



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A Happy New Year to all! We would encourage all members to take advantage of the great line-up of speakers and outings that are scheduled. We also recommend taking part in the roadside clean up, the nature book club, the roadside flora study and/or the maintenance of the I.D. trail (which is currently closed due to the danger posed by standing dead trees along the path). We also suggest volunteering in Wye Marsh projects (a biological inventory of the Wye Valley, wildflower gardening, etc.) or with the new local alternative energy group. Taking part is a great way to learn and enjoy yourselves.

Adrienne & Greg

105th Audubon Christmas Bird Count December 18th 2004

On an overcast, but dry Saturday, the Midland Penetanguishene Field Naturalist Club took part in the 105th annual Christmas Bird Count. 36 participants split into 12 groups to crisscross their respective areas with eyes and ears at the ready to try and spot and identify our feathered friends.

By all reports it was another successful count as 57 different species were identified. The total individuals increased from 3,677 to 5,544. This was also an increase from 2002's numbers.

We then enjoyed a potluck dinner at the Wye Marsh and shared our count details with the other participants. It's always fun to share the days experiences with the other counters.

If anyone would like to have the count details, please see me.

Dave Schandlen



Good News Bad News Dept.



There is good news and bad news about the Concerned Citizens to **Stop Dumpsite 41** movement. The bad news is that the Ministry of the Environment has chosen to ignore the Oct. 14/04 recommendations of the Environmental Commissioners Office to re-view the Certificate of Approval for site 41. Other bad news: local politicians are no longer listening to anyone other than the Ministry of the Environment and are only hoping to hear the approval to go ahead with Site 41. The good news is that we have a new Warden of Simcoe County, Dennis Roughley, who hopefully may be willing to listen to us. Very Good news is that Ontario Nature wrote a letter on December 17th to the MOE fully supporting our cause. Carolynn Fishleigh will be happy to supply a copy of this letter to anyone who is interested. Many thanks to all those who sent letters to the MOE. Please encourage as many others as possible to do the same. A public outcry can only help.

Carolynn Fishleigh

Midland-Penetanguishene Field
Naturalists Club
Box 393
Midland, Ontario L4R 2J8

Co-Presidents: Greg Lutick and
Adrienne Jex
Treasurer: Diane Marr
Secretary: Shirley Tilson
Past President: Joanne Scott

We're on the web!
www.csolve.net/~mpfnc



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*To study and appreciate nature.
To protect and preserve wildlife and
the environment.
To stimulate public interest in, and
promote protection and
preservation of
nature.*



Schedule

*Here are the club
meetings for the Winter sea-
son. Check the brochure for
more information.*

COOKOUT IN TAY TOWNSHIP
January 22, 2005

BOREAL FORESTS
February 17, 2005

BIRDING 101
Saturday February 19, 2005

WILD MADAGASCAR
Thursday March 17, 2005

WYE MARSH SWEETWATER
FESTIVAL
April 2-3, 2005

HIKE
Saturday April 9, 2005
"Note date change"

GRASSES
Thursday April 21, 2005

MATCHEDASH BAY
Saturday April 30, 2005

FIELD TRIP
Saturday May 14, 2005

GARDENING WITH NATIVE
PLANTS
Thursday May 19, 2005



THE NATURE BOOK CLUB

The book club met at the home of Liz and Dave Schandlen for the November meeting. We talked about the bushmen of the Kalahari, having read Laurens van der Post's classic "Lost world of the Kalahari". Once again it is a sad story of a population of human beings almost wiped out of existence by other humans, black and white, who did not believe they were really fellow humans at all. Happily, some groups of bushmen have managed to survive. They have incredible knowledge of their environment and can find food and water where the rest of us would see nothing. Their skill in hunting and tracking is dazzling.

It is good to remember that all of us are descended from hunter gatherers. Without the skills of our ancestors we would not be here at all. I found reading about the bushmen made me feel nostalgic for that way of life...and yet I know if I suddenly had to survive by my wits in the desert I would fail dismally.

Our next project is to read whatever we can about John James Audubon for our next meeting on Thursday Dec. 29th. In January we will be looking into the life of William Dampier, pirate and naturalist extraordinaire.

I should mention tasty treats and tea were served beautifully by Dave...Thanks Liz and Dave for your hospitality.

Linda Whitehead

Alvar Art Exhibit

The Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery in Owen Sound is displaying The Limestone Barrens Project until January 28. Poetry, photographs and scientific explanations of the geomorphology of alvars are presented, representing alvars from The Burren (County Clare, Ireland), the northwest tip of Newfoundland and The Bruce Peninsula. A DVD of music, poetry and landscapes is available as well. An impressive web-site can be linked through www.tomthomson.org. The exhibit is excellent but could have been much more extensive. I was also disappointed at the choice of photographs only as the visual medium, and the portrayal of rocks to the detriment of the flora and fauna. There were other art exhibits and a shop carrying books by local artists Tim Zuck and John Hartmann, as well as the Group of Seven, etc. All in all a worthwhile destination; don't miss the Ginger Press Book Cafe downtown.

Adrienne Jex

CLUB NEWS



On September 11, 2004, members of the MPFNC joined the newly formed Six Mile Lake Conservationists club on a hike, led by one of their members Paul Wiancko, along a relatively open woodland trail on the Canadian Shield to an overlook of a large marsh/conifer bog. Typical plants encountered included pines, maples, serviceberry and teaberry. Relatively few birds were observed on this trip, although a couple of Olive-sided Flycatchers, a Turkey Vulture and a possible eagle were reported by some of the group. This area of rocky woodland and marsh/fen/bog is representative of the area which the Six Mile Lake Conservationists are attempting to protect from further development by cottagers wanting increased access to shoreline lots. The area is home to five-lined skinks, red shouldered hawks and Massasauga rattlesnakes. These were not observed during the hike, except for a report of the rattling of a snake heard by a few who brought up the rear of the group. Some of the members visited with the Wianckos and spent some time in trying to identify to species a type of hawkmoth caterpillar. Adrienne and I then visited with another Six Mile Lake member, Anne Lewis, and were treated to a boat ride where we were able to observe large gar-pike in the shallows of a nearby bay. *Greg Lutick*

On October 9th, club members and guests (from Japan and Australia) visited Ed Glanert on his property in Oro-Medonte Township. Although the weather was a bit wet, we were able to walk the property and view its attractions. White breasted nuthatches and chickadees greeted us near the house. Spawning salmon were working their way up Coldwater Creek, and rainbow trout were present in the ponds that Ed maintains. We were also able to observe numerous fungi (including *Hieracium*) and the remains of some herbaceous plants, including those of showy ladyslippers. The hardwood bush above the creek contains a lot of leatherwood (a spring-flowering shrub) and the more mixed woods along the creek adds to the interest of the property. Thanks to Ed for his hospitality. *Greg Lutick*

(check the inbox below for a different recounting of this hike. -ed.)

A small group of club members and guests visited Grant's Woods November 13. Our group walked one of the trails. The trails are through a hardwood bush mixed with some hemlock and white pine. A major attraction on the property is a number of old large white pine. One pine near the entrance to the trails is about 300 years old. Some of the hardwoods are also of considerable size. Few herbaceous plants were in evidence at the time of the walk, but the remains of some included wild ginger, tinker's weed or feverwort (*Triosteum*), Christmas fern and spinulose wood fern. I was told that these woods are beautiful in spring with numerous flowers, both native and non-native (near the original residence), and that it is also a good place for birding in season. The birds that we encountered on our walk included red-breasted nuthatch, chickadees, blue jays, goldfinches and evening grosbeaks. *(see page 4 for more information on Grant's Woods. -ed.)* *Greg Lutick*

MEMBERS' INBOX

Outing to Ed's Oct. 9, 2004 It's raining. "Shouldn't we just go home?" Strong winds and sweeping rain blow across the parking lot pavement making waves on puddles at Wye Marsh. We question our judgement whatever it might be. "If we go home it will turn into a beautiful day. If we go to Ed's it will probably rain all day but let's go anyway." We all go.

Ed has hot coffee waiting for us. We walk past his wonder-working stove in the toasty-warm room and out onto his fabled deck. We have to oh and ah at the dark pond, dappled with raindrops, its background of tall, red, orange and gold maples fronted by tall, slender, intensely-green conical conifers. Is that how they got that name? More likely both words came from "cone"? Conus (Latin) Conos (Greek) Take your pick. It means "a solid with an axis oblique to the base." We hear about how 25 years ago, Ed rerouted and dammed (with official permission) the Coldwater River tributary that ran through his property, a huge, time-consuming task. Chickadees chirp and white-breasted nuthatches show off their climbing (down) techniques for us. To earn the feed Ed provides. Squirrels share the feast.

Did we really want to walk out there in the rain? Of course we did, most of us without the rubber boots we should have known enough to wear. Ed has continued improving the property while keeping it natural, pointing now to the last remains of the wildflowers that must have run rampant earlier. He pointed out turtlehead, and gentians, bottle and fringed, now on their last legs under sugar maple, hemlock, tamarack, cedar and shrubs that provide shade and hold the soil. One black cherry grown tall and straight and magnificent brings on talk about the commercial value of even a single tree. In the pond an island with just one perfectly formed tamarack enthralled me. It, like the far shore, seemed almost too perfectly composed to be real and not just a tourist-brochure photo. Another island hosted one tall dead tree trunk, preserved as handy and dandy for the local kingfisher's watch post. Ed led us to a tiny garden of rattlesnake plantain, its intensely green, mottled leaves bright and shining even under the cloudy skies. He showed us where he was organizing a wet area where, with the addition of gravel and clay, he was introducing blue flags and marsh marigolds at a natural curve in the river.

We followed trails around the ponds and then along the river where we were able to see some large, bedraggled-looking salmon forcing their way upstream, visible in the clear water over the gravel beds, nearing the end of their long trek from Georgian Bay. The rain thinned as the afternoon waned so we didn't get too wet though we carried pounds (or kilograms?) of mud on our shoes. Except of course for Sid and Dorothy in their rubber boots. It was a great day, Ed. Thanks so much. That morning trees were blown down on the I.D. Trail, Wye Marsh. *Betty Carter*

Take a Walk in Grant's Woods

One of the finest stands of old-growth forest in this region is now protected and open to the public, thanks to The Couchiching Conservancy and many donors and volunteers. Grant's Woods, a 52-acre property located on Division Road just west of Orillia, was donated to the Conservancy in 2002 by Bill Grant in memory of his brother Jack. Grant's Woods is one of a number of properties administered by the Couchiching Conservancy. The Conservancy acts to preserve lands of natural importance in our region, and administers properties that they purchase, have donated to them or are protected through easements and the like. Grant's Woods was donated to the organization and now serves as their headquarters. The Conservancy has converted a stone house on the property into its office and meeting space, and erected a large gazebo next to it. Conservancy volunteers have developed over 4 kilometres of walking trails in a series of loops, with newly-built bridges over wet spots. An interpretive booklet gives information about the forest ecology at 25 stops along the trail.

The forest on this property has not been logged since at least 1908, and it features large specimens of White Pine, Eastern Hemlock, Hard Maple, Red Oak, White Ash, and others. Because the site has rich moist soils, most of the trees are tall and straight, with a rich understory of wildflowers and ferns. The diversity of mosses is exceptional as well - Frank Cook from Barrie has found 44 different species on this property alone! Grant's Woods is open for visitors during daylight hours year-round. A parking area and trailhead sign are available from a short laneway at 1485 Division Road West. There is no admission charge, but donations are welcome. For more information about this special piece of nature, Sid and Dorothy Hadlington are frequent volunteers who know it well.

Thanks to Ron Reid, Executive Director of the Couchiching Conservatory

<u>Midland-Penetanguishene Field Naturalists</u> <u>2003-2004 Expense Statement</u>	
For the Year Ended June 30/04	
<u>INCOME</u>	
Memberships 79	\$948.00
Coffee Fund	\$167.70
Donations	\$20.00
Festivals, Crafts, Beans	\$743.60
Christmas Auction	\$312.25
Bird Count	\$61.25
Bank Int.	\$0.31
Reptile Program	\$1,440.00
TOTAL	\$3,693.11
<u>EXPENSES</u>	
Owl Foundation	\$312.25
Can. Nature Fed.	\$50.00
M.T.M. membership	\$100.00
F.O.N. Membership	\$150.00
Insurance	\$325.00
Program printing	\$21.68
Postage	\$104.86
Rent	\$372.05
Service Charge	\$12.60
Gifts, Speakers	\$251.01
Bean Supplies	\$227.87
Newsletter	\$431.98
Trail Maintenance	\$30.93
Bird Board	\$1,023.50
Wye Marsh deposit	\$5.00
TOTAL	\$3,418.73
Opening bank balance Aug 31/03	\$675.23
Income	\$3,693.11
Expenses	\$3,418.73
Bank balance as of June 30/04	\$949.61
Actual bank balance June 30/04	\$949.61
less o/s cheque	
G.I.C held at TD Bank	\$1,500.00

Diane Marr, treasurer