



Wheatley River Improvement Group **Summer 2014**

WRIG 2014 FIELD CREW

We are pleased to introduce the addition of two new field crew members to WRIG's roster!

Brittany MacLean joins WRIG as our Field Crew Supervisor, following her first year of the 2 year Wildlife Conservation Program at Holland College, where she plays for the Hurricane Women's Basketball. An experienced outdoors woman, Brittany enjoys recreational hunting and fishing and has won awards for her skills. Joining her as our Field Crew Technician is Jerrica Cormier, fresh from her graduation at Bluefield Senior High and travels to Greece. In addition to being bilingual, Jerrica plans to attend UPEI in the fall, focusing on Biology and the environment.

Brittany and Jerrica have started their field work, and are looking forward to a great summer!



WRIG 2014 Field Crew Supervisor Brittany MacLean (left), and Crew Member Jerrica Cormier (right). Contact WRIG if you're interested in tree planting or stream restoration on your property this year.

2014 Celebrate our River and Duck Race!

Here come the Ducks again! It's almost time for WRIG's annual Celebrate our River Event, which will be held August 30th at Rackham's Community Pond. Everyone is invited to come out and enjoy our beautiful river and celebrate the environment! We will be there sharing watershed displays, and new members can take home a native tree to plant on their property. There will be a barbeque, pond tours and bird watching, games for kids, and of course, the River Duck Race!. Duck tickets will be available soon at local stores and the WRIG office. As the event approaches, keep an eye out for more details on our posters around the community, Facebook, and our website www.wheatleyriver.ca.



SUPPORTING LOCAL PRODUCERS



Driving through Wheatley River you may have noticed the recent addition of the La Serena Farm Stand. Located just west of the bridge, this self-

serve stand is stocked with a variety of farm fresh produce, perennials and roasted coffee. The addition of this charming stand gives locals and visitors the chance to buy local, directly from the producers themselves. It is well known that local food tastes better, uses less packaging, supports local farms and businesses, is kind to the environment and builds stronger communities. Take the time to stop in next time you're passing through, and enjoy the lovely view of Wheatley River while you're there!



EFFECTS OF THE EVER GROWING WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME IN HIBERNATING BAT POPULATIONS



Little Brown Bat suffering from White-nose syndrome. (Photo credit Scientific American).

White-nose syndrome (WNS) has been an inclining problem for hibernating bats such as the Little Brown (native to PEI) since the discovery of the disease, in a single New York cave in February 2006. WNS is a white fungus that thrives in cold and damp places, growing on the faces and wings of bats, making it hard for the bats to breathe, and causing them to wake more often throughout hibernation. Depleting the bats' stored fat and energy reserves that are essential to get them through the winter, infected bats often emerge from hibernation too soon and leave their caves in midwinter because of confusion and hunger. These bats usually freeze and starve to death. WNS is only a risk to hibernating bat populations because these bats collect in tight groups, called a hibernaculum, during the winter. As hibernating bats don't move very often and are so close together, it is easy for the disease to spread quickly and grow. 25 U.S. States and 5 provinces have now had confirmed cases of WNS.

The presence of White-nose Syndrome on Prince Edward Island was confirmed on February 27, 2013 by researchers at the Atlantic Veterinary College. The first affected bat was found in the Bonshaw area, and since the initial case, officials have received over 20 reports of dead and live animals in various locations across the province in the last two years.

Since the discovery of WNS an estimated 6 million bats in eastern North America have died from this fungus and it continues to spread at an alarming rate. It is estimated that 90% of bat populations have been eliminated.

Bats are very helpful by eating forest and agricultural pests, including mosquitoes and black flies. The loss of them to our ecosystem will have huge impacts on the forestry and agriculture industries.

If one wanted to try and help putting up bat boxes is a great start, just be sure to put them up in a southerly facing direction that is where it is warmest. (Info source: Bat Conservation International, CBC News.)

As part of a larger environmental learning project, Grade 9 students of Gulf Shore School

participated in building bat boxes which they donated to both WRIG and the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group. These structures are available upon request, and if you're a resident who is interested in installing one on your property, please get in touch with us at the WRIG office for more information. (Submitted by B. MacLean)

OPPORTUNITIES
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 site visit and have our 2014 Field Crew plant on your property to increase canopy cover and plant diversity at no cost to you!

YOUR 2014/2015 WRIG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Chair, Jeff Arsenault**
- Treasurer, Stephen Lowe**
- Secretary Trudy MacDonald**
- Director Allie McCrady**
- Director Ann Wheatley**
- Director Jiselle Bakker**
- Director Stewart MacRae**



WRIG IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE 2014 FUNDING FROM PEI WCF

As a non-profit organization, the Wheatley River Improvement Group receives its funding through a variety of sources, including the generous donations of our members. We'd like to gratefully acknowledge the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund for its continued support of our efforts to enhance and maintain the overall health of the Wheatley River watersheds. Funds awarded for the 2014 field season will help enable our Field Crew to accomplish their important stream enhancement work, habitat restoration and improvement for fish and wildlife, and protection of water quality.

Wildlife
Conservation
Fund



OUR GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE:

OUR FUNDING SOURCES:

- Province of Prince Edward Island Watershed Management Fund•
Greening Spaces
- Government of Canada Summer Jobs Program•
- PEI Employment Development Agency – Special Projects•
•Jobs for Youth•
Wildlife
Conservation
Fund



OUR PARTNERS:

- Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group•
- Agriculture Canada•
PEI Departments of
- Forestry and Agriculture•
- Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal•

NOTABLE VOLUNTEERS:

WRIG Board of Directors
Environmental Fun Day Presenters and Volunteers

AND OF COURSE, ALL OUR INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND CORPORATE MEMBERS!

Blue Bay Farms



THE WHEATLEY RIVER OLD FASHIONED PICNIC

Everyone is welcome to attend an upcoming Old Fashioned Picnic in the heart of our community! Planned for Saturday, July 19th (with a rain date of the 20th), and hosted by the Wheatley River 4H and the Women's Institute (Wheatley River, Oyster Bed Bridge and Ebenezer chapters), the Wheatley River Hall and WRIG, and made possible through funding from PEI 2014. The event will be held from 2-6pm, with supper starting at 5 o'clock. There will be outdoor entertainment, old fashioned games, story sharing, and a picnic supper served from the hall. Our crew will be on hand at Rackham's Community Pond to share some environmental information and help spot some local flora and fauna! We encourage everyone to mark their calendars and take part in reminiscing of golden times and enjoy this special event. Limited parking will be available on site. Hope to see everyone out for what promises to be a lovely day!



Get a load of those suspenders! Old fashioned picnic fun.

Congratulations to the 2014 Grade 9 class of Gulf Shore Consolidated for winning RBC Evergreen award!



Students participate in "Adopt-A-River" days last October.

purchase a new microscope for the school laboratory, create the display panels which will be mounted at the school, and donated as a legacy fund to help support future school travel to environmental events within the neighboring watersheds.

Environmental education is a key focus of WRIG, and we couldn't be more thrilled and proud of the initiative and enthusiasm shown by our local students. Under the guidance of their teacher John Stephens, the grade 9 graduating class of Gulf Shore Consolidated put their passion into action and applied for the RBC – Evergreen Watershed Challenge. Being centrally located between the Wheatley River and Hunter Clyde watersheds, students learned about the challenges and changes occurring around their local rivers and streams. The result was a yearlong project called "Maintaining Water Quality" which saw the students participate in a number of activities, including environmental education events, creating a video of their experiences, building bat boxes, writing essays and designing interpretive display panels (read more here: <http://goo.gl/UJVb5B>). Their hard work and dedication paid off, and this spring they were awarded the Evergreen Watershed Champions Regional Award! The award money will be used to

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.

Office hours are variable during the field season, so if you'd like to drop by for a chat, please contact us to make sure we're in, and we'll be happy to meet you at the WRIG office in the Cymbria Lions Club at 2184 Church Road!

Keep the bugs at bay with WRIG hats!



Are the bugs getting you down this summer? Good news, you can keep your noggin covered with one of our fantastic WRIG hats! These

hats are great at keeping both black flies and mosquitoes out of your hair. These high quality navy hats are fully adjustable, stylish, and very comfortable. As well, they were purchased and embroidered here on PEI, so you can wear your WRIG gear with buy-local pride! A 2014 WRIG Membership and hat combo is \$20, taxes included. Limited quantities are available, show your support for our watershed group while you're out enjoying nature this summer! You can pick yours up at any of our WRIG events, or contact Tamsyn at the office (963-3198) to arrange for convenient delivery!

Special thanks to Rackham's Pond Landowners

- Grant, Nancy, & Steven Rackham •
 - Charles and Laura Lipnicki •
 - Melvin & Debbie Ling •
- Michael & Betty-Ann Mokler •
- Philip & Shirley Wheatherbee •

Coming Events

Wheatley River old fashioned Picnic: Saturday, July 19th at the Wheatley River Hall and Rackham's Pond.

Bobolinks and Barn Swallows: Tuesday, August 7th, at 7pm. Island Nature Trust Information Session.

Celebrate our River: Saturday, August 30th, at Rackham's Pond. This year's event will include BBQ, outdoors games, bird watching and our famous Duck Race!! Watch our website for more details on where you can purchase tickets!



From The Island Nature Trust: Bobolinks and Barn Swallows

Bobolinks and Barn Swallows are two bird species that have long been associated with agriculture on PEI. Unfortunately, changes in agriculture practices over the years is now causing declines in both species. Increasingly early hay harvests now coincide with the Bobolink's nesting season, resulting in lost nests and young for these ground nesters. Most new barns are closed and made of metal, reducing the quality and availability of nesting habitat for Barn Swallows. Island Nature Trust is conducting a program this summer to increase nesting opportunities for these species. Anyone that has seen these birds or is interested in protecting these species on their property can attend an upcoming information session, August 7th at 7pm, at the Wheatley River Hall. If you're interested in more information but unable to attend, please contact the INT office at 892-7513 or email islandbirds22@gmail.com.



Photo credit: Bobolink, left - A. Strong, Barn swallow, below - M. Daly.

Both the Bobolink and the Barn Swallow, birds native to P.E.I., are facing challenges finding sufficient nesting habitat due to changing agricultural practices.



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

