

Wetlands Observer

Mashkinonje Provincial Park

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Vol 16 Issue 1

January 2016



Friends of
Mashkinonje

www.mashkinonje.com

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Bits and Bites.....

- In 2015, Friends of Mashkinonje lost a good friend with the passing of Scott Chandler. We offer our condolences to the family and friends. Scott Chandler enjoyed visiting the Park and hiking the trails. He valued and supported the Park. We gratefully thank everyone who donated to the Park in Scott's memory.
- In 2015 we received a grant from TD Friends of the Environment for educational signage to enhance the Heron-Atakas Trail boardwalk. The signs have been completed, some have been installed and the remaining signs should be installed in the Spring of 2016.
- Thank you to Dianne Furchner for your hard work on the Board for Friends of Mashkinonje. Dianne has resigned from the Board - her knowledge, commitment and humour will be missed.
- At the August AGM Harley Lang was recognized as a lifetime Honorary Member of the Friends of Mashkinonje board. Thank you Harley for your commitment and ingenuity in supporting the needs of the Park.
- The Friends of Mashkinonje also welcome Mary Coulombe to the Board of Directors.
- The lucky winner of the 17.5' Prospector Canoe made by Souris River Canoes was Marge Van Exan of Sudbury.
- In 2015 the Friends of Mashkinonje sponsored a young person to attend Ontario Natures 2015 Youth Summit for Biodiversity and Environmental Leadership. If you know of a young person who would be interested in attending the 2016 Summit please let us know as soon as possible.
- Thanks to the following:
 - Nancy and Andy Kennedy for sponsoring the Tamarac Swamp.
 - The French River Horticultural Society for donating the wonderful gift baskets at our Silent Auction.
 - Daniel D. Longlade FCS of Collins Barrow for completing our financials.
 - TD Friends of the Environment.
 - Due North Marketing for hosting our website.
 - We would like to thank all the Friends who have supported us by becoming members, by donating time, money, energy and by participating in our activities.
 - Saenchiur Flechey Resort for sponsoring the Cotton Grass Fen.

Strategy.....we move from build to maintenance!

- Mashkinonje Park has 11 hiking trails covering over 30 km with various levels of difficulty. There is a paddling trail for canoes and kayaks through the marshes for 5 km. We have access by land/water to 2 beaches for great swimming. The build has been supported by many people and funds raised through multiple beneficiaries. The trails give us access to marshes, swamps, fens and bogs as well as trails along the coast of Lake Nipissing offering beautiful views of the West Arm. We move from one chapter in the evolution of the park to a new chapter on maintaining the beauty and usability of Mashkinonje.
- First up.....The Loudon Boardwalk (by Harley Lang) . It has been over 10 years since we first built the boardwalk and 5 years since we built the first overlook deck and upgraded the trail to make it accessible to visitors with disabilities, Now, while the boardwalk was constructed to be serviceable for a number of decades, the ravages of time/weather along with about 60 feet of unexpected subsidence along the north-central portion of the boardwalk makes wheelchair operations perilous. The FOM has been planning to remedy this situation for the past few years and had come up with a Plan "A" which had involved cutting the sunken hemlock columns below the cross members and inserting tailored "plugs" to return the north side of the boardwalk to its original level.....This phase of the operation required that we place temporary jacking points of timbers from which to raise the decking. Of course, we had to wait for strong ice on the pond to support the jacking operation. So when Eddie and Harley arrived in March of 2014, they found plenty of ice but unfortunately , the resident beavers had neglected to notify us that they were going to raise the level of the water in the pond to the point where it was impossible to proceed with Plan "A"(We know the beavers were snickering about this development in their cozy lodges because they have always been a little peeved about the FOM messing about in "their" pond). This little setback caused us to come up with Plan "B" which was to lower the pond water by 10" in the fall of 2015 to permit the re-implementation of Plan "A" in March 2016. And then another "Ah ha" moment.....the only way to lower the water would have been to lower the more southerly dam in the late fall of 2015 by about a foot in the hopes the water would have pressed along on its course to Lake Nipissing before the freeze up. However, after a LOT of discussion and careful investigation, this Plan "A" was abandoned altogether when a delegation of beavers informed us that lowering the pond level before freeze up would imperil hibernating amphibians, reptiles and assorted pond beasties over the winter. Continued.....

Strategy.....we move from build to maintenance!

Now , since a number of holes had rotted through the hemlock decking over the years and a number of planks have had to be replaced, a new plan, Plan “C” was developed wherein all 311 planks would be replaced by new ACQ (brown) treated wood (which is much more environmentally friendly than the green ACQ) along with new stringers for levelling where required. This scheme does not require “ice” cover so can take place at any convenient time. In fact Liz, Jeremy, Dave and I have already installed the decking along the first 60 feet and plan to have the remainder of the decking and new stringers in place before the end of February 2016. Reconstruction of the railing may have to wait for more clement weather but in the meantime, the boardwalk will be perfectly functional.

- The donation box at the Loudon site was stolen and we are looking at the costs for replacement.
- One of the roofs over a washroom is being assessed for replacement.
- Clean up of the trails is being planned with Friends of Mashkinonje and Ontario Parks for early May. We will invite high school students to participate under supervision to assist them in achieving their volunteer hours. All help will be appreciated in getting the Park ready for use after the winter and we will keep “friends” aware of our details on the clean up.
- Baseball Caps with Mashkinonje Park logo will be available again this spring for a nominal cost.
- A Canoe raffle for a 17.5” Prospector Canoe made by Souris River Canoes will be held again in 2016. The canoe will once again be located at the French River Visitor Centre for viewing from May to October when the draw will take place. Good Luck!
- The Snowshoe hike is scheduled for **FEBRUARY 7 meeting at Loudon entrance at 1:45** and leaving at 2:00 sharp for a 2-3 hour hike. The hike will be lead by Dr. Peter Beckett, Reclamation, Restoration and Wetland Ecologist and Jeremy Pawson, Superintendent Parks Ontario. Be sure to mark this on your calendars
- AGM will be held again in August (date to be finalized) where lunch will be available at a minimal cost and a silent auction that is always a lot of fun!

Friends of Mashkinonje 2016 Membership

It is that time again to renew your annual membership as a Friend of Mashkinonje. Please complete the attached form and mail to the address below. Thank youwe appreciate your support.

- Respond to: Friends of Mashkinonje at 1692 Robin Avenue, Val Caron, Ontario P3N 1M3
- www.mashkinonje.com
-
- Please indicate the type of membership you would like to have. Memberships and donations are tax deductible and are much appreciated.
YEAR _____
- Individual \$15.00 _____ Family \$ 25.00 _____
Corporate \$50.00 _____ Donation Only _____
- I would like to become a sponsor in the following category: Muskrat Marsh \$50.00 _____ Tamarac Swamp \$100.00 _____
- Cotton Grass Fen \$250.00 _____ Moose Bog \$500.00 _____
_____ ***Tax receipt desired*** _____
- Name: _____

- Address: _____

- Email: _____
Phone Number: _____
-
- ***Thank you for being a Friend!***

Nature's Nuggets.....

- The snow has finally blanketed the landscape of Mashkinonje Provincial Park and the atmosphere of winter is upon us. Hopefully you're reading this article in a warm room with a bright window. If so, take a look outside at the current winter landscape. What do you see? As I write this article I'm looking out the window and see conifer trees billowing with fluffy snow and a forest floor covered in a soft white blanket. In general the land appears quiet, almost in a slumber. People often portray winter as a time for reflection, a time for rest, or simply a time to slow down. In Mashkinonje Provincial Park this may be reality for some of the local wildlife, but for others the opposite is true. Winter can be a very challenging time. For some, remaining extremely active is often key to survival and the saying, "do or die", truly applies.
- In the Summer months, when heat is plentiful, a life of exposure to the open air is a fine option. During the winter months many of our local inhabitants prefer to choose a life of solitude. Beneath the surface of the snow a secret layer of warmth exists. Heat rises up from the ground and is then insulated by the thick snowy, blanket creating a warmer (not necessarily warm) area to inhabit. In this layer, and deeper below, a rushed lifestyle occurs where every day is focused on obtaining the energy needed to survive to the next.
- The mouse-sized northern short-tailed shrew is probably one of the best examples of this. I would say the shrew is sort of like the professional athlete of the rodent world. They work extremely hard and as a result must eat an immense amount of food in able to fulfill their energy demands. On average a short-tailed shrew will eat its own body weight in food every day. That's right, think of eating your own body weight in food every day. If a shrew doesn't do this, it won't be able to generate enough body heat and will perish from the cold. During the fall and winter a significant food cache is created and maintained to help them subsidize the daily food supply. The production of venomous saliva allows a shrew to actually paralyze its prey. Yes, I said paralyze, and yes, venom like our only venomous snake the massasauga rattler. Just so that no one is scared out of hiking in the park I do want to clarify that a bite from a shrew, however unlikely, would only cause at most a slight irritation of the skin in humans. Small insects are paralyzed, stashed in these caches, and kept alive for a substantial period of time. Even more impressive is that shrews can be quite aggressive allowing them to eat other small animals such as mice. They have even been known to attack much larger animals such as young snowshoe hares **cont.....**

Nature's Nuggets..... (cont)

and snakes. In my opinion it doesn't **seem** like a good idea for a rodent to attack a snake, but shrew do.

Now that you know a little more about the busy nature of the very active northern short-tailed shrew you should take a moment to re-observe the winter scenery out your window. Winter isn't necessarily a place of winter slumber for all animals. Many are living their busy lives right on through until the springtime. So when you feel your winter schedule is getting a little too hectic, you can always reflect on the fact that at least you're not a northern short-tailed shrew living in Mashkinonje Provincial Park. (Dave Ward A/Assistant Superintendent Mashkinonje Provincial Park)



FISHING FANATICS – Word Search

K	C	A	B	E	L	K	C	I	T	S	E	B	B
C	I	K	R	E	N	I	H	S	G	G	L	N	B
T	S	U	C	K	E	R	U	L	N	U	I	N	U
T	C	N	B	D	R	L	B	U	E	P	G	A	R
U	O	N	D	A	C	E	L	G	L	H	F	O	B
O	E	O	L	E	D	L	I	U	L	W	C	H	O
R	B	E	B	A	E	L	C	T	O	K	T	M	T
T	C	G	A	K	L	S	N	N	B	C	I	L	E
W	O	R	S	C	K	C	N	A	N	N	V	E	Y
O	P	U	S	S	E	I	S	I	N	R	D	E	E
B	M	T	K	K	M	S	S	O	K	P	R	U	L
N	P	S	I	D	Q	M	W	S	P	P	U	V	L
I	M	P	U	M	N	E	A	W	M	W	M	W	A
A	L	M	M	E	F	L	T	A	H	S	T	U	W
R	E	T	R	A	D	T	L	H	H	C	R	E	P

FISHING FANATICS - FOM

- Lamprey
- Rainbow Trout
- Stickleback
- Chub
- Gar
- Perch
- Sucker
- Pumpkinseed
- Mud minnow
- Darter
- Rock Bass
- Sturgeon
- Blue Gill
- Drum
- Eel
- Burbot
- Ciscoe
- Bass
- Muskellunge-
- Walleye
- Dace
- Pike
- Smelt
- Minnow

- Wildlife continues to be active around the Park this winter. Four white tail deer travelled across the ice from Musky Island into the Park. Half an hour later 7 grey wolves followed their tracks into the Park. Ten minutes later a second year bald eagle followed the same tracks into the Park. Thanks to Angela Martin for providing the details and the picture.



2015-2016 Board of Directors

- President: Peter Beckett
- Vice President: Mary Tallevi
- Treasurer/Membership: Brenda Tunney
- Secretary: Anita Bracer
- Board Member: Mary Coulombe
- Honorary Board Member: Harley Lang

- ONTARIO PARK REPRESENTATION:
 - Superintendent Parks Ontario: Jeremy Pawson
 - Assistant Superintendent: Dave Ward

- CONTACT INFORMATION:
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