



PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS

PECFN NEWSLETTER

November 2017



Photo by S. Smith



Enjoying an outing in Margaret Kerr's woodlot with Tree Identification workshop leaders Justin and Brittany Dart. Nov. 4

Photo by Agneta Sand

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY FIELD NATURALISTS

PECFN speaker for Tuesday November 28
Bloomfield town hall 7pm

Impossible journeys: the new science of migration

presented by Pamela Stagg, host of the popular County FM radio program, **The County, Naturally.**

Can a bird the size of a walnut fly across the Gulf of Mexico ? For decades, scientists said it was impossible for hummingbirds to make the journey. Today, we know these tiny birds fly 600 miles over the ocean. New techniques – and old ones, re-visited – are giving us new insights into the impossible journeys undertaken by migrating birds.

Photo courtesy www.naturespicsonline.com



Pamela Stagg
photo by Rick Matthews

Reminder:
PECFN membership dues were due in September.

Christmas Cards for sale at November 28 PECFN meeting



PEPtBO Greeting Cards will be available at the next PECFN meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 28, 2017.

The greeting note cards are of the highest quality, with high gloss outside and an easy to write on matte surface inside.

These special cards are \$5.00 — not subject to HST.

\$1.00 from each purchase will go to PECFN.

Membership Night is coming up on January 30, 2018.

This is your opportunity to tell us about what you have seen on your rambles around the world. All forms of communication are welcome- photo albums, collections, or power point presentations. We hope that many people will present, so please try to keep your presentation to 10-15 minutes. Please let us know in advance.



Tree ID Workshop

On November 4th, PECFN hosted a sold-out Tree Identification workshop featuring local arborists Justin and Brittany Dart as part of its ongoing relationship with Tree the County. We spent an informative morning session at the Milford Town Hall where we learned the identifying features of most of the native trees that populate Prince Edward County's remaining woods, and then we spent the afternoon in a beautiful private woodlot trying to identify its magnificent trees by their bark, buds, branches, behavior, cones and shapes. A wonderful day was had by all and we hope to repeat the workshop in future years. Our thanks go to Justin and Brittany Dart, Margaret Kerr, Andy Margetson and Bruce Dowdell for making the workshop a success!

*Amy
Bodman*



Arborist and workshop leader Justin Dart
Photo by Agneta Sand



Brittany and Justin Dart lead the walk.
Photo by Amy Bodman.



Agneta Sand enjoys our discovery walk in Margaret Kerr's woodlot.
Photo by Amy Bodman.



Tree the County is a group of volunteers working with County staff to update the existing tree policy.

GOALS:

- Increase public awareness of the benefits of trees for human health and the environment
- Develop a plan to protect existing trees
- Work towards a tree inventory
- Aim to increase the tree canopy in the County

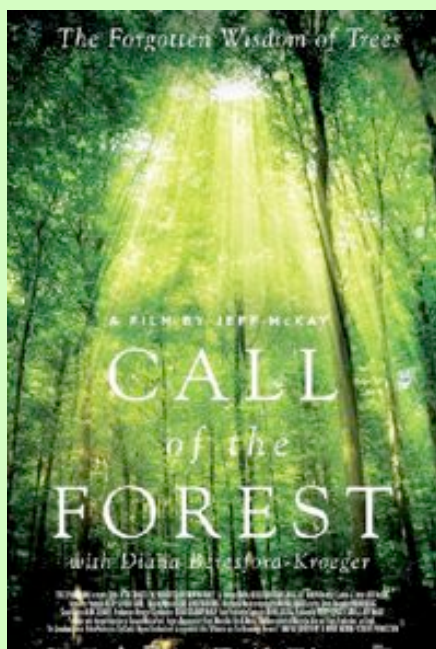
Contact info:

Facebook "Awesome Trees of Prince
treethethecounty@gmail.com



Participants enter the forest during the Tree Identification Workshop Nov.4

Photo A. Sand



Sue Banks

Call of the Forest.

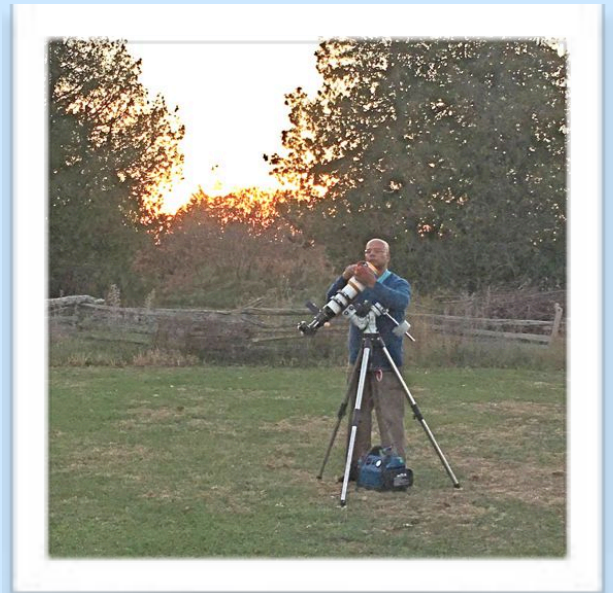
On September 28 Tree the County, with the help of PECFN, brought Diana Beresford Kroeger's film 'Call of the Forest' to Picton. St Andrews Church was almost full with 60 or 70 people keen to meet Diana and watch her film. The film took us to forests around the world, to Japan where forest bathing is practiced for health, to the Black forest in Germany, to Ireland where forests have all but disappeared and to the coastal forests of North America. As a biochemist Diana has studied the way trees communicate and nurture their young. Did you know that there is a chemical relationship between our coastal forests and the health of the ocean? Diana is a warm, intelligent woman, who has done much to question conventional understanding of trees. Recently she earned a prestigious science award in Paris for her work.

Susan Banks

Dark Sky Viewing

On October 20th, night sky enthusiast and PECFN member Ramesh Pooran hosted a terrific night of stargazing at the Prince Edward Point National Wildlife Area as the final event in the Nature Matters! festival. It was a perfect moonless night, clear with no wind, so dark you could not make out the face of the person next to you – the perfect weather to view the glorious night sky with the Milky Way crossing through it. With the help of two telescopes, Ramesh showed us a rare view of a multitude of planets, star clusters and nebulae. We were also graced with a display of shooting stars. People who arrived early got to see the rings of Saturn, while those who stayed late, in addition to the night sky, got the additional treat of seeing and learning about two Saw-whet Owls that had just been banded at the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory, reminding us all about the value of darkness and the inherent relationship between the night sky and migration.

Amy Bodman



Ramesh Pooran setting up a scope as the sun sets.
Photo: Marilyn Holland



Wellington beach evening /photo R. Pooran

Join us!



The Christmas Bird Counts



Snowy Owl
photo S Smith

This count is the oldest citizen science project in the world. It's a census that began over a hundred years ago as an alternative to going out and shooting as many birds as possible to "celebrate" Christmas. The data have proven invaluable for researchers studying bird population trends.

There are now two Christmas Bird Counts in the County, the older one to the southeast, the Prince Edward Point Christmas Bird Count, and a new one to the west, the Sandbanks Christmas Bird Count.

Pamela Stagg is the co-ordinator for the Prince Edward Point count and Tyler Hoar manages the Sandbanks count.

1. Prince Edward Point Christmas Bird Count

This year the count will be on **Saturday, December 16th.**

There is a need for more people on the Prince Edward Point count. If you're an experienced birder, great! If you're new to birding, you can take on the role of scribe for the team, keeping track of the number and species of the birds which are seen. Each count area is different. Some require a lot of walking, others, not so much. Reports of birds seen at feeders in the count area are also welcome – the count area stretches from Prince Edward Point up into Dorland, north of Adolphus Reach, east beyond Kaiser Crossroad and west to Old Milford Road. The start time for each team is decided by the team leader. Interested?

Contact Pamela Stagg at pstagg05@kos.net. Please note that you need to sign up ahead of time to make the logistics easier for team leaders.



Cardinal
Photo S Smith

2. Sandbanks Christmas Bird Count

This year the count will be on **Tuesday December 19th**

If you're an experienced birder, great! If you're new to birding, or just want to count the birds coming to your feeder we will love to have you. Each count area is different in the amount of walking and habitat that gets surveyed.

The count circle runs from Maple street in Wellington East to Waring's Corners (Waring house area) se to Milford. The count takes in all of Sandbanks P.P., East and West lakes, Point Petre, Cherry Valley and Bloomfield. The start time for each team is decided by the team leader. Interested? Contact Tyler Hoar at thoar@rogers.com. Please note that you need to sign up ahead of time to make the logistics easier for team leaders.



juvenile Bald Eagle
Photo S. Smith



Willow beach Field Naturalists South Shore outing Oct 14, 2017
Photo by Amy Bodman.

The South Shore IBA with the Willow Beach Field Naturalists

On Saturday, October 14th the Willow Beach Field Naturalists from Northumberland County joined PECFN for a day of birding and exploration throughout the South Shore IBA. The day started at the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory (PEPtBO), continued along the north shore of the IBA to Little Bluff Conservation Area, proceeded along the south shore to Point Petre and ended at the Lighthall berm and wetland. All walks were gallantly led by Peter Fuller. We had a great day of birding and a wonderful time getting to know our neighbouring Field Naturalists, sharing our concerns for and appreciation of nature. We hope to get together more often in the future.

Amy Bodman

Birches

Robert Frost, 1874 - 1963

When I see birches bend to left and right
Across the lines of straighter darker trees,
I like to think some boy's been swinging them.
But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay
As ice-storms do. Often you must have seen them
Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning
After a rain. They click upon themselves
As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored
As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.
Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells
Shattering and avalanching on the snow-crust--
Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away
You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.
They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,
And they seem not to break; though once they are bowed
So low for long, they never right themselves:
You may see their trunks arching in the woods
Years afterwards, trailing their leaves on the ground
Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair
Before them over their heads to dry in the sun.



Birch tree in
Bloomfield
Photo S. Dowds

Winter Trees

William Carlos Williams, 1883 - 1963

All the complicated details
of the attiring and
the disattiring are completed!
A liquid moon
moves gently among
the long branches.
Thus having prepared their buds
against a sure winter
the wise trees
stand sleeping in the cold.



Photo by Louisa Ielo

PEC SOUTH SHORE IS AN IMPORTANT BUTTERFLY AREA



photo SSmith

A two year study recently released by Ryan Norris and Grace Pitman of Guelph University found that milkweed grown on farm land has more than three times the amount of monarch eggs than those growing in urban gardens and roadsides. Roadside patches may potentially pose a number of threats to monarchs because of vehicle collision and accumulation of noxious chemicals. A better strategy may be for managers to develop incentive programs with landowners to plant and maintain milkweeds in agricultural landscapes.

Milkweed on farm land has more than three times the amount of Monarch eggs than those growing in urban gardens and roadsides.

*Ryan Norris, Grace Pitman
Guelph University*

Our County South Shore has many large and small patches of milkweed as well as nectar flowers every summer and fall. It is an ideal area on Lake Ontario for the Monarchs to feed, lay eggs and get ready to start their migration south in the company of raptors and other birds *Myrna Wood*

Ideal areas for planting milkweed patches are crop margins, field corners, and other marginalized cropland within close proximity to crop fields. At the same time, small patches in gardens and urban parks can still be useful for adult monarchs to lay eggs and find nectar for themselves, the paper states.

Most monarchs migrate thousands of kilometres along various routes through the United States between Mexico and Canada, where they are mostly found in southern Ontario, southwestern Quebec, and the most southerly parts of Manitoba and British Columbia. However, monarch populations are estimated to have plunged by 90 per cent or more across North America over the past two decades. Part of the decline has been blamed on the attempted eradication of the otherwise prolific milkweed, which has traditionally been viewed, or officially listed, as a noxious weed, even poisonous to livestock.

Roadsides appear not to be the best place to attract females to lay eggs, says study co-author Ryan Norris, an associate professor in the department of integrative biology. "Whether females don't like roadside habitats, or they do like them but are getting killed, is something that needs to be looked at further."

Small, low-density milkweed patches of under 16 square metres in agricultural landscape appear to be most useful, in part because they tend to be home to fewer predators that feast on monarch eggs or larvae than medium-sized patches, the study finds. Large patches may be important for male monarchs to search for mates, but they might interfere with females trying to lay eggs.

One big unknown, Norris said, is whether more eggs translate into more adult monarchs and what impact pesticides might have on survival rates. "That's a trickier thing to measure, it's much harder than going around counting eggs."

The Monarch butterflies are an example of the importance of the biodiversity of our South Shore

<http://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/guelph/saving-monarch-butterflies-with-milkweed-depends-where-you-plant-it-1.3669133>

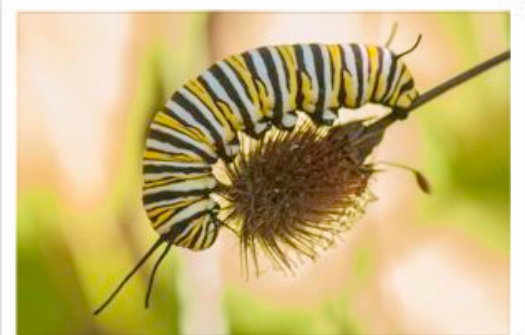


photo B Durell

Sydney needs advice

I've become obsessed with the leaves falling from my purple smoke bush. The variety of colours and designs amazes me. I wish there was a way of preserving them forever. I'm trying a couple of methods I got from YouTube, but if any of the members know of a sure-fire method to use, I would appreciate knowing.

Sydney Smith



Celebrating Myrna Wood's birthday at Parson's Brewery, Picton, in August.



From left: Sheena Kennedy, Suzie Thorne, Myrna Wood, Agneta sand, Cindy Cartwright, Cheryl Anderson, Sandra Dowds.



winner of PEPTBO kayak Shawn Andrews with Cheryl Anderson

So What's So Great About Sandbanks?

By Yvette Bree

That's one of the questions I'm trying to answer as I prepare Sandbanks' Interpretive Strategy, a document that will identify the important natural and cultural features of the park, establish how best to educate people about these resources and determine how to protect them. Research has shown that the more people understand and value a resource – whether that's a park, a library, or a favourite pair of shoes! – the more they will care for it. The interpretive services provided at Sandbanks are intended to foster that sense of stewardship.

Sandbanks Provincial Park is one of the busiest parks in Ontario, with approximately 800,000 visitors annually and of course we all know the main attraction: the beach. But even the most die-hard will eventually leave that sun-soaked habitat and head for other things. We know quite a bit about the summertime campers and day users that visit the park every year. Surveys have been conducted that tell us how many are returning or new visitors, how far they travelled, what motivates them, how old they are, how long they stay for, etc., etc.. Although we can always add to that knowledge, there are other components of our park visitation that I'm also interested in.



Outlet Beach on a busy day



Indigenous Peoples Children's Program

Are we meeting the needs of local people? Do they even know what we have to offer? Should we offer programs in the fall, winter and spring, when the park is less busy? Do they think we are protecting the park properly? Would they like to help us? Would children benefit from offering programs to schools, girl guides, scouts and other youth groups?

These are the types of things I'm asking about in a questionnaire through e-mail. If you would like to contribute your ideas, please send your contact information

to:

yvette.bree@ontario.ca



A guided hike

The survey will be sent out by the end of November and is due back by **January 3rd, 2018**. Ideas and comments will be incorporated into the Interpretive Strategy. Once completed, it will be a management document that guides the development, management and implementation of all interpretive services and resource management practices within **your** park.

Yvette Bree
NHE Coordinator

Sandbanks Provincial Park

**Minutes of the Executive Meeting
Prince Edward County Field Naturalists
Picton Library
November 7, 2017, noon-2:00 p.m.**

Present: Sue Banks, Amy Bodman, Elizabeth Cowan, Sandra Dowds, Gerry Jenkison, Sheena Kennedy, Sheila Kuja, Agneta Sand, Myrna Wood

1. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda was approved as presented, with swift habitats added under New Business.

2. Approval of the Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of October 5 were approved as presented.

3. Status Reports

(A) October 31 speaker meeting

The trial use of the microphone was discussed. While it did increase the volume it blurred the sound, so it was decided that it would be kept available but that only particularly quiet speakers would be asked to use it. Sandra will ask Bruce, the winter caretaker at the Town Hall, if he can suggest any way of improving the quality of the sound.

Amy will look into the computer/projection problems; she always asks speakers if they are bringing their own computer and cables. Sandra will look through her bag of cables for the new one, to have in reserve, and she will talk to Bruce about the problems.

(B) Membership

We have four honorary members and 49 paid-up members for the 2017-18 year. Only two people asked to be removed from our mailing list in response to Agneta's enquiry.

(C) Treasurer

We have a bank balance of \$6,311.70. Sheena presented a preliminary budget for the Sept-2017-Aug.18 year, anticipating sufficient revenues over expenditures to do a little better than breaking even. She reminded the Executive that she must have an invoice or a receipt for every cheque she's asked to issue. The problem of guest speakers too delicate to cash their cheques was discussed, and it was decided to go back to presenting them with cheese and County wine. Amy will look after the cheese and Gerry will buy a case of wine.

(D) Programs

Outdoor programs

The outing with the Willow Beach Field naturalists on the South Shore on Oct.14 went so well that Willow Beach is interested in more joint ventures.

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Ramesh's Dark Sky evening at PEPTBO on Oct.20 was also a success, with 40-50 people enjoying the chance to see Saturn's rings and shooting stars, and then going on to the Observatory to watch the saw-whets.

After a lot of struggle with the computer set-up, the Tree ID Workshop on Nov.4, with arborists Justin and Brittany Dart, was a success as well. The Darts are excellent presenters, and Margaret Kerr's woodlot is beautiful. She is willing to let us use it for a spring walk.

Gerry reported on the idea of a community tree-planting project. Justin Dart has suggested we ask the County for \$1,000.00 and possible locations. Sue pointed out difficulties with the idea: tree planting is hard work, our members aren't getting any younger, and the community doesn't always turn out for this kind of activity. Furthermore, young trees need to be protected and watered, which the County may not be willing or able to do. Sue felt that if we do go ahead we shouldn't ask the County for money, but rather rely on funds raised by the native plant sale or a grant from the TD green fund, because Tree the County is going to need to ask the County to put up money for professional help drafting the new tree policy. She agreed that County buy-in is important, but said it could take the form of choosing sites for the new trees. Gerry will write up a plan for the project and we will discuss it again.

Sue has spoken to Peter Fuller about another native plant sale. He suggests late May or early June, as more species will be available then and the plants will be bigger. We can either buy finished trays of 18 pots each at the wholesale price of \$35 a tray, or cover just the cost of pots, trays and potting mix while doing the potting ourselves, giving a cost of \$10.57 a tray. Pots can be sold for \$4.00 each. It was decided that we would go with the second option, of providing the labour ourselves. Macaulay Park was the preferred venue.

Amy suggested Main Duck Island, perhaps with Terry Sprague as the guide, as a good place for an outing. It would be an all-day walk, over uneven terrain, and cost \$100 per person for the boat. Also, Heather Coffey has said we could come to her farm in the winter.

Indoor programs

Nov.28: Pamela Stagg/Impossible Journeys: the new science of migration (confirmed)

Jan.30, 2018: Members' Night

Feb.27 and March 27: Heather Coffey can't come in February and Stu Mackenzie can't come in March. Sandra will ask David Bree when he might be available to do a talk on moths, and Myrna will ask Mike Burrell if he could speak on citizen science on either of these dates.

April 24: Matt Ellerbeck/salamanders (Sheila will confirm)

May 29: Terry Sprague/bats

(E) White Pines and Amherst Island tribunals

The turbine companies are moving ahead with their destruction. Eric's lawsuit will be heard in the old Picton Court House on **Friday, Nov.17, at 10:00.**

Amy, Myrna and Sheila reported on the Oct.13 South Shore Conference. The groups that attended will be staying in touch to organize a campaign, and may launch their own website. Ideas for a name were discussed at the conference, with some groups wanting to keep a reference to the County and others preferring a name with broader scope, such as the South Shore Commons. It's very important to have bigger players, like the Nature Conservancy of Canada, involved.

(F) Official Plan Review

On hold until the agricultural consultations are completed.

(G) BioBlitz

Sheila isn't sure where next summer's BioBlitz will be held, as one possible property has been sold. There will be a meeting in January.

(H) PEPtBO

"Nature Matters" will be re-appearing next year, and Amy suggested that PECFN should buy an ad in it as we did this year. Peter Fuller would like PECFN to guide some walks again during the Birding Festival. Amy asked whether Boris might try selling his PEPtBO Christmas cards at the next meeting, as Books & Co. is no longer carrying them for some reason. It was felt that since several of our members produce cards, it would be unfair to allow any one member to sell at a meeting. Instead, Boris will be asked if he would like to make a brief announcement of where they can be found (the County Drug Store on Picton Main Street).

(I) Ontario Nature

The minutes of the Eastern Region meeting haven't come out yet.

(J) Millennium Trail

Kari Gunson has prepared her plan for eco-passages and it will be presented at the next meeting of the Trail Committee.

(K) Millennium Trail Native Plant Garden

The garden is being put to bed. Sheena is making six winter arrangements that at \$50.00 apiece should cover the cost of a sign; she is looking into kiln-dried redwood, which could have a simple description burnt into it.

(L) Newsletter

The deadline is **Nov.20**. Sandra has offered to take back responsibility for the newsletter from Sue, who has a lot on her plate already.

(M) Tree Committee

The County will be meeting on **Nov.10** in the upstairs room at the Picton Library. Sue has approached Robert McAuley, the County's commissioner of Engineering, Development and Works, about the issue of the tree management policy; he would like to delay it until the 2018-19 fiscal year. There is a question of priorities: is the most important thing the tree policy or the actual planting of trees? Other municipalities and counties have arborists on staff, whereas PEC puts its trees under the authority of the roads department.

(N) Tree sale

Now that the Stewardship Council isn't holding its annual tree sale every year, the 4H will be trying their hand at it. If it proves too much for them, PECFN could always offer next year.

(O) Christmas bird counts

The Prince Edward Point count is on **Dec.16** and the Sandbanks count is on **Dec.19**.

(P) Water bottles

When we decided to give up on coffee and sweets, bottled water seemed a useful alternative. However, some club members pointed out how environmentally unfriendly it is, so there will be a few bottles available for the speaker, and in case someone has a coughing fit, and Sandra will announce that otherwise members should bring their own water if they feel they might need some.

4. New business

Sheila raised the problem of swifts' nesting chimneys being blocked. She expressed concern about the Armoury, the old Lake on the Mountain School, the former Legion building and Tara Hall. Gerry knows the new owner of the Armoury and could contact her; she also assured us that the Legion chimneys are not going to be blocked. No one was sure who is responsible for the school property.

3. Next meeting

Tues., Dec.5, noon-2:00 p.m., in the Picton Library's upstairs room.