



WHEATLEY RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

Wheatley River Improvement Group

Fall 2014

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hi all, I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to chair WRIG this year, and would like to take this chance to introduce myself. I have lived on the Church Road in Wheatley River Since early 2008 and have been on the WRIG Board of Directors since 2013. I am a lineman for Maritime Electric, and since a young age spent a lot of time

on the Island rivers sport fishing. WRIG has done a fantastic job with our local watershed, and with your support, continues to enhance our waterways. I encourage all of you to take part as much as you can, in whatever way big or small, to support our cause and keep our watershed clean and beautiful! *Submitted by Jeff Arsenault, WRIG Chairperson.*



Oyster fishing on the Wheatley River. This beautiful scene was captured from the Oyster Bed Bridge causeway late September. Photo credit; Tamsyn Cosh-MacKenzie, 2014.

WRIG 2014 Season Field Work

Our Field Crew, Brittany and Jerrica, had a busy summer working around the Watershed. As well as taking part in many community events, our crew of two worked hard to help improve stream conditions, riparian health, and increase plant diversity along the Wheatley River and its tributaries. Here's a summary of the work they accomplished:

- 793 trees planted at 8 sites in the WR Watershed (Assisted in 1 major planting in the CAWG watershed).
- Constructed 8 brush mats: 3 on the Wheatley River South Tributary, 3 on the Wheatley River-Bungay South Tributary, and 2 on the Wheatley River-Bungay North-West Tributary.
- Recovery and restoration of the wheelchair accessible dock at Rackham's Pond as well as general maintenance upkeep at Rackham's Pond: Mowing, pruning, garbage clean up.

- Shoreline clean ups along the Barachois Beach and Rustico Bay (west of Oyster Bed Causeway).
 - Removed 6 major blockages (requiring chainsaw).
 - Assessed, Cleared and restored 7.9 km of streams in our watershed.
 - Performed Riparian Health Assessments on two previously unassessed sections of tributaries.
- A huge thank you to our 2014 Field Crew for their dedicated work, they made a huge impact in our watershed!



FANTASTIC FIND!

Chris Macleod and Jiselle Bakker were assessing some newly planted apple trees and located one particularly odd looking caterpillar.

This is an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, and those are eyespots (not real eyes)!! (*Submitted by Jiselle Bakker, WRIG Director.*)



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail caterpillar on an apple leaf in Oyster Bed Bridge (Photo credit Chris MacLeod).

The Horned Lark, a migratory songbird known to nest and migrate through PEI. Photo credit: audubon.org



near sheltering vegetation where feeding birds have some protection from predators, and think about putting a bell on your cat so it's harder for them to sneak up on birds.

- Make sure if you have feeders near large windows in your home to stick a silhouette on the window to reduce the likelihood of a bird striking it. You can find these at local stores like the PEI Preserve Company, or cut out your own design and tack it up.
- Long-term tip: make the most of your landscaping! When making decisions on what to plant around your yard, you can choose native shrubs and trees like bayberry, sumac or cedar which provide shelter and food sources in the fall and winter of the year. Contact the WRIG office if you'd like more information on ideal choices. This can entice birds into your yard, and give them a nice reward to help them on their way. Keep litter tidied up and avoid using harmful pesticides which can be detrimental to wildlife.



Canada goose in flight. Photo credit cfw.ca.

• Remember to keep a safe distance and respect wildlife; ducks and geese can be quite aggressive when they feel threatened, and many smaller birds can become stressed if harassed. Admire our feathered friends from afar with binoculars, discourage your pets from chasing by keeping them on leash, and teach our younger generation the importance of birds in our local ecosystem.

And finally, share the pictures of beautiful birds you spot around the watershed with us! You can e-mail them to Tamsyn (Tamsyn@wheatleyriver.ca), or post them on the WRIG Facebook page, along with any other interesting things you spot out in nature this time of year. We'd love to hear from you!



SPECIAL TIPS FOR FALL AND WINTER BIRDING

Have you heard the honking? Migratory bird species of many varieties have been landing on local soils as part of their seasonal migratory marathons. An assortment of ducks can be spotted enjoying the water down at Rackham's Pond and along waterways towards Rustico Bay, and seasonal songbirds are making appearances at local feeders. As they pass through, it's an excellent time of year to admire and catch pictures of these beautiful birds, so here are some tips to help our feathered friends!

- Put out a bird feeder in a good site, and remember to keep it supplied year-round with appropriate feed. It takes a lot of energy for birds to migrate, they need to fuel up! Choose a location

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

OUR FUNDING SOURCES:

- Province of Prince Edward Island Watershed Management Fund
- Greening Spaces Program
- Government of Canada Summer Jobs Program
- Jobs for Youth

Wildlife Conservation Fund



Your Conservation Dollars at Work

OUR PARTNERS:

- Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group
- 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!

Maritime Electric
Blue Bay Farms

PLANNING AHEAD FOR WRIG'S

FUTURE

WRIG's Board of Directors and some contributing members recently took some time to meet and have a



visioning session to focus on the group's achievements, goals, and plans for the future. Facilitated by Directors Ann Wheatley and Jiselle Bakker, the emphasis of the session was to identify key issues facing our watershed, and develop goals and actions for our group to take in order to address them. Some of the fantastic initiatives that came forward included:

- Working to increase tree cover across the watershed
- Lengthening our field season when stream enhancement takes place
- Providing more opportunities for our community to learn and get involved, by hosting workshops and offering a class through a local community school next fall.
- Taking more steps to reducing erosion, lessening siltation and nitrate levels in surface waters.

There were many other exciting ideas that came to light during the planning process. We'll be working together with you, our community and stakeholders, to develop and achieve the goals of a healthy watershed and an environmentally sustainable tomorrow! Do you have ideas or visions for the watershed you'd like to share? Drop us a line and let us know! We're always looking for volunteers and input from 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



Late summer and fall visitors to Rackham's Pond may have noticed some new cover on the steep slope bordering the stream below the pond. These long strips of jute matting (donated by the PEI Dept. of T&IR) have been hung and firmly anchored vertically on the slope, in order to help hold soil and vegetation in place.

This area has been a challenge to stabilize for quite some time. Because of the steep angle of the slope, spring thaws, when vegetation is just starting to grow, are particularly damaging, and erosion is common. Native PEI shrubs known for their tenacious root systems, wild rose and high bush cranberry, have been planted in and around the jute to help establish healthy vegetation which is ideal to prevent erosion. An added bonus is that both of these plants are great food sources for local wildlife!

Adopt a River Days attended by local students



Educators lead students in performing water quality tests.

A little rain certainly didn't dampen spirits during the 2014 Adopt a River Days, hosted by WRIG and HCWG in mid-October. Students from Ecole St. Augustin and Gulf Shore Consolidated joined volunteers and staff for two fun filled days of hands on learning, both in English and French. Those who took part got to learn about water quality testing, see how harmful substances can affect our water using an interactive watershed model, and all about stream dynamics and ecology! In the afternoon, samples collected from a stream bed were

checked out in the lab, and the aquatic insects found were identified and sorted according to environmental sensitivities. This programming is provided for us through the Bedeque Bay Environmental Association with great appreciation! There was a lot of learning, plus a lot of fun, and our students were great learners!



An interactive watershed model helped students see how a water flows. Thanks to UPEI's "Let's Talk Science" program.

Coming Events

Wheatley River Community Christmas Craft Sale:

Saturday, November 22nd, 2014, at the Wheatley River Community Hall. Proceeds going towards hall renovations and maintenance.

Do you have a coming event you'd like to share? Let us know and we'd be happy to add it to our newsletter and promote it on our Facebook page!

HARVEST TALES FROM MANYBERRIES COTTAGE...



This summer we became very crowded in the garden at Manyberries! The family grew and grew - there was hardly room in the bed for all of us! And early on, Mother and I began to farm some of the larger, older members out to neighbours near and far. There were some very happy endings on tables in Queens County and we hear that some freezers are well-stocked for winter desserts.

The remaining family posed for this photo at the end of harvest. You can see that Mother is quite red-eyed after a very busy season. And young Yellow had been causing some heartache with his rambunctious behaviour. But we have a long winter to work with him and we hope there will be lots of great seeds for planting next spring.

Article and Photo credit: Trudy MacDonald, 2014.



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!

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 •

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 1NO



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

