



The Quinte Naturalist

The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is affiliated with Ontario Nature, a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research.



SMALL WETLANDS WITH BIG IMPACTS

Quinte Field Naturalists

Lecture Series

Guest Speaker: Emma Horrigan

Monday, March 26, 2018

7:00 p.m.

Sills Auditorium,

**Bridge Street United Church,
Belleville**

(corner of Bridge & Church Street)



Vernal pools provide critical wildlife habitat. Learn about the features of these temporary wetlands, and the species that rely on this unique ecosystem from Emma Horrigan, Conservation Science Coordinator for Ontario Nature.

All welcome, by donation

Refreshments are served



OUTINGS



Barred Owl
Photo by Kyle Blaney

Owling. Yes, here we go again. For the third time this year I'm tempting fate by scheduling an owling expedition. Weather permitting (Did I really need to say that?) **Sunday, Apr. 8** meet in the **Lowe's parking lot** on Millennium Parkway at **7:30 pm**. Dress more warmly than you think you need to. We will drive to several local woodlots to listen for owls. Three species are known to nest in Quinte. Two more probably do nest locally but in small numbers. We will finish about 10:00 pm.

Spring in The Land Between. The Land Between refers to the territory which straddles the boundary between the Algonquin Dome and the St. Lawrence Lowlands from Georgian Bay to the Ottawa Valley. It has more biodiversity than either of these regions and provides clean water and

other ecosystem services. On April 28 join Gerry Doekes to explore his part of The Land Between north of Marmora and its wildlife. Watch for details in next month's newsletter.

WELCOME JESSICA

Jessica Spooner has agreed to be our membership coordinator. Let's get to know her better.

From a very early age, Jessica was introduced to the natural world and encouraged to explore. Spending summers barefoot, playing in the woods or waves of Lake Ontario she would develop her love for the outdoors. Today she is the owner of Women Hike Wild, a small company dedicated to empowering women in the outdoors through backpacking trips in the wilds of Ontario. To compliment this, she is an active environmentalist and after completing an environmental awareness cycling tour through the Maritimes, she found



All flowers pictured in this newsletter are important to pollinators. Leave dandelions because they are one of the only food sources available when pollinators emerge from their winter retreat.

herself working in post-secondary as the Sustainability Coordinator at Loyalist College! This role allows her to share her passion for nature and the environment through projects which help the natural landscape as well as lower Loyalist College's environmental footprint.

Through projects such as Habitat Enhancements, tree plantings, introduction of 15 honey bee hives, waste diversion plans and more Jessica has been able to keep connected while encouraging others to do the same!

The smooth transition to Jessica as membership coordinator which was obvious in our up-dated 2018 membership list is a tribute to both Jessica and Karina Spence who established the system we currently use. In an organization like the QFN with membership approaching 100 accurate records are essential. Thank you, Karina. Thank you, Jessica.

MEMBERSHIP

Please renew your membership if you haven't done so already. You can pay by cheque or cash at the meeting or you can send your dues to our treasurer, Doug Newfield, 161 Thrasher Rd., R.R. #1, Plainfield, ON. K0K2V0. Dues are \$25.00 for an individual or \$40.00 for a family. Your membership demonstrates your interest in both enjoying and preserving our natural heritage.



Swamp milkweed is a better choice for a pollinator garden than the common milkweed you see in fields. The flower heads are flatter than the round balls of common milkweed. Swamp milkweed is an important food plant for monarch butterflies and their larva as well as other butterflies. Unlike common milkweed it probably won't send out long underground runners into your neighbour's lawn. Take it from the voice of experience.

Despite its name swamp milkweed will grow in any soil that isn't droughty. Butterfly weed (below) is also a species of milkweed. It thrives in drier, sandier soils.



BOSTON PIZZA

On March 5, for three hours, six members acted as QFN ambassadors and celebrity greeters at Boston Pizza on Bell Boulevard. Several other members ordered pizza and other items from the menu as non-celebrity diners. In return BP presented us with a cheque for \$319 representing ten percent of the receipts during the three hours. Patrons



***Columbine
Blooms in late spring.***

also put \$25 in our donation box. Thank you to the ambassadors Elizabeth Churcher, Doug Newfield, Jessica Spooner, George Thomson, Penny Vance and Denice Wilkins who organized the event. Of course, thanks also to Boston Pizza for generously supporting local organizations such as QFN.

BIRD SAVER WINDOW TREATMENTS AT THE FRINK

Last year we provided bird-saver window treatments for Quinte Conservation offices at the foot of Wallbridge-Loyalist Road. Our proceeds from Boston Pizza should be enough to enable us to do the same for the classrooms at the H.R. Frink Outdoor Centre. Twenty-five years ago naturalists assumed that most bird collisions with windows occurred at night when migrating birds hit lighted windows in tall office and apartment buildings. We now know that because there are so many of them, one or two-storey buildings like our homes kill far more birds as they go about their daily lives. Through efforts like this project we both reduce bird injuries and fatalities and educate the public about the nature of the problem and how to prevent it. Visit FLAP, the Fatal Light Awareness Program, for more information <http://flap.org/index.php>

If you would like to help with any of the projects mentioned, future projects or would like help with a project of your own, please discuss your ideas with any member of the executive. Contact information for executive members can be found in the green box on the last page.

ONTARIO 2018 YOUTH SUMMIT

We have money to give away to the right person but no one to give it to. That's not quite accurate but it does highlight an opportunity often missed by local secondary school students. (continued on next page)

Every year Ontario Nature hosts a weekend gathering of about 100 youth. Planned by the Youth Council made up of students who attended in previous years the event is designed to appeal to students. Guest speakers, workshops and outdoor activities enable interested students to improve their understanding of environmental issues and develop the tools to take action in their communities and beyond. Participants become part of a peer network who support and advise each other. They also gain insight into possible areas of study, volunteer opportunities and careers in the environmental sector.

The 2018 Youth Summit will take place September 21-23 at YMCA Geneva Park in Orillia. QFN will sponsor a local student who is in grades 9 to 12. Interested students, parents or teachers should contact John Blaney at quintefn@gmail.com or 613-962-9337.

DEMONSTRATION POLLINATOR GARDEN

We are working with the city of Belleville to establish a demonstration garden on city property in 2019.



Cosmos is not a native plant but it is a good choice for a pollinator garden. It comes in many colours; many pollinators love it and birds enjoy its seeds in the fall.

Of course you can also set up your own pollinator garden or even just a pollinator-friendly container yourself. Your best source of advice and plants is QFN member, Peter Fuller. Fuller Native and Rare Plants on Airport Parkway doesn't open until May 2 but in the meantime you can visit the web site and dream. <http://fullerplants.com/index.php>. The web site has an extensive list of local native plants offered, suggestions for what to plant under certain conditions or for a specific type of garden and a list of useful links for more information.

Peter also devotes a percentage of his sales to the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory. Your pollinator garden can also support important research about our bird populations.

The American Audubon Society's March challenge to celebrate the year of the bird is to plant a bird-friendly garden. A pollinator garden is also a bird-friendly garden. Hummingbirds are pollinators. If you leave the plants to produce seeds and die you will be providing food for birds and winter shelter for some pollinators.

NATURALIZING YOUR PROPERTY TO ATTRACT WILDLIFE

BY TERRY SPRAGUE

First published in the Picton Gazette and Napanee Beaver, June 30, 2011

When my wife and I first moved to our lot 35 years ago, there was not a tree or a shrub anywhere on the property. It was, in fact, the corner where two agricultural fields met – one with timothy hay, the other a field of oats, both yet to be harvested. We wanted birds and other wildlife, just like we had when we lived at the original farmstead – stately trees, conifers, shrubs and bushes, and all the associated wildlife we had come to enjoy. We needed to get started right away with an intense planting program as we were not getting any younger.

The fellow at the nursery told me the tree I was now staring at was a native red maple. It seemed like a good place to start. It shouldn't take much to guess what that thing evolved into! Our little red maple became a Norway maple, a non-native tree species frowned upon these days due to its invasive nature.

A few years later, I went to another nursery and determined to have only native trees and shrubs on our property, inquired about locusts as I knew they grew fast, and fast growing trees were what we were seeking. We were advised to get honey locusts. We purchased not one, but three, honey locusts. Honey locusts, while native to southwestern Ontario, are not native to here. Their more familiar cousins, black locusts, are even further removed, native only to mid-eastern United States. To add insult to injury, in the 20 years we have had these "native" locusts, they have attracted virtually nothing except occasional perching birds, and the autumn crop of 12-inch long seed pods allegedly are consumed by rabbits and deer, although I have yet to see either under their branches. Mostly, it attracts me, every autumn, as I rake up wheelbarrow loads of seed pods. However, we decided that while honey locusts were as useless as.....well, you know the rest of the phrase....., they did add to the overall effect of what we were attempting to create.

From those two mistakes, we did more research on native plants, comfortable in the knowledge that the only real mistake in life is the one from which we learn nothing. Today, most of our two acres is a forest of native trees and shrubs, including silver maple, white ash, white spruce, serviceberries, honeysuckles, currants, gooseberries, and grey dogwood. We still throw in a few non-native shrubs now and again to justify why we have a clump of lilacs (I heard that catbirds love to nest in them).

From the days when our lot was so open that killdeers even appeared nervous to remain on our property, we now have a list of over 100 species that have visited our yard, 23 of which decided that our efforts were worthy enough of nesting. Among the nesters have been brown thrashers, catbirds, chickadees, eastern bluebirds, yellow warblers, and our first warbling vireos nested in the now stately silver maples just last year.

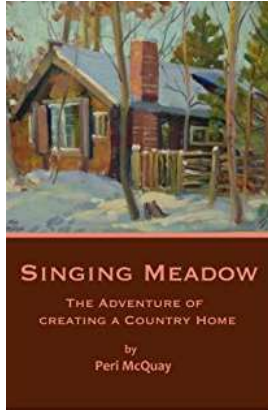
We learned from our experience that non-native trees are okay when planted sparingly. Not only do they contribute to the overall effect, but they provide a haven for insects which, of course, provide a food source for birds. I remember spending many an hour on our farmstead, with my binoculars aimed into the foliage of our three weeping willows as migrating warblers feasted on the emerging insect larvae. And the lowly red cedar that grew like so many weeds on our farm, was actually capable of attracting birds too, cedar waxwings and robins feeding on the berries, while chipping sparrows and mourning doves nested in its boughs.

And the Norway maple on our lot? We now sit in our lawn chairs under it, gazing in wonderment on our success in attracting wildlife to our premises. Above us, robins nest in the branches, and on winter days, the tree provides the necessary limbs to hang our feeders, while above both downy and hairy woodpeckers probe for overwintering insect larvae. What a treat now to spend any free time we have, watching these trees and shrubs, and decades of hard work, finally pay off.

So the point of this column? As always, I am promoting the use of native shrubs and trees for that is what our wildlife historically have made use of for food and shelter. However, I guess we shouldn't overlook a few of the ornamentals and non-native species either in our attempts to realize our goal of attracting wildlife. They all contribute, some more than others. Above all, now that the word "native" is being tossed around with as much reckless abandon as other "green" words, do some research before seeking out so-called native species. They may not be as native as you think!



Serviceberries (Amelanchier species) are good native shrubs for pollinators and birds. They can be grown as a shrub or small tree up to 8 metres tall. The bloom period in spring is short but the berries are favourites of birds. In our yard cedar waxwings and robins start checking for the berries days before they are ready. In the fall the orange foliage is spectacular.



MOVING CLOSER INTO THE HEART OF NATURE

JOIN US FOR A DELICIOUS BUFFET MEAL FOLLOWED BY A PRESENTATION FROM NATURALIST AND PASSIONATE ENVIRONMENTALIST, PERI MCQUAY. PERI WILL TAKE US ON A JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTING TALES FOM 30 YEARS AT FOLEY MOUNTAIN, NEAR WESTPORT.



ANNUAL DINNER

MONDAY, APRIL 23

6 P.M.

ST. MARK'S UNITED CHURCH, 237 CANNIFTON ROAD NORTH, CANNIFTON

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE MARCH MEETING

OR

CALL DOUG NEWFIELD 613-477-3066

\$28 PER PERSON

**BUY YOUR TICKET BY APRIL 10-THE CHURCH NEEDS TO KNOW HOW MANY
DINNERS TO PREPARE**

*The Quinte Field Naturalists Association, an affiliate of Ontario Nature, is a non-profit organization sponsoring nature education, conservation and research. It was founded in 1949 and incorporated in 1990 and encompasses the counties of Hastings and Prince Edward. The Quinte Field Naturalists Association is legally entitled to hold real estate and accept benefits. Quinte Field Naturalists meet on the fourth Monday of every month from September to March (except December), 7:00 pm, Sills Auditorium, Bridge Street United Church, 60 Bridge Street East, Belleville. In April we hold our annual dinner at an alternate time and location. New members and guests are always welcome.
Bring a friend.*

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Next Newsletter Deadline – April 15, 2018

Please send submissions to sharronjohnblaney@gmail.com