left off." Nor can she remember when she was tagged with the title 'archivist' but it was well after Fred passed away in 1984.

Betty took great care and pride with her duties as the club's archivist, being careful to note important events, label photos, ensure that minutes were promptly handed in, and researching information when requested to do so by club members. All materials were stored on shelves and in boxes and in the wooden filing cabinet in Betty's basement. Each item was organized and recorded on an index card. Over the years, Betty developed an intimate knowledge of the KWFN archives.

- ⇒ Ask her a question and she's bound to provide you with an instant answer
- ⇒ Ask her for a particular document and she knows just where to look

As part of her archival duties, Betty also researched and wrote three histories of the club. Not only was Betty the club's archivist, but as the KWFN collected materials over the years, Betty seemed to automatically move into the role of club librarian.

At every meeting, Betty would wheel out “the cart” laden with reading materials for sign-out by club members.

By 2010, Betty was ready to retire from her position as librarian and archivist. But she didn't retire from everything. She continued to offer her home as the mailing address for the KWFN and the duties that go along with it.

It is not surprising that Betty received all of the awards the club provides:

- ⇒ the Conservation Award
- ⇒ the Honorary Life Membership Award
- ⇒ the club's nomination for the Province of Ontario Volunteer Award
- ⇒ and, most recently, the Volunteer pin

There was one other award which made a brief appearance for only two years – in 1969 and in 1970. It was called the Ancient Order of Water Ouzels Award. This award of merit was given “to those hardy souls who ventured forth in foul weather on club outings.” Betty can claim the honour of winning this award, too.

During her 62 years as a member of our club, Betty was a regular at meetings. And outings, too. Even last year, at the age of 92, Betty was walking the Mill Race Trail in St. Jacobs and feeding the chickadees there.

There are many stories that could be told about Betty. They would highlight her energy, her generosity, her indomitable spirit, her determination, her compassion, her love of nature, her fierce independence. More than once have I heard a club member say, “I want to be like Betty!”

For Betty, the club has been a constant in her life, bringing new interests and expanding her knowledge and friendships. Conversely, her mark on Waterloo Region Nature has been truly immense and will endure far into the future.

Betty, for your many decades of faithful service we are grateful.

We thank you. We will miss you. And, from deep in our hearts, Betty, we know there will never ever be another quite like you again.



William Kay Prudham 1939 – 2021

The family of Wil Prudham is saddened to announce the passing of their father, brother, and brother-in-law just three months after the death of his wife, Marilyn. A long time member of WRN, Wil participated in numerous outings with other members and led a number of 10K hikes along the Avon Trail that runs from St. Mary's to Conestogo.

Wil loved the outdoors. A cottage without water or electricity on Georgian Bay outside Owen Sound in the 1940s; canoe and primitive camping skills at Camp Hurontario in the 30,000 Islands; maintaining ski trails at Sauble Beach; building boardwalks at nature sites like Petrel Point on the Bruce; birding with Marilyn across SW Ontario and in Florida; hiking the Bruce trail solo and with friends—he did it end-to-end; biking and hiking trails across Waterloo Region; canoe camping with his daughter and son in the inland provincial parks; canoe and motorboat camping with his brother across the 30,000 Islands from Beausoleil Island to the French River; canoe camping at 82 with family in July 2021; boating and biking on the Bruce in September and then stricken down two weeks later by a previously undetected cancer. Doing what he loved right to the end. He will be missed.

Waterloo Region Nature Kids!

By Giselle Carter

It was wonderful to be back together as families for our Nature Kids program in September! We had a scavenger hunt at Huron Natural Area, where we explored the park, looking for turtles, jack-in-the-pulpit seeds, apple trees, and more. There were a lot of questions about mushrooms.... something we will have to study as a group in the future!

To read more about our event, see our blog -always written by one of the participants! (<https://waterlooregionnature.ca/2021/09/30/wrn-kids-scavenger-hunt-2021/>)

We had a lovely morning walk with David Gascoigne for a bird adventure at Hillside Park in early November, and are looking forward to our game of Predator Prey in late November.

New members are welcome!

Visit www.waterlooregionnature.ca/kids_or_email_kids@waterlooregionnature.ca_for_more_info/



Pictures from
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Area Scavenger
Hunt

by L. Callum



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**Nominations are now open for
the WRN Conservation Award
and the Honorary Lifetime
Membership Award!**

Due before December 15th.

Please contact Janet for
more details.

president@waterlooregionnature.ca

WRN Photo Gallery

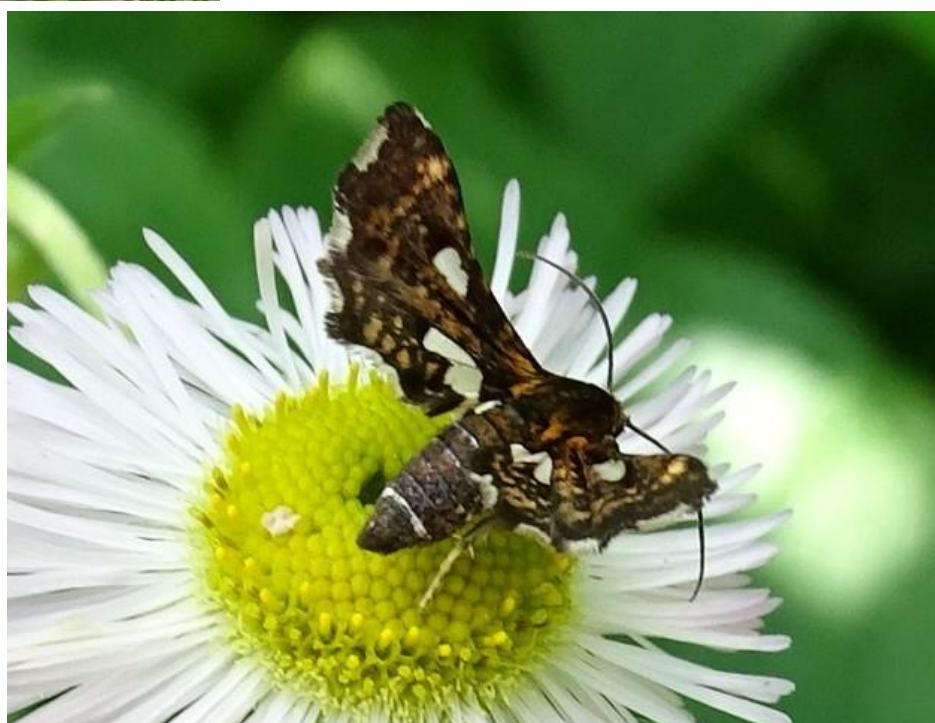


Common Redpoll and Pileated Woodpecker (right)
Photos: F. Gorenc



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

Gosling, Great Blue Heron and Spotted Thyris
Photos: D. Hitchens



Membership Report

By Zack Stevens

As you know, WRN memberships for the 2021-2022 season are free. ***We still encourage those who wish to pay for their membership dues to do so as they're able—any contribution is most welcome!*** All donations with a membership designation will be deposited into the club's Operating Fund.

If you no longer wish to be affiliated with the club, and do not want your membership to be extended for another year, you may opt out by contacting membership@waterlooregionnature.ca.

Thank you for your continued support!

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Meet the WRN Board !

WRN is pleased to welcome our incoming Secretary, Hashveenah Manoharan. We wish all the best to our outgoing Secretary, Jeremy Bannon.



Hashveenah Manoharan — Secretary

Biologist, artist, and admirer of everything from snails to scales. I'm looking forward to joining and learning from this incredible team, and sharing what I can about the things I love: nature, communities, and the spaces where these things meet

Ontario Nature Report

By Fraser Gibson

The Ontario Divisional Court determined the Government of Ontario Broke the Law

The Government of Ontario broke the law when it failed to comply with the public consultation requirements of Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR). Specifically, the Court declared that the government acted "unreasonably and unlawfully" in failing to consult with the public on changes to the Planning Act regarding Minister's Zoning Orders (MZOs).

In August 2020, after the passage of Ontario's controversial Bill 197, a legal challenge against the legislation was launched by: Earthroots, Ontario Nature, CELA, Cooper Price (a 17-year-old activist) and Michel Koostachin (who was born and raised in Attawapiskat).

"The government chose to expand its powers to issue MZOs without the required public consultation, even after a warning from the Auditor General. Such blatant disrespect for the law by our own government must not be taken lightly," says Dr. Anne Bell, Ontario Nature's Director of Conservation and Education. "Thankfully the court has declared the government's actions unlawful."

Regarding changes to the Environmental Assessment Act enacted through Bill 197, the Court found that the changes were lawful because Bill 197 included a "statutory exception" which retroactively exempted the changes from the consultation requirements of the EBR. The Court indicated that there is no prohibition against retroactive legislation in Canada, except in criminal law.

Pickering Developments has withdrawn its previously-approved permit application to pave over the Provincially Significant Wetlands at Lower Duffins Creek.

As a result, the wetlands are now safe from the lingering threat of development. Development plans were met with widespread community opposition.

In tandem with the community's efforts, Ecojustice on behalf of Environmental Defence and Ontario Nature launched a judicial review to challenge the MZO for failure to comply with critical wetland protection policies.

The Ontario government used every available tactic to undermine the litigation and the protection of the Duffins Creek Wetland including tabling both Bill 229 and Bill 257 to expand the Minister's Zoning Order powers retroactively and force conservation authority approvals.

However, the community prevailed.

Laura Bowman, Ecojustice lawyer, said: "This is an example of what can be achieved when the public comes together to hold their government accountable."

Phil Pothen, Ontario Environment Program Manager with Environmental Defence, said: "Approving a warehouse on this vital wetland was ill-considered and dangerous."

Anne Bell, Ontario Nature's Director of Conservation and Education, said: "Thankfully, the voice of the community has prevailed. If the government had chosen to respect its own policies to protect Provincially Significant Wetlands from the get-go this costly fight could have been avoided."

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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.

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