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WELCOME BACK!

*Our first club meeting of the season is
 Monday, September 25th.*

*Join us in person or online to hear recent
 news, meet other members, share nature
 sightings and listen to a guest
 presentation on bumble bees.*

ATTEND A WRN OUTING!

Visit waterlooregionnature.ca/outings to see
 the full calendar of events and register to
 attend. There is something for everyone!

Consider leading an outing! Contact
outings@waterlooregionnature.ca



Photo: WRN Teen Simon Daub

**Pollinator Roadsides**

This is a new project that Waterloo Region Nature is leading. The verges along our expressways and regional roads constitute a large acreage, and are currently just mowed, providing no benefit for pollinators, birds and other animals. Our proposal is to plant these verges with wildflowers/native flowers in order to promote the three B's (Beautification, Bees and Butterflies). The project supports the Region's stated desire to be a 'Bee Region'.

The project is led by Jennifer Leat and a working group which includes other members of WRN, members from the community, and representation from the City of Kitchener and the Region of Waterloo. The plan is to undertake pilot plantings in a trial area to demonstrate the potential, determine the best methods, and enable the public to see the benefits. Ultimately, the hope is that the Region and the cities will adopt this as their on-going management of roadside verges.

We have been awarded a grant from the Region of Waterloo Community Environmental Fund to support this project. We plan to prepare the site and seed it this fall. There will be many opportunities to volunteer and get involved e.g. by providing seeds or plants, or helping with the planting and maintenance. So please save any native plant seeds or native plant "volunteers" that you might be able to pot up for us nearer the time. If you can help with this, or by volunteering your time when it comes to planting, please let us know at:

conservation@waterlooregionnature.ca or
knap@waterlooregionnature.ca

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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.

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Submission Deadlines:

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

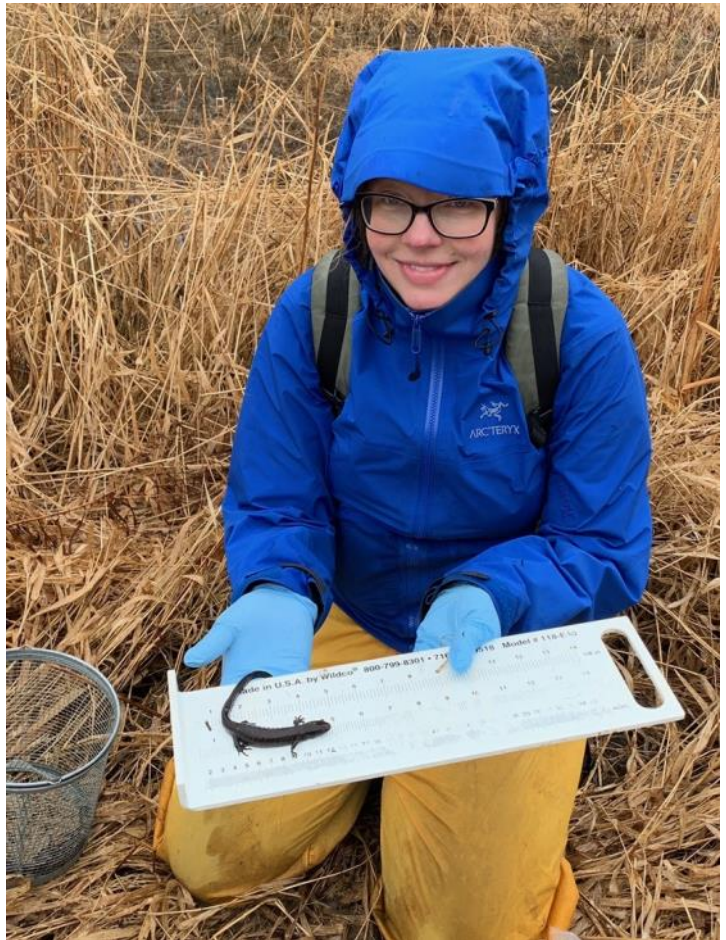
We are always looking for volunteers to fill positions of responsibility and sit on the Board of Directors. Please reach out to pastpresident@waterlooregionnature.ca if you want to learn more.

President's Corner

This is my first term as President and I am looking forward to getting to know everyone and contributing to the club. I hope everyone has been enjoying their summer and getting to explore outside as much as possible. I have a young daughter and her perspective means that every time we go for walks or spend time outside, I find myself noticing new and different things. My daughter is one of the reasons I wanted to become more involved in WRN because I know it will be an important part of her life when she is older, and I can't wait for her to get started with WRN Kids.

I'm happy to share that all vacancies on the board have been filled. Many of us (like me) are newer faces and we are all looking forward to seeing members in the fall for in-person meetings. I wanted to mention that aside from the board there are many opportunities available for volunteers and we would love your help so please consider volunteering for the following opportunities!

1. Do you have a favourite place to walk, nature knowledge to share, or do you want to gather to explore and amble together? Become an Outings Leader! Anyone can lead a club outing, with no experience necessary.
2. Do you want to get your hands dirty while being an important part of local stewardship and conservation? Join the Montgomery Tract Committee! This stewardship group takes care of maintenance, monitoring, and other conservation concerns at the Montgomery Tract. Attend seasonal visits with a group and discuss challenges and approaches related to the care and stewardship of these lands.
3. Are you passionate about policy and environmental issues in our area? Join our Conservation Action Committee! This group was formed during the pandemic to help WRN respond and mobilize to emerging issues in our area. You can help research, draft responses, and discuss challenges and approaches related to local issues and member concerns.
4. Volunteer with WRN Teens and Kids! Teens meet on Saturday mornings weekly from April to July and September to October for monitoring in St. Agatha, and on Saturday afternoons year-round once or twice a month for work projects and outings. Kids meet in the morning on the last Saturday of each month for planned outings and programs. Adult volunteers come out as they are available, to supervise and participate with Teens and Kids in these activities. Other adult volunteer jobs involve communicating with community partners, coordinating opportunities, recruiting new members, etc.
5. As our in-person meetings will resume in September, we will need helpers to assist in setting up and putting away chairs before and after meetings and to welcome and greet members upon arrival. If this sounds like something you would like to do, please consider volunteering to support our monthly meetings!



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.

Meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month at 7:30pm in hybrid format. Join in person at Reception Hall, Waterloo Knox Presbyterian Church, 50 Erb St. West, Waterloo or register at waterlooregionnature.ca/meetings/ to join on zoom.

Upcoming Meetings: For full presentation descriptions and presenter biographies and register to attend online visit: waterlooregionnature.ca/meetings/

Monday, September 25, 2023 @ 7:30pm – Bumble Bees: Insect Teddy Bears in Our Backyard

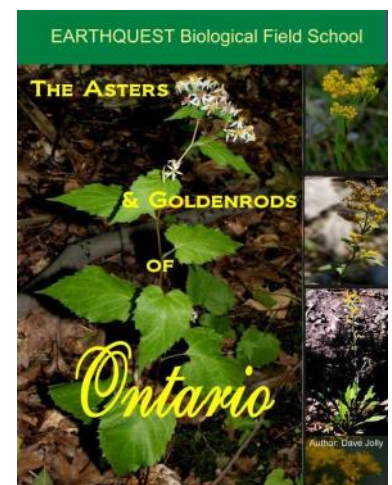
Join local author Dana L. Church as she discusses her nonfiction book *The Beekeepers: How Humans Changed the World of Bumble Bees*. She'll touch on topics such as, What are bumble bees, anyway? Why are they important? Are bumble bees in trouble? What can we do to help save the bees? She'll talk about why she loves bumble bees so much (it has something to do with a "bee disaster"), and other fascinating species, like squash bees. There will also be a sneak peek into her two upcoming books on animal minds and monarch butterflies.

Monday, October 23, 2023 @ 7:30pm – Asters and Goldenrods of Ontario

As a result of over 25 years of practical botanical experience, Dave Jolly, Senior Instructor and Botanist of the EARTHQUEST Biological Field School, has produced his unique photo field guide book on the Asters and Goldenrods of Ontario. This book contains over 200 full colour photographs of 17 species of asters and 17 species of goldenrods (2 varieties), including 6 Ontario Species at Risk (SAR) and 1 confusing look-a-like. The presentation on Asters and Goldenrods of Ontario will demonstrate the field identification techniques in the book with examples featuring some of Ontario's common species.

Additionally, a few SAR species will be compared and contrasted with common, but confusing look-a-likes.

Monday, November 27, 2023 @ 7:30 – Presentation to be announced



UPCOMING CLUB OUTINGS

All outings require advanced registration by visiting <https://waterlooregionnature.ca/outings/>

Unless otherwise specified, meeting point locations will be provided upon registration.

Non-members are welcome to register and attend outings but must sign a waiver.

In the event of rain and unless otherwise specified, outings will be cancelled and not rescheduled.

Participants should check the website the day before to confirm if the outing is proceeding in the event that rain is a possibility.

Learning Together—Laurel and Forwell Creeks

Monday, August 14 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

This outing will focus on Laurel and Forwell Creeks. The City of Waterloo plans to do rehabilitation to improve water quality and promote healthy fish habitat while minimising flooding impacts. You can contribute your expertise, or do some research on the role maple trees have in the ecosystem. This trail is paved and mostly flat, with some gentle inclines.

Let's Meet Up!

Wednesday, August 16 from 6:30pm to 8:00pm

SOCIAL OUTING!

TWB (Together We're Bitter) 300 Mill St. Unit #1, Kitchener

By popular request, we are organizing some social outings! Once a month, we'll choose a local pub to meet and learn more about nature in the region, and the people who enjoy it.

The first night is at TWB (Together We're Bitter) ... a brewing cooperative.

Come on your own or bring a friend or two!

Learning Together—Economical Trailway

Monday, August 21 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

This outing follows the Economical Insurance Trailway section of the [Walter Bean Grand River Trail](#). The Grand River is about 310km long, and has a watershed area of 6,800 square km, about the size of Prince Edward Island. Approximately [80 species at risk](#) occur in the watershed, and there are approximately [90 species of fish](#) in the river system! This trail has hills that could be challenging to some people, and has at least some gravel sections.

Interested in leading an outing?

Offers to lead outings for any season are always welcome. Remember, you don't need to be an expert to lead an outing. Please contact the Outings Director at outings@waterlooregionnature.ca.

Easy Saturday Morning Bird Walk (1)

Saturday, September 2 from 9:00am to 11:00am

Laurel Creek Conservation Area

This is one you don't want to miss! Join Stewart for a walk or roll as we search for birds along the fringes of Laurel Creek Conservation Area in Waterloo. We will be looking for migrants which are passing through the Waterloo Region. The walk will be through areas with trees that are full of late summer berries and with the possibility of viewing wading birds that can be seen in marshy habitat. Possible sightings include great egret, black-crowned night heron, bald eagle, osprey, as well as possibilities of seeing migrating warblers. A scope will be available for use by participants.

Walk is limited to 12 people. Please bring a bottle of water and binoculars, if you have them.

This walk is suitable for beginning birders. Meeting location and trails are accessible by transit and mobility devices. Washrooms are available at the meeting point.

Fern Walk

Thursday September 7 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm

Huron Natural Area

Join Fraser to explore a small segment of this green gem in central Kitchener. The focus of the outing will be finding and learning to identify some of Waterloo Region's ferns. We should be able to find at least 8 species near the trail.

Most of our route is on wide, well worn trails over gently rolling terrain. We will move a short distance from the trail in order to see ferns up-close. The meet-up location and trails are accessible by transit and mobility devices. Washrooms are available at the meeting point.

Learning Together—Geological Time Trail

Sunday September 9 from 10:00am to 12:00pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

This outing highlights different eras of the earth's formation, with interpretive signs along the way, including a sun dial. This 4.5 km wooded trail has hills that could be challenging to some people. The trails are a mix of dirt and pavement surface.

Monday Meanderings—Downtown Galt

Monday, September 11 from 10:00am to 11:30am

Meet at Queen's Square free parking lot at 40 Grand Ave, Cambridge

Come discover the urban naturalscape while strolling through downtown Galt. We will walk at a leisurely pace listening to birdsong, discovering several pollinator gardens and enjoying the view as we stride along the Grand River.

Historical buildings are a bonus! At the end of our walk participants may wish to lunch at Melville's Café or grab a coffee-to-go from Grand Café. The meet-up location and trails are accessible by transit and mobility devices.

Learning Together—Bechtel Park

Tuesday, September 12 from 10:00am to 12:00pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

This outing highlights the importance of wetlands to birds, amphibians, dragon flies and other species. Some municipalities are creating wetlands to buffer some of the run-off from precipitation and slow the rate at which it drains away. This is a new approach compared with rapid drainage systems using ditches and pipes.

Bechtel Park trails feature a great forested area with wetlands. This trail has inclines that could be challenging to some people. The trails are a mix of dirt and wood chip surface.

Birding on the North Shore of Lake Ontario

Saturday, September 23 from 8:00am to 5:00pm

Join David on a full-day outing to see migratory birds. Car pooling is encouraged. There are at least five stops:

1. First stop will be at the [DesJardins Canal in Dundas](#), ON where a wide range of waterfowl is possible, including close views of Hooded Merganser. In September this location is almost a certainty for adult and juvenile Black-crowned Night Herons. Carolina Wren has been present during recent visits.
2. 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.
3. We will then head to [LaSalle Park in Burlington](#) where the first Trumpeter Swans of the fall should be present, in addition to gulls, a few lingering terns, cormorants, grebes and waterfowl. 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. Many other common passerines should be seen.
4. We will then check out [Paletta Park](#) where the wooded area and the lakeshore often yield good birding. Migratory warblers are often numerous at this location.
5. If time permits we will check at [Bronte Harbour](#) in Oakville, and [Lakefront Promenade](#) in Mississauga, where both Horned and Red-necked Grebes are possible, and possibly Fish Crows at Bronte. 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 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.

Pipits Outings

WRN members are invited to attend Pipits club outings. Pipits outings typically run on Sunday mornings and WRN members can attend for \$15 per outing, or can purchase a membership for \$40 (single) or \$50 (family).

To learn more about the group and outings, please visit: thepipits.com.

Learning Together—Health Valley Trail

Sunday, September 24 from 10:00am to 12:00pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

On this outing we will focus on the river and the plants and trees nearby. The river/stream side vegetation is important to control erosion and prevent sediment pollution. Too much sediment can harm the stream/river and wildlife. Pretty steady elevation, beautiful scenery.

The Health Valley Trail is an easy route through field land and woodland. The Conestoga River is just about always in sight or very close by. We will see the Wise Old Oak tree. The trail has a hard-packed stone-dust surface and is quite level from the trailhead to Arthur St. S. It is a short walk to the nearest transit stop.

Easy Saturday Morning Bird Walk (2)

Saturday, September 23 from 9:00am to 11:00am

Waterloo Park Area

This is one you don't want to miss! Join Stewart for a walk or roll in the Waterloo Park area. We will be searching for late migrants along the Laurel Trail, Waterloo Park and Silver Lake areas of Waterloo. This is a good opportunity to possibly view Sparrows, Finches, Yellow-Rumped Warblers and migrating waterfowl. A scope will be available for use by participants.

Walk is limited to 12 people. Please bring a bottle of water and binoculars, if you have them.

This walk is suitable for beginning birders. The meeting location and trails are accessible by transit and mobility devices. Washrooms are available at the meeting point.

Learning Together—West Side Trails

Sunday, October 1 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

The focus on this walk is urban forests – they need to be cherished! They increase our quality of life by encouraging physical activity. They reduce air pollution, cool temperatures in the summer and protect biodiversity. Urban forests affect urban wildlife behaviour and can alter the ecology of urban wildlife. The interactions between humans and wildlife and the impacts of urbanisation on these wildlife populations cannot be ignored.

Westside Trails has somewhat hilly dirt trails. This woodlot contains rare plants, migratory breeding birds and a variety of wildlife. The trail has natural and woodchip surface. Some people may find the inclines challenging.

Monday Meanderings—Downtown Kitchener

Monday, October 2 from 10:00am to 11:30am

We will walk in downtown Kitchener. Save the date and check the website for more details and to register.

Learning Together—Stamm Woodlot

Wednesday, October 11 from 1:30pm to 3:00pm

Learning together outings are designed to learn from each other during the walk. We take in nature's delights along the way. This is a great way to get out and share our interest in nature and all that it has to offer.

Stamm Woodlot is a gem in the north end of Waterloo. Wildflowers include jewelweed, baneberry, meadow-rue and a variety of ferns. This woodlot has plenty of maple trees. You will see maple syrup lines along the way.

This is a lovely easy 3.4km loop trail which is generally level or mildly sloped, wide and mulched. It is a 2km walk to the closest transit stop. There are no washrooms.

Meet the New Members of the WRN Board!

WRN is pleased to welcome several new board members filling positions of Vice-President, Secretary, Outings Director, Program Director, Conservation Director, and Director-at-Large. We thank outgoing members Janet Ozaruk, Hashveenah Manoharan, Shannon Pennington, and Levi Moore.



Brett Fried — Vice President

Logan Mercier — Secretary (pictured, top)

I am a Restoration Project Technician, fascinated by all aspects of nature - with a desire to constantly learn more. When not exploring the little green spaces we have left, I occupy my time with sports, playing both field and ice hockey. I am eager to join WRN and make many new connections.



Kathy Mortimer — Outings Director (pictured, top middle)

You might find Kathy Mortimer, Outings Director, removing invasive plants in her Kitchener neighborhood along the trails!



Jeff Leader — Program Director (pictured, bottom middle)

Jeff is a husband, father of two teenage children, and an amateur field naturalist who is passionate to learn more about the natural world around us and how we interact with it. He has a background in geology, chemistry, and natural resources, and beside WRN, he also volunteers his time with Brant For Nature, the Canadian Chestnut Council, Glen Morris Stewardship, Giant Hogweed Mitigation Project, The Grand River Community Play Project, Royal Botanical Gardens Species At Risk team, Trout Unlimited, and a few other organizations.

Andrew Rutland — Conservation Director



Jade Anderson — Director-at-Large (pictured, bottom)

I am the Ecological Monitoring Intern at **rare Charitable Research Reserve**. I spend most days monitoring butterflies in the summer and salamanders in the fall. When not working I try to enjoy nature as much as possible, taking nature walks, kayaking and canoeing. I am always looking to learn new things, especially when it comes to nature!

To meet the returning members of the board, see the Fall 2021 and 2022 editions of the Heron online: <https://waterlooregionnature.ca/newsletter/>



WRN Teens Report

By Brynn Roderick, WRN Teen

WRN Teens and adult volunteers have been busy this spring and summer with ongoing Saturday morning monitoring at SpruceHaven Farm in St. Agatha. We just started our new snake board monitoring program in addition to our bird, salamander, and frog monitoring. It began in April with us helping Levi Moore install the boards at SpruceHaven and we began monitoring the following week. We haven't found any snakes however we are hoping to see some under our boards soon!

We've also attended a variety of afternoon activities over the past few months. In February, Levi taught us about using radio telemetry to track animals. We tried out the equipment on each other, playing hide-and-seek at SpruceHaven! During March Break, we met with Marg Paré at the University of Waterloo for a visit to the Faculty of Environment's Ecology Lab which included a tour and field study.

A few weeks later, five of us and our adult volunteer coach Graeme Smith returned to the Ecology Lab to participate in the Grand River Regional Competition of the Forests Ontario Envirothon, a nature-focused science competition for high school students across Canada. We won first place in the regionals and went on to receive fourth place in the provincial virtual competition! Go, WRN Teens Envirothon Team!

In April, we joined Fraser Gibson, Marg, and Linda Dutka at WRN's Montgomery Property to help remove invasive periwinkle and later in June, we helped Megan and Linda Sloka pull out invasive garlic mustard from White Cedar Forest in Waterloo.

In May, we returned to Forest Heights Pollinator Patch to work with Giselle Carter, doing some spring gardening. We were sad to learn that this may be our last visit as the garden will probably be destroyed during construction in the park to re-route the waterway there. Later in the month, we met at Riverside Park in Cambridge for a birding hike with David Gascoigne.

As well, this spring our Data Team continued the painstaking work of transferring all our data on paper into spreadsheets -- the next step towards making it shareable.

Our most recent event was held at the University of Waterloo's urban forest, where we helped Ecology Lab assistants Sierra and Chloe remove invasive Common Buckthorn shrubs.

This summer, we have two events at the University of Waterloo: a visit to the Earth Sciences Museum and the first campus-wide BioBlitz. We're also looking forward to resuming salamander and frog monitoring in the fall!

Big thanks to all the Teens regular adult volunteers: Linda Dutka, Michelle MacMillan, Philip Pyatt, Levi Moore, Thelma Beaubien, Graeme Smith and Karen Medsger as well as our occasional volunteers, WRN supporters and project leaders!

Waterloo Region Nature Kids!

By Rachelle Swayze

Waterloo Region Nature Kids is a fabulous monthly nature program where families with children ages 7 - 12 meet to have fun outside and learn about the plants, animals and insects that share their home with us. We meet the last Saturday of each month from September to May for two hours, 10 am – 12 pm. Our program takes place at various natural areas in the Waterloo Region and our plans for this fall include a tour and night sky watch at the Gustav Observatory at University of Waterloo, a community nature project with Roots and Shoots, and shelter building. In the winter we will snowshoe and hand feed chickadees, participate in the Christmas Bird Count, and do a night hike to look for owls. Our spring outings are still in the works but will include a community litter clean-up and a hike at **rare Charitable Research Reserve**. At every meeting we chat about the interesting nature things we have seen or experienced and sometimes play a game or two. WRN Kids is a great way for parents, grandparents and other adults to spend quality time in nature with the important kids in their lives.

You can register at <https://waterlooregionnature.ca/kids/>

If you have any questions or outing ideas, contact me, Rachelle, at kids@waterlooregionnature.ca. I look forward to seeing you in September!



WRN Activities

Photos: Marg Paré (left, bottom right)
Photo: Simon Daub, WRN Teen (top right)
Photo: Nicole, WRN Teen (opposite page)

Celebrating WRN Volunteers!



Congratulations to Marg Paré, WRN Teens Coordinator, on receiving the 2023 Ontario Nature Education Award! Marg was recognized at a ceremony during the Ontario Nature Annual Gathering on June 10th. This award is given to a nominee who successfully helps people understand the natural world so they become enthusiastic supporters of conservation and environmental protection.

After volunteering with WRN Kids for 12 years, Marg created the WRN Teens Club because she saw a need for a program that supported young people through their teen years.

Marg's vision was for a teens club focused on stewardship and education in partnership with community organizations across Waterloo Region. Every year, she reaches out to potential partners including the local conservation authority, the cities, universities, and other local environmental charities, and secures various opportunities for monthly work and learning projects that allow the teens to earn volunteer hours at the same time as spending time in nature - all while making positive environmental contributions on local projects. Teens are connected to other youth interested in environmentalism, as well as many adult volunteers and educators who provide mentorship and inspire future career paths. Through her incredible leadership and persistence, the WRN Teens officially began in 2018 with 10 nature-loving teens enrolled and it has since grown to include more than 70 teen participants over five years, including a current cohort of 30 teens – and still growing!

The first project Marg arranged for WRN Teens was assisting the Grand River Conservation Authority

Marg Paré

with a turtle nesting site restoration project at Laurel Creek. Since that first project, Teens have pulled invasive species, built nest boxes, planted trees, sorted seeds, picked up litter, collected water and snow samples with researchers from the local University, participated in a stream restoration project, and monitored salamanders, benthic invertebrates, tree frogs, eastern bluebirds, and barn swallows, as well as volunteered at multiple Christmas Bird Count for Kids events, among other activities. Additionally, Marg has organized learning workshops on a variety of interesting topics including animal tracking, bird banding, protecting pollinators, tree identification, and native seed propagation.

Marg is a life-long learner and is relentless in her pursuit of new opportunities and partnerships for the teens. She has developed an astounding network of resources and she is extremely generous with her time and knowledge.

Marg takes a personal interest in each teen. She regularly requests teen suggestions for future activities and solicits feedback after every outing. She encourages teens to think and act independently of their guardians and presents opportunities without pressure. Marg has given up countless weekends and evenings planning and attending teens activities.

Waterloo Region Nature has truly benefited from the Marg's leadership and dedication. She embodies the qualities of this award as a volunteer dedicated to fostering an appreciation and responsibility for the natural world in those around her. A future of unprecedented challenges is burdening many young people. Discussing these ideas and issues together with other youth, spending time in nature, and participating in local conservation action can all help manage eco-grief and empower youth to become climate leaders, innovators, and voices for a better future. Thank you Marg for creating such a space for Waterloo Region teens!

Articles compiled from nomination letters

Mary Ann Vanden Elzen

On April 24, 2023 Mary Ann Vanden Elzen was awarded an Honorary Life Membership Award in recognition of her valuable and exceptional service to Waterloo Region Nature. She was nominated by fellow members Fraser Gibson, Elaine LaRonde and Janet Ozaruk.

Mary Ann has worked tirelessly over many years for the betterment of WRN. She began volunteering shortly after becoming a member of KWFN in the early 2000s. Mary Ann's first volunteer involvement was as a coffee host in 2002. This was the beginning of her long standing commitment to WRN.

Mary Ann served as a Board member between 2007-2012, first as secretary and then becoming the only director in recent history to serve two consecutive terms as president. Her numerous contributions were often behind-the-scenes and time consuming, including serving on committees to host the 2006 Ontario Nature AGM (a 22-month commitment), establish a permanent home for the WRN archives, develop a volunteer recognition scheme, select award winners, and, most recently, amend the club bylaws. She has edited and authored many club documents such as the Trail Guide and multiple sections and revisions of the Executive Guide. Perhaps most significantly, Mary Ann has served as WRN's Archivist since 2013/14, ensuring club documents are saved and submitted to the Region of Waterloo Archives annually. She also supports the club by being a regular attendee at membership meetings and on outings. Our Volunteer Recognition database has 68 entries next to her name with 23 different notations. This indicates that over the years of her membership, she has volunteered at least 68 times, doing 23 different types of activities, that often require numerous meetings or a number of hours to complete.

Mary Ann is extremely reliable and possesses a quiet determination to complete any task well. She is thorough, with a keen eye for detail, and researches topics carefully. She is thoughtful and thinks carefully about issues before expressing her opinions. She is a valued committee member as she makes sure others are included and their ideas and concerns are recognized and addressed. She has a genuine love of nature and an excitement in sharing that joy with others.

In recognition of Mary Ann's exemplary service to Waterloo Region Nature, please join the WRN Board and nominees in congratulating Mary Ann on this prestigious Honorary Life Membership Award.



Photo: Nancy Gibson

* Congratulations to **Jennifer Leat and the Conservation Action Committee** who were awarded \$2500 from the Region of Waterloo Community Environmental Fund toward the WRN Pollinator Roadsides project!

* Congratulations to the **WRN Teens Envirothon Team** on their fourth place finish in the provincial virtual Envirothon competition!

Nominate a WRN Member by December 15th

WRN Conservation Award & Honorary Lifetime Membership Award

Contact Heather for more info:
president@waterlooregionnature.ca

Remembering Marco DeBruin

A memorial compiled and edited by Graham and Marg Macdonald

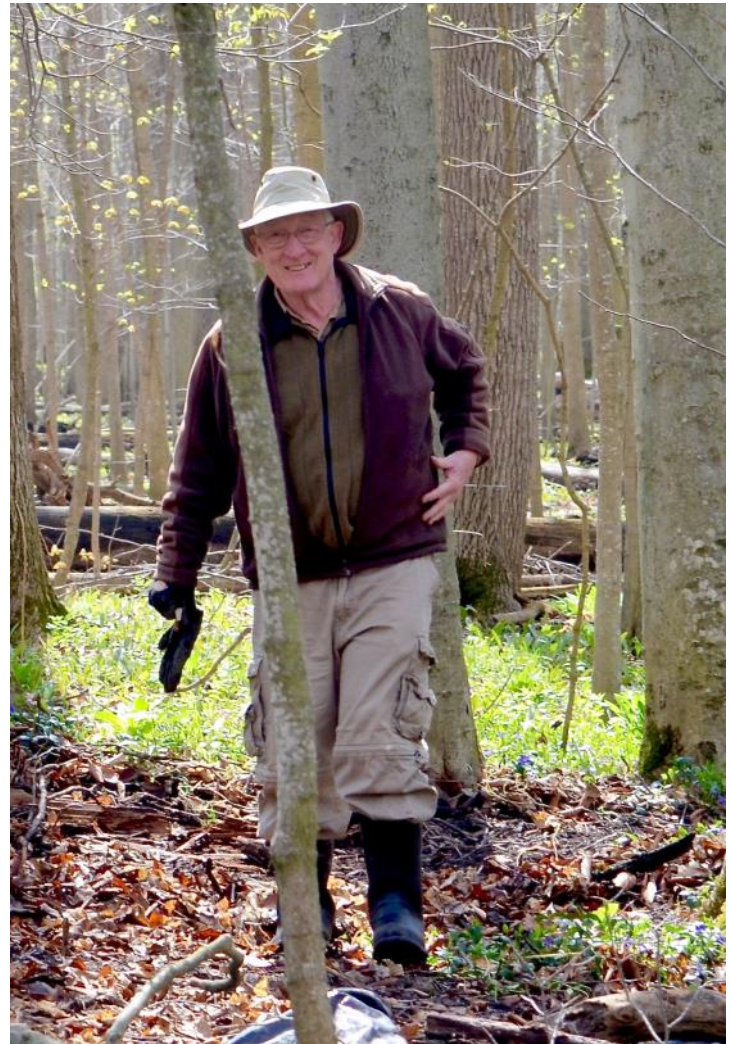
On April 10, 2023 Waterloo Region Nature (WRN) lost a long-time and highly valued member. Marco's contributions began when he joined the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists (KWFN) in 2002 and continued through to the onset of his illness. In fact he attended meetings in person post-Covid within a few months of his death. In this remembrance of Marco we have asked some long time members of KWFN/WRN to write about his contributions to KWFN and Waterloo Region Nature. In his obituary the family states that Marco had "an ongoing thirst for knowledge and love of nature". What we wish to highlight in this tribute is the energy and enthusiasm he applied to every activity he led or in which he participated.

From Fraser Gibson

When Donna and Marco DeBruin joined KWFN in February of 2002, the club welcomed a dedicated duo. By the following January, Marco was already filling a vacancy on the Board. Six months later he became the Vice President, while also serving as the Outings Director! In the following years he served as President and Past President. These were busy years on the Board: hosting an Ontario Nature Smart Communities Workshop at Victoria Park Pavilion; establishing the Montgomery Committee to provide club members with valuable hands-on opportunities; and the almost three years of planning for the Ontario Nature 2006 AGM and Conference held at Wilfred Laurier University. Marco was a reliable, "get the job done" director and a ready volunteer for many club tasks. You knew where Marco stood on any issue. He told things as he saw them. He and Donna regularly led outings both locally and sometimes further afield. Marco was strongly committed to those things he cherished and the wild species and spaces in the Regional Municipality of Waterloo certainly benefited from his dedication to them, as did WRN and the friends he made there.

From Mary Ann Vanden Elzen

From her Archives research Mary Ann observes that Marco attended "Outings" even while President of KWFN. He led outings to all the local conservation areas (12 Conservation/Natural Areas) from the very popular Huron Natural Area to more distant areas including Pinery Provincial Park. In winter he took members of KWFN along the Grand & Speed Rivers to see what birds overwintered here. Over the years he led several outings to our own Montgomery and Founders properties. As President his monthly columns in the Heron covered wide-ranging topics such as Trumpeter Swans and Sandhill Cranes at Bannister Lake, protection of Hidden Valley, and the accomplishments of KWFN in the year of his Presidency! For five years (2005-2010) he and Donna served as the mailing team for *The Heron*, which at that time, was published ten times a year!



From David Gascoigne

Marco's love of Cuba, its wildlife and its people, was well known. His visits went far beyond the usual tourist visit to an all-inclusive resort, and he made it a point to become friends with local people and get to know them well. Their welfare became his priority and there were certain Cubans who knew they could count on Marco for help in their daily lives. In addition, Marco was generous with his advice to people planning a first-time visit to Marea del Portillo, with tips to see sought-after birds and ways to secure guiding assistance. Marco will be missed by his Cuban "family" and his kindness will be long remembered.

Marco and Donna were longtime members of the Montgomery Committee. They could always be counted on to attend the trail cleanup and assessment days set by the committee. Marco, a self-taught field observer, listened for and caught sightings of birds and other wildlife as we walked through the forest. Donna took photos, including the first photo of our resident screech owl, which was breeding in our wood duck box! On one such visit, he and a large and aggressive raccoon had a very close encounter - a little too close for even our stalwart Marco who quickly backed away, camera clicking! Marco also participated in the Giant Hogweed search and eradication effort every year.

Marco eagerly participated in all the major events and activities taken on both by KWFN WRN and associated organizations through the years. Among many other contributions, he was a Kitchener Natural Areas (KNAP) Earth Day Volunteer 2006-2010; a Wonders of Nature Volunteer 2015 and 2016; provided nourishment for ON Nature Regional Network meetings hosted by WRN; and served many years with Bill Wilson monitoring Bald Eagles along the Speed and Grand Rivers.

As we who knew Marco well would all agree, Marco was a very energetic person with a wonderful sense of humour and common sense, a man who called it as it was. His right-hand partner in all activities was his wife Donna – hard to talk of one without the other! We all express our pleasure at having known Marco and sharing his joy in nature.

We extend our sympathies to Donna, his wife of 49 years, his daughter Catherine and son Brian.



Photos: Graham MacDonald



In Memoriam

Deb Fowler, a longtime member of Waterloo Region Nature passed away peacefully on July 16, 2023.

She and her husband Randy were regular attendees at WRN meetings. Deb contributed countless hours as the Heron editor over an eight year period when nine issues were printed annually.

Our sincere condolence to her husband Randy and family.

Alvars Outing, recap

By Jeff Leader and Kruti Patel

On June 1st, a small group from Waterloo Region Nature embarked on a 3 hour journey to meet with Bob Bowles in Orillia for a tour of Prairie Smoke and Little Bluestem Reserve Alvars. When we arrived, the temperatures were quickly warming up. Based on the small group size and anticipated heat we changed plans and followed Bob to a different Alvar. We drove from highway to backroad to dirt path and arrived at the limestone plain of the Robert L. Bowles Alvar. Immediately we could see that see an array of plants and colours in full bloom among the grikes and clints of the plain. Bob led us from the south to the north part of the Alvar to an area he called flat rock where we were saturated with a vibrant display of alvar wildflowers, mosses, and lichens. This was by far one of the most dramatic experiences of alvar flora that I have seen. However temps were >30C and mosquitos were thirsty so we cut our day short and cooled down with a drink in nearby Brechin. I had a brilliant time and would highly recommend experiencing these alvars. Keep in mind that alvars are not protected by any legislation, and although the plants are resilient, they are at risk of being lost due to quarrying, as quality bedrock is present near surface.

Here's a list of many of the plants, mosses, lichens, shrubs & many other species we encountered on our field trip:



Photo: Leader

Scarlet Painted Cup – *Castilleja coccinea*
 Purple Prairie Smoke – *Geum triflorum*
 Hairy Beardtongue – *Penstemon hirsutus*
 Rock Sandwort – *Sabulina michauxii*
 Long-leaved Bluets – *Houstonia longifolia*
 Canadian Summer Bluet – *Houstonia canadensis*
 Tall Cinquefoil – *Potentilla arguta*
 Crawe's Sedge – *Carex crawei*
 Field Chickweed – *Cerastium arvense*
 Early Saxifrage – *Saxifraga virginensis*
 Early Buttercup – *Ranunculus fascicularis*
 Balsam Ragwort – *Packera paupercula*
 Red Columbine – *Aquilegia canadensis*
 Orange Hawkweed – *Hieracium aurantiacum*
 Wild Strawberry – *Fragaria virginiana*
 Biting Stonecrop – *Sedum acre*
 Upland White Goldenrod – *Solidago ptarmicoides*
 Grey Reindeer Lichen – *Cladonia rangiferina*
 Green Lichen – *Flavoparmelia caperata*
 Dog Pelt Lichen – *Peltigera canina*
 Tornado Moss – *Torella tortuosa*
 Delicate Fern Moss – *Thuidium delicatulum*
 Fir Tamarisk-moss – *Albietinella abietina*
 Wild Bergamot – *Monarda fistulosa*
 Tufted Hairgrass – *Deschampsia caespitosa*
 Pussytoes – *Antennaria plantaginifolia*
 Meadow Buttercup – *Ranunculus acris*
 Early Buttercup – *Ranunculus fascicularis*
 Tower Mustard – *Turritis glabra*
 Fragrant Sumac – *Rhus aromatica*
 Staghorn Sumac – *Rhus typhina* L.
 Common Snowberry – *Symphoricarpos albus*
 Chokecherry – *Prunus virginiana*
 Nannyberry – *Viburnum lentago*
 Common Juniper – *Juniperus communis*

Other notable species include: Beaverpond baskettail, Two-spotted Bumblebee, House Wrens, Common Yellowthroat, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrows, Field Sparrow, Eastern Towhee, Killdeer, Snowshoe hare, and lots of Moose scat and mosquitos!



Castilleja (L) and Prairie Smoke (R)

Photos: Jeff Leader

WRN Photo Gallery



***Do you have local
nature or WRN event
photos to share?
Send them to
editor@
waterlooregion
nature.ca***



Clockwise from top left: Scissortail Flycatcher; Eastern Meadowlark;
Turkey Vulture; Gray Treefrog; Spotted Salamander

Photos: Mike Weissmann

Membership Report

By Judy Watson

A reminder to members to renew your membership for the September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024 year. You can renew online or you can mail a cheque along with the renewal form you can print from the WRN website. You can also pay at our monthly meetings with the next meeting being September 25, 2023.

<https://waterlooregionnature.ca/membership/>

Welcome New Members!

Steve Bentley
Marwa Elsharkawy
Raymond Foster
Yvonne Foster
Brett Fried
Evelyn Lewis

Hannah Lewis
Minnie Mansfield
Melinda McCoy
Elaine Neill
Mark Neill
Andrew Rutland

Michelle Stelter
Meagan Walker
Kathy Weissmann
Mike Weissmann
Maile Yamaguchi



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Ontario Nature Report

By Fraser Gibson

Conservation Award Winners

We have great news to share about this year's Ontario Nature Conservation Award recipients. Marg Paré, a long time member of WRN and the dedicated leader, organizer and cheerleader behind our WRN Teens was awarded the Education Award for her long time commitment to this initiative and the young people involved (see pg.16 for more).

Two other awards went to local recipients as well. The **rare Charitable Research Reserve** was awarded the Corporate Award and Mark Schwarz of Woolwich Township received the The Steve Hounsell Greenway Award. Ontario

Nature extends their deep gratitude to all the winners and nominees for the great work that they do to help wild species and wild spaces in this province.

Please visit the Ontario Nature website for more details on the awards and the wonderful natural legacies of the award recipients. Congratulations to the winners!



New Coalition Seeks Regulation on Sale of Invasive Plants

The Great Lakes West Regional Meeting hosted an informative talk by Cathy Kavassalis of Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation (CCIPR).

Founded in 2022, CCIPR wants invasive plants in the horticultural and the pet/aquarium trade regulated and is calling on the Government of Canada to act. If the status quo remains, Canada will fail to safeguard our country's biodiversity and will fall short of its international obligations by 2030. A coalition has developed six recommendations to improve policies, tools, and regulations for invasive plant management. Invasive plants are harming our economy, environment and public health.

Visit ccipr.ca for more information and to download the latest whitepaper. It details the current risks, and offers insight into what we can do to change Canada's current path including banning high-risk plants, and labelling risky plants at the point of sale.

Article submitted by CCIPR



Reduce Your Environmental Footprint

Our planet's natural environment is under unprecedented stress.

We need systemic change to address the most pressing environmental issues we face today, but there are still many ways that we as individuals can contribute to restoring a healthy planet by reducing our environmental footprint. Ontario Nature has some suggestions to get you started:

ontarionature.org/take-action/reduce-your-environmental-footprint/

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](mailto:editor@waterlooregionnature.ca)

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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
Half Page	\$100	\$260
Quarter Page	\$50	\$130
One-tenth Page (business card)	\$25	\$65

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