

Editor: Sandra Dowds

President's Message

Bob Simmons



I hope everyone survived this dry hot summer. The hummingbirds and the orioles had a difficult time at the feeders because of the wasps. There seemed to be an unusual number of wasps. It is now beginning to cool off but still there is a lack of moisture. The farmers are suffering and some trees are having difficulty.

We are still waiting on word on Gilead and Wind Turbines at Ostrander Point. You received a pledge sheet and information sheet by e-mail. We are preparing for a tribunal. The environmental assessment has been sitting on the desk of the Minister of the Environment since the end of May. I am not sure what this signifies but we need to be prepared. We have a discussion after the Point to Point Presentation at our September meeting.

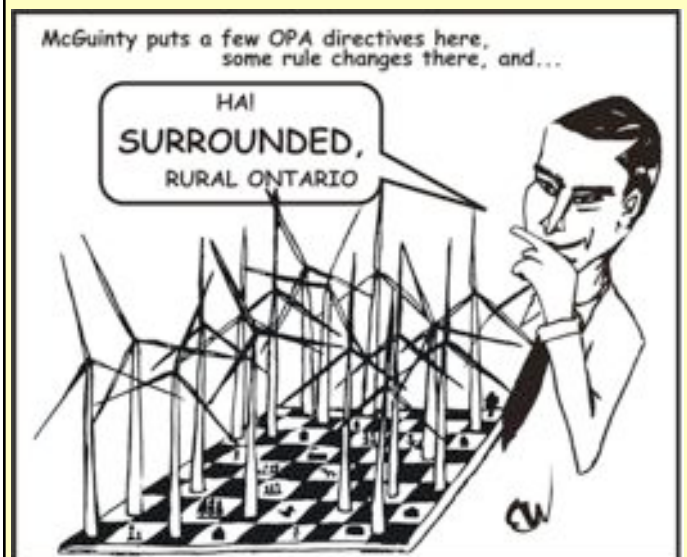
A project with Prince Edward Bird Observatory is being organized in honour of Walter Frey, an avid nature enthusiast, former member of the PEC Horticultural Society and long time member of PECFN. It is hoped that we, along with the PEC Hort Society will put in a butterfly and hummingbird garden on the PEPtBO site. It will also serve pollinators. It is hoped this fall we do some site preparation for planting next spring. *Bob Simmons*



Blandings Turtle *photo by Susan Shipman.*

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PECFN speakers for September 25 2012 Meeting
Point to Point PEC Foundation



Point to Point PEC Foundation is a Canadian Federal Non-profit organization. It was established by Richard Copple and Dr. Karen Hatchard working to protect Prince Edward County's South Shore, specifically to protect the land between Point Petre to Prince Edward Point the shoreline and adjacent marine habitat.

The goal of Point to Point is to protect the PEC South Shore Important Bird Area (IBA), wetlands, unique habitat, migratory bird route and wildlife. Also, they wish to establish the National Marine Heritage Conservation Area, including the water around Timber Island, False Duck, Main Duck Island and Swetman Island.

Their mission is to protect and conserve wildlife and marine life habitats in the Important Bird Area by engaging people and advocating on behalf of nature.

Their current focus is on preventing industrial developments that do not promote wildlife conservation, wilderness protection, and the survival of species at risk who inhabit Ostrander Point.

Their speakers at the PECFN meeting on Tuesday September 25 will be will Richard Copple and Dr. Karen Hatchard

PECFN outing on Mon., Sept .24, 10:00 a.m.

Join us for a walk along the North Beach area and Alexander Island. Pack a snack and a drink. Parking should be available on the road to the park.

Are you a “paid up” PECFN member? Send cheque for \$15 to PECFN, Box 414, Bloomfield, ON K0K 1G0

PECFN's October 30 Speaker

Greg Grabas: Habitat Ecologist, Canadian Wildlife Service – Ontario
Environment Canada

Using Lake Ontario coastal wetland monitoring to support conservation.



Greg Grabas is a Habitat Ecologist with Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service. Greg's wetland work in Ontario involves monitoring Great Lakes coastal wetlands and the development of habitat and biotic community condition indices. The indices are used to report on wetland condition at the basin-wide, regional, and site-specific level as well as refinement and reporting of delisting criteria in Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

Greg is also involved in monitoring and reporting on the effects of water level regulation in internationally regulated systems including Lake Ontario in the south and Rainy Lake in the north-west.



November PECFN Speaker
Pamela Stagg
How Plants Adapt to the Sub Arctic

Pamela Stagg
photo by Donald McClure

Now Available online - [A Faunal Investigation of Prince Edward County](#). This 1941 report is fascinating reading, both to see how things once were and in the case of the insects, there are no more modern lists and these are really the current authority! One of the authors was Fred Urquhart, later of Monarch migration fame.

<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/title/52197#page/27/mode/1up>



Monarch Butterfly *photo by Terry Sprague*



Asters and Goldenrod
photo by Terry Sprague

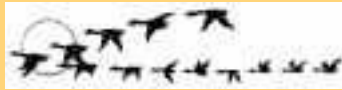
'KittyCam' Documents Cat Carnage

6 August 2012 – A recent study by scientists from the University of Georgia and the National Geographic Society's Crittercam program recorded the outdoor activities of house cats wearing special video cameras around their necks. Nearly one-third of the cats in the study succeeded in capturing and killing animals. The cats killed an average of 2.1 animals every week they were outside, but brought home less than one of every four of their kills. Bird kills constituted about 13% of the total wildlife kills. Based on these results, it has been suggested that house cats kill far more than the previous estimate of a billion birds and other animals each year. The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) estimates that cats are likely killing more than 4 billion animals per year in the U.S., including at least 500 million birds. Visit the [ABC website](#) to learn more.



The Last Blog

Cheryl Anderson



One of my heroes is Dr. Paul Cox, an Harvard trained ethnobotanist, who famously mortgaged his house to save a rain forest in Western Samoa from logging. While studying the medicinal plants used by the villagers of Faleolupo, Paul was amazed to hear logging going on in the forest. The villagers used the trees to make the huts they lived in. They used the fruits and roots and shoots produced by the forest for medicine and food. Yet, the government had decreed that they must have a school. The school was going to cost \$64,000. Living on the land in a subsistent way, they had no way of finding \$64,000– and so they sold the logging rights to their forest. In order to prevent the destruction of the rain forest Paul Cox mortgaged his house, back in the USA, and paid for the school. He then went on to make a covenant with the villagers of Faleolupo that they would become stewards of the forest in exchange for owning patents on any medicines derived from the plants and they would promise not ever to permit logging. He also contacted some large organizations and companies that started to help the villagers develop an eco-tourism industry on their island. Paul Cox is a person that commits to doing the right thing. Through the Faleolupo Covenant, he designed a way for the villagers to start to move into the modern world without destroying their traditional way of life.

It strikes me that, in Prince Edward County, we may be confronting some of the same sort of issues that the Faleolupo villagers dealt with. We need industry so that our young people will be able to have jobs and live a good life. Our agricultural roots are withering unless they can be converted to vineyards. Farmers are enticed to permit alternate energy uses on their land, because finally they can see a dependable source of income.

For millennia; however, Prince Edward County has had another use. We share the space with wildlife. More and more we are taking over land and leaving less for birds, animals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Some of the space they use (we call it habitat) is more important than others to their continued existence. Such is the South Shore of Prince Edward County. It is, not only is part of a migratory pathway for birds, but also it is used by several species at risk. National and International organizations recognized this by designating that area as an Important Bird Area.

Now we have to decide to save that important place from development. It will take money and guts to fight the government approved plans to put Industrial Wind Turbines across the South Shore. Will we be like Paul Cox and say “I will find a way to stop this” or will we just let it happen?

IMPORTANT LETTER TO PECFN MEMBERS

Dear PECFN members:

As you know we have been anxiously waiting for word on the Gilead Power wind project at Ostrander Point and there has been none. Hanging over our heads was the prospect of having only 15 days to mount an appeal, find a lawyer and fundraise to pay for it! We have 1) organized an initial coalition of Ontario Nature, Nature Canada, and local naturalists with a connection to our IBA; 2) talked to an environmental lawyer and received a proposal for an initial review and strategy and a budget for an appeal if it is needed.

In order to be prepared for the worst case scenario of an approval for Ostrander Point we need to raise \$3000 to retain the legal firm to do a preliminary review of information and preparation of the firm's strategy for an ERT appeal and the key steps required to put the appeal in place. We are attaching a pledge form for this purpose. The Executive approved this idea at our Sept 3 meeting and have started it off with our pledges.

If the government chooses to approve of this industrial project in the middle of the PEC South Shore IBA we will be initiating the first Ontario Tribunal appeal to the Renewable Energy Act on the grounds of "serious and irreversible harm to the environment". This case can only be won on science. We are prepared to present evidence that the project would destroy the habitat of avian migrants and resident species at risk and, during operation, cause a mortality rate that has the potential to effect specific species, insectivores, aerial-display species, raptors, and bats, at a population level.

After a projected 25-50 year lifetime of the project these effects would be irreversible to the habitat and thus to the population levels of specific species and/or through displacement of breeding species, or the disruption of genetic migration mapping. It will also set a precedent for other proposed projects on the South Shore, Gilead offshore projects, Amherst Island, and Crown lands of similar environmental value on the Great Lakes.

There are important instances of wind farm siting decisions which reveal a great lack of biological insight. Governments and industry claim that turbines do not kill birds "at a population level" by quoting national statistics while ignoring the fact that high bird mortality is due to poor siting decisions. High rates of mortality have been documented at sites on nearby Wolfe Island (14 dead birds per turbine), West Virginia, mountain passes in California and Spain (thousands of raptors per year), prairie ridges, and shorelines worldwide and also at communication towers during migration seasons.

These high mortality rates raise the fear that the proposals for hundreds of turbines on Eastern Lake Ontario, if approved, will have hemisphere-wide effects on avian populations. Covering the spring and fall staging areas of hundreds of millions of birds, bats, monarchs and odonata with industrial developments will remove essential survival habitat. Therefore the result of the Ostrander Point appeal will be precedent setting to the conservation of wildlife. Ideally the Tribunal could inform the government that it must take responsibility for siting decisions.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service said in 2012: "With more than 100,000 turbines expected to be in operation in the United States by 2030, annual bird mortality rates alone (now estimated by the Service at 440,000 per year) are expected to exceed one million."

As we wrote to Minister Jim Bradley on April 24: "By opening all *Crown Land* to development an important government responsibility has slipped between the cracks: the protection of wildlife habitat. Ostrander Point is a Candidate Area of Natural and Scientific Interest in the centre of the Prince Edward County (PEC) South Shore Important Bird Area (IBA). This IBA including the National Wildlife Area were designated *globally significant* under the congregatory (water fowl) species category and *nationally significant* under the threatened species category. Millions of birds (at higher densities than at Pelee Point) migrate through the PEC South Shore in spring and fall. By agreeing to this project the Ontario government will be jeopardizing its responsibilities for Species at Risk and international agreements such as the Migratory Bird Act. However, denying the project allows Ontario to set a precedent confirming its commitment to protecting the environment as one of the primary reasons for the Green Energy Policy."



Myrna Wood is interviewed by CBC at Ostrander Point

PECFN Pledge Sheet for Saving Ostrander Point

Help Prince Edward County Field Naturalists save Ostrander Point

Since 2008 PECFN has been protesting Gilead Power's plan to erect 9 wind turbines on the Ostrander Point Crown Land Block on Prince Edward County's South Shore. PECFN's submissions to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) have pointed out that:

Environment Canada has classified the site Highly Sensitive and advised against its use for wind energy

Data from the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory indicates that the site is on the spring and fall migratory pathway for millions of birds

Environmental reviews conducted by the proponent prove that the site has been/ is being used by species at risk – Whip-poor-will and Blanding's Turtle and other species of concern

Historically Endangered Henslow's Sparrows have used the Ostrander Crown Land Block

The site contains valuable alvar habitat and is the home of rare alvar plants

The South Shore has been internationally recognized as an Important Bird Area

In spite of these arguments and many others the MOE continues the process toward approval of Gilead's project. If the project is approved, PECFN will launch an appeal to the Environmental Review Tribunal on the grounds that the Gilead projects will cause "serious and irreversible harm to the environment". Preliminary investigation indicates that this appeal, if necessary, will cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Retaining legal expertise will require a retainer of \$3,000. We believe it is prudent to be prepared and therefore are asking you for a financial pledge to help meet the first goal of raising the retainer amount, if necessary.

Please indicate your willingness to donate \$100 to this cause by completing the form below:

Name _____

Address _____

Contact information: _____

I will donate \$100 to help save Ostrander Point, if necessary (please check) _____

I will donate another amount, if necessary \$ _____ (please insert amount)

Please deliver this form to: Myrna Wood #2-59 King Street, Picton ON, K0K 2T0

Or the information by email to: myrna@kos.net

PICTON SWIFT WATCH 2012.....by Sheila Kuja

Until this spring I'd never seen a chimney swift descend into a chimney at nightfall. It was fascinating and really exciting to watch the different methods of descent: from fluttering down like a butterfly to dive-bombing right in. Last June, Joanne Dewey invited club members to participate in an Ontario Swift Watch Monitoring Program that was being organized by Bird Studies Canada. At our second meeting, Kristyn Richardson came to give us some background information about swifts and the BSC program.

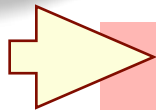
Like other avian aerial insectivores (birds that forage for insects while in flight), chimney swifts are declining across N.A. and have been designated as Threatened in Ontario. Apparently 63% of the Canadian population occurs in our province. For many years Joanne had noticed swifts in Picton and thought this an appropriate area to conduct a survey since the birds were obviously using some of the large old brick chimneys in the downtown area. Swifts can't walk or perch, instead they cling to the rough sides of a chimney and attach their nests to the inside of the chimney wall. It was our goal to search for potential nesting chimneys, locate those that were active nesting chimneys and discover the major roosting chimney for the Picton population, plus record the number of birds using it.



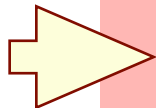
Each week our survey team of Joanne, Myrna, Sandra, Elizabeth, Pamela, Agneta, Cheryl and I (and sometimes my husband Allen) would meet, about an hour before dusk, in the parking lot behind Main St. near the Firehall. (This is an excellent place to watch the swifts' aerial acrobatics and listen to their distinctive "chattering" in flight.) We would then either walk through town watching for swifts and identifying potential chimneys or divide up, stationing ourselves where we could watch for activity at a chimney. Although we all tried to make it out every week, only Myrna had a perfect attendance record but as a "reward", she was the only one of us who had a pair of swifts nest in the chimney of the house opposite her home!

Over the summer we found five chimneys being used by nesting birds and two roosting chimneys: one that was active early in the survey and the other used later. On Aug. 15, 49 swifts descended into two chimneys (47 into one!) but there were still about a dozen birds that didn't enter the chimney, yet they mysteriously disappeared at dusk – so we think there were at least 60 swifts in all. On Aug. 22, after some cool evenings, half the birds had headed south. Sometime between Aug. 23 (when there were still 25 present) and Aug. 29, the remaining swifts had set off on their southern migration. No swifts have been seen since. We'll have to wait until next spring again to see chimney swifts in Picton with hopefully additional club members joining us.

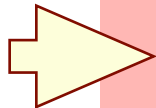
PECFN Studies Chimney Swifts



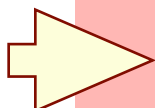
- The Chimney Swift is a small, sooty-coloured bird that makes its home in open brick chimneys in small to large towns and cities.



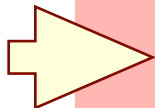
- It can be observed in most urban areas, flying overhead in quick, jerky movements, making a high-pitched chittering call.



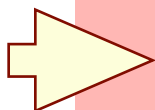
- Unfortunately, this bird is federally and provincially designated as a Threatened species. Chimney Swift numbers have declined by over 90% over the last four decades. The species was recently highlighted in the *State of Canada's Birds 2012* report as requiring urgent attention.



- Since European settlement, Chimney Swifts have preferred to live near people, nesting in chimneys rather than the cavernous trees they once inhabited. You are most likely to observe swifts using larger chimneys attached to buildings such as hospitals, churches, and schools.



- Some chimneys are roosting sites where swifts gather in large numbers. By late summer, you will see the number of birds at roosts increasing, with some sites offering spectacular displays of hundreds, or even thousands, of birds entering a chimney at nightfall.



- Then, suddenly, Chimney Swifts depart, migrating south for the winter.

Executive meeting Minutes of Meeting Sept. 3, 2012
Cheryl Anderson's home 2 pm

Present: Sandra Dowds, Bob Simmons, Myrna Wood, Agneta Sand, Sheena Kennedy, Cheryl Anderson, John Brett.
Absent: Karen Smith.

1. Gilead project at Ostrander Point.

We discussed the legal process of a Tribunal appeal if Gilead gets approval to start construction at Ostrander Point. Cheryl and Myrna reported on contacting a lawyer, Peter Pickfield and his estimate of costs.

We discussed a pledge sheet for members to provide a retainer to start Pickfield's assessment of what an appeal would require. It was suggested that we write a covering letter to explain to members our intentions to appeal if the project is given approval.

Another suggestion is to print the documents from our County Live Blog for information.

The Pledge sheet will be emailed this week and we will be prepared to discuss a possible appeal after the Point to Point presentation at our Sept 25 meeting.

Motion: PECFN issue an appeal to the membership (and wider if needed) for pledges of \$100 for a retainer of \$3000 for an Initial Review and Strategy Memo of a Tribunal appeal.

Moved by Cheryl Anderson and Myrna Wood. Motion approved unanimously.

2. Walter Frey Memorial Garden.

Cheryl reported that the Bird Observatory would like a bird and butterfly garden at the site. Since Walter was a member of PECFN, PEPTBO, and the Horticultural Society we will ask all of them to design and build the garden.

3. Hillier beaches signage – Nature Conservancy has approached us to work with them to apply for a - Great Lakes Guardian Community Fund grant for signage on the beaches. We sent a letter of support.

4. Ontario East Fall Regional Meeting coming up on **Saturday September 22, 2012** at the H. R. Frink Outdoor Education Centre.

5. Terry is asking Pecfn/Peptbo to prepare to take over the trail grooming at Traverse.

4. OUTINGS

Sept 24 Hillier Beaches walk 10am. Sheena will organize, Myrna will contact Mark Despault for information. Rain date Oct 1.

5. Indoor Programs

Sept 25 – Point to Point. Who will introduce?

Oct 30 – Coastal Wetlands speaker – Bob will investigate

Next meeting: Oct 1 or 9 to be confirmed.