



PECFN NEWS

Christmas Bird Count



Immature Bald Eagle *photo S.Smith*

Immature Bald Eagle soaring overhead while Bob Simmons takes Sydney, Sheila and Allen on a tour of his and his neighbours' property during the Dec. 16/17 Prince Edward Point Christmas Bird Census.

Earlier on Dec. 16 while on the same CBC Sheila and Sandra were lucky enough to observe a Long-eared Owl in a cedar as he was being mobbed by Blue Jays along a hedgerow near Bongards Crossroads. The noise alerted us to his whereabouts, so we followed it and were rewarded by a view of big yellow eyes watching us for several minutes before he decided that he'd rather roost elsewhere.



Long-eared Owl *photo files of S. Smith*

Our January 30 presentations:

Members' Night

PEC Field Naturalists
Tuesday January 30, 7pm, Bloomfield Town Hall



Terry Sprague will present a digitized version of vintage original adventures shot and compiled in the 1970's



Brian Durell will present
Newfoundland & Labrador
A Trip to Remember

Moths by David Bree

David Bree grew up in Almonte, Ontario and developed an interest in the natural world at an early age. After high school he pursued a formal education in the field of Geology, receiving a B.Sc. from Waterloo in 1983, and a M.Sc. from Queens in 1990. Since 1988 he has worked as a seasonal naturalist in the Provincial Park system, including 4 years at Charleston Lake, 8 years at Bon Echo, 1 year at Sandbanks and 4 years at Petroglyphs Provincial Park, and 1 year at Algonquin park. He has been the Senior Natural Heritage Education Leader (Park Naturalist) at Presqu'ile Provincial Park since 2006. For the last 26 years he has been a resident of Prince Edward County, though seasonal work has allowed time for international travel. He and his wife, Yvette, have managed to enjoy the natural world in six continents over the last 27 years.

While all aspects of nature are of interest to David his early interests focused on the study of birds, vascular plants, and geology.

In the last few years insects have become his passion and he has pursued these throughout east-central Ontario. Dragonflies in particular have been a favourite study area, along with butterflies and moths.

PECFN's February speaker
Feb. 27, 7pm, Bloomfield town hall



Join David as he explores the world of moths, how to ID them and some of the many kinds that can be found around Prince Edward County.



Desmia funeralis



Rosy Maple Moth

On a Winter day

There's a Pileated roost along one of our snowshoe trails in the woods. He/she has gone in twice late afternoon when I've been tromping by on snowshoes! Very close to me - maybe 6 metres, and only about 7-8 feet up. It pecks around the opening, then quickly vanishes inside the long hole. There are several other smaller holes above in this dying beech tree. Very cool!

Lots of fox activity too - 4 den sites! The 2 local dogs who frequented the woods have died, so there are only wildlife tracks now!!!

My ski boots are not warm enough for this bitter cold - should get out my telemark leather boots and old wooden skis I've had since I was 17! Need to put on a new heel plate.

The firewood guy should be here any minute with a cord of hardwood he got from up north. He's in Carrying Place.



Pileated Woodpecker

From the photo files of S.

Molly Mulloy



She watches lazy snowflakes descend from a pearl sky

Squirrels tightrope-walk on telephone wires

A cardinal guards one side of the feeder

Mottled pigeons patrol below - the clean-up squad

J.C. Sulzenko

From "Vigil", South Shore Suite



Northern Cardinals

Photos by S. Smith

Tree the County at County Blooms



A New Tree Policy for the County

Attitudes to trees and tree policies have changed a lot in the 16 years since the County adopted its current one. Municipalities across Canada are recognizing trees' contribution to the environment and improving their tree canopies.

In November 2015, Council adopted Lenny Epstein's motion to replace its outdated 2002 tree policy. In spring 2017, Tree the County volunteers asked council to strike a committee to develop a new policy. Working with community input, the committee will formulate the policy in 2018.

Raising awareness about the benefits of trees to the community is a key activity of Tree the County. In June, we engaged the public at County Blooms, the Horticultural Society's annual exhibition. Inside our spacious tent, we offered activities for adults and children: planting conifer seedlings to take home and making leaf prints in clay. A photo display of County trees and a "wishing tree" also engaged people in conversations about the importance of trees in improving health and mitigating climate change.

Tree ID Workshop and Woodlot Tour

Learning more about trees includes knowing how to identify them. On a Saturday morning in November, certified arborists Justin and Brittany Dart taught County residents about the physical properties that differentiate one tree species from another; in the afternoon we visited a woodlot to practice our new skills.



Tree the County on Facebook

We've asked local tree enthusiasts to post photos of their favourite trees on our Facebook page, "Awesome Trees of Prince Edward County."

If you're on Facebook, post a photo of a tree you think is special, and say why you like it so much.

Here is a magnificent Elm - there are quite a few around still. You can find it on the north side of Scoharie Road, just east of Hwy #62. Reach us by email at TreetheCounty@gmail.com



South Shore Conference

The Campaign to Protect the South Shore IBA has Begun! By Cheryl Anderson

Last October, the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEPtBO) and the Prince Edward County Field Naturalists (PECFN) spearheaded a day-long conference to brainstorm ways to protect the South Shore Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) and to enhance recognition of its biodiversity and the importance of its natural habitats. The IBA stretches from Prince Edward Point to Point Petre and from Lake Ontario to Army

Reserve Road and Hilltop Road. It includes a large marine area that circles the south shore peninsula and extends from Black River to Soup Harbour. It has been designated as one of the most endangered IBAs in Canada because of the threats to its natural habitats from wind turbine development.

Represented at the conference, along with PECFN and PEPtBO, were Ontario Nature, Nature Canada, Nature Conservancy Canada, Bird Studies Canada, Ontario Ministry of Nature Resources and Forestry, Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust, Company of Canadians Belleville group, Point to Point Foundation, County Coalition for Safe and Appropriate Green Energy,

Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County, Kingston Field Naturalists, Quinte Field Naturalists and local citizens and businesses. The conference was funded by a grant from the Gosling Foundation and facilitated by Stan Kozak of that foundation.

PEPtBO president Peter Fuller, delighted by the results of the day, commented “PEPtBO and PECFN have collected a vast amount of data about the flora and fauna that live in and migrate through the South Shore. The biodiversity we have documented emphasizes the importance of this natural area and the reason it should be protected”. Participants left with a plan to work together to press governments at every level into action to achieve protection for this last remaining undeveloped piece of land on the north shore of Lake Ontario.



Prince Edward County
South Shore IBA
Courtesy Terry Sprague

What are we planning for our South Shore?



A local committee has been working to fulfill our plan by designing an organization named the South Shore Joint Initiative (SSJI). We plan to launch it with an AGM in March. We have also written a draft letter to the federal and provincial Ministers responsible for environment asking them to designate the South Shore as part of their Aichi Biodiversity Target which aims to protect 17% of Canada's land and 10% of our seas. We will be supporting a similar campaign by Nature Canada and Ontario Nature. We will also be meeting with our local representatives of three levels of government, as well as the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, to inform them about the campaign.

Dick Bird from Hastings Prince Edward Land Trust presented an antique No Trespassing sign originally from Main Duck Island to Gary Bell from Nature Conservancy Canada in recognition of that organization's part in transferring the Island's ownership to Parks Canada. The sign was given to Dick as a memento of the day he was asked to leave the Island's dock where he had sought shelter from a sudden storm by a representative of the original owner.

Amherst Island Owl Study by Project SNOWstorm

Two newly tagged owls on Amherst Island, one of the most famous owl spots in North America, may help Project SNOWstorm better understand the impact of wind energy development on these raptors. (©Rebecca McCabe)

Amherst Island has for decades been a favourite winter spot for long time owl lovers such as PECFN. In past years there have been a number of tagged owls by Project SNOWstorm on or migrating through Amherst. In December, though, work began on what will eventually be a 26 turbine development by Windlectric on Amherst Island, a project that has generated a significant amount of local opposition, as well as concern about its impact on birds. Researchers recognized that they have a unique research opportunity on Amherst, which might lend some clarity to the debate over the impact of wind energy on raptors.

They already have several years' worth of movement data from owls on Amherst in the absence of turbines — and a last opportunity this winter to obtain more. Once the wind farm is built, they can then continue the study to see whether the movements and behaviour of snowy owls change in the presence of the huge towers — something which, so far as is known, has not ever been researched

So earlier this week a four-person SNOWstorm team converged on Amherst Island with the goal of deploying up to four transmitters there: Jean-François (J.F.) Therrien from Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania; longtime snowy owl researcher Tom McDonald from Rochester, NY; Dave Okines from the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory in southern Ontario; and McGill University Ph.D. student Rebecca McCabe, who will be analyzing SNOWstorm's immense dataset for her doctorate.



Tom McDonald, left, and Dave Okines (PEPtBO) get Emerald fitted with her transmitter and harness. (©Rebecca McCabe)

Jean-François Therrien holds Stella, with her new transmitter in place, before returning her to her capture location. (©David Okines)



The new birds are Stella and Emerald, named for the two small communities on the island. Both were big, very healthy owls — Emerald weighed 2,135g (about 4.7 pounds) and Stella was 2,379g (5.25 pounds). Since their release, Emerald has been hunting farmland in the eastern half of the island, while Stella has been moving between the base of Long Point at the southern shore and out to the ice up to 3.75 km (2.3 miles) offshore.

Coming events.

- Wednesday, Jan 24. Pre-hearing conference re APPEC's ERT appeal of WPD's changes to the interconnection line and transformer substation. Sophiasburgh Town Hall, 10:30 am.
- Monday, Jan 29. Hearing re APPEC's application to Divisional Court to have the White Pines FIT contract declared null and void. Belleville courthouse, 15 Bridge St. West, 2 pm.
- Monday, Feb 12. Main hearing re APPEC's ERT appeal of WPD's changes to the interconnection line and transformer substation. Sophiasburgh Town Hall, 10:30 am.



Snowy Owl, County Rd. 2

Photo files S. Smith

Minutes of Jan. 2/18 PECFN Executive Meeting

Present: Sandra Dowds, Amy Bodman, Susan Banks, Gerry Jenkison, Sheena Kennedy, Sheila Kuja

Regrets: Elizabeth Cowan, Agneta Sand, Myrna Wood

Agenda for the meeting was approved (moved by Sheila, seconded by Amy, unanimous)

Dec. 5/17 minutes were approved (moved by Amy, seconded by Sheena, all agreed)

Re November club meeting: still problems with the microphone (**Sandra and Amy** will meet with Bruce, the new person in charge of Bloomfield Town Hall, before the January meeting)

A. MEMBERSHIP REPORT: 57 paid up members and 4 honorary members = 61 members

B. TREASURER'S REPORT: account balance \$5,956.67 but 2 cheques outstanding, so actual balance is \$5,644.69.

Funds for Appeals: **Sandra** and **Myrna** have arranged to meet with Eric while he is in the County to discuss when and whether we can charge Gilead for costs of the Ostrander Point appeal. Everyone should remember that we joined with Appec in the Save the South Shore Fund sponsorship. Funds for Eric's appeals were combined in one. We will be asking Appec Board about any fundraising plans they have.

C. PROGRAMS:

1. Outdoor Programs:

Amherst Is. Outing on Jan. 15. Sixteen members have responded that they wish to come. **Sandra** will send out another email closer to the time asking those who are going directly to the Amherst Is. Ferry to contact her. Just need to remind everyone of the times for each ferry.

Native Plant Sale: **Sue** says that Peter will prepare a schedule for volunteers. We'll need to spend some money on advertising and buying grasses since they are popular and Peter doesn't have them ready in time for the sale. Amy will check who to contact about the quonset hut at Bird City as this was a good venue with plenty of parking and washroom facilities. It's best to have the sale on the same weekend as the Master Gardeners' Sale (think it's the last Saturday of May (26 May) but **Sandra** will check)

Tree Planting: **Gerry** emailed the tree-planting proposal to Robt. Macaulay in December and asked him or his designate to suggest municipal sites suitable for community tree-planting. She hasn't received a response yet. She has asked Justin Dart to be the Arborist-Advisor on the project - professional involvement in choosing species and training volunteers to plant effectively is critical for success. Fall, rather than spring, of 2018 may be better timing, giving the seedlings a chance to establish in cooler weather. Ideally, local groups could take on the responsibility of caring for the trees. So far, Gerry has had excellent success asking volunteers to help with planting.

Heather Coffey: **Sheila** will contact Heather about a possible visit to her farm as a PECFN outing. She may have been away over the Christmas holidays.

Main Duck Island: Amy contacted Terry Sprague and he would be happy to lead a group of nine others on the day-long boat trip. It costs \$900.00 for 10 people so it will cost \$100.00 for each of the nine people and as leader, Terry's way will be paid. It was suggested that the best time would be in June, so if the BioBlitz is on June 9-10 then it could be arranged for any other date that is free but if it's to be on a weekend, then June 23-24 is a possibility or June 16-17, the weekend before when the KFN BioBlitz is scheduled – or any weekday after June 10, whatever times are available for the boat owner. (Dick Bird discovered the boat owner willing to do the trip.) **Amy** will find out about dates available.

2. Indoor Programs

Jan. 30, 2018 – Members Night – Brian Durell will show slides, Cheryl Anderson would like to talk about the South Shore Joint Initiative and Amy has digitized some of Terry Sprague's 1970's films about the county which can be shown and Terry has agreed to comment on them (since they are silent). **Sandra** to introduce, **Sheila** will sum up.

Feb 27: David Bree – Moths of Ontario. **Sandra** will introduce, **Sheila** will thank.

Mar. 27: Mike Burrell – Bird migration? **Myrna** knows the topic.

April 24: Pamela Stagg – Ticks in the County

May 29: Terry Sprague – Bats of Ontario **Sandra** will introduce, **Gerry** will thank.

D. REPORTS

White Pines: (1) The court date for the APPEC legal initiative against the IESO and WPD is Jan. 29. The hearing will be at 2 PM at the Belleville Court House, 15 Bridge St. (2) APPECs appeal to the ERT pre-hearing at Sophiasburgh Town Hall is Jan 24 10:30 am; Appeal hearing also at Sophiasburgh will be Feb 12, 10:30 am.

Official Plan Review – no new information

BioBlitz Committee – The report will be finished soon. The first meeting for the 2018 BioBlitz is scheduled for Thurs. Jan. 18 at 2 PM at Miss Lily's.

PEPtBO Report – nothing new as yet. 45 Christmas cards were sold at the Nov. meeting with \$1.00 of each going to PECFN.

Ontario Nature – Aichi Targets and Protected Places Campaign. There was a teleconference with ON, BSC, NCC and people in the county (PEPtBO, PECFN) on Dec. 8 in which members of the PECFN executive were invited to participate (Myrna sent us the numbers). Caroline Schultz agreed to draft a letter that we might all sign indicating that the South Shore was an ideal site to target for protection under the Aichi Targets (17% protected lands by 2020) with suggestions as to how the provincial government could designate their lands to provide the appropriate protection. There was a second meeting of PECFN and PEPtBO members on Dec. 20 at which the BioPec name was discussed. South Shore Joint Initiative or South Shore Commons were suggested with the former being tentatively accepted. Caroline hadn't sent her draft letter yet so John Hirsch was going to contact her. Sheila and Myrna have been interviewed already for an article on the South Shore to be featured in the March issue of Ontario Nature magazine as a means of highlighting the area for protection.

Millennium Trail – Amy has been appointed to the Board for the Millennium Trail. Wendy Lane is now on a leave of absence from her job with the County. Re Kari: ecopassages for the Slab Creek portion of the trail require study before they can be implemented. Sufficient funds weren't allocated for these studies. A tender for the trail from Wellington to the new LCBO was three times the amount budgeted but the number of km involved hadn't been specified. One good thing that has happened is that the County has lowered the speed limits on wetland portions of the Trail, thanks to Amy's many suggestions on this matter.

Newsletter deadline – Jan. 22

Tree the County – Sue - The group met on December 11th and invited Tom Mikel to attend. Tom was the former owner of The County Arborist. He now teaches arboriculture at Fleming college. He has expressed an interest in being part of the Tree Policy Advisory Committee who will be working with municipal staff and Councillors to develop a new tree policy. He introduced the program i-Tree to the Tree the County committee and demonstrated its usefulness in calculating the existing tree canopy in the County. It can also put a dollar value on the benefits trees provide the home owner and the community. Tree the County thought that presenting the application iTree to the Policy Committee would be very beneficial. **Next meeting will be on Thurs. or Fri. Jan. 11 or 12.**

Christmas Bird Counts – Sandbanks CBC, Dec. 19, 74 species seen; most noteworthy were the Brown-headed Cowbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds and Common Grackles that are still here. Difficult to see the birds because of the high winds that kept them close to the ground or hiding in shrubs. The Prince Edward Point CBC had excellent clear sunny skies but the temperature was cold. Our group's best birds were our Bald Eagles at once over the Bay, a Long-eared Owl being mobbed by Blue Jays and a pair of Pileated Woodpeckers fly overhead.

Next Exec Meeting – TUES. FEB. 6 from 12-2 PM at The Picton Library

