



Notes from the Chair

Early in 2013 the chairmanship of WRIG was passed to me by the Board of Directors. It has been a learning experience and a challenging 9-10 months. I would like to thank the other WRIG board members for their help during this time.

I would also like to thank the 3 previous board members who have moved on to other projects; James Kemp (past WRIG Chairman), Vicki Reddin-Gauthier, and Jack Hanley. They deserve our appreciation for their devoted volunteer work over the years.

A thank you and welcome goes out to our newest director Jeff Arsenault, who joined in the

spring of 2013. There will be more Board vacancies to be filled in the coming year, so please consider joining the board as an opportunity to learn more about the Wheatley River watershed. Elections will be held at the 2014 WRIG AGM, details will be available through the website as they become available.

Finally, I must say that Tamsyn has done a wonderful job for WRIG organizing events and workers, and we look forward to a continuation of the great working relationship with her in 2014.

Enjoy the beautiful fall and winter seasons in Wheatley River.

WRIG Chair, *Stewart MacRae*

WRIG SETTLES IN TO NEW OFFICE SPACE AND WELCOMES NEW WATERSHED MANAGER



2013 has brought a few changes to WRIG, starting with new headquarters! In the past, our watershed group has been dependent on the hospitality of our members and volunteers to store our field

equipment and the ever growing mountain of paperwork necessary for the day to day running of a non-profit organization. Now, we have a place to call home! Our new office can be found at the end of Church Road in South Rustico, in the annex of the Cymbria Lions Club. Along with a safe and secure location for our records and necessary equipment, this provides a central location for our staff, along with an ideal space for WRIG to host our monthly Board of Directors meetings as well as our other special events. We're very pleased to have this new partnership with the Cymbria Lions Club, and the view of the beautiful Wheatley River as it winds its' way into the Rustico Bay is breathtaking.

Starting in the spring of the year, you may have seen a new face around the watershed. Tamsyn, our new Watershed Manager, has happily been part of the WRIG Crew since spring 2013. She grew up in Winsloe South, and now lives in North Milton with her husband Charles and son Alexander on their family run dairy farm.

Tamsyn studied at UPEI, and graduated with a BSc in Biology with a Minor in Environmental Studies. After working for a couple of summers with the Island Nature Trust and DFO, she followed up by obtaining an Advanced Diploma in Water Quality from the Marine Institute of Memorial University in Newfoundland, completing an internship at the PEI Department of Environment.

Luckily, she's had the opportunity to work and research with some great PEI organizations, and her work has given her time in the field and in the laboratory. Since the birth of her son, her goal has been to return to what sparked an interest in biology in the first place; working to protect and enjoy our beautiful Island. WRIG is exactly the place to do just that, and she's looking forward to being involved with this great group.



2013 FIELD WORK

Submitted by Colin Jeffrey



Photo credit Dan Watts, 2013

WRIG had a sensational field season this year, improving the watershed stream conditions in many areas. Dan Watts and Colin Jeffrey made up this year's field crew along with High School student Justin Ellands who volunteered for three weeks and brought much humor and enthusiasm to the work site! In July, 600 native trees and shrubs were planted along watershed streams. Species planted this year included white ash, yellow birch, white pine, white spruce, bayberry and choke cherry. This year's plantings will shade riparian areas that are currently grassland, diversify wooded areas and provide food and habitat for wildlife. At Rackham's pond, tall grass was obscuring pathways and threatening to choke out trees planted in previous years. With the help of Melvin Ling and his brush hog, the grass was subdued between the parking lot and pond to make room for picnics and other fun. Many plantings were also rescued from the grass and

wild morning glory that threatened to overwhelm them.

The field crew completed extensive stream restoration work within the watershed this year, removing blockages and building brush mats to capture silt. Activities were focused on the Wheatley River, where work was undertaken all the way from the Art Ford cross road to Rackham's pond! Restoration work was also completed along several Wheatley River tributaries and parts of Chapel Creek and Crooked Creek. In some areas, thick alders are preventing the establishment of a mature forest that could provide better habitat for fish and wildlife. In others, habitat quality is reduced by limited tree cover along the streams or high volumes of sediment on the stream bed. By capturing silt from the stream and improving tree cover alongside it WRIG can ensure that suitable habitat exists for a diverse range of fish, birds and mammals. Work will continue to alleviate these issues and help restore habitat conditions and wildlife diversity across our watershed.



Photo credit Dan Watts, 2013



WRIG Managers' Report

Following our AGM in April, we had a rather slow start to spring, which fortunately turned into an excellent field season!

We started off the spring in our new home, moving all of our files and equipment out of closets and garages across the community and into the Annex of the Cymbria Lions Club. Before school let out for the summer, we had the opportunity to once again hold our annual Environmental Fun Day, which was hosted at the beautiful Island Preserve Co.' Gardens of Hope in New Glasgow. Grade 6 English and French Immersion students from Central Queens and Gulf Shore Consolidated in attendance, taking in 6 environmentally themed stations, including forestry, recreational fishing, birds of prey, pollinators, watershed ecology, and water quality.

The Canadian Heritage Rivers Conference was hosted in Charlottetown this past spring, and I was lucky to be in attendance along with many other PEI watershed group representatives. The conference was an inspiring way to start the season, sharing ideas and hearing about cultural

and environmental success stories from across Canada.

Kicking off the summer, WRIG staff joined the HCWG staff in celebrating Canada Day in grand fun at the North Rustico community festivities! You may have seen us at the booth with the trees and the bugs, where we handed out 200 young trees and asked people to plant their saplings as part of their environmental legacy to Canada's future, a pledge which was very well received! We hope that the trees planted will thrive and be a reminder of how big little actions can grow over time.

Our 2013 field season was a busy one, with our main crew of three (Dan, Colin, and Justin) working hard all summer, and they were occasionally joined by devoted volunteers, and even myself! We spent our time planting native trees and shrubs in riparian zones and upland areas, clearing stream blockages and removing garbage and debris from our river systems, and building brush mats to help remove silt from the biologically sensitive stream beds. Ashleigh, our Riparian Health Assessment Technician, also spent her summer hard at work in the streams of both

Wheatley River and Hunter-Clyde Watersheds, bringing to completion the 4 year Riparian Health Assessment our groups have been undertaking. The results of this assessment will continue to be compiled through interactive mapping software. They will be used to gauge the overall health of our watershed and pinpoint areas of need in our tributaries and riparian zones, which will help determine how WRIG can best concentrate our efforts to efficiently improve the overall health of our watershed, and water quality for aquatic life.

Water quality, an important factor to consider in overall watershed health, was monitored biweekly this summer, using an electronic device, referred to as a YSI multi parameter water quality probe. In partnership with Agriculture Canada, water samples were also collected for nitrate analysis, and turbidity and temperature probes were set up at different points along the main branch of the Wheatley River and its estuary.

If you were passing over Wheatley River Bridge August 31st, you may have seen a rather colorful flock of ducks making their way towards the bridge from Rackham's Pond. The 2013 Celebrate our River Festival was held again this year, and we had a fantastic turn out for this community event, welcoming many members, new and returning. We had scavenger hunts and bird watching at the pond, the duck race, and a WRIG members' BBQ held at the Wheatley River Community Hall, serving delicious local fare.

Fueling the imaginations and educations of our future environmentalists is of the utmost importance to WRIG, and in mid-October, we had the opportunity to once again have a field day out with the grade 7 and 8's from our local schools. Hosted by WRIG and Hunter Clyde Watershed Group at Rackham's Community Pond, the Adopt a River program got students in the stream exploring the different factors affecting watershed health. They got to learn about how water chemistry, plant diversity, and the physical characteristics of a stream can impact on aquatic health, and even got to examine invertebrates collected from the river bottom as indicators of stream health!

After a busy summer season, I'm looking forward to resting up for next year's field season, starting early with the planning for the 2014 Winter Woodlot Tour, which is already sounding like it'll be a really fun event! I'll keep you posted on all the details through our website, so stay tuned for your next opportunity to get involved and get out and enjoy our watershed!

**WANT TO READ MORE ABOUT
WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO?**

2013 Field Crew Report

**2014 WRIG Field Crew Work Plan
available at www.wheatleyriver.ca**

We're open to your feedback, and we'd like to hear your opinion on what needs to be done to help restore and protect our watershed.

**OPPORTUNITY: WRIG'S SUMMER
FIELD CREW WILL WORK FOR YOU!**

Watershed residents! Do you have a section of stream needing improvement/restoration or a section of buffer zone in need of the bank stabilizing benefits that trees and shrubs provide?

If so, we have a solution for you. Please contact WRIG to arrange for a free site assessment and have our 2014 Field Crew plant on your property to increase canopy cover and plant diversity at no cost to you!

**Your 2013/2014 WRIG Board of
Directors**

**Chair, Stewart MacRae
Treasurer, Stephen Lowe
Secretary Tracy Gallant
Director Allie McCrady
Director Jeff Arsenault**

If you're interested in volunteering to be part of the WRIG Board of Directors, we're looking for new directors; elections will be held at our 2013 AGM in the late winter/early spring. Please get involved, WRIG survives because of the generous time and efforts of people like you!



**Looking for an excuse to get out
on the river?**



Photo credit: TCM, 2013

Calling all those with a canoe or a kayak! Why not get together with other like minded individuals and form a recreational boating club next year? We could meet casually once every couple of weeks over the summer, and spend some time exploring our tranquil Wheatley River and bask in the beauty of our surroundings. All you'd need is your own paddle, a pfd, and a boat (or a buddy with a canoe!). We're open to hearing your suggestions, and if you're interested, please get in touch and let us know your thoughts.



OUR GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO

MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE:

OUR FUNDING SOURCES:

- Province of Prince Edward Island Watershed Management Fund•
- Government of Canada Summer Jobs Program•
 - PEI EDA – Special Projects•
 - Jobs for Youth•
- PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund•
 - Wildlife Conservation Fund



OUR PARTNERS:

- Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group•
- Agriculture Canada•
- PEI Department of Forestry and Agriculture•

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:

- L'Ecole St-Augustin•
- Gulf Shore Consolidated•
- Central Queens Consolidated•

SUPPORTIVE DONORS:

- Wheatley River Community Hall•
- Gallants' Clover Mart•
 - ADL•
- Blue Bay Farms•
- Brookfield Gardens•

NOTABLE VOLUNTEERS:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Karalee MacAskill | David Gladstone |
| Lee Cowen | Robbie Reddin |
| Pat Cosh | Michelle Dollar |
| Melvin Ling | |

AND OF COURSE, OUR FAMILY AND CORPORATE MEMBERS!

- Syngenta•
- Creekfield Homeowners Assn.•

MacPhail Woods: 2014 Site Search

MacPhail Woods Ecological Forestry project will be creating a Confederation Forest on three sites in PEI, and they're searching for suitable locations. If you, or anyone you know can offer a suitable 4 hectare site which can be converted into a natural area accessible to the public, please contact them at macphailwoods@gmail.com for more information.

2013 Shoreline Clean Up

Saturday, September 21st dawned sunny and warm, making it the perfect day for the 2013 Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup! In partnership with the Island Nature Trust, WRIG and HCWG, five participants armed with gloves and garbage bags swept along the shores of our beautiful Barachois Beach. The popular sand bar has changed dramatically over the past couple of decades, and is an important habitat for a wide variety of shorebird species, including the Piping Plover. It's also a very popular sunning, walking, and swimming destination for locals, who take excellent care of their beach. While there was 254lbs of garbage picked up and taken away during the cleanup, the majority of the garbage was lost fishing and marine equipment, with just a few pieces of litter dotting the beach. It's wonderful to see such a pristine beach that is obviously well taken care of by those who use it.



Coming Events

Wheatley River Watershed Photo Contest: Nature and wildlife on display. *Details to come, however now's a great time to get some gorgeous shots of fall foliage and wildlife!*

Winter Woodlot Tour 2014: Coming late February – *After last year's exceptional event and turn out, planning has started for this winter. More details to come, but suggestions and requests are most welcome right now!*



Special thanks to
Rackham's Pond Landowners

Questions? Comments? Just want to get in touch?

You can reach us through the WRIG website www.wheatleyriver.ca, or e-mail Tamsyn@WheatleyRiver.ca.

You can also drop by and visit the WRIG office in the Cymbria Lions Club at 2184 Church Road, but please give us a ring to make sure we're in during the off season by calling 902.963.3198!

Please Consider Joining Our Membership



Individual or Family \$10.00

Corporate or Supporting \$50.00

Simply clip this out and mail it to:

The Wheatley River Improvement Group

2184 Church Rd, RR#3

Hunter River, PE, COA 1N0



Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email - Would you like to be notified about upcoming WRIG meetings and events? _____

YES _____ No Thanks _____

Please visit us online at...

www.WheatleyRiver.ca

