



Note from the Chair

Welcome everyone to the Wheatley River Improvement Group newsletter, I am Sidney Annema and I am the chair of this amazing group. I knew very little about WRIG before joining the board in 2015. Since that time I have come to learn of all the great things WRIG does for our community and environment, from setting up information booths at community events, sharing knowledge to our young ones in school and the tireless efforts our staff put towards the health of our watershed. So please believe me when I say that it is worth the time to learn more about WRIG and about the wonderful staff we have working for our community.

Sidney Annema, WRIG Chairperson



WRIG's 2016 Summer Field Crew

This year, WRIG is privileged to have three summer employees as part of our field crew. Brittany MacLean, Hailey Blacquiere, and Emma Spence.

Brittany MacLean, Field Crew Supervisor

Brittany has showed interest in nature and the outdoors ever since she was young, enjoying activities such as hunting, fishing, camping and outdoors sports. She grew up in the Wheatley River community, and takes great pride in the area and its natural health. She graduated from the Wildlife Conservation Technology program at Holland College in 2015. During this past school year she completed her third year at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, working towards her undergrad in Environment and Natural Resources in the wildlife portion of the this degree. This is Brittany's third year as the WRIG supervisor and she hopes to continue her work from last year to improve the community's natural wildlife habitat so more people can enjoy it like she does.



WRIG 2016 Field Crew: Hailey Blacquiere, Emma Spence, & Brittany MacLean.

Hailey Blacquiere, Field Crew Technician

Hailey grew up in this area and has just completed her first year of the Wildlife Conservation Technology Program at Holland College. Hailey is an active member of the community; she has been involved in 4H and has also spent time volunteering for many different causes and organizations including the Cornwall and Area Watershed Group. Hailey enjoys animals and the outdoors and is passionate about keeping the environment healthy for future generations.

Emma Spence, Riparian Health Assessment Technician

Emma graduated from the Holland College Wildlife Conservation Technology Program this year and will be going on to UPEI next year to complete a degree in Wildlife Conservation. Emma grew up on a sheep farm in Windsor, Nova Scotia and has spent time working at various dairy farms as well. She enjoys working in a field with tangible accomplishments that have lasting positive impacts.



This summer the WRIG field crew will be continuing stream rehabilitation efforts along the waterways in our watershed. Sedimentation is a continuous problem in many PEI rivers—brush mats are built during the summer to trap the sediment and stabilize the banks of our rivers and streams. The crew is currently working on planting native trees and shrubs in the area; thank you to everyone who has joined us in our efforts to increase forested area in our watershed!

The Striped Bass

Striped Bass, also known as sea bass, are a very powerful fish and have historically always been in the Atlantic region but not near to the abundance of recent years. The northern Atlantic region is at the edge of the bass's range north for spawning; they range from the Gulf of Mexico to the St Lawrence River, and into the Bay of Fundy. However, with warming waters the fish are venturing further than they ever have. Being an anadromous fish, meaning spending part of its life in freshwater and then part of its life in salt water, striped bass have a lot of striking similarities to the Atlantic salmon. Both these fish are



Very large striped bass
https://i.ytimg.com/vi/_ONNh9H8fmo/maxresdefault.jpg

voracious feeders, often gorging themselves on whatever prey may pass by. Despite their similarities, these two fish are very different when it comes to their migration patterns. Striped bass are a very coastal fish, and do not travel very far off shore to grow when at sea. In late spring the bass travel up rivers to spawn and overwinter in these same rivers. Atlantic salmon, however, spend the first part of their life in the rivers, then migrate far out to sea, to the open ocean or off-shore areas to feed and grow for 1-2 years. After those two years the salmon come back to spawn in the fall and lay their eggs in redds to overwinter and then hatch. The salmon hatch and are big enough to make the journey to the sea to grow at the same time

that the bass are heading up streams to spawn. The young salmon are often consumed by these big predatory fish, and this is having a drastic impact on Atlantic salmon populations in New Brunswick but on PEI as well. Striper fishing, as it's locally called, has become very popular among anglers in recent years on the island. With their monstrous size and appetite they put up a tremendous fight but are tightly regulated by the province. A person is only allowed to keep one bass per day between the sizes of 50-65cm and only during the specified retention periods. Unfortunately, even with the boom of bass fishing and the tireless efforts to stock PEI rivers with salmon parr by Abegweit Biodiversity Enhancement Hatchery, we may still see our small salmon population plummet just as it has in the Miramichi river in New Brunswick, due to the unfortunate timing of fish migration and tight regulations surrounding them.

Submitted by Brittany MacLean



Male Atlantic salmon
<http://www.restigouchelodge.com/faq>

2016 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 27th. 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!

Watershed: the region or area that drains into a river system or body of water.

Anadromous: fish that migrates from the sea up rivers to spawn.



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 •



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!

Piping Plovers on Barachois Beach

North Rustico Sandbar, South Rustico Beach, Barachois Beach – there are many names for the barrier beach that spans from North Rustico Harbour to Robinson’s Island in PEI National Park. The sand dune system there grows and changes every season. It only formed in the last 65 years as a result of the causeway built in the 1950s that was to connect Robinson’s Island to North Rustico Harbour.

After decades of water depositing sand, and marram grass and dune vegetation collecting and stabilizing sand, the beach and dune system is now well established and has become a popular destination for local beach walkers, sunbathers and wildlife.



Newly hatched chicks at Barachois Beach. Piping Plover chicks are extremely vulnerable to disturbance and trampling by humans, vehicles and pets.

The wide, sandy beaches in front of the dunes make excellent breeding habitat for the endangered Piping Plover. In fact, the site has been the most active provincial plover nesting beach this season. Three Piping Plover pairs nested on Barachois Beach in 2016. One nest has already hatched and successfully fledged three chicks. Two nests failed (one was lost to flooding and the other to unknown causes), and a single nest is still being incubated.

Interestingly, the nest still being incubated belongs to a banded Piping Plover. The bird has a pink flag with the code 7E on its upper right leg. It was banded in November, 2015, in the newly protected Joulter Cays National Park in The Bahamas. It is the only Bahamas-banded bird we have observed this season on PEI. We are hopeful

that the remaining nest will hatch and fledge chicks, but this can only happen with public understanding and assistance.

With only 60 individual Piping Plovers on PEI this season, and many shoreline species in decline, it’s important that we do what we can to keep our beaches safe for wildlife. Here are a few ways that you can help:

- Keep an eye out for Piping Plover nesting area signs and symbolic fencing. If you encounter a nesting area, walk next to the water and do not linger. Your presence may create a disturbance and flush incubating plovers from their nest.
- Piping plovers and other shorebirds need to be feeding constantly to be in good condition for their migration south at the end of the summer. If you see a group of feeding shorebirds at the water, walk around them and not through the group, to avoid disturbing them during these important feeding times.
- If you have a pet, place it on a leash and keep away from signed areas.
- Do not drive vehicles on beaches.
- Dispose of trash in garbage cans or take it home with you.
- Become a Piping Plover Guardian! Guardians visit a nesting beach of their choosing at least once per week and report back to INT on the status of the beach and nesting plovers. For more information on how to become a Guardian, call INT at 902-892-7513 or email Julie-Lynn at plover@islandnaturetrust.ca



Piping plover nests are very well camouflaged. Island Nature Trust staff protect nests by installing signs and symbolic fencing around nesting areas.

Contributed by Julie-Lynn Zahavich, Stewardship Coordinator at Island Nature Trust

We would like to gratefully acknowledge former WRIG directors Jeff Arsenault and Trudy MacDonald for their time and effort on behalf of the Wheatley River Improvement Group. We are thankful for the years they have dedicated as WRIG board members.

WRIG IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE FUNDING FROM PEI WCF FOR THE 2016 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.



Your 2016/2017 Board of Directors

- Chair, Sidney Annema**
Treasurer, Melanie Fredrickson
Secretary, Charles Lipnicki
Director, Gary Loo
Director, Micah Gallant
Director, Stephen Lowe
Director, Stewart MacRae



2016 Environmental Fun Day



Jaime Stride with Island Falconry Services brought his falcon, Sam, for a presentation at lunch.

On Friday, June 10th, we had 102 grade 5/6 students from Gulf Shore Consolidated, Central Queens Elementary, and a local homeschool group join us at Rackham's Pond for the 7th annual Environmental Fun Day which WRIG plans in partnership with the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group. Even though we had a bit of rain in the morning the event was a great success!

The students rotated through six different educational stations and filled out their 'Fun Day Passports' after each presentation. Our presenters came out from the PEI Invasive Species Council, Bedeque Bay Environmental Management Association (BBEMA), the PEI Department of

Communities, Land and Environment, and the Cornwall and Area Watershed Group. The students learned about invasive species, electrofishing, water chemistry, healthy forests, wildlife identification, and songbirds and amphibians. We also had a presentation by Jamie Stride with Island Falconry Services at lunch which everyone thoroughly enjoyed. It was an excellent day and we are grateful for our wonderful presenters, all the great volunteers that came out to help, and the fantastic students and teachers that joined us!

Canada Day in North Rustico

WRIG teamed up with the Hunter-Clyde Watershed Group for our annual native tree giveaway at the Seawalk Park in North Rustico for Canada Day. It was a beautiful sunny day for the celebrations; there was good food, great music, and a lot of red. In total, approximately 180 trees were given away to be planted on private properties. The tree species included Green Ash, White Pine, Eastern Cedar, and Red Oak. Each tree came with a name tag and the Canada Day tree planting pledge with information on the specific type of tree and proper planting instructions. Thank you to everyone who came out and took part in the festivities and supported your local watershed groups and the environment by taking a tree home to plant!



Coming Events

The Celebrate Our River Event and River Duck Race is on Saturday, August 27th at Rackham's Community Pond! Stay tuned for details.

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!

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



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!

BLUE BAY FARMS
BROOKFIELD GARDENS
CREEKFIELD HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION
SAVORY ENTERPRISES-OYSTER BED ESSO

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

