

Northumberland Land Trust

Ontario, Canada

Preserving Northumberland County - one acre at a time

The Preserver, May 2017

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Northumberland Bioblitz

John Geale

I'm going to turn this message over to Chris Ketola to explain some of the details of this summer's bioblitz. But I do want to thank Brian Maxwell, President of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists, for initiating the project and pushing it forward until it actually got under way; this will be a great event both for public participation and for scientific knowledge of the areas involved. Thanks also to Chris for organizing the whole affair.

Whether or not you have participated in a bioblitz before, we hope you will join in the excitement on July 8 and 9. Read on...

.....

Get Ready to Blitz!

Chris Ketola

The concept of highly trained biologists, skilled naturalists and fascinated members of the public all coming together to discover what hidden biological gems can be found in a specific area sounds amazing, doesn't it? Too bad there isn't a name for an event like this... Oh, wait... there is a name, it's called a bioblitz and it's coming to Northumberland County this July!



Wetland at Pelton NR

The first annual Northumberland Bioblitz will be held on July 8th to 9th at Peter's Woods Provincial Park along with surrounding lands managed by the Northumberland Land Trust (the Pelton Nature Reserve) and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (The Schultz Property).



Schultz Property grassland

Some people will ask: What is a bioblitz? Well, before answering this question,

let's go over its history. The first bioblitz was held at the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens, Washington, D.C. in 1996 and since then the concept has spread across the globe. So far at least 16 countries hold annual bioblitz events and that number continues to grow. Obviously there is something to this event, so what's it all about?

A bioblitz is actually two events in one, the Intensive Blitz and the Guided Blitz. The Intensive Blitz involves biologists and highly skilled naturalists who survey specific areas to record species diversity. These experts are divided into taxon groups; for example, birds and mammals are two obvious groups to study. These groups can sometimes be further divided into more specific groupings such as nocturnal birds and small mammals to examine areas even more intensely. The goal of the intense blitz is to record as many species as possible to establish a

baseline for the area in question. This data can be used in a variety of ways going forward, including land use planning, future study projects and even future blitz events.

The Guided Blitz is all about connecting the general public to the fantastic work biologists and naturalists do in the field. Many people have been on a nature walk or read a book about animals, but understanding how a study is actually conducted is something few people actually have a chance to experience. Guided Blitz walks focus not only on what species live in the area but how researchers discover and record species data to enhance our knowledge of the world around us.

On a personal note, I have attended numerous bioblitz events and have been blown away by the atmosphere it generates. Being surrounded by likeminded individuals who share a real passion for nature is always inspiring to me. I am so honoured to be a part of the planning of this event and I know everyone who attends will share in my enthusiasm once they experience it for themselves.

More information about the final schedule and the experts we have lined up will be coming soon, so stay tuned!

AGM 2017

This is your official notice of our *Annual General Meeting*, to be held at the Cobourg public library on Wednesday, June 14. We will have the usual business portion of the meeting to report on and affirm the Board activities for the past year and elect Board members for the coming year.

Our speaker will be John Urquhart, the environmental consultant who is carrying out a biological inventory of the new Jack van Nostrand Nature Reserve and developing a long-term management plan for the property. He will report on progress and results obtained up to this point, which will make for a very interesting presentation.

Refreshments will be available at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 7:30.

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE JACK VAN NOSTRAND NATURE RESERVE

On Saturday, May 27, we will officially unveil the sign at our newest Nature Reserve and declare it "OPEN"! We will gather at the site (see map, page 3) at 2:00 p.m. for a short ceremony. Then, depending on the weather and the inclinations of those present, there will be an opportunity to view the property from the road or by walking a rough path to the lakeshore; those who wish to walk to the lake may want to wear rubber boots after all the recent rain!



At 3:00 p.m. everyone is invited to the Grafton Village Inn for refreshments and socializing. We are very proud of this property, and we hope that you will join us to celebrate its opening.



Directions from the Esso station ★ in Grafton:

1. Go south on Old Danforth Road for about 0.3 km.
2. At this point the road veers slightly right and becomes Station Road; follow it about 2 km to the first stop sign.
3. Turn left (east) and follow Orchard Grove Road 2.5 km to the site. ★

WALLACE BIRDATHON 2017

This year's Wallace Birdathon will be run in much the same way as last year - but now we have six Nature Reserves to cover. As a reminder, here's how it will work:

- six expert birders will cover the six properties for a maximum of 24 hours in any 24-hour period of their choice sometime in May: Ben Walters (McEwen Nature Reserve), Margaret Bain (Laurie Lawson Outdoor Education Centre), David Geale (Pelton NR), Roger Frost (Leckey NR), Doug McRae (Chub Point NR), and John Urquhart (Jack van Nostrand NR); top to bottom on right:
- when supporters sponsor one of our birders, they will make a guess at the total number of species the six birders will record; the closest guess will win 2 L of Northumberland County maple syrup. [hint: last year's total was 106]
- for a sponsorship of \$75 or more, a maximum of 11 sponsors can choose to accompany one of the expert birders for all or part (to be negotiated) of their 24 hours; to take advantage of this offer, you must contact John Geale (in person, by phone [905-342-3851], or by e-mail [johngeale@yahoo.com]) to make arrangements.
 - please remember that although the birders will try to choose good days, poor weather is possible and some of the walking could be wet or on rough ground
- income tax receipts will be issued for sponsorships of \$20 or more.



By way of introduction, John Urquhart is the environmental consultant who is conducting a biological inventory of the Jack van Nostrand NR. He has generously agreed to devote one day in May to the Wallace Birdathon.

We hope you will sponsor one of the birders by contacting John Geale (as above) or by going to NLTrust.ca and following the links to the Birdathon (on this website you can use a credit card). You may also fill in the form on page 4 and mail it to NLT, P.O. Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5A4. Accompanying one of the birders is a great opportunity to get a close look at one of the reserves and enjoy some fabulous birding - last year showed you never know what will turn up!

All the funds we raise will be used for acquisition costs and stewardship of our properties: maintaining fences, controlling invasive species, preserving habitat for at-risk species, creating trails, and setting out bird nest boxes. Many thanks to our six expert birders and for your support of this important fund-raiser.



WALLACE BIRDATHON 2017



YES! I will sponsor (circle one): Margaret Bain (LLOEC) | John Urquhart (Jack van Nostrand)
David Geale (Pelton) | Doug McRae (Chub Point) | Roger Frost (Leckey) | Ben Walters (McEwen)
 for \$ _____ TOTAL SPECIES GUESS: _____

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Please mail this form to Northumberland Land Trust, P.O. Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5A4. Cheques should be made out to Northumberland Land Trust (Birdathon).

STEWARDSHIP NOTES



Pelton - on April 14, Bill Newell organized an enthusiastic group (photo, left) to help conduct a prescribed burn at the Nature Reserve. We burned the northeast and southwest quadrants and noted the presence of Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds as potential users of the nest boxes out in the field.

McEwen - our Scots pine elimination had to be postponed on April 5 because of rain, but we will try to get this done later in the year. We have a fence inspection and maintenance morning planned for June 3; if you would like to come along to help or observe, please contact John Geale.

LLOEC - May 3 was too wet for the planned bridge and stair work, but Russ Lake helped to plant 50 swamp white oaks near the stream near the property entrance. Mark Rupke enjoyed a successful volunteer day on May 6, when TCS students and some Baltimore girl guides planted trees and assisted with control of invasive plants.

Leckey - May 6 was rainy (a common theme this spring), but two hardy folks showed up for the Willow Beach Field Naturalists' walk at the property. Thanks to Russ Lake and Elizabeth Kellogg for leading the hour's walk, and to Frank Prest and Jeff Devine for giving us permission to reschedule for a suitable date in the future.

Chub Point - Our Steward, Ted Nasmith, helped John Geale to install the invasive species sign (photo to right) and clean up some garbage along the roadside.

Jack van Nostrand - in February, Tom Jackman helped us to eliminate some of the European buckthorn near the northwest corner of the woods; as at all our nature reserves, this will be a long-term project.



Another collaborative project with Fleming College: Nest Boxes for the Pelton Nature Reserve

By: Daniel Featherstone, Jennifer Nieuwland and Kieran Sharkey

Over the course of the 2017 winter semester, three Ecosystem Management Technology students from Sir Sandford Fleming College (School of Environmental and Natural Resource Sciences) constructed six bird nest boxes for the Northumberland Land Trust as part of their Credit for Product course. In this course, students participate in a unique placement program, where teams of 3 or 4 students work together on a project for an external agency to gain experience with real-world environmental work.

The nest box project focused on the 52-acre Pelton Nature Reserve owned by the Northumberland Land Trust, located in Alwick-Haldimand Township of Northumberland County, Ontario. This reserve is composed of several types of ecosystems, including coniferous forest, deciduous forest, a post-agriculture field, and a provincially significant wetland. The aim of this project was to research cavity-nesting bird species that breed on the Pelton Nature Reserve, construct nest boxes for these birds, and to provide site recommendations and GPS coordinates of locations to install the nest boxes.

The species that were chosen for nest box construction were Barred Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Winter Wren, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wood Duck, and Pileated Woodpecker. These six bird species face nesting habitat loss as cavity trees (their preferred nesting situation) are in decline due to deforestation. Sites have been selected for the future installation of each nest box, based on the habitat requirements of each species. Although each nest box was built with a custom design for the target bird species, it is possible that other species of birds, or even mammals, may also use the nest boxes for nesting or shelter purposes.



Jennifer, Kieran and Daniel (L to R) with the completed boxes

It is our hope that this project will encourage the growth of bird populations that may be limited by lack of potential nesting sites.

Editor's note: The timing of the winter semester did not allow the students to install the nest boxes, but the Stewardship Team has installed two of them in the recommended locations. We will continue to work on this project through the spring and summer. This student team was very enthusiastic, and we enjoyed working with them. The nest boxes will be monitored for occupancy in hopes of finding them well used. Thanks to Sara Kelly, Fleming College Professor and Part-time Coordinator with the Lone Pine Land Trust, for overseeing this project.

MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2017

[If you pay for a membership now, it will take you through to the end of 2017.]

Our members make the conservation work of the Northumberland Land Trust possible.

We look forward to having your support in 2017. Members receive:

- A tax receipt (Charitable Registration #89257-5930 RR0001)
- The right to vote at the Annual General Meeting (June 14 this year)
- Newsletters, and invitations to events such as our dinner, hikes and lectures
 - and if you have some time and/or expertise to offer, we would love to have you join us as a volunteer!

If you prefer, you may now submit your membership online: please visit www.nltrust.ca, go to the HOW YOU CAN HELP page, and scroll down to the appropriate button; this will allow you to use your credit card. Otherwise:

Please fill out the form below. Make cheques payable to
"Northumberland Land Trust", and mail to:
Northumberland Land Trust, P. O. Box 1153, Cobourg, ON, K9A 5A4

✂ -----

Renewal

New membership

Dr. Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other: _____

Last name _____ First name(s) _____

Address _____
Number and Street *City/town* *Postal code*

Telephone _____ e-mail _____

Individual: \$25 Family: \$40 Supporting: \$50 Corporate: \$100

Donation: \$100 \$250 Other _____ I wish to remain anonymous

Gifts of Publicly-traded Securities

Some of our supporters are turning their **appreciated stocks, bonds and mutual fund units** into gifts for the Northumberland Land Trust. A new tax break introduced in the 2006 Federal Budget **exempts donor individuals from capital gains taxes**, making this the least expensive way to give. In addition, donors of securities **will receive a tax receipt for tax purposes** for the full market value of the shares **at the date of the transfer**. Please contact us if you wish to take advantage of this tax break.

The NLT recognizes its supporters in print and online. If you wish your membership or donation to remain anonymous, please indicate this at the time of your contribution by ticking the box above. To view the NLT privacy policy please visit our website.