



Summer Field Season

Welcome to summer! This year, in addition to planting native trees and shrubs and stream rehabilitation efforts focused on clearing blockages and bank stabilization, our field crew will be constructing wing deflectors upstream of Rackham’s Pond. As part of the old pond basin, that stretch of the Wheatley River lacks a natural meander pattern and leaves fish vulnerable as they swim upstream. By working to restore the natural meander of the river—which consists of pools and faster moving riffles—the goal is to improve habitat. Fish will be able to move through a series of deeper pools rather than being exposed along the long, wide, and shallow stretch.



2017 Field Crew

Brittany MacLean, Field Crew Supervisor

Brittany loves the outdoors and enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor sports; she grew up in Wheatley River and is invested in the health of our watershed and looks forward to continuing those efforts this year. She graduated from the Wildlife Conservation Technology program at Holland College in 2015 and will be starting her third year at UNB in the fall studying Environment and Natural Resources. This is Brittany’s fourth summer with WRIG and we are glad to have her back!



Taylor Gallant, Field Crew Technician

Taylor grew up in New Glasgow, PEI and recently completed his grade 10 year at Bluefield Highschool. In his free time Taylor likes to be outdoors whether it be fishing or spending time at the beach. After finishing school Taylor hopes to work in the conservation field as he enjoys being able to work outside all day.

Clare FitzPatrick, Riparian Health Assessment Technician

Clare grew up in Charlottetown and has just completed her second year at Dalhousie University where she is studying Biology and Chemistry. Clare has volunteered at shore clean ups in the past and has always had a love for being outdoors. She has always had a passion for protecting the environment and is really looking forward this summer working with WRIG.



2017 Environmental Fun Day

On Friday, June 9th, we had over 90 grade 5/6 students from Gulf Shore Consolidated, Central Queens Elementary, and a local homeschool group join us at the Gardens of Hope for the 8th annual Environmental Fun Day. This educational day is planned by WRIG in partnership with the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group and includes 6 stations focused on different aspects of the environment for the students to rotate through. This year our stations included: Piping Plovers with Parks Canada, Water Chemistry with David Gladstone and Karalee McAskill, Fly-fishing with Holland College, Healthy Forests with the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Birds of Prey with Island Falconry Services, and Monarch Butterflies with BBEMA. We are incredibly thankful for all of our presenters, our volunteers, and the teachers for making this day possible. Environmental education of our youth is of utmost importance and is one of WRIG’s priorities. We are grateful for the wonderful schools in this area and for those that partner with us to promote environmental education.



Luke Peters and Dwaine Oakley from Holland College teaching students about fly fishing.

Snake Species in PEI

PEI's reptile population is represented by 3 species of snakes, the common garter snake, northern red-bellied snake and the eastern smooth green snake. These snakes are non-venomous and are generally harmless and docile. Commonly found across the country, these snakes are all listed as least concern under the IUCN, which is the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Garter snakes are among the most common snake in Canada, with 6 different species in total across the country. They are the most common because they live in a variety of different habitats, but generally are found close to water. These garter snakes have a defense mechanism of releasing foul smelling scent from anal glades at the base of the tail in hopes to deter predators. In Canada where there is changing seasons snakes must go into hibernations in the winter months because they cannot regulate their own body temperature. Garter snakes have been known to have 8,000 or more individuals in one den to hibernate. Amongst the 3 snakes found on PEI the garter snake and red-bellied snake are ovoviviparous, meaning the eggs are retained inside the body of the female to develop, they



<http://srelherp.uga.edu/snakes/thasir.htm>



<http://srelherp.uga.edu/snakes/stoocc.htm>

then hatch remaining inside the female; after hatching the female then gives birth to the live independent young. Red-bellied snakes as adults only reach 20-30cm in length and are the only snake of its kind in Canada that has a distinct red underside. These snakes are nocturnal creatures and feed on mainly slugs, hiding underneath cover during the daytime, they can be found on the edge of wetland areas. When threatened this snake shows its bright red belly to scare off predators. The smooth green snake is the only one out of the 3 species found on PEI to lay eggs, the female lays on average 7 eggs and they hatch 1-3 weeks later, depending on the temperature in the environment. These snakes do not incubate their eggs like birds do, they preform no parental care. As an adult, this snake feeds on caterpillars and spiders, is on average 50cm in length and their best defense against predators is their coloration. They are a vibrant green color and camouflage well in thick vegetation where they are mostly found. In PEI, there is a stable and secure population of red-bellied snakes and garter snakes however the smooth green snake population on the island is undetermined, there has not been a confirmed sighting in 15 years, so little is known about the status here. If you happen to come across a smooth green snake in your travels contact the Department of Communities, Land and Environment or your local watershed group.



<http://boyscouttroop102.weebly.com/reptiles.html>

Submitted by Brittany MacLean

2017 CELEBRATE OUR RIVER EVENT AND DUCK RACE!

Our annual Celebrate Our River event is coming up! Get ready to come out to Rackham's Pond for a fun-filled afternoon on Saturday, August 26th. This family-friendly event is great for all ages and is an excellent way to support WRIG, your local watershed group!

We will be having a BBQ and everyone is welcome! Bring your friends and family for free hot dogs and fun for all ages. We will be hosting the popular Duck Race at this event, so make sure to buy your duck ticket. Duck tickets will be available at Gallant's Clover Farm, at the WRIG office in the Cymbria Lions Club, and from WRIG directors, staff, and volunteers. With the purchase of a duck ticket, you will be assigned a duck to enter in the race from Rackham's Pond down to the Wheatley River Bridge. We offer prizes for the first three people whose ducks make it to the finish line, so hopefully your duck will be the fastest! Come join in the fun—enjoy our beautiful river, learn more about the watershed, and take part in family friendly games and outdoor activities. Keep an eye out for our posters around the community, on our Facebook page, and on our website (www.wheatleyriver.ca) for additional details!



Define a Term!

Freshet: a great rise in water levels resulting from the spring thaw or heavy rains

Estuary: the transition zone between the river and the sea that is affected by the tides and where salt water and fresh water meet (brackish water)



Special thanks to
Rackham’s Pond Landowners

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



Questions? Comments? Just want to get in touch?

You can reach us through the WRIG website www.wheatleyriver.ca, on our Facebook page, or e-mail Kayla@WheatleyRiver.ca. Office hours are variable so if you’d like to drop by please contact us to make sure we’re in. We’ll be happy to meet you at the WRIG office in the Cymbria Lions Club at 2184 Church Road!

The Estuary Watch Program

The P.E.I. Estuary Watch Program is a water quality monitoring program for bays and estuaries of Prince Edward Island. In this program, volunteer “Estuary Watchers” make daily observations of water quality.

The P.E.I. Estuary Watch Program is useful because it:

- Is a low-cost method of monitoring estuaries;
- Can be used to track the location, timing and duration of anoxic events;
- Can be used to make comparison to future water quality or to see how water quality is changing in an estuary over time; and
- Raises interest and awareness of water quality in the local estuary.



Wheatley River, Summer 2016

The program is simple to learn, takes just minutes a day and requires no special equipment. Watchers simply record daily observations of water clarity, water colour, the presence of odours, as well as the amount and relative health of sea lettuce present in a section of estuary. The time-frame for making observations is between mid-May and mid-October, however, the commitment of time does not have to be that long as July and August are the months of most interest. A logbook and/or a spreadsheet used to record the observations are provided. A short training session (< 1 hour) can be provided if the watcher is interested. Instructions are also provided with the logs.

Completed logs are sent to the Department of Communities, Land and Environment (CLE) at the end of the season. CLE staff use the daily observations to produce a score which represents the health of the estuary (Healthy, Impaired, Hypoxia, Anoxia). A graph is produced to show the changes in water quality over the season and a summary of results is provided.

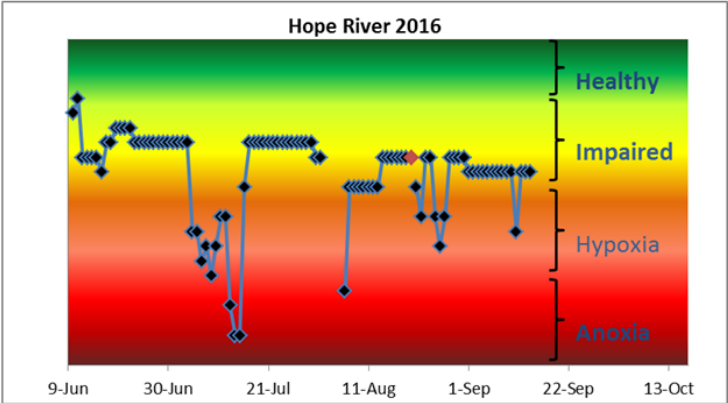
Each Estuary Watch participant, along with the local community watershed group, will receive a short report on these results by late December. The watershed group can publish or post this report or use it as they see fit. Watcher names will be kept confidential. CLE also uses the information from Estuary Watch to add to anoxic events tracking in the province but does not publish or post the reports. Logs can also be returned to the individual watcher if they wish to keep it for future reference

Anyone with questions or an interest in volunteering for Estuary Watch is asked to contact either their local watershed group or Cindy Crane by phone at 902-368-5179 or via e-mail at cscrane@gov.pe.ca.

~Submitted by Cindy Crane

The results produced from a 2016 Estuary Watch record are below:

Graph



Summary

Period	# Days Recorded	Days Healthy	Days Impaired	Days Hypoxic	Days Anoxic
June 10- Sept. 14, 2016	57 of 110 days	1	75	13	4
July 1 - Aug. 31, 2016	58 of 62 days	0	42	12	4

Your 2017/2018 Board of Directors

- Chair, Sidney Annema
Treasurer, Melanie Labelle
Secretary, Charles Lipnicki
Director, Gary Loo
Director, Micah Gallant
Director, Stewart MacRae



WRIG IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE FUNDING FROM PEI WCF FOR THE 2017 SUMMER FIELD SEASON!



As a non-profit organization, WRIG receives its funding through a variety of sources. 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. The WCF is generated from annual angling, hunting, and trapping fees and from the sale of motor vehicle Conservation Plates.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge former WRIG treasurer Stephen Lowe for his support of the Wheatley River Improvement Group. We are incredibly grateful for the time and effort he dedicated both to being a WRIG director and to serving as treasurer.

Be on the Lookout for Bats!

As you are likely aware, bat populations across Eastern North America have experienced drastic declines in the past decade due to the onset of white-nose syndrome. This disease afflicts bats during hibernation, causing them to emerge during the winter months when adequate food resources are unavailable. Until relatively recently, it was thought that the majority of PEI's summer bat population over-wintered in caves and mines in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. However, we now know that abandoned hand-dug wells on PEI are used as hibernacula by relatively small groups of bats. To date we have identified 2 such features, but there may be many more active and important sites that we are currently unaware of. Knowing where these over-wintering sites occur is extremely important for the long term conservation of bats on PEI.

If you are aware of any open wells, in any landscape but especially in or around abandoned homesteads, we ask that you please consider contacting Fish and Wildlife (902-569-7595,gggregory@gov.pe.ca) or your local watershed coordinator to let us know about it. With your help, we can do our part to ensure that bats remain an integral part of our wildlife community.

~PEI Department of Communities, Land and Environment

We need your support! Annual membership dues go directly toward protecting the environment in our watershed and it is our membership base that helps to give you and WRIG a voice. Please consider becoming a member for the 2017-2018 year—your support truly will make a difference. You can join WRIG's membership by filling out the form below and mailing it in or online through our website, www.wheatleyriver.ca. We appreciate you, thank you for contributing to conservation efforts in this beautiful place we call home!

Coming Events

The River Clyde Pageant is taking place on TWO weekends this year, **July 29-30 and August 4-6!** Make sure you get your tickets!

The Celebrate Our River Event and River Duck Race is on **Saturday, August 26th** at Rackham's Community Pond! Stay tuned for details.

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

OUR FUNDING SOURCES:

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

OUR PARTNERS:

- Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group•
- PEI Department of
- Communities, Land & Environment•
- Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal•

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

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#13
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

