

September 2011



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Next Club Meeting:

September 26, 2011 at 7:30 PM
Wing 404/Rotary Centre, Dutton Dr., Waterloo

The Last Stand

**A Journey through the Ancient Cliff-face Forest of the
Niagara Escarpment**

Peter Kelly

The most ancient and least disturbed forest ecosystem in eastern North America clings to the vertical cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment. This talk will take you on to these cliffs through photographs and drawings to look at the unusual eastern white cedar trees that make this place their home and will discuss the unique properties of white cedar that made it a valuable tree for both First Nations communities and the first settlers into Southern Ontario.

Peter Kelly joined the University of Guelph's Cliff Ecology Research Group in 1989 for a summer inventory of ancient cliff-face forests along the Niagara Escarpment but only recently left the group after close to 19 years of ecological and conservation work. Peter currently resides in Guelph where he is Research Director at *rare*.

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Submissions for the Heron need to be received by the 15th of the month.

Submit via email,

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Thanks to last year's Board of Directors for all their hard work and to those continuing or taking on new responsibilities and our new directors I look forward to another rewarding year.

Deb Fowler
Editor

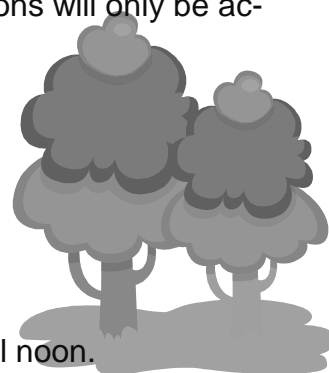
Information for everyone

The **2011 Champion Tree Hunt of Waterloo** started in May and nominations will only be accepted until the end of September and there are still many tree species (that qualify for nomination) that have not been nominated yet.

Please check out the Tree Hunt's website at www.treehunt.ca.

More volunteers are needed to verify nominations. If you can help please contact Phil Dickie at pdickie@Fastforest.ca

The awards and commemorative tree planting ceremony will be at Huron Natural Area on Trillium Drive on Saturday, October 29 from 10:00 am until noon.



The Region of Waterloo Archives gratefully acknowledges the donation of records from the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists. These records have been arranged in archival file folders and boxes according to their original order maintained by KWFN Archivist, Betty Cooper. The records are described in our new online public access catalogue called **Archives Online**. Discover these records and others held in the Archives at <http://row.minisisinc.com>.

Archives Online allows researchers to search for archival records by keyword, search histories of local municipalities, agencies, boards and commissions, view digital copies of archival records, view online exhibits, and make comments.

We look forward to your feedback and making the KWFN archives accessible to you in our research room on the 2nd floor of 150 Frederick Street in Kitchener.

Lesley Webb
Archivist
Region of Waterloo Archives

A Message from the Archives Committee:

The Club Archives are safely installed at the Region of Waterloo Archives, as of May 17, 2011, and are available there, by appointment, for research by the public.

How do you feel about the Club's Library? One or two people use it in a year. With so much information available on the Internet now, has it out-lived its usefulness?

Your thoughts please,

Betty Cooper
for the Archives Committee.

GET WELL AND BEREAVEMENT CARDS

We would like to send words of encouragement and sympathy on behalf of the KWFN to members and/or their families. To facilitate this process, please make the Membership Director aware of the necessary contact and related information. Thank you for your assistance.

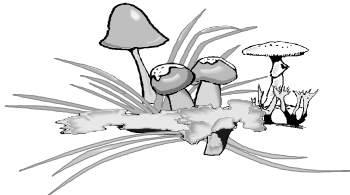
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Third Annual WSN Summer Garden Tour

The Waterloo Stewardship Network (WSN) hosted its third annual summer native plant tour to which members of KWFN who asked to be notified were invited. Several native plant nuts were in attendance on a warm morning in mid-July when we boarded a bus for a tour of 3 prairie sites in the region. In past years, the tours were focused on native plant gardens such as ours, (Nith River Native Plants) or Alan and Anne Morgan's, or Fred and Jane Schneider's. This year the tour visited natural existing prairie sites that were in various stages of restoration. The tour was led by Larry Lamb and Graham Buck who have been involved with the restoration of these sites for several years.

Our first stop was Savannah Links Golf Course on Cheese Factory Road in Cambridge. The golf course was constructed on an oak savannah, one of the rarest habitats in the province. Larry explained that one of the reasons that the golf course was allowed to develop the area was to restore some of the native plants growing in the rough (areas that, as any golfer knows, are left unmanicured) that had become degraded with the growth of non-native plants such as Buckthorn by setting aside. Golfers (a least the good ones) seldom venture into these areas. As a condition, the golf course has to continue the removal of these alien species, work which was initially carried out by volunteers with Nature

Native Plant Nuts

By Wayne Buck

Conservancy Canada (NCC) in which several members of KWFN participated. The group walked initially along Cheese Factory Rd. seeing prairie plants that had taken a firm hold. Then, we followed the cart path to several other areas where the brush had been removed several years ago allowing the seeds of the prairie species that had lain dormant for years to germinate with surprising vigor.

The next stop was the Waynco Prairie, located on an ESL on the west side of the gravel pit owned by Waynco. This is a large prairie, with moraines overlooking the Grand River at Footbridge Rd. The area was at one time an agricultural field in which crops were grown but was turned into a pasture due to the steep slope of the terrain. Prairie species were pretty much eliminated except for a narrow strip at the bottom of the moraine where the rail line ran. Sparks from passing trains caused periodic fires that set back the non-native species and allowed the prairie species to thrive, preserving a small pocket of this rare habitat for many years. Once the grazing by animals was stopped, the prairie species began to spread eastward carried by wind and animals, increasing the size of the prairie. In the past 10 years, 3 prescribed burns, brush removal, and the spreading of seeds collected along the rail bed have continued to increase the area of the prairie. The goal is to restore the entire area back to the prairie it once was with the accompanying birds, insects and mammals.

The last stop was at a field owned by WSN member, Peter Kyle, who offered part of one of his hay fields in order to grow more prairie plants to provide seed for prairie restoration. Grass and forb transplants and seeds have been planted over the past 3 years with varying degrees of success. Brown-eyed Susan, Wild Bergamot and Tic Trefoil were very much in abundance. Grasses were scarce.

It was an informative, interesting and enlightening tour for those who took the opportunity to learn more about one of the rarest habitats in the region and the province; tallgrass prairie and savannah.



Climbing a moraine at the Waynco Prairie site

Congratulations to Thelma and Ron Beaubien for their fantastic butterfly garden featured so prominently on the front page of The Record, Aug. 5, 2011. It sounds like a wonderful place that I'm sure will inspire others to set up something similar.



Ontario Nature's AGM & 80th Birthday Celebration!

Ontario Nature's AGM & 80th anniversary celebration held June 11-12 was a huge success! KWFN was well represented at the gathering where more than 130 members explored the Ganaraska Forest near Campbellcroft in the beautiful Oak Ridges Moraine. The weekend also included a Kids' Nature Camp held especially for the next generation of Ontario naturalists.

The Nature Workshop sessions offered on Saturday all sounded very interesting making the choice difficult. I participated in "A Look Behind the Names," an interesting approach to wildflower ID and the hidden meanings in their common and scientific names. I also attended a session on Tiger Beetles and Spiders of Ontario and discovered that either of these groups would make for fascinating study. My Sunday session was spent in beautiful Peter's Woods Provincial Na-

ture Reserve, a large tract of old growth forest in the area. We were capably led through this wonderful habitat by Brendon Larson, ON's president and U of W professor.

Two resolutions were passed at the AGM. One encourages the Federal Government to create a Rouge Duffins National Park. The other urges the Provincial Government to abandon a proposal to build a new highway from 403 to 407 to 401 which could cause significant damage to Beverly Swamp, the Niagara Escarpment, RBG, Cootes Paradise and prime, non-renewable farmland.

Nature Reserve Website Pages† Submitted by Mark Carabetta, Ontario Nature† Ontario Nature now has 22 nature reserves and the Nature Reserve Program website pages have been updated. The main page now features an interactive map and table, which when clicked will take you to an individual page for each reserve. Each reserve page has a description of the property's ecological features, driving directions and an interface with Google Maps for people interested in visiting, and a slide show of photo-

~ Fraser Gibson

graphs from the reserve. Go to www.ontarionature.org/protect/habitat/nature_reserves.php to see the new pages.

2011 Youth Summit Registration Open Submitted by Sarah Hedges, Ontario Nature

Registration for the 2011 Youth Summit for Biodiversity & Sustainable Living is now open. The event will be hosted by the Ontario Nature Youth Council, and will feature a variety of workshops, activities and speakers dedicated to the conservation of Ontario's biodiversity and the promotion of sustainable living. Being held September 23-25 at the YMCA Cedar Glen in Schomberg, young people in grades 9-12 are welcome to join us for this one of a kind weekend. If you know someone in this age range who is interested in working with others for the environment, please encourage them to get more information by visiting http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/nature_guardians/biodiversity_summit.php.

NAME TAGS

For the September meeting there should be a name tag on one of the green blankets for each person who was a member for the 2010-11 year and those who are already members for 2011-12. If you do not find your tag on the blanket please inform the Membership Director without delay to ensure a speedy solution to the problem.

Wearing your name tag at each meeting facilitates communication. Be a FACILITATOR please.

Before leaving the meeting, please return your name tag to the collection box. You do not have to reattach it to the blanket.

Stick-on name tags are available for guests, visitors and new members. A fresh new name tag will be available for each new member at the meeting following the receipt of their membership fees.

Three KWFN members receive awards from Ontario Nature at the AGM in May

Richards Education Award – Fraser Gibson

Awarded to an individual who has succeeded in helping people understand the natural world and become enthusiastic supporters of conservation and environmental protection.

Fraser Gibson has fostered environmental values and actions in children and adults throughout his career teaching outdoor and environmental education and has continued to promote the importance of the natural world in his retirement. A long-standing member of the Kitchener Waterloo Field Naturalists and a regional director for Ontario Nature, Fraser was a founding member of the “What on Earth Are We Doing” committee dedicated to teaching staff and students about environmental issues in a natural setting. He has led countless nature walks, participated in dozens of butterfly and bird counts, maintains bee hives and monitors marshlands.

W.W.H. Gunn Conservation Award –Jane and Fred Schneider

Awarded to individuals who demonstrate outstanding personal service and a strong commitment to nature conservation over a number of years with exceptional results.

For more than three decades, Jane and Fred Schneider have welcomed visitors to their 500-acre rural property outside Waterloo, which contains swamps, woodlands and fields. Numerous trails run through their property allowing visitors to enjoy magnificent, unspoiled natural areas. The Schneiders have planted hundreds of trees around their home, enhanced woodland and prairie habitat, and created a butterfly garden. The couple are long-time members of the Kitchener Waterloo Field Naturalists and Fred is a former director of the Waterloo Stewardship Network. They have led campaigns to protect the Waterloo moraine against urban sprawl and are widely respected for their knowledge of natural areas and their ability to find solutions.



Congratulations Fraser, Jane and Fred! The KWFN is proud to have such dedicated members and to have them recognized by Ontario Nature!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We ended the 2010-11 Membership year with 161 memberships representing 230 members. The corresponding numbers for 2009-10 were 159 memberships representing 237 members. We have held our own! Now it is time to grow! Current members encouraged to invite others to join our club.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Our revised Membership Form is enclosed with this newsletter for your convenience. The membership fees remain the same!

Thanks in advance for DOING IT NOW!

1. Fill out the form.
2. Write the cheque or gather the cash.
3. Pop your completed FORM and CHEQUE in the mail
OR

Bring your completed FORM with CHEQUE or CASH to the meeting on September 26, 2011. Help us to achieve a record number of returns by the end of September!

A Word about the Revised Membership Form

1. Please check the footnote regarding Family/Couple membership in the first section. To be included as a member, the name of each family/couple member must be given on the Membership Form. If you have any questions, please contact the Membership Director.
2. Be sure to check either Renewal or New Member.
3. Please take time to give us some information in the numbered sections. This information will be most helpful to the Board of Directors. Thanks!
4. Regarding Item 1. Newsletter Choice, please choose one option. If you wish to, in the future, you can change your choice by notifying the Membership Director. Please refer to the article **Newsletter: By Print or Download**,

Additional Information

Only one or two regular Members and our Lifetime Members do not need to renew their memberships.

Newsletter: By Print or Download

There was considerable discussion at the May meeting regarding methods for distributing The Heron and the possibility of reducing expenditures. The Board discussed this matter at its June meeting and decided to support the concept of choice that was clearly expressed at the general meeting.

Members will be asked to indicate their choice [to receive their newsletter by print or by download] when they complete their Membership Form for 2011-2012.

Note: The Current Practice will remain in place until the Board has had an opportunity to review the information gathered via the 2011-2012 Membership Form and make an announcement regarding the Proposed Practice.)

Current Practice

The September issue, which includes the Membership Form for the current year, is mailed to each Membership in late August. Subsequently, you may pick up your monthly newsletter at each meeting, from the Mailing Team at the back of hall. Unclaimed copies will be mailed within a few days of the meeting.

Proposed Practice

The September issue, which includes the Membership Form for the current year, is mailed to each Membership in late August. For the balance of the year, according to the choice you made on the 2011-12 Membership Form, a printed copy of The Heron will be available for pick up at each meeting or you will download your copy from the web site at (www.kwfn.ca).

The newsletter Mailing Team will be available at the back of the meeting hall to assist those Members who are picking up their printed copy of The Heron. Unclaimed copies will be mailed to these Members within a few days of the meeting. Those Members who are downloading their copy of The Heron from the web site may do so the day prior to the Meeting. This will allow time to peruse the newsletter and bring any questions/comments to the meeting.

Outings Schedule



By Mary Voisin

September is a great month to enjoy the outdoors and observe the transition from summer into autumn. Plan to join us for an outing or two. If you would like to lead an outing or have suggestions for new outing locations, please email me at maryvoisin@rogers.com or speak to me at a meeting.

Occasionally there will be a Meet, Greet and Explore Together outing. There is no designated leader for this outing. It's a shared experience!

Meet at the given location.
Greet your fellow naturalists. (experienced and new) Guests are always welcome.
Explore together. Share your questions and knowledge as you enjoy your hike together.

Note regarding guests –
Please email me for waiver form for your guest to sign and drop the signed form off at the next meeting.

Fern Hike at Stamm Woodlot
Saturday, Sept. 10, 2011.
Fraser Gibson 519 576 9287

Meeting Time/Place
9:00 a.m. at Trinity Evangelical Missionary Church on Conservation Drive at Westmount Rd.

Join Fraser on a leisurely walk through this beautiful 36 acre hardwood forest in the north

west section of Waterloo. The outing focus will be on ferns and fern relatives. Ferns have been on this planet for many centuries and have an interesting method of reproduction. Even though the Stamm forest has been surrounded by subdivisions on three sides, it still offers great fern diversity. (We should be able to see about 10 species.)

Fall Raptor Migration at Hawk Cliff
Tuesday, Sept. 13, 2011.
(Rain Date: Friday, Sept. 16)
Randy Fowler 519-576-2788

Meeting Time/Place:
8:00 a.m. at the carpool parking lot, Fountain Street (Homer Watson) and the 401. (In the event of poor weather, this outing will take place on Friday, September 16)

Once again we travel to Hawk Cliff near Port Stanley to observe raptors as they migrate south to their winter destinations. Hawk Cliff is one of the best places in Ontario to witness this spectacle due to its geographical location and cliffs along the shoreline.

Various species such as Sharp-shinned Hawks, Kestrels, Northern Harriers, Osprey, Broad-winged Hawks, Merlins and Bald Eagles will be moving at this time of

year.

If you get tired of watching hawks, then check out the migrating warblers and other passerines that are usually found in the nearby trees and thickets along the roadside.

Bring a lunch and drinks, a chair to sit back in, your hat, binoculars, field guide and a scope if you have one. This outing will consume most of the day with a one and a half hour travel time each way. Porta-potties should be on location. If you would like to meet us there, you can get directions on the Hawk Cliff website. For detailed information and photos, go to: www.ezlink.ca/~thebrowns/HawkCliff/

Chesney Wilderness Area
(west of Drumbo)
Saturday, Sept. 24, 2011
Scott Beamer 1 519 836 7023

Meeting Time/Place:
9:00 a.m. behind the gas station in Laurentian Plaza at the corner of Westmount Road and Laurentian Drive (south of Ottawa St.) in Kitchener.

Chesney Wilderness Area, a 93 hectare (230 acre) natural area controlled by the GRCA, is located 30 minutes from Kitchener between Drumbo and Innerkip. The Hemlock Trail, as reflected by its name,

is special because it passes by a large number of mature hemlock trees. The varied landscape includes mixed woodlands, a pine tree plantation, bog, swamp and some scrubland. The trail has a hard earth surface with occasional tree roots and hills farther into the woods. Bring along a snack and drink, as well as your binoculars and field guides. This will be an all morning outing.

Health Valley Trail
Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2011

Marco DeBruin 519-658-5372

Meeting Time/Place:
9:30 a.m. at the Riverworks parking lot, St. Jacobs, at the extreme east end (follow the signs for buses and campers)

We'll explore the Health Valley Trail, which is part of the Trans Canada Trail, from St. Jacobs to Martin's Creek and back. Varied habitats will be encountered as we follow the trail along the river through woods, cross open pastureland and skirt some backwater ponds. We'll be on the lookout for a variety of wild-

flowers, butterflies (Monarchs are on the move migrating south) and birds such as warblers, flycatchers, herons and shorebirds. Bring a drink and snack for this leisurely 2 ½ hour hike. Binoculars, field guides and appropriate footwear would add to the enjoyment of this outing.



Baillie Birdathon 2011 Report - Neil E. Taylor

I have closed my records for the Birdathon. This year Bird Studies Canada set up a special web site that was both successful and popular. I advised as many as possible via email, telephone, newsletter etc. As many of you know, I set a new goal of raising \$3000. The initial response was overwhelming and so encouraging that I decided that I might aim for \$4000. This was accomplished with a final total of \$4010 (about 133% achievement) as of the date of August 8., 2011.

While I moved from 2nd place to 8th place across Canada and would have been in 7th place as a team of one, I am happy to note that my friends George Pond raised \$8,211, and Mike Cadman of Guelph and OFO Celebrity Birder for 2011 raised \$4,124.

I had initially stated that this was my last Birdathon. The tremendous support I received, together with the ease for me in having 49 pledges via credit card going directly to my account at BSC totaling \$2,271, has given me pause to reconsider and perhaps go for a new and higher goal next year.

It still entailed a great deal of worthwhile effort. My individual soliciting and multiple requests via email totaling over 600 messages including 'Thank You' emails made it worthwhile and most satisfying.

While the Premier and other provincial and federal politicians declined to support me, Councillor John Gazzola did. One pledge arrived from Israel and 2 from Alberta. \$1616 (**a new record**) was pledged by non-members of the KWFN. These included family members and friends, former teaching colleagues, and former students including teachers and students from my first class and school in Scarborough. This I think is pretty significant given that it represents some 40% of the total. However, I am disappointed to report that only 50% of the KWFN Board of Directors supported me in this campaign.

Nevertheless it merited the effort. The Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists should receive 35% or about \$1280. Bird Studies Canada will use the balance for the many great programmes that they support. I am ever so grateful for the generosity of all who have supported this worthy cause over the many years that I have been a participant to raise \$15,441 since 1993 and possible \$4000 or \$5000 before that.

Thank you so very much.

Neil



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Walter Muma – Wildflowers of the Great Smoky Mountains

Walter Muma, a long-time KWFN member and a seasoned macro photographer, has, for the past three years, been spending the third week of each April in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP), a 2108-km² area straddling Tennessee and North Carolina. GSMNP sits in the Blue Ridge Mountains, which in turn are part of the larger Appalachian Mountain Chain. The famous Maine-to-Georgia Appalachian Trail passes through the centre of the park.

GSMNP is a wildlife sanctuary, with many backcountry areas well away from the major trails and roadways. It has over 800 miles of formal hiking trails, and many of these lead to veritable landscape heavens that are a mecca for patient photographers. The park is widely known for its profusion of springtime wildflowers—an annual show that is unequalled in variety, and that is worth travelling far to see. The variety of spring flowers is unique because of the wide range of soil types and altitude-influenced relatively mild microclimates that this area provides.

Because GSMNP lies about a 14-hour drive south of southern Ontario, the spring blossoming in that region takes place about one month prior to that here. Walter noted that many of the species found there are native here too.

Annual climatic variations mean that some surprises are always in store. For example, this year, springtime arrived earlier than usual. Walter also noted that the mountain environment enables one to see the effects of varying climate merely by a change in elevation. So, a 100-metre elevation change can be equivalent to thousands of kilometres of latitude change. The resulting breadth of photographic opportunities makes the area a true paradise for hikers and photographers.

Walter noted that the one can hike all day and simply revel the natural beauty, often without encountering another person.

Prior to the establishment of GSMNP, the Great Smokies were quite heavily settled, with logging being a major industry. The long process of buying up privately owned properties concluded with the careful naming of trail corridors in order to give clues to their respective histories of settlement. A case in point is Ash Hopper trail, which reflects the soap-makers who made their product using ash here.

Walter has honed his macro-photography skills and equipment to a professional level. His breathtakingly beautiful collection of 250 digital photographs demonstrated thoughtful composition, careful attention to lighting angles and intensity, and meticulous attention to depth of field. He noted that, in order to bring out the flower from what is frequently a cluttered background, it is often necessary to try shooting a given subject flower from many different angles.

Walter notes that, after a good angle has been found, he then turns his attention to fine-tuning the depth of field: just enough so that all three dimensions of the flower are captured in razor-sharp crispness, but not so much that the background is distractingly in focus. (Aesthetically applied out-of-focus background blur is known as *bokeh*.) With endless patience, practised diligence and high-end equipment, the result is a very pleasing effect that highlights the intriguing anatomical intricacies of the flower at hand.

Illumination in macro photography brings special challenges, particularly given that insufficient light often forces the photographer to use long exposures (which, even with a tripod, brings blurring because flowers often stir in the slightest breeze) or make other compromises (such as increasing the camera sensitivity, which increases chroma and

Recap by Michael Frind

luminance noise), in order to obtain adequate depth of field. A ring flash is helpful for even illumination of the subject, and it can be pointed upwards into drooping flowers. Reflectors can also be used.

Walter is starting to experiment with backlit photography, which can bring very dramatic results. He noted that this type of lighting brings its own special problems in terms of depth of field and avoidance of background clutter. Indeed, the challenge of photographing wildflowers with backlight is complex: not only does one need to have enough depth of field to capture the petals and stamens in razor-sharp focus, but sufficient light must be allocated to these parts for good color rendition—all without making the background too bright nor distractingly in focus. Fortunately, digital photography enables one to take virtually unlimited photographs, and to review them onsite immediately, thus enabling opportunities to be maximized and failed shots to be reattempted.

On photography expeditions, Walter likes to limit the equipment he carries to a full-frame-sensor digital SLR camera with a 100mm image-stabilized macro lens, ring flash, and a wide-angle lens that he carries on his belt. In a simple over-the-shoulder bag, he carries a field guide and a water bottle, plus a notebook. By recording details pertaining to each photo at time of shooting, he has a complete record of where, when, why, and how each photo was taken.

GSMNP is home to a number of impressively flowering trees, such as Silver Bells and the Umbrella Magnolia. The Cucumber Magnolia, which is also found in Ontario, is common there. The Flaming Azalea, a shrub that is sometimes occurs as a small tree, has spectacular flowers too. The Pawpaw tree (rare in Ontario, but a few can

be found at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington; the downwards-facing flowers make it difficult to obtain correct exposure) can easily be found in GSMNP. Meanwhile, Striped Maple (with its distinctive striped bark) and Mountain Maple are common there, and are easy but less exciting to photograph.

One of the most impressively photogenic shrubs is Mountain Laurel, which was in full bloom when Walter arrived in Tennessee. Each laurel blossom is about an inch across, and has spring-loaded stamens. This ensures that when insect enters the blossom, it is vigorously brushed with pollen.

In the realm of ground flowers, some of the flowers that Walter has extensively photographed include Yellow Clintonia, Fire Pink (with an especially attractive red five-pointed star), Dutchman's pipe (challenging to photograph because it climbs trees, and so good opportunities only arise if a tree falls), Dwarf Ginseng (which he first saw in Grey County), Dwarf Larkspur (the dark-blue variety is not found in Ontario), and Carolina Spring Beauty.

Some of the easiest-to-photograph flowers are Creeping Blue and Glade Phlox, which like wet areas and are common in sinks occupied by white oaks. These sinks are areas where the water flows in and can only leave via evaporation or infiltration, or via disappearing streams. These occur in the parts of GSMNP that are noted for their karst topography, where dissolution of limestone along cracks (given that rainwater is naturally slightly acidic due to the carbonic acid resulting from atmospheric carbon dioxide), over millions of years, has created underground channels and caverns which enable streams to disappear underneath such sinks. These magical locations, which can be tiring to hike into and out of, reward the photographer with the phlox's heady, musk-like aroma, combined with the peaceful, idyllic

setting that makes for a thoroughly enjoyable and photographically rewarding experience. Deep underground, the caves are home to many unique forms of wildlife, including bats, but are off-limits to human visitors.

Other ground flowers that are fun to photograph are the dainty pale-yellow Sessile Bellwort and the various versions of the Phacelias (the white one is frilled whereas the purple one is not). Miami Mist, a charming little wildflower, with its gorgeous little fringes, has been seen in Ontario at Pelee Island. Yellow Lady Slipper (bulb-like flowers) and Alternative-leaf Dogwood are two examples of plants which are common here in Ontario, but which people in Tennessee and North Carolina are very excited to come across.

The Orchid family is well-represented in GSMNP, and this family includes the Rattlesnake Plantains. Downy Rattlesnake Plantain, which is also common in Ontario, has tiny leaves, with a spike of little white flowers 6 to 8 inches high. There are multiple species of Rattlesnake Plantain (4 in Ontario alone), and they can be difficult to distinguish from each other. Also in the Orchid group is Showy Orchid, which is very beautiful but is only a few inches high. Walter noted he found these on one of his Grey County properties. This orchid is also found in Waterloo Region, in several secluded, little-known locations.

Ontario is home to only a handful of trillium species, but in the Smokies, there are countless varieties that are often difficult to distinguish. They have the standard White Trillium (which fades to purple but is not a purple trillium), Sweet White Trillium and Red Trillium. But they additionally have intriguing varieties such as Yellow Trillium, Catesby's trillium (curly, changes from purplish to pinkish), Bent Trillium (light-coloured pistil in the middle), Painted Trillium (distinctive and ac-

companied by a poisonous Copperhead Rattlesnake that was reluctant to be photographed, but a harmless Rat Snake he later encountered posed willingly), Southern Nodding Trillium, Red Nodding Trillium, and Vasey's Trillium (dark red colour, but distinct from Red Trillium).

Walter found many old logs that were decaying and serving as nursery logs for large numbers of plants, such as Galax, Greenbriers (Smilax), Jack-in-the-pulpit, Foam-flowers (part of the Saxifrage family), Snakeroot (a version with a longer stamen than ours), Sicklepod, and many others. Nursery logs are also home to small amphibians such as newts, which are endearing subjects for macro photography.

Pleasant photography opportunities are also provided by One-flowered Cancer Root, Orange-rooted horse Gentian, and Smooth Meadow Parsnip (purple flowered variety). Some plants, like Pennywort and Wild Gamroot, have small flowers and are best photographed while lying on the ground. In contrast, the small flowers of the many species of Poison Ivy require more caution during photography.

Walter concluded with a set of especially beautiful flowers from Indian Creek Falls. Because the Great Smoky Mountains receive ample rainfall and have a topography of elegantly varied elevations, they are home to numerous photogenic waterfalls, including Abrams Falls, Grotto, Hen Wallow, Toms Branch, Juney Whank, Laurel, Mingo, Meigs, Mouse Creek, Rainbow Falls, Ramsey Cascades, and the Place of a Thousand Drips. All of these promise excellent opportunities for those looking to capture photographs of flowers.

Heartfelt thanks to Walter Muma for presenting to the KWFN the sheer beauty of the abundant springtime wildflowers in the Great Smoky Mountains.

It was an overcast, chilly day in early June when our small group left for the planned walk through the Drynan Tract in North Dumfries Township.

Two years ago, I had been in Drynan in early spring, when the entrance was still covered by a plantation of red pine, the trees standing shoulder-to-shoulder, with very little light below, no green under storey, and many dead or dying trees. There was a long walk through this plantation to reach the central area where the typical oak/hickory association of Carolinian woods began.

In that two year interval, an unbelievable transformation had taken place. Most of the red pines were cut down, and in their place there was now a thriving community of native tree saplings, and shrubs of Elderberry, Ninebark, Dogwood and Blackberry. A great variety of native ferns and wildflowers covered the ground, filling every possible space. Birds had come back to this restored landscape, with nesting pairs of Indigo Bunting, Song and Field Sparrow,

Catbird and House Wren. Just two years had produced this vibrant life.

We then walked through the older woods beyond, listening for birds, and admiring the lush variety of plants and wildflowers. There were even several stands of "Squawroot", a parasitic plant just then in evidence.

On our return to the parking lot about noon, some of our group had to leave, but Neil, Ruth and I wanted to check out the Radio Tower field and Grass Lake for birds. The Tower field yielded Bobolink, Meadowlark, Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows.

We then slowly worked our way over to Grass Lake, and the reedy swamp that lies beyond it. Neil parked beside this marsh, and we three spread perhaps 30 feet apart to slowly scan the reeds with binoculars. Soon, the "neighing" call of a Sora Rail was heard, followed later by the low, rising-and-falling "wup-wup-wup-wup-wup" that revealed a Least Bittern.

Marsh birds are very secretive, and more often heard than seen, so we continued to wait. Then,

a subdued but urgent call from Ruth sent up quickly to her side. She had a Virginia Rail in view, and we soon located it, crouched on flattened reeds, and quite near. As we watched, we soon saw two little black chicks run out from under her, then back in, then out again, five chicks in all. We also noticed another adult, darker and a little smaller than the female, running about collecting food, which was carefully given to the mother bird's bill, then quickly away for more. The female gently fed each bit to one of the chicks.

It is hard to describe my emotion as I watched this private domestic scene. It felt like a privileged visitor, allowed to see a rare and special moment in the life of a wild creature. We three watched, fascinated, for several minutes more. Then, after sharing a group hug, we left for home.

For me, this Virginia Rail was a "lifer", since I had never seen one before. I shall never forget this beautiful experience. It will remain there, in my memory, as long as I live.

DONATIONS

When renewing their memberships some members also include a donation to one of our special funds – Operating Fund, Sanctuary Fund or Young Naturalists Fund. These donations, like the membership fee, are tax deductible.

Donations to the Operating Fund help us deal with the ongoing costs of operating our club.

Donations to the Sanctuary Fund are used to further our conservation efforts.

Donations to the Young Naturalists support this group of young people in the development and extension of their interests in the world of nature.

Cheques should be made payable to KWFN with a note in the memo section indicating the designated fund. Donations may be mailed to the club address shown on The Heron or given to the Membership Director at a meeting. Cash at a meeting is also welcome.

Neil E. Taylor
Waterloo Stewardship Network
April 2011



Waterloo Stewardship Network (WSN)

“providing Waterloo Region with knowledge necessary to continue responsible stewardship of the natural resources we all share”

Project Updates

Dryan Activities – Additional plantings have been done. Plaques and signs have been installed and wood chips have been spread along paths. A commemorative event took place with the Regional Chair, Ken Seiling, in attendance along with the CAO of the GRCA.

Prairie Tour – July 24th featuring Monarda, desmodium, brown eyed susan, etc. at Waynco, Branchton Swamp, Savannah Golf Links sites. Prairie restoration and management at these Waterloo region sites was discussed and illustrated.

Butterfly Garden in Elmira - dedicated with over 30 people in attendance. Other design elements are part of this community project that is a true show case and an asset to the community.

Rare Native Plant Planting - This initiative is completed that WSN supported financially. A dedication walk will be happening in the future.

Incorporation of the WSN - Discussion continues and remains to be finalized.

- Al Murray presented the background behind the desire for MNR to have stewardship councils comply with the Transfer Protocol Accountability Directive (TPAD). This is challenging due to the unique nature of the stewardship councils and their independence. This autonomy and independence is the strength of the programme. Options that can help the MNR comply to the TPAD are to pursue incorporation, work with a third party partner or status quo.

➤ **Action:** Steve May will circulate Q&A available through MNR regarding re. other stewardship councils and their incorporation ideas.

Friends of the Grand Partnership Option – While there is mutual interest, after further investigation the Federal government requires that the WSN would be enveloped by Friends of the Grand River. This may be an issue in terms of visual identity and procedures.

Incorporation of WSN Option - Waterloo Stewardship Network can incorporate on its own. This is the preferred option due its ability to address the independence and autonomy of the council. It is also possible to work with other local councils to save money in terms of insurance and book keeping. This can be investigated and put to a vote at a later meeting. Insurance needs to be investigated concerning coverage and costing. Ontario Stewardship will be asked to assist.

Banking Change Requirements - The Stewardship Coordinator will no longer be a signing authority of the council. Changing the signing authority will be required. Once officers are determined in September this will be completed at the bank.

Neil

Giants in Waterloo Region?

Apparently giants have been reported to be hiding in the depths of some of our larger forests in the Region. Some are reported to even venture into open spaces and sometimes even into residential areas. Many have lived here for years, possibly away from the main trails and in quiet surroundings avoiding attention and rarely being noticed. There is now a call for residents of the Region to be vigilant observers for these long lived inhabitants while walking in our local forests. Apparently KWFN members have an advantage in locating and getting a positive ID on these hiding giants because of our skills and familiarity with natural areas.

Please consider taking on this challenge by searching for at least one of these giants. If you head out on the hunt, be sure to take normal precautions - good shoes, bug repellent, etc. Add a few other unusual essentials to your pack. These should include a straight stick that can be held or cut to the exact length of your arm and a long tape measure! After all, you are gearing up for The Champion Tree Hunt of 2011 and the deadline is almost upon us.

Many of our long time members will remember the Great Tree Hunt of 1990 initiated by

the KWFN. At the time, 430 entries were received by the July 31 deadline. Samm MacKay tabulated the nominations and results were published in the Honour Roll of Trees Found in the Great Tree Hunt of 1990 in the Region of Waterloo. In her introduction Samm states, "The most striking discovery of the Tree Hunt was the deep affection, if not passion, that people have for trees, especially for trees that they regard with enough esteem to nominate in a tree hunt. People have spent thousands of dollars to keep a favourite tree living in their back yard; they have designed house additions so that a special tree can be spared from the saw. They have planted seeds, seedlings and saplings in personal efforts to reforest the Earth, and they have wept when grand old trees died or were cut."

A grove of 100 native trees was planted in honour of the winners in Bechtel Park, Waterloo, as an Arbour Day project of Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists.

Twenty one years later an update is needed and three local professional arborists have undertaken this task by initiating The 2011 Champion Tree Hunt of Waterloo Region.

"The goals of this endeavour are to locate and identify

Champion Trees within the Region of Waterloo and to raise awareness of the value of tree preservation.

KWFN members are likely to be more familiar, than many in the general population, with tree species and possible locations of large individuals. Do your part to help make this great project a success. Remember a giant Hop Hornbeam is much smaller than a giant Bur Oak! Enter "Champion Tree Hunt" into your Google search to find required details including a simple method for calculating tree height.

Please get out there to find one or more of our local giants and submit its vital statistics (species, circumference, height, crown width, location) online before the September 30th deadline!



September 2011 at a Glance - refer to page 8 this Heron for full outing details

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 Stamm Woodlot 9:00 a.m.
11	12	13 Fall Raptor Migration 8:00 a.m.	14	15	16 (rain date) Fall Raptor Migration 8:00 a.m.	17
18	19	20 Health Valley Trail 9:30 a.m.	21	22	23	24 Chesney Wilder- ness Area 9:00 a.m.
25	26 KWFN Meeting	27	28	29	30	

Update from the Board of Directors

Because of a back-log of items, the Board of Directors met for an additional meeting May 24, and then again on June 6 for their turn-over meeting. The following topics were discussed:

- Review of the financial statement and proposed budget, which were approved at the AGM.
- Review of the Treasurer's Report.
- Review of the Membership Report, Membership Form, and Membership Welcome Letter.
- Members will now have a choice as to whether they would like to receive a paper copy of *The Heron* at the monthly meeting, or whether they will download *The Heron* from the website!
- A report to increase KWFN membership.
- Role of the Founders' and Conservation Committees.
- Recommendations made by the Awards Committee.
- Region of Waterloo Bird Checklist and Noteworthy Bird Sightings report.
- Continual update from the Archives Committee.
- Waterloo Stewardship Council's Volunteer Event Report submitted by Neil Taylor
- Updates to the Executive Guide.
- Board business during the summer.
- The Board appointed people for all its positions on the Board, as well as for all positions of responsibility within the club. Thank you to everyone who is volunteering for this upcoming year!

The minutes of the May 24 have been approved by the Board, and the minutes from June 6 will be approved at the Board's next meeting September 12. The approved minutes can be viewed in the KWFN library at club meetings, or you can request to receive a digital version from the Secretary.

It's been a pleasure to serve the KWFN as Secretary for the last 3 years! Kelly Holdaway is now taking over from me. All the best!

– Katharina Walton.

317 Highland Road East
Kitchener, ON N2M 3W6

Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists

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Membership Fees September to August (After Feb. 1/12 - 1/2 price*)

* new members only
(senior = 60 yrs)

Family/Couple
\$35.00

Senior Couple
\$30.00

Adult Individual
\$30.00

Senior Individual
\$25.00

Student \$25.00

18 and under Free

Bring payment for membership to the next meeting or mail to KWFN at 317 Highland Rd E Kitchener N2M 3W6

Objectives of the KWFN

- 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 monthly from September to May, on the fourth Monday of the month with the exception of December. Our meetings are free and visitors are always welcome. Outings are scheduled almost every month.

KWFN is a registered charitable organization. Membership fees and all donations are tax deductible. KWFN is affiliated with Ontario Nature (FON).

www.kwfn.ca



"The Heron" is the official publication of the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists' Club and is produced by volunteer members of the club. It is published nine times yearly from September to June, except for December.

Copies of "The Heron" are available at meetings but will be mailed (free of charge) to members if not picked up.

Articles reflect the views of the authors and are not necessarily the views endorsed by the KWFN club.

Pesticides in Ontario *It is KWFN's policy not to use pesticides on any club property or during any club activity. (November 2000)* In April 2009 the use of pesticides for commercial reasons was banned in the province of Ontario. This ban overrides all municipal by-laws. The main exceptions are for agriculture, human health and safety, golf courses, sports fields (though not parks), forestry, and in some instances to protect natural resources. Any pesticide identified as Class 9 is not allowed for residential or cosmetic use. To report non-compliance with the ban please contact the Guelph OMNR office at (519) 826-4955. For more information go to:
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/en/land/pesticides/>