



Wheatley River Improvement Group

July, 2011

State of the River

A regular feature reporting on the health of our river.

Provincial Nitrate Pilot Study - Progress Report

Further work remains to be done on the Nitrate Report that will result from the many hours of dedicated labour exerted by the Wheatley River working group through the winter months. But we can report significant progress. Our working group will be invited to meet again in the fall, when the final report will be discussed with the community.

As mentioned in previous WRIG Newsletters, the objective of the Wheatley River study (one of two pilot studies funded by the Province) was for watershed residents to come up with a realistic nitrate management target for our river and estuary and figure out how to get there. Project facilitator Rob Reddin summarized it this way:

OUR GOAL:

To achieve a targeted frequency of anoxic events in the Wheatley River and Estuary of no more than one event every two years over a 15-yr term, with the ultimate, perpetual goal of no anoxic events at all.

#1 PRIORITY or TOP VALUE:

Provide conditions that will allow residents to make a viable living in the watershed.

STRATEGIES

Some strategies developed by the working group with a view to reducing nitrate loading and anoxic events:

Now or ASAP:

1. Provide for a dedicated resource/liaison person (cost-shared WRIG employee) to build understanding of the current nitrate situation and assist producers to access relevant programs to address the problem.

2. Look into sea lettuce removal in the short-term.
3. Significantly improve water testing and monitoring.
4. Implement a manure management program across the watershed.
5. Consider removal of crop land to forest or other use, modeling various alternate scenarios, e.g. 3% forested land, 5%, 10%, etc.).
6. Wetland (pond/lagoon) research.
7. Research potential impacts of plowing strategies, alternative crops, "compatible crops", and organic farming.
8. Increase compensation to producers for Alternate Land Use Services (ALUS) and other incentive programs currently offered.
9. Residential development: Identify and model future development scenarios.

Long-term

10. Research options for a watershed septic authority, potentially accessing infrastructure funding.
11. Further research into modeling potential flow improvement via alterations in the Oyster Bed Bridge and Robinson's Island causeway.
12. Mitigation & prevention of siltation and sedimentation

Once completed, the draft report will be posted on our website at <http://www.wheatleyriver.ca/wrig-pilot-nitrate-study/>

Letter from the Chair

Suddenly Summer

Another winter has come and gone, and instead of discussing how the “snow flies”, now it’s all about “black flies”, ah... isn’t life in the country wonderful. As I sit here writing this letter I am watching the beautiful countryside come to life and the land being prepared for sowing. We are so fortunate to have this ever-changing landscape, and wish the farmers well as the growing season moves on. At this time of year it is so easy to think of the farm land as the “watershed”, we should keep in mind that all of the land surrounding our homes is also part of the watershed and has an impact upon the health of the river.

Throughout the winter, many people have spent uncounted hours working on the Nitrate project that was initiated between the Provincial Government and our watershed. I would like to personally thank all of those that have been involved in this very important project. With summer upon us, we are now busy planning summer events, work schedules, and hiring students that will continue working on the river and streams. While we are not initiating any projects as large as the restoration of Rackham’s Pond, it is important to remember that work continues and we are always looking for volunteers to help us with smaller projects and to help us maintain the watershed.

I would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy summer and encourage us all to get out and enjoy the watershed. Whether you fish, take walks along the river, paddle a kayak or canoe, take time to enjoy the Wheatley River, and remember that we are all part of this watershed.

Welcome to New Members and Officers

As with life, everything is in a process of change and so too is the WRIG Board of Directors. Throughout the winter there have been some significant changes in your Board of Directors and I am very pleased to welcome Samantha Doucette and Stephen Lowe to the Board. These two individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the group and I would like to thank them for volunteering to help. Of course the addition of new directors means that we have also lost two valuable Board members. For years Ann Wheatley has given tirelessly as Treasurer. While her term on the Board has expired, we hope that Ann will enjoy a brief break and we welcome her continued contribution to the group. I know that I speak for many people when I thank Ann for all she has accomplished. Besides losing Ann, we have also lost our Secretary, Paulette Potvin. Paulette has moved to Ottawa to be with her family, but her Island family will greatly miss her.



For years now, Paulette has spent countless hours keeping track of our Board meetings and again, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank her for all she has done.

Stephen Lowe has been elected as Treasurer for the Board and we thank him for taking on such an important position, his expertise will prove invaluable to the Board.

Thank you Tracy

With that said, I would also like to mention that we have lost Tracy Gallant as Watershed Coordinator. Yes it is true, but perhaps not as frightening as some think, for Tracy has also been elected to the Board of Directors and will serve as Secretary. It is impossible in the limitations of this Newsletter space to thank Tracy for all she has done as Watershed Coordinator. Her enthusiasm has been infectious and when we think of the Wheatley River Watershed, we all think of Tracy. I can personally say that everyone I have met that has had involvement with Tracy has always said how fortunate we were to have her. Again, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to thank Tracy for all she has done in the past, and welcome her to her new role on the Board of Directors.

Jim Kemp

Ann Wheatley Wins 2011 PEI Environmental Award.

WRIG Charter Member, Ann Wheatley, has been chosen as a recipient of a 2011 PEI Environmental Award.

The presentations took place June 10th at Montague Intermediate School, hosted by Minister Richard Brown and The Hon. Barbara A. Hagerman, Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island.



Ann was nominated by The Wheatley River Improvement Group and recognized as a tireless volunteer and organizer for

many branches of the provincial environmental movement. She has shared her talents and organizational expertise with other watershed and environmental groups and with her vision for a strong association of provincial watershed groups has fuelled the momentum that brought the PEI Watershed Alliance from a dream to a reality.

As a founding member of Wheatley River Improvement Group and after serving several terms with the WRIG board, Ann also acted as a founding member and participated in the original executive of the Watershed Alliance. She has won the respect and admiration of all who work with her. Ann has had a great influence on a new generation of voices for the environment. Through WRIG, the Sierra Club, CUSO - International Youth Internship Program and numerous other avenues, she has helped youth find ways to participate and become active in local and international watershed communities. In this way she has shown young people how to put their concerns into action and demonstrated the importance of volunteerism as rewarding and essential to the health of both self and society.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and members of the Wheatley River Improvement Group as well as our watershed communities, congratulations to "our" Ann!

Tracy Gallant

Environmental Education X 4

The Wheatley River Improvement Group & the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group (HCWG), make up the team working for local environmental education. We have had a busy spring with the planning of three bilingual environmental education events as well as participating in a fourth in a neighbouring watershed. (With apologies for the forest of environmental acronyms), the four events were:

1. **DISCOVER-YOUR-RIVER**, May 2nd
WRIG & Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association (BBEMA) visited 3 schools with a grade 1 & 2 river program.
2. **BIODIVERSITY DAY**, May 20th
Bilingual program and 600 trees delivered to our 3 schools.
3. **BIO-BLITZ**, May 24th
WRIG & HCWG returned the favour, helping BBEMA present a full day event for Summerside grade 8 students at the Maple Plains Eco. Centre.
4. **2nd Annual ENVIRONMENTAL FUN DAY**, June 3rd
At Campbell's Pond in New Glasgow, WRIG, HCWG and our partners hosted 120 grade 5 & 6 students from 3 schools for a bilingual fun day.

The 2011 Environmental Fun Day took place on a rainy Friday, with the help of volunteers from the Wildlife Division & Forestry Division of the PEI Dept. of Environment, Energy and Forestry; Island Nature Trust; PEI Salmon Federation, The Sierra Club, PEI Model Forest Network Partnership and BBEMA. Alternating between the two watersheds, this year's Fun Day took place at the beautiful Campbell's Pond in New Glasgow, where six stations arranged in and around the water each featured an activity. For the second year, students from L'école Saint Augustin in Rustico, Gulfshore Consolidated in North Rustico and Central Queens Elementary School in Hunter River embarked on a short bus ride to get out and learn more about the watersheds that surround them.



This was a full day of "critter dipping" (shown in the photo), which involved investigating invertebrates and pond life with Island Nature Trust's Executive Director Jackie Waddell, electro-fishing with biologist Allie MacLennan and the Sierra' Club's Jen O'Neil, learning about salmon migration with Todd Dupuis from the Salmon Federation, and fly tying with Gerry Blacquiere. The students spent had a memorable day outdoors learning from these and other nature related activities in their own backyard, their watershed.

Our extra special thanks go to Stephane Blanchard of the Conseil Acadien de Rustico, who has been such a friend to our watershed groups as we strive to provide quality environmental education en francais. Stephane has provided translations and delivered presentations helping us improve the standard of our environmental education to the French language students of L'ecole Saint Augustin and Gulf Shore School.

Check out our Eco-education pages for more details!
<http://www.WheatleyRiver.ca>

UPEI Engineering Students Look at Rackham's Pond Trail System.

WRIG Chair, Jim Kemp and coordinator Tracy Gallant mentored a group of engineering students who chose the Rackham's Pond trail system as their semester project. The final presentation held in April here a 3D model of the pond basin was unveiled and the report delivered. WRIG wishes to thank the students involved for their interest and their fine work. Their report will be available at www.wheatleyriver.ca.

WRIG COORDINATOR POSITION

Opportunity available! Main duties are to coordinate community led improvement activities in the Wheatley River and sub watersheds, with emphasis on projects that will improve the quality of our water.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Background in natural resources, environmental or watershed science or similar.
2. Highly motivated, original thinker who likes to work independently.
3. Talent for managing both time and projects.
4. Good communication skills: orally, in writing and electronically, including online applications.
5. Ability to lead and facilitate group discussion and decision making.
6. Willing and able to travel around the Wheatley River area.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Experience in the fields mentioned in 1. above.
2. Good understanding of fiscal accountability and budgets.
3. Team player with excellent interpersonal skills
4. Living in the area would be a bonus. .

And of course you don't mind getting your feet wet.

IF THIS SOUNDS LIKE YOU, PLEASE...

Send your resume, letter of interest, and three references to Wheatley River Improvement Group, Attention Dr. James Kemp, Chair, , c/o 215 Buffalo Road, Rustico, PE - COA 1N0

or e-mail to Tracy@WheatleyRiver.ca

Summer Field Crew

WRIG also welcomes **Beverly Ward** as Summer Field Crew Supervisor. Beverly is entering her fourth year at UPEI. "With a keen interest in biology and the world we live in," says Beverly, "I hope to be able to spend the summer contributing to make the Wheatley River a healthy water system by planting native trees, cleaning up trash, building brush mats and other tasks that will help ensure a healthy watershed for generations to come." Brush mats along the beds of the streams in our watershed help gather silt and filter the water.

Following field training lead by the PEI Watershed Alliance, Beverly will work with two other crew members, **Denver Parkman** and **Eric Sylvester**, who share her interests in biology and preserving the environment. Be sure to look for Beverly, Denver and Eric at WRIG events such as Canada Day, North Rustico Day and Rackham's Pond Day. **Beverly feels that with WRIG's BOD leadership,** much will be accomplished during the 2011 summer season.

WRIG Thanks

Without these corporate sponsors, our work would be impossible. We appreciate their support and encourage WRIG members to support them in turn.

- Ann's Rustico Bay Cottage
- Arnold's Post Hole Digging
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Please Consider Joining Our Membership

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The Wheatley River Improvement Group
c/o Pierre-Yves Daoust
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Name _____
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Email - would you like to be notified about upcoming WRIG meetings and events? _____

YES _____ No Thanks _____

Please visit us online at...
WRIG.Blogspot.com



www.wheatleyriver.pe.ca

Recent web stats show an average 28 visits per day, totalling 5,017 visits to mid June. Thank you and please do keep on coming back. Our commitment is to make it worth your while. And here's the interactive part: when you note something that affects the health of our watershed, let us know about it. Click on *About WRIG*, scroll to *State of the River* and tell us what you see.

WRIG Newsletter edited by Eric C. Riordon