



## Friends of Mashkinonje

[www.mashkinonje.com](http://www.mashkinonje.com)

# The Wetlands Observer

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### Home of the Great Egret & Black Ash

This year we are raffling this beautiful canoe, a 16.6 Saugeen Special Edition by Bluewater Canoe. It is made of lightweight, strong Kevlar with cherry trim and a great yolk. The canoe can be seen at the French River Visitor center on Hwy 69 at the French River. We would like to thank Chuck Miller and Leah Guthrie from Ontario Parks for all their help. Tickets cost \$5 each and can be obtained at the French River Visitor Center or from a Board member. The draw will be held October 10th at the French River Visitor Center. As with all the funds we raise, every cent will go into Mashkinonje. We have a few projects; the most expensive will be interpretive signs. To those acquiring a ticket, thank you very much and good luck!!!



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Watch for this **Great Egret** the end of July and the beginning of August. It most likely will be seen at the edge of water or in wetlands. A Great Egret has been seen for the last three years, in the Mashkinonje area: adjacent to the park then flying over Mashkinonje and at the Hwy 64 West Arm Narrows. Please let us know if you see this beautiful bird, call Angela at 705-594-1153.



# Universal Barrier Free Trail

By: Chuck Miller, Superintendent Killarney/ French River/ Mashkinonje/ W. Sandy Island/ Manitou Islands/ Daisy Lake Provincial Parks

*Many people are happiest if they have an opportunity to get out in nature even if it is just for a few minutes.*

One of my favorite locations – especially when time is limited – is to do a quick hike into the first boardwalk and lookout over the marsh on the Loudon Peatland Trail. There is always something to see along this route and usually a nice breeze at the boardwalk and lookout. It is not unusual for people to travel the 400 m to the boardwalk and to stop and chat, relax and just take in the sights, sounds, smells; and feel of the breeze and sun. In general just connect with nature with minimal effort.

The trail for the most part follows an old road bed until it reaches the marsh. It is terrific that the Friends of Mashkinonje with financial support from the Sudbury East Board of Trade and volunteers from the École secondaire de la Rivière-des-français have embraced the idea to make this 600 m section of trail universally accessible to many more people regardless of abilities, assistive devices or stage in their life cycle.

The trail improvements were relatively simple with the addition of some finely crushed gravel, a few curbs, ramp, lookout platform and some reduced slopes. The work has generated a lot of enthusiasm by everyone who has volunteered to make it happen. It has been a definite “feels good project”.

Kudos to everyone who made this trail possible – if some people are happiest when in nature - it is wonderful to know that the opportunity is universally accessible. 🍄

## Black Ash & Flooded Jellyskin Project

In a previous newsletter, we told you about Black Ash trees in Mashkinonje and their importance. We have joined a project to study Black Ash and the species at risk, Flooded Jellyskin, with Dr. Jeff Dech, Nipissing University, the North Bay OMNR and the Nipissing Naturalists Club. The study areas will be Mashkinonje, Cache Bay and the Dokis Reserve. Black Ash is integral to the park's and areas ecosystem and all the partners want to learn more about this tree. Elisha Townsend will carry out the field work this summer. We will report the findings in our next newsletter. 🍄

## Friends of Mashkinonje

### Picnic and Annual General Meeting

Sunday, August 21, 2011

**Location:** Mashkinonje Provincial Park, Loudon Peatland Entrance, Hwy 64 one km south of Musky Island Rd.

Watch for signs

**11:00 am** Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers (members only)

**12:00–1:30 pm** Lunch, Corn Roast and Silent Auction

*If you have something to contribute to the auction and help Mashkinonje, please bring it along.*

**2:00 pm** Pontoon boat ride to see Mashkinonje including: Lapin Beach, Coastal Bridge and new dock at Pebble Beach

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

# Mashkinonje Snowshoe

By: Angela Martin

Although the forecast called for snow on February 13th, it didn't arrive until that evening. Seventeen snowshoers came from Sudbury, North Bay and Paul and Denny Sharp from our area. We decided to snowshoe the Loudon Peatland Trail from the main park entrance, one kilometer north of Muskrat Creek. The snowshoe trip was led by Chuck Miller, Mashkinonje Superintendent and Dr. Peter Beckett, Biology Professor at Laurentian University.

We snowshoed about 5 kilometers. One can do that distance quickly but there are so many things to see and view scapes to enjoy, it took us 4 hours. We spent time on the boardwalk at the first marsh, looking at the beaver lodges, the plants above the snow and the unusual land structure. This portion of the trail was upgraded last fall and now is barrier free, when the snow is gone.



The nice bright white snow made the vegetation and trees stand out better than other times of year. We stopped and learned about the many kinds of lichens visible on the trees. It is amazing if one takes the time to look at details, how many different species can be seen in our natural environment. An advantage of being outside in the winter, one can see tracks from all sorts of mammals from voles to moose and wing angels made in the snow by birds. In some areas, we gently cleared the snow to see special plants that we don't normally get the opportunity to see at other times of year. A Great Blue Heron rookery or nesting area can also be visited in the winter without disturbing nesting birds. All sorts of local wonders are best observed during the winter months.

Snowshoeing has become more popular. You can travel most landscapes in our area. Snowshoeing is healthy for us both physically and mentally. On a beautiful winter's day with a lovely blue sky, bright white snow, being outside enjoying nature and keeping healthy snowshoeing is like a vacation. We are lucky to be living in the north. 🐻



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## Ontario Job Creation Program, OJCP

We are grateful to the Municipality of French River and particularly Lucie Rochon for acquiring and administering this year's OJCP grant. Special thanks go out to the crew: Brad Frankfurth, Jean-Robert Labelle and Andrew St. Pierre for their good work. They hardened 1,896' of trail and volunteered help on the barrier free trail.

Ontario Parks' Chuck Miller and Ed Chevette as well as Friends of Mashkinonje's Harley Lang played a major role making this year's grant successful.

Thank you very much to all. 🐻



# Halloween Hike

Saturday October 29, 2011

1:30 pm

Loudon Peatland  
Entrance one km south of  
Musky Island Rd.

## Pebble Beach Dock

Many thanks to Bob Prevost and Noelville Rental for their donation and installation of a dock at Pebble Beach. For many years, boaters have pulled their boats up on shore to enjoy Pebble Beach, now you can pull up to a dock and unload your things and stay dry. When thanked, Bob said, he likes helping our community!!! 🐻



## Earth Day Hike in Mashkinonje

By: Angela Martin

Many of us have learned not to listen to the weatherman, unless dangerous weather is coming or one would never go outside and enjoy nature. The forecast for our hike was 60% chance of showers. We had our hike and some hiked further afterwards, we were not showered upon. Twenty two people came for our hike including two families each with two children. The inquisitive minds of the young added to the enthusiasm of the day.

We hiked the Heron, Bobcat and Atakas Trails. One of the many ponds is Cranberry Pond, where the remains of a draft-dodger cabin can be seen. It was also a good stop for lunch. Superintendent Chuck Miller told us of the significance of this area.

The woods and ponds were alive with plant and wildlife. Trailing arbutus was in flower, pale corydalis was 2" high and the always-present three kinds of reindeer lichen were of interest. Fortunately Dr. Peter Beckett was with us to tell us about the orange slime mold, there were a few varieties along the way. Woods frogs and spring peepers kept us amazed.



Painted turtles, water and garter snakes were in clear view. We saw and heard yellow-rumped warblers, Sandhill cranes, Canada geese, ring-necked ducks, buffleheads, yellow-bellied sapsuckers, northern flickers, winter wren, great blue heron, red-breasted nuthatch, bufflehead, chipping sparrow, common loons and northern harrier.

Every time we have a hike, we experience new and wondrous events in our natural world. There are many neat places to visit in our area. The Mashkinonje trails make it easy to experience a variety of different habitats. They are free, please come and experience them. 🐻



## Welcome New Members

Kimberley Narozanski, Narozanski North  
Realty Inc.

Richard Quesnel, On Q Renovations &  
Construction

Tania Middlebro

Silvia Bourre

Katherine MacLeod

Jean Elliott

Brad Frankfurth

Rob Van Exan

Mark Fisher



## 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. They are willing to  
take this task on for us for this year!!!

**Nature Writers** are invited to share their  
sightings and experiences with nature.  
Articles have to be from the Mashkinonje  
area and can be up to half a page. They are  
subject to the editor's approval, and should  
be submitted to Angela Martin at welcome@  
ontera.net.

**Ontario Nature** is collecting data  
on all **reptiles and amphibians**  
found in the province. They can be  
reported to Ontario Nature. (See last 2  
pages of newsletter.)

# FREE

New style Mashkinonje caps with a  
\$100 donation

## CONTACT US

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

[www.mashkinonje.com](http://www.mashkinonje.com)

or contact us at:

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## FOM Directors

**President:** Angela Martin

**Vice President:** Dr. Peter Beckett

**Secretary:** Nicole Wilson

**Treasurer & Membership:** Brenda Tunney

**Park Liaison:** Chuck Miller, Ontario Parks  
Superintendent

# Thank you for being a Friend

## They're Back!

The dates when reptiles and amphibians emerge vary from year to year and from region to region. This year March 16 was the date of the first reports. Western chorus frogs were heard in Windsor and Woodstock and Butler's gartersnakes were seen basking near Windsor. Since then much of the province has seen cold snaps and warm spells that sent the early risers into and out of their hibernacula multiple times.

Knowing when these wonderful animals awake from hibernation - where they spend nearly half their lives - allows us to monitor seasonal trends and this information may become very important with the changing climate. Please contribute your sightings to the atlas by using our online form, emailing John Urquhart at [herpatlas@ontarionature.org](mailto:herpatlas@ontarionature.org), calling 416-444-8419 ext. 243 or toll free at 1-800-440-2366 ext. 243. For multiple observations please use the excel spreadsheet on our website.



## 2010 Year End Update

The second annual online Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (ORAA) is now available. Go to our website ([www.ontarionature.org/atlas](http://www.ontarionature.org/atlas)) to see the maps updated with the observations you submitted in 2010! Thank you to everyone who submitted observations. The ORAA has now compiled over 162 000 records. We have doubled the size of the provincial database of reptile and amphibian observations in just over two years!



## It's Not Easy Being Green

*By Tracy Parker - Atlas Participant*

After a stormy morning in early April I was driving in Bruce County and sadly noticed a dead northern leopard frog on the road. I pulled over and promptly got out my camera and trusty GPS, to take some pictures and record my first ORAA observation of 2011. Almost immediately after I resumed my trip, I noticed another leopard frog but, this time it was in the middle of the road and alive. When I went to help I noticed its back legs had been crushed and the frog was struggling futilely to get off the road. Dreading the thought, I knew what I had to do. Before I could act, a vehicle sped by and I sorrowfully watched my first roadside animal get killed. It was a very heart-wrenching experience for me. I stood at the side of the road with wet eyes and got a glimmer of hope when I saw a little hopping motion just to the side of me. I quickly gathered my composure and helped a cute little leopard frog to safety. As I was doing this I noticed many other leopard frogs trying to cross to a pond. I ended up helping about 30 frogs to safety. This felt incredibly satisfying after stopping for frogs that it was too late to save. However, I realize that observations of both the live and dead animals are important and for that reason I made sure I had my co-ordinates and corresponding photographs for each. What started off seemingly dreary ended up being a great start to the field season!



### Did you know?

Snapping turtles can live over 80 years with some estimates suggesting that they can reach ages up to 160 years!

Turtles rely heavily on adult survival and less than one tenth of one percent of eggs laid survive to adulthood. A lasting increase in adult mortality of as little as one percent could cause the disappearance of entire snapping turtle populations.

Because many human activities including hitting turtles with cars, habitat destruction, and legal hunting for food are occurring in the province the snapping turtle is now listed nationally and provincially as a species of Special Concern.

**Photo Credits:** Eastern gartersnake at hibernacula and nesting snapping turtle by John Urquhart, northern leopard frog on road and spotted turtle by Tracy Parker.

Assistance for this project was provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Canada



Ontario Nature protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. Ontario Nature is a charitable organization representing more than 30,000 members and supporters and over 140 member groups across Ontario.

### Upcoming Events

One of our biggest events of the year will be the third annual Remarkable Reptiles Weekend. Please join us in Bruce Peninsula National Park on Aug. 20-21. If you are interested in attending email: [herpatlas@ontarionature.org](mailto:herpatlas@ontarionature.org).

Check out our events calendar periodically to see what events are being planned at: [www.ontarionature.org/connect/events.php](http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/events.php)



### Turtle Crossing Sign Evaluation

Eco-Kare in cooperation with the Ontario Road Ecology Group and other partners is creating an inventory of the approximately 700 turtle crossing signs in Ontario to determine where and how they are placed in the landscape. If you see a turtle crossing sign you can help this project succeed by reporting its location and other information at the following website:

[www.eco-kare.com/turtle\\_sign\\_inventory.html](http://www.eco-kare.com/turtle_sign_inventory.html)

This project will ensure future signs will be placed to maximize their benefit to Ontario's turtle populations.

### Submit your stories!

We want to hear about your exciting search for reptiles and amphibians. Please share with us, in 250 words or less, the most exciting thing that happened to you this spring and we will post a few of these stories in our summer 2011 newsletter!