



Friends of
Mashkinonje

The Wetlands Observer

Volume 10 Issue 2

July 2010

Home of Preserved Biodiversity

2010 The International Year of Biodiversity

By Angela Martin

The United Nations declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity calling it “a celebration of life on Earth and of values of biodiversity for our lives.” This statement encourages us to understand the importance of all species and to appreciate and protect our biodiversity.

Strive For Biodiversity; Our Lives depend On It

Biodiversity refers to all the species in a particular area or on our earth. The species range from plants, trees, insects, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds to every living thing. Our biodiversity is a magnificent mechanism where each sustains the other.

Humans have impacted biodiversity in a major way, changing the landscape to fit our needs and therefore affecting biodiversity.

One can think of our world as a pyramid. When a species becomes extinct, a minute portion of the structure falls away. The loss of that species may be taken up by other species but as more species cease to exist the integrity of the structure becomes compromised.

There is a song that goes like this: “no man is an island, no man stands alone.” This is very true and pertains not only to humans but everything in our world. We as humans need biodiversity for our long-term well being.

Our mandate in the Mashkinonje Provincial Park is to preserve the park in its natural state, meaning preserving its biodiversity. The park is like an island in our area and cannot stand on its own; it needs landowners everywhere to follow their lead to protect biodiversity for the entire mechanism to work.

Declaring 2010 as The International Year of Biodiversity was a very good move on the part of the United Nations to raise the visibility of the importance of biodiversity. Learn about our natural world, accept it, be tolerant and enjoy the attributes of other species even if you don't like them or they are an inconvenience. All species have a purpose and are an integral part to our well being, even if it does not appear evident to you at the present time.



Biodiversity Is Essential To Life As We Know It

Biodiversity / Boardwalks / Black Ash

By Chuck Miller, Superintendent

Killarney/ French River/ Mashkinonje/ W. Sandy Island/ Manitou Islands/ Daisy Lake Provincial Parks

Biodiversity

2010 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Biodiversity! Biodiversity is all around us – it's the variety of life on Earth, from the tiniest insect to the largest forests. Biodiversity is also about being connected to nature. No species, including people, can live without other species. I would encourage you to get outside and appreciate nature and there is no better place to do so than at Mashkinonje!

Two people who have been out exploring, learning and gaining an enhanced appreciation for nature were Gregory Beaton and Kirk Kulmala, from Cambrian College. Greg and Kirk spent three weeks at Mashkinonje volunteering to look for "species-at-risk" in the park under the mentorship of Angela Martin. Everyone involved enjoyed conducting the biodiversity work in the park and will be left with a lifetime of pleasant memories.

Why not discover Mashkinonje's biodiversity for yourself: hike a trail, go on a guided walk, or take a canoe for a paddle. You may be amazed by the abundance of life around you. For more information on Ontario's biodiversity, visit

www.ontario.ca/biodiversity



Boardwalks

Another "thank you" to the Municipality of French River for hosting a third, very successful, Ontario Job Creation Partnership project to establish additional boardwalks in Mashkinonje. These projects harden the trail treadways in wet areas – both protecting the environment and making for a more pleasant hiking experience by eliminating muddy areas. These projects have established about 4000 feet of boardwalk in the park. There is about 1000 feet of additional boardwalk required.

The crew of skilled and happy builders included Morgan, Marcelin and Jean-Robert. Also, thank you to Lucie, Harley, Liz, Ed and Bob from the Municipality,



Friends and Ontario Parks. If you want to see some spectacular new boardwalks – check out the Atakas Trail at both the Bobcat and the Beckett-Lang intersections.

Black Ash

Mashkinonje is known for its mature and healthy black ash swamps. These swamps are potentially a home to the elusive flooded jelly skin lichen (a threatened species). A sample of lichen collected in the park last winter and examined under a microscope proved to be a related species – but the search continues. The report on the sample did spark a discussion on what else to look for in black ash swamps including nodding trilliums, and jack-in-the-pulpit. Mashkinonje is an important area for the protection of mature black ash.

All ash forest in Canada and the United States are under threat from an introduced, invasive and deadly (to ash) beetle from Asia – the emerald ash borer. These beetles are about 10 mm long, slender and metallic green. Currently people are working to prevent the spread of these beetles by restricting the movement of firewood from infected areas to unaffected areas. Biological control methods for these pests are in the research stage – hopefully these beetles can be brought under control before the park's magnificent ash forests are affected.

Finding Lost Ladybugs

By Randy Moratz

The dead of winter may seem like a strange time to be thinking about ladybugs but how better to pass a cold northern evening then reading up on one of our favourite insects. In spite of their colourful friendly appearance ladybugs could easily be called the piranhas of the insect world. They are voracious carnivores whose appetite for their fellow six-legged creatures has unfortunately been their own downfall.

In 1916 the first deliberate release of an imported ladybug, the Multi-colored Asian, occurred in California in an attempt to control an aphid that was damaging pecan crops. Over the years numerous other releases were done and none of them seemed to establish a breeding population. Then in 1988 a population was found in Louisiana which quickly spread out from there. Like other invasive species the Asian soon threatened native species.

Cornell University has established the Lost Ladybug Project in an attempt to measure the extent of the Asian's spread and to assess the damage to our native species. They have a website where you can report sightings of the Ladybugs you have found. The well-organized site, <http://lostladybug.org/>, has a number of learning resources and a photo gallery and most importantly a form that you can use to upload your own photos. I highly recommend browsing the site, the amount of effort being put into it clearly demonstrates the importance of this initiative.

When you submit a form they would like you to include the GPS coordinates of where you made the sighting. If you don't have a GPS, the coordinates can be found by locating your encounter on Google Earth, <http://earth.google.com/>.

If you wish to identify your Ladybugs before submitting the form there are several guides available on the internet. The one at Lost Ladybug was still incomplete the last time I looked. When it is done it will have all the species of North America – which may make it time-consuming to sort through. I prefer to use one created by the University of Guelph which is called Lady Beetles of Ontario, <http://www.uoguelph.ca/debu/lady/lady-beetles.htm>

In spite of appearances these ladybugs are all the same species.



These Multi-colored Asians are gathering together to hibernate for the winter.

Book Reviews *By Chuck Miller*

Winter World – The Ingenuity of Animal Survival

Bernd Heinrich

Pages – 316

Harper Perennial

Summer World – A Season of Bounty

Bernd Heinrich

Pages – 323

Harper Collins

The Wonders of the World are at Your Own Back Door!

What I learned from these two books is “the wonders of the world are at your own back door! Bernd Heinrich is a second generation naturalist and a professor emeritus at the University of Vermont. He

has endless curiosity about nature that leads to amazing understanding of the creatures we share this planet with. From his cabin in the woods of Maine he comes to know the secrets of survival and life cycles of mammals, birds and insects. Fortunately you can also know these secrets because his superb naturalist skills are equally matched by his ability to tell a story.

I think of Mashkinonje as my cabin in the woods. In any season, if you want to enrich your experience at the park, both of the books are a fascinating read. In these books you will come to understand that you don't need to travel the world to experience its wonders. Ever wonder how a bear sleeps all winter and does not lose muscle mass or bone density? What do wasps eat? Bet you would be surprised.

The books are easy to read.

Poison Ivy & Jewelweed

By Angela Martin



Poison Ivy — Summer



Poison Ivy — Fall

Many of us take delight in fall colors. While poison ivy looks pretty in the fall, if you are sensitive to the plant, you can still get an irritating rash on contact.

Some people are very fortunate not to react to poison ivy while others can suffer for weeks. I am one of the latter group and have been since a child. There are over-the-counter creams and ointments to alleviate the pain



and suppress the spread of the rash. In severe cases, prescription drugs can control the rash. I have used them all.

Several years ago, a friend told me about jewelweed and I am so grateful. When I suspect that I have come in contact with poison ivy, I take the stem of the jewelweed, split it down the center and cut it into one inch strips, then press it until a liquid is generated and put the liquid on affected areas of the skin. I found a mortar and pestle works best, and use the pestle as an applicator. Jewelweed can be

used on the poison ivy rash at any stage; it can also be used on insect bites. I have also been told that if there is a plant with irritating properties then the antidote plant is close by.

Jewelweed is also called spotted jewelweed or spotted touch-me-not. It can be found in damp areas; marshes, swamps, creek banks and the dark side of buildings. This plant can grow over four feet in height with a pale green translucent stem. The jewelweed flower is orange with red dots.

A garden plant, cow parsnip, can also cause a rash similar to that of poison ivy. If the sap from the cow parsnip comes in contact with unprotected skin, a blister may occur. Cow parsnip is not harmful when it dries out whereas poison ivy contact at anytime can cause a rash. In some areas of the USA, giant hogweed – a species related to cow parsnip – has government action plans to manage the noxious plant.

For more information go to:

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0006360>



Summer Club Update



ON Nature Magazine

Ontario Nature continues our celebration of the International Year of Biodiversity! In the summer issue of *ON Nature* magazine, you can read about:

- The Barcode of Life project, where scientists are using cutting-edge technology to catalogue every plant and animal on earth.
- A rescue plan for the bobolink, a plucky grassland bird in steep decline.
- How to preserve and protect the wildlife in your neighbourhood.



To read back issues of *ON Nature* and our up-to-the-minute blogs on nature here and around the world, visit www.onnaturemagazine.com.

When you become a member of Ontario Nature you make nature's voice stronger. You help defend Ontario's forests, protect at-risk species and so much more. Speak out for Ontario's wild species and wild spaces – consider adding your voice to ours and become a member today: www.ontarionature.org.



Stay up-to-date with Ontario Nature's New Website!

Our brand new site is an excellent source of information on biodiversity Ontario's habitat hotspots, environmental issues, member profiles, local events and much more.

Please take a moment to visit the new site at www.ontarionature.org. We'd love to hear from you!

Volunteer for Nature

Are you looking to spend some quality time with nature this year? The first **Volunteer for Nature** events of the Schedule for 2010 have been posted. Visit <http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/volunteer/events.php> and register to join us! **More events are on the way!** Make sure to check our website often for updated information, and please get in touch with Gabe Camozzi at gabec@ontarionature.org with any questions or comments.



2010 Youth Summit for Biodiversity – A huge success!

Ontario Nature would like to thank the participants, volunteers, and presenters who were involved in making the 2010 Youth Summit for Biodiversity a success! During three days of workshops and activities, high school students from across the province gathered at the YMCA's Camp Cedar Glen to learn, be inspired, and have fun. To view some of the highlights, visit:

http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/childreyouth/biodiversity_summit.p

Events

International Wetland Day



International Wetland Day was special to the Friends of Mashkinonje. Since the park is a third wetlands, we have come to appreciate how important wetlands are to our world. International Wetland Day was in February but that didn't stop us from celebrating the day. The Board of Directors of the Friends of Mashkinonje and the Nipissing Naturalists Club snowshoed through some of the Mashkinonje wetlands to discover traces of life and food that could be eaten by those species in the winter time. We found footprints, wing prints, live species and lots of food. It was hard to get very far because there was so much to look for. Some species hibernate, some migrate south but many remain active over the winter. It is fun to explore and learn on those beautiful winter days.



Cross the Park Snowshoe

Folks came from Sudbury and North Bay to join us in a wonderful day of snowshoeing. The large group split at the lookout tower, half continued across the peatlands and the rest circled back by the marsh. As you can see from the happy faces, snowshoeing in the park in the winter is a healthy winter activity. Even the very young enjoyed the outing.



Earth Date Hike

We changed our Earth Day hike a little this year. We met in the afternoon to enjoy a hike in the day light, had dinner then went to a marsh to have fun with the night life. Spring was early this year and our natural world went along, so the night life was not as hyped as usual. On a normal year, the spring peepers are deafening and it is hard to hear other species. In the spring, we would like to encourage you to go out to a wetland at dusk and join in the festivities. There is nothing else like it. It will help you understand why wetlands are so important.



Ontario Parks

Edward Morris, Northeast Zone Ecologist for Ontario Parks led a course in Mashkinonje this spring. Some of the participants are seen here moving a Blanding's turtle off a road in the park.



Friends of Mashkinonje Picnic and Annual General Meeting Sunday, August 22, 2010

Location: Welcome Lodge, Musky Island Rd. off Hwy. 64 South
11:00 am Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers (members only)
12:00 – 1:30 pm Silent Auction
If you have anything to contribute to the Silent Auction, please bring it!
12:00 Lunch: Corn Roast, Fish Fry, Desserts, or bring your own
2:00 pm Trail Hike in Mashkinonje

For further information, contact Angela Martin (705) 594-1153

Want to Learn More and Get Involved

Dragonflies and Damselflies

Colin Jones has compiled a Checklist of Ontario Odonata in conjunction with the Toronto Entomologists' Association, Ontario Nature and the Province of Ontario. Copies are available from the Toronto Entomologists' Association at

www.ontarioinsects.org.

There is also an Ontario Odonata Atlas being compiled. You can contribute to the atlas at: <http://nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/odonates/atlas.html>

Species at Risk

Sudbury District MNR contact Eric.Cobb@ontario.ca

North Bay District MNR contact
Rebecca.Geauvreau@ontario.ca

Bird Studies Canada has many programs you can get involved in, check them out at www.birdscanada.org

Metro Toronto Zoo has an Adopt-A- Pond participate by going to www.torontozoo.com/adoptapond



**Free
Mashkinonje Cap
for a \$100 donation**

FOM Directors

President: Angela Martin
Vice President: Dr. Peter Beckett
Secretary: Nicole Wilson

Treasurer & Membership: Brenda Tunney
Park Liaison: Chuck Miller, Ontario Parks
Superintendent

Special Thanks:



Municipality of French River

We are thankful for our partnership with the Municipality of French River. They have helped us with all of our requests: Ontario Job Creation Programs and snow plowing next winter. The Municipality has agreed to plow 20' into the Blanding's Pond driveway located in their municipality. This will allow park users to snowshoe in the west half of the park, knowing they can leave their car safely and not create a hazard to highway traffic.

Dr. Josef Hamr of Cambrian College

Thank you Dr. Hamr for providing your students: Gregory Beaton and Kirk Kulmala from the Environmental Monitoring and Impact Assessment program. Greg and Kirk did 3 weeks of biodiversity work in the park.

Collins Barrow Chartered Accountants

Tax returns aren't nice for any of us. We are very thankful to Collins Barrow Chartered Accountants from Sturgeon Falls for completing our Annual Tax Return and our Charities Return.

Sudbury East Board of Trade

SEBOT is giving us \$5,000 towards a park project. We appreciate your financial support.



Did You know?

The name *atakas* is old French for cranberry. Since Cranberry Pond is in the center of the west half of the park, we named the trail passing by it **Atakas Trail**.

CONTACT US

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. To view past editions, visit our website

www.mashkinonje.com

or contact us at:

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New members

French River Horticulturalist Society
Daryl Gold
Dr. Mark Silverman

Coming Events

Picnic & AGM see page 7 for details
Join us on October 30th at 10 am. for our
Halloween Hike at the Blanding's Pond
parking lot

Thank you for being a Friend