



The Esquesing

May-June 2016 Newsletter
Volume 50, Number 5



Talks and Walks

Indoor: Meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of the month, October to June at St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams, unless stated otherwise.

Tuesday May 10, 2016

Dave Beaton: The Credit Valley Trail

Long rumoured, an initiative to establish a trail from the Credit River headwaters to Lake Ontario is now gaining traction. Dave Beaton, Manager of Community Outreach for Credit Valley Conservation will provide an overview of the proposed trail. Trails – the Bruce Trail is a great example – provide exceptional access to natural areas. While a great boon to naturalists and others who value being outdoors, trails can also have negative impacts – erosion and off-leash dogs come to mind. Dave will invite feedback from our club about areas of natural and cultural interest along the Credit River that the trail should pass through, or alternatively, avoid.

Tuesday June 14, 2016

Our annual “outdoor-indoor meeting” prior to summer break.

Note: The location of this outdoor meeting has been changed from that indicated in the last newsletter.

Meet at 7 p.m. in the parking lot at Scotsdale Farm, entrance east off Trafalgar Road, north of 27 Sideroad, Silver Creek.

We'll spend about 2 hours investigating nest boxes the club has put up at Scotsdale over the past two years. This project, made possible by the construction efforts of club member Kim Dobson, has seen approximately 50 nest boxes erected at Scotsdale to attract nesting birds. We'll open them briefly to determine tenancy. Expect tree swallows, house wrens and with luck, bluebirds.

Tuesday September 13, 2016

Colin Cassin: Invasive Plants

Colin Cassin is “Project Liaison” for the Ontario Invasive Plant Council. Colin will highlight some of the invasive plants currently threatening ecosystems in Ontario and will offer guidance on options to stop or mitigate their advance.

Outdoor Events

Please see the last page of newsletter for Monday Evening Walks

Sunday May 8, 2016 (early afternoon)

Spring Wildflowers and early Warblers

Join Fiona Reid for a wildflower walk on her Speyside property. Trillium will be in full glory, along with numerous other plants of interest. Unfortunately the blackflies will be in full swing as well, so be warned. After walking in the forest we will car pool to Scotch Block to see spring birds including Eastern Meadowlark, possibly Bobolink, sparrows and with luck early arriving warblers. Please call Fiona (905-693-9719) or email (Fiona.reid7243@gmail.com) for start time and directions.

Sunday May 15, 2016

Spring Bioblitz and Potluck

Gloria Hildebrandt, editor of the popular Niagara Escarpment Views magazine has invited club members to a bioblitz event at her property just north of Georgetown. Club members participated in a previous bioblitz at this location in August of 2014. Now it's time to catalogue the springtime flora and fauna.

When: Sunday May 15th beginning at 3 p.m. Departure time entirely optional. Some of us will stay after dark to tally moths.

Directions: Go north on Trafalgar Rd. to the four corners of the hamlet of Ballinafad, which is north of Georgetown. Going north on Hwy 7, at the top of a hill where there is a gas station, the main Highway 7 curves west to Acton but Trafalgar Rd. breaks off here, still going north on a smaller road, through Silvercreek. Keep going north about 1 km to Ballinafad. At the 4 corners of Ballinafad, turn right (east) on the 32nd Sideroad to the next intersection, which is 8th Line. Turn right (south) for about 1/2 km. to 14134 on a green sign on a mailbox frame. The address is 14134 Eighth Line.

If in doubt, and to RSVP call **Gloria** at 905 873 2834.

Details: All club members are welcome. Level of expertise doesn't matter. Those with knowledge of a particular area can help with identification and all of us can further our knowledge.

We'll survey wildflowers, birds and other wildlife in the late afternoon and then break for a potluck dinner at Gloria's house. Those able to stay can do more inventory work after dinner.

Please be advised that Mike Davis, co-publisher of Niagara Escarpment Views, may take photos for a possible future article in the magazine. If this is a concern, please let Gloria or Don Scallen know.

Sun. May 22, 2016.

Spring Birding at Thickson Wood, Lynde Shores Conservation Area and Cranberry Marsh:

Ray says: If I had only one day in the spring to go birding, this is where I would go. These locations provide a wide variety of habitats including mature forest, meadows, swamps, marshes, old fields and Lake Ontario and its shoreline. The result is a diverse collection of bird species, especially during spring migration. Scheduling on the Sunday of the Victoria Day holiday weekend has resulted, so far, in trouble-free driving to and from these Whitby birding hot spots. Bring a lunch, water, hat, sunscreen, binoculars, etc. Call Ray Blower ([519-853-0171](tel:519-853-0171)) for starting location and times.

President's Message

As I write this on April 28th the temperature is a chilly 6C, but with luck you'll be basking in warmth as you read it. Spring has been advancing in fits and starts, but May will usher in the full expression of its glory.

Two formal outings are planned for this month. On Sunday May 15th, the club will return to Gloria Hildebrandt's property north of Georgetown to take inventory of the flora and fauna found there. This will be a fun event with lots of opportunities to socialize and learn about local wildlife. Details are provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

Then on Sunday May 22nd, long time member and birder extraordinaire, Ray Blower will lead a trip to Thickson Woods in Whitby to view the returning migrants. Expect to see a satisfying variety of warblers in this urban oasis.

There will likely be other outings offered as well and as usual we'll let you know via email. Our first chimney swift monitoring session may take place before the end of the month.

On another note, on behalf of the Club, I'll be visiting Forks of the Credit Provincial Park in early May with representatives from Ontario Parks and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. This to initiate a process that I hope culminates in the cutting or burning of a section of the park to maintain grassland habitat. Forks of the Credit Provincial Park currently provides excellent habitat for a variety of open country birds and wildflowers, but is gradually reverting to woodland. For a full explanation of the Club's position on this issue please visit the website.

And while it's important to enhance and create habitat on public lands, anyone with a yard can do their part. Why not help offset the loss of biodiversity by banishing part of your lawn and planting wildlife-friendly plants? And what better time to do this than the spring! Native asters, goldenrods and milkweeds are wonderful for all manner of bees, wasps, moths and butterflies. Watching the frenzied insect action around these plants when they bloom is a joy - and far more interesting than watching grass grow!

For hummingbirds, exquisite cardinal flower is a sure-fire attractant. Try to purchase the true native - in my experience the large-flowered hybrids commonly offered in the nursery trade do not attract as many hummers.

But there are a few non-native wildlife plants that I wouldn't be without. Butterfly bush is aptly named. It is a butterfly magnet. Dill and fennel almost always entice egg-laying black-swallowtail females to my yard and rue sometimes pulls in giant swallowtails.

I think that our devotion to lawns that demand water, fertilizer, lawnmowers is starting to wane. People are beginning to explore interesting, ecologically sound alternatives to our sterile expanses of turf. May birdsong and the buzzing of bees trump the whine of lawnmowers.

Have a wonderful spring!

Don Scallen



Information on a Historical Tornado in Halton

In a footnote to an article dealing with the Big Tree Project undertaken by the Halton/North Peel Naturalists, Don Scallen [2015] noted some information about a tornado that crossed through Nassagaweya Township and came close to the Esquesing Tract. The course of that tornado was mentioned by the Nassagaweya Historical Society [2008]. While they only referenced information directly associated with Nassagaweya, we now know that the effects were much more extensive than that.

The exact date of the tornado is unknown because there are no written records from that period for Halton. European settlement did not even commence in Halton until 1806 in the most southerly parts and until 1819 in the north. Estimates of the timing of the storm range from 1740 to 1790. Given the additional information included here, it seems likely that the date was closer to the latter date.

The new information is actually quite old. It is supplied within the records of forest cover recorded by the early land surveyors who laid out the lots and concessions in the then new townships within Halton [McLean *et al.*]. The surveyors were required to record the dominant tree species in the area along with characteristics of the land that they travelled through. Fortunately, they made note of a number of sites where the trees had been knocked over. These sites were listed as ‘windfall’. Only a tiny area affected by the wind was recorded in the earliest survey (1806) of Trafalgar Township. The vast majority of the affected area was noted in the northern surveys completed in 1819. Even if the tornado had caused the damage at the latest estimated date, nearly thirty years had elapsed before the surveys were carried out and the windfall was still quite evident. It seems less likely that damage would be so noticeable if the tornado had passed during the early part of the suggested time frame for up to 80 years would have passed and much of the fallen wood would have decayed by the time the surveyors visited the area.



Fig. 1. Map of Halton showing location of windfall trees reported during original land surveys in 1819.

The path of destruction across Nassagaweya was about a mile wide and started from about Lot 23 in Concession 1 (Fig. 1). It reportedly travelled eastward and passed completely across Nassagaweya and exited into Esquesing Township at Lot 8 [Nassagaweya Historical Society]. This would leave the Esquesing Conservation Area right in line with the cyclone course, only about a half kilometer from the border with Nassagaweya. The path crossed the present site of the interchange between Highway 401 and Highway 25. It then continued on past Drumquin to the area of the 9th Line and Lower Base Line. The tornado damage was more extensive than the survey records for Halton show. After touching down near the Wellington County border, it travelled completely across Halton then continued into Peel County reaching almost to Port Credit (Paul O'Hara, pers. comm.). Overall, the damage extended in a straight line not less than 40 km in length with the main portion of the route occurring within Halton.



Fig 2. Appearance of tornado damage to young forest near Fergus following a tornado in August 2005.

The locations of the reported windfall within Halton are shown in the attached map. It is uncertain whether the presence of fallen trees was an aid or a hindrance to the settlers when they went to clear the land for agriculture. After being on the ground for at least 30 years, decay would have been advanced so that little salvageable lumber would remain. As well, the possibility of being able to burn the wood *in situ* might have been a problem. Any new forest growing up between the fallen trees likely meant less cutting with axes since those trees would have been smaller. In any case, the settlers did end up clearing most of the land when they prepared the land for agriculture. After these many years, there is no evidence of the tornado damage beyond what these limited historical records show. To provide some visual context relating to tornado damage, a photograph of recent severe damage to a young forest at Fergus is presented in Fig. 2.

by W.D. McIlveen and Dilys Bowman

References Cited:

McLean, P. and W.D. Bakowsky. 1999. Presettlement vegetation map of Halton County based on original land survey field notebook notes. Unpublished. Natural Heritage Information Centre, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Nassagaweya Historical Society. 2008. North of the 15th: A Nassagaweya History. Vol. 1. Nassagaweya Historical Society. Campbellville, Ontario. 252 pp.

Scallen, D. 2015. The Big Tree Project. The Esquesing. Vol 49 (4) pp. 6-8.

Gray Treefrogs



In mid-spring our ponds resound to the penetrating trills of Gray Treefrogs – a come-hither cacophony rising from the vocal sacks of hormone driven males (above).

So strong is the males' yearning for females that they will continue to sing even when a flashlight illuminates their watery stage. This makes the calling males wonderful subjects for nighttime photography.

These photogenic frogs are remarkable amphibians, magnificently adapted to life in northern woodlands. They are changelings, able to shift their skin colour through various shades of gray, green and brown to blend with their surroundings.

They have adhesive disks on the tips of their fingers that allow them to climb trees. This ability expands their feeding space far beyond that available to their earthbound cousins. Like forest birds, they can hunt the cornucopia of insects inhabiting every level of the forest, from the ground to the tree tops.

To cope with our cold winters, treefrogs, like wood frogs, can tolerate freezing temperatures. Glycol in their bloodstream acts as an antifreeze. Then when spring warms their amphibian hearts, treefrogs seem able to divine new water sources. Dig a pond near a grove of trees and treefrogs will come.

Treefrog tadpoles are also remarkable. They are hunted by dragonfly larvae - sharks of the Lilliputian pond-world. Faced with these pint-sized terrors what's a soft bodied tadpole to do? Well with treefrog tadpoles, changing the colour of their tails is one answer. Research has shown that in ponds with lots of dragonfly larvae, treefrog tadpoles sport bright red tails. Biologists propose that these red tails divert the attention of dragonfly larvae away from the tadpoles' heads. Far better to lose part of your tail than lose your head!

Given trees and ponds, the remarkable Gray Treefrogs will survive. Long may they trill!

by Don Scallen

Listen to the trill of the Gray Treefrog at

http://www.naturenorth.com/spring/sound/Gray_Treefrog.mp3



Green and gray phases of Gray Treefrogs

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club, Box 115, Georgetown, Ontario L7G 4T1
Charity Registration number 869778761RR0001

Executive

President: Don Scallen (905) 877-2876
Past President Fiona Reid (905) 693-9719
Vice President: Ian Jarvie (905) 877-1441
Secretary: Emily Dobson (647) 408-9515
Treasurer: Janice Sukhiani (647) 408-9515

Appointments

Membership:
Newsletter:
Ontario Nature Representative: Johanna Perz
Public Relations: Johanna Perz
Webmaster: John Beaudette
Crozier Property Steward
Hardy Property Steward Ray Blower

Membership for one year: \$30 Single; \$40 Family
The Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club is an affiliated member of Ontario Nature.

www.hnpnc.com

Birding outing to Beamer Conservation Area, April 23, 2016

Bird list

by Ian Jarvie

SCOTCH BLOCK

Canada Goose 50
Wood Duck 1
Double-crested Cormorant 6
Great Blue Heron 1
Caspian Tern 1
Red-bellied Woodpecker 1
Downy Woodpecker 1
Tree Swallow 1
Bank Swallow 1
Barn Swallow 2
Black-capped Chickadee 6
American Robin 1
Northern Cardinal 1
Red-winged Blackbird 9
American Goldfinch 7

LASALLE MARINA

Canada Goose 20
Mute Swan 2
Trumpeter Swan 2
Mallard 7
Double-crested Cormorant 10
Carolina Wren 1
House Sparrow 20

CANADA CENTRE FOR INLAND WATERS, HAMILTON

Canada Goose 10
Gadwall 6
Mallard 1
Long-tailed Duck 10
Double-crested Cormorant 400
Black-crowned Night-Heron 21
Ring-billed Gull 1000
Caspian Tern 1
Rock Pigeon (Feral Pigeon) 2
American Robin 2
European Starling 1
Song Sparrow 2

WINDERMERE BASIN, HAMILTON

Canada Goose 6
Mute Swan 2
Blue-winged Teal 1
Northern Pintail 2
Redhead 16
Lesser Scaup 30
Bufflehead 50
Ruddy Duck 3
Double-crested Cormorant 7
Bald Eagle 1
Red-tailed Hawk 1
American Coot 4
Killdeer 5
Ring-billed Gull 25
Caspian Tern 25
Northern Flicker 2
American Kestrel 1
Merlin 1
Tree Swallow 50
European Starling 3
Song Sparrow 2
Red-winged Blackbird 3
Common Grackle 3

BEAMER CONSERVATION AREA

Turkey Vulture 10
Sharp-shinned Hawk 1
Cooper's Hawk 1
Broad-winged Hawk 5
Red-tailed Hawk 3
Mourning Dove 2
Red-bellied Woodpecker 2
Golden-crowned Kinglet 3
Ruby-crowned Kinglet 2
Dark-eyed Junco 2
Northern Cardinal 3

15 SIDEROAD/ MUD STREET, GRIMSBY

Turkey Vulture 2
Upland Sandpiper 3
Savannah Sparrow 1
Eastern Meadowlark 1

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club Membership Form

_____ Renewal or _____ New Member(s) Date _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Membership renewal fee

from September through to August _____ Single (\$30.00) _____ Family (\$40.00)

New members' fees from sign-up date:

December through to August _____ Single (\$22.50) _____ Family (\$30.00)

March through to August _____ Single (\$15.00) _____ Family (\$20.00)

June through to August _____ Single (\$ 7.50) _____ Family (\$10.00)

Do you have any suggestions for programs or field trips?

How did you hear about our club (newspaper/website/friend/other)?

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

(**must** be signed by anyone planning to attend field trips or other outdoor activities)

In making this application, I affirm that I am in good health, capable of performing the exercise required to participate, and that I accept as my personal risk the hazards of such participation and will not hold the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club or its representatives responsible.

In consideration of the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club accepting my application, I hereby and forever release and discharge the Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club and its officers, directors, servants and agents from any liability whatsoever arising as a result of my participation in these trips and declare that this is binding upon me, my heirs, executors, administrators and assigned.

Signature(s): _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Meetings are at St Alban's Church in Glen Williams (see over) starting at 7:30 p.m.

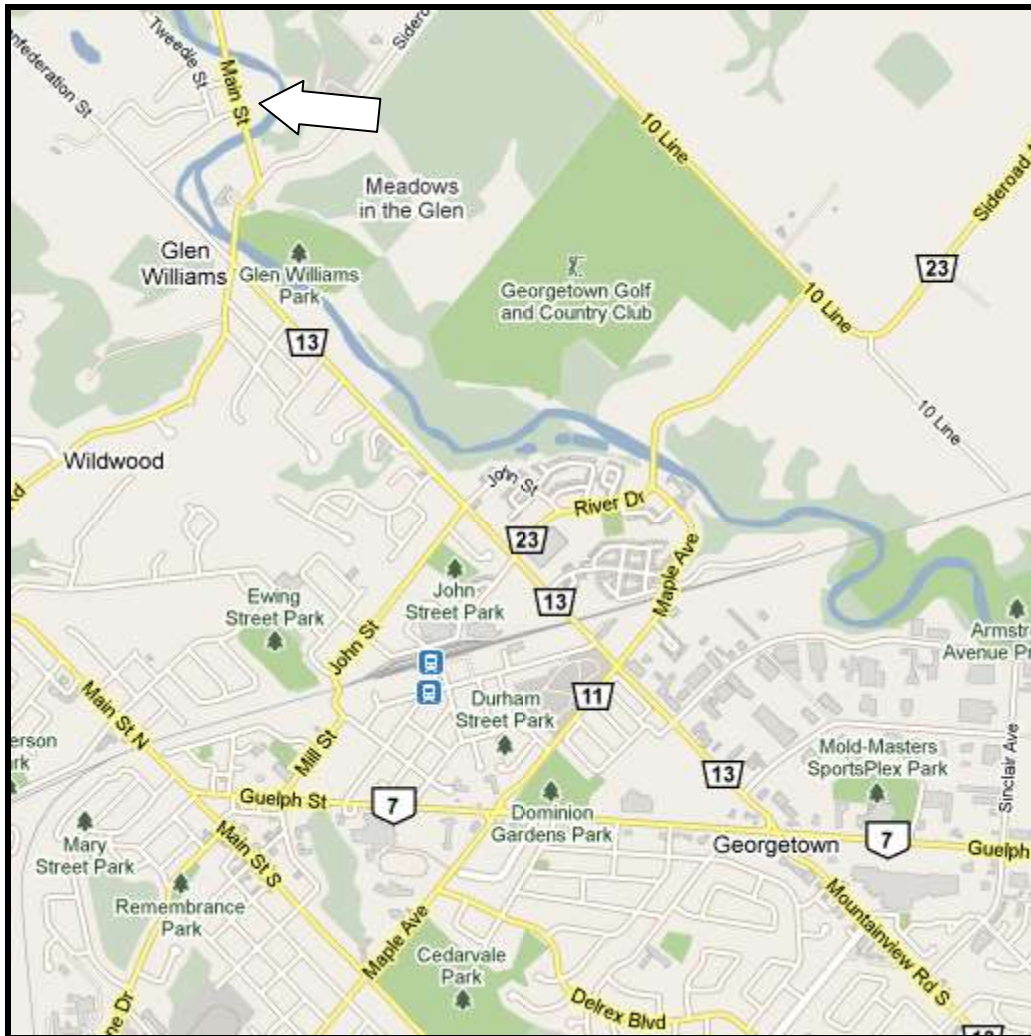
Please fill out this form and bring it in to next indoor meeting or mail with payment to:

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club,
P.O. Box 115,
Georgetown, Ontario, L7G 4T1

Halton/North Peel Naturalist Club

Meeting Location

St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church, 537 Main Street, Glen Williams



Naturalist Club Evening Walks - Summer 2016

Halton/North Peel Naturalists and South Peel Naturalist Clubs

All walks are on Mondays and start at the meeting location at 7:00 p.m. sharp.

| | 2016 | Location | Meeting Place | Leader |
|----|--------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | May 09 | Sherwood Forest Park Wildflowers | Sherwood Forest Park | Bill McIlveen |
| 2 | May 16 | Acton Swift Watch | Dublin Line | Emily Dobson |
| 3 | May 23 | Scotch Block Warblers | Hwy 401 at Hwy 25 | Fiona Reid |
| 4 | May 30 | Hewick Meadows | Credit Pointe Drive | Bill McIlveen |
| 5 | Jun 06 | Scotsdale Bird Box | Scotsdale Farm | Bill McIlveen |
| 6 | Jun 13 | Lowville Park | Lowville Park | Bill McIlveen |
| 7 | Jun 20 | Forks-of-Credit | Forks-of-Credit | Don Scallen |
| 8 | Jun 27 | Riverview Park | PineCliff Park | Bill McIlveen |
| 9 | Jul 04 | Mahon Tract | Campbellville Parking | Dawn Renfrew |
| 10 | Jul 11 | North Park, Oakville | Sixteen Mile Sports fields | Bill McIlveen |
| 11 | Jul 18 | Hardy & Crozier Tracts | Hwy 401 at Hwy 25 | Ray Blower |
| 12 | Jul 25 | Riverwood | Riverwood | Bill McIlveen |
| 13 | Aug 01 | Dublin Line Extension | Hwy 401 at Hwy 25 | Bill McIlveen |
| 14 | Aug 08 | Swift Night Out | Oakville | Emily Dobson |
| 15 | Aug 15 | Nassagaweya Townline Ponds Bats | Hwy 401 at Hwy 25 | Fiona Reid |
| 16 | Aug 22 | Shanahan Tract | Campbellville Parking | Dawn Renfrew |
| 17 | Aug 29 | Ratray Marsh | Green Glade School | Kirsten Burling |

Sherwood Forest Park – Parking lot at north end of Fothergill Blvd., Burlington, just west of Burloak Dr.

Acton Downtown – Dublin Line about 0.5 km north of Sideroad 25 at closed former right of way followed by check for Chimney Swifts in Town.

Hwy 401 at Hwy 25 – Commuter parking lot at SE intersection of Hwy 401 and Hwy 25, Milton

Credit Pointe Drive – Roadside of Credit Pointe Dr. at Culham Trail between Covington Terr. & Wellsborough

Scotsdale Farm - parking lot at Scotsdale Farm, east side Trafalgar Road north of Sideroad 27, Silver Creek

Lowville Park – Lowville Park parking lot on Guelph Line.

Forks-of-Credit – Parking lot off McLaren Drive, south of Charleston Sideroad. Entrance Fee in effect

PineCliff Park – Parking lot near Creditview Road and Credit River

Campbellville – Commuter parking lot southwest corner Hwy 401 and Guelph Line

Sixteen Mile Sports Complex - 3070 Neyagawa Blvd, Oakville, near off-leash dog park

Riverwood – Main parking lot at Riverwood Conservancy, Burnhamthorpe Road W, east side of Credit R.

Oakville – Old high closed school east of Reynolds St. between Sheddon Ave and Oakville Trafalgar Hospital

Green Glade School – Green Glade off Meadow Wood Road, Clarkson

For more information, call Bill McIlveen (519) 853-3948