



# *The Quinte Naturalist*

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

## **Addendum to the September Edition**

### **2012 – 2013 Program**

*Meetings from September to March are held at Sills Auditorium, Bridge Street United Church (60 Bridge St. East, Belleville) at 7:30 p.m.*

***Sept. 24 Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen***

Local award-winning nature photographer, Bill Bickle, will present stunning images from his recent trip to northern B.C.

***Oct. 22 eBird: Making Your Sightings Count***

Mike Burrell, eBird's Ontario editor, will discuss this new program, how to get involved and what it is already teaching us about Ontario birds.

***Nov. 26 Personal Solutions to Climate Change***

Cam Mather lives off grid and is the author of several books on both renewable energy and organic gardening. In his usual dynamic style, he will outline easy and practical strategies for reducing your carbon footprint.

***Jan. 28 Birds & Flora of Belize***

QFN member and retired teacher, Donna Fano, presents a personal travelogue of this naturalists' paradise.

***Feb. 25 Beyond the Beech***

Well-known naturalist and popular local speaker, Terry Sprague, will present a survey of the huge variety of woodlot critters, big and small.

***Mar. 25 The Frontenac Arch***

This UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve has one of the richest collections of biological diversity in Canada. Mark Conboy, Research Assistant at Queen's University, will discuss its natural history and importance.

**Please be sure to read pages 3-5 before the meeting.  
They contain information regarding the two  
resolutions on which you will be asked to vote.**

## **WE HAVE GROUNDS TO SUPPORT THE BIRDS**

**By Sharron Blaney**

As conscientious nature lovers Quinte Field Naturalists are pleased to announce that this year we will be serving coffee with a difference.

This organic coffee is shade-grown in Nicaragua. Hand-picked, sun-dried and manually bagged by the workers of La Union Plantation, the dense flavoured beans are shipped to London, Ontario where they are roasted by the plantation owner's daughters.

By purchasing this SHADE TREE coffee we will be helping to preserve habitat and food for all the birds of this Nicaraguan rain forest. We will also be supporting our own Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory since a portion of the sales for each bag of coffee goes to PEPtBo to assist its crucial work collecting data on thousands of birds, including a number of the species that winter in Nicaragua.

Of course this coffee is more expensive than cans of coffee previously bought on sale at the local drug store. This means we will charge a little more for your coffee and treats but we feel that delicious Arabica coffee, which really does make a difference, is worth it.

Should you wish to further support this project by purchasing coffee for home use, it is available at County Sunshine, 195 Main Street in Picton or in Belleville at L'Auberge de France, 304 Front Street. Decaf is available in Picton only.



Shade-grown bird-friendly coffee comes from plantations that look like this. The rainforest canopy is preserved. Resident birds help to control insects. Normally coffee does not grow in the sun so special varieties had to be developed to grow in the large plantations in clear cuts. These varieties grow more quickly and have to be heavily fertilized to support their growth in an area where nitrogen-fixing plants have been removed. They also have very poor biodiversity with fewer birds. With fewer birds they require more pesticides.



This network is a collaboration of organizations, businesses, community groups and partners. Membership is a wide-ranging group. It includes Algonquin College, Quinte Conservation, the County of Frontenac, several organic farms, small companies and volunteer community groups who are working to promote sustainable solar, wind and hydro power generation as well as small eastern Ontario businesses and groups which simply support the concept of a sustainable economy.

Members are working to implement projects in five general areas:

1. Researching and promoting best practices, case studies and opportunities for energy conservation and renewable energy production.
2. Promoting green jobs and training in renewable and energy and energy efficiency sector through mentorship programs, job fairs and outreach.
3. Developing educational tools and workshops to promote community re-skilling and sustainable business practices.
4. Supporting the development of new models of ownership and collaboration in the renewable energy sector, including cooperatives and joint ventures.
5. Enhancing the network itself to build new partners, resources and community capacity.

Particularly in Quinte the issue of developing renewable energy sources is a difficult one for naturalists. We oppose the placement of wind turbines in the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area but support a policy of placing turbines where they will have minimal impact on the ecosystem. More information on Important Bird Areas will be available at this month's meeting.

The executive will provide more information regarding reasons why the Quinte Field Naturalists organization should consider joining the Community Energy Network of Eastern Ontario.

Members are simply required to take the following pledge on which you will be asked to vote:

***We support the movement toward clean community energy through renewable energy production, energy efficiency and conservation. We commit to collaborating with other organizations through the Community Energy Network of Eastern Ontario to promote outreach, education and implementation of this initiative across Eastern Ontario and the National Capital Region.***

## PROPOSED WIND TURBINES AT OSTRANDER POINT

The second issue on which you will be asked to vote also concerns renewable energy and the use of best practices in its development. Prince Edward County Field Naturalists are spearheading a group working to keep wind turbines out of Ostrander Point which is part of the Prince Edward County South Shore Important Bird Area. The process has reached the point where legal action may be necessary. This is expensive, of course, so PECFN is asking for pledges of financial support so that they can judge whether it is reasonable to take this step. At the meeting you will be asked whether you believe that QFN should pledge financial support.

The pledge form is provided also for anyone who may wish to make a pledge as an individual.

Cheryl Anderson of PECFN has written the following letter to explain the situation in detail:

As you know we have been anxiously waiting for word on the Gilead Power wind project at Ostrander Point and there has been none. Hanging over our heads was the prospect of having only 15 days to mount an appeal, find a lawyer and fundraise to pay for it! We have 1) organized an initial coalition of Ontario Nature, Nature Canada, and local naturalists with a connection to our IBA; 2) talked to an environmental lawyer and received a proposal for an initial review and strategy and a budget for an appeal if it is needed.

In order to be prepared for the worst case scenario of an approval for Ostrander Point we need to raise \$3000 to retain the legal firm to do a preliminary review of information and preparation of the firm's strategy for an ERT appeal and the key steps required to put the appeal in place. We are attaching a pledge form for this purpose. The Executive approved this idea at our Sept 3 meeting and have started it off with our pledges.

If the government chooses to approve of this industrial project in the middle of the PEC South Shore IBA we will be initiating the first Ontario Tribunal appeal to the Renewable Energy Act on the grounds of "serious and irreversible harm to the environment". This case can only be won on science. We are prepared to present evidence that the project would destroy the habitat of avian migrants and resident species at risk and, during operation, cause a mortality rate that has the potential to effect specific species, insectivores, aerial-display species, raptors, and bats, at a population level.

After a projected 25-50 year lifetime of the project these effects would be irreversible to the habitat and thus to the population levels of specific species and/or through displacement of breeding species, or the disruption of genetic migration mapping. It will also set a precedent for other proposed projects on the South Shore, Gilead offshore projects, Amherst Island, and Crown lands of similar environmental value on the Great Lakes.

There are important instances of wind farm siting decisions which reveal a great lack of biological insight. Governments and industry claim that turbines do not kill birds “at a population level” by quoting national statistics while ignoring the fact that high bird mortality is due to poor siting decisions. High rates of mortality have been documented at sites on nearby Wolfe Island (14 dead birds per turbine), West Virginia, mountain passes in California and Spain (thousands of raptors per year), prairie ridges, and shorelines worldwide and also at communication towers during migration seasons.

These high mortality rates raise the fear that the proposals for hundreds of turbines on Eastern Lake Ontario, if approved, will have hemisphere-wide effects on avian populations. Covering the spring and fall staging areas of hundreds of millions of birds, bats, monarchs and odonata with industrial developments will remove essential survival habitat. Therefore the result of the Ostrander Point appeal will be precedent setting to the conservation of wildlife. Ideally the Tribunal could inform the government that it must take responsibility for siting decisions.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service said in 2012: “With more than 100,000 turbines expected to be in operation in the United States by 2030, annual bird mortality rates alone (now estimated by the Service at 440,000 per year) are expected to exceed one million.”

As we wrote to Minister Jim Bradley on April 24: “By opening all *Crown Land* to development an important government responsibility has slipped between the cracks: the protection of wildlife habitat. Ostrander Point is a Candidate Area of Natural and Scientific Interest in the centre of the Prince Edward County (PEC) South Shore Important Bird Area (IBA). This IBA including the National Wildlife Area were designated *globally significant* under the congregatory (water fowl) species category and *nationally significant* under the threatened species category. Millions of birds (at higher densities than at Pelee Point) migrate through the PEC South Shore in spring and fall. By agreeing to this project the Ontario government will be jeopardizing its responsibilities for Species at Risk and international agreements such as the Migratory Bird Act. However, denying the project allows Ontario to set a precedent confirming its commitment to protecting the environment as one of the primary reasons for the Green Energy Policy.”

Cheryl Anderson

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## Help Prince Edward County Field Naturalists save Ostrander Point

Since 2008 PECFN has been protesting Gilead Power's plan to erect 9 wind turbines on the Ostrander Point Crown Land Block on Prince Edward County's South Shore. PECFN's submissions to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) have pointed out that:

Environment Canada has classified the site Highly Sensitive and advised against its use for wind energy

Data from the Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory indicates that the site is on the spring and fall migratory pathway for millions of birds

Environmental reviews conducted by the proponent prove that the site has been/ is being used by species at risk – Whip-poor-will and Blanding's Turtle and other species of concern

Historically Endangered Henslow's Sparrows have used the Ostrander Crown Land Block

The site contains valuable alvar habitat and is the home of rare alvar plants

The South Shore has been internationally recognized as an Important Bird Area

In spite of these arguments and many others the MOE continues the process toward approval of Gilead's project. If the project is approved, PECFN will launch an appeal to the Environmental Review Tribunal on the grounds that the Gilead projects will cause "serious and irreversible harm to the environment". Preliminary investigation indicates that this appeal, if necessary, will cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000. Retaining legal expertise will require a retainer of \$3,000.

We believe it is prudent to be prepared and therefore are asking you for a financial pledge to help meet the first goal of raising the retainer amount, if necessary.

Please indicate your willingness to donate \$100 to this cause by completing the form below:

<b>Name</b>
<b>Address</b>
<b>Contact information:</b>
I will donate \$100 to help save Ostrander Point, if necessary (please check)
I will donate another amount, if necessary \$ (please insert amount)

Please deliver this form to: Myrna Wood #2-59 King Street, Picton ON, K0K 2T0  
Or the information by email to: myrna@kos.net