



Friends of Mashkinonje

www.mashkinonje.com

E-mail: friendsofmashkinonje@yahoo.ca

The Wetlands Observer

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Home of Dog Lichen and Beaver Trees

Barrier-free Trail Opening

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

“This trail, of all the things that we’ve done in the park, it gives me the best feeling, the warmest feeling, to be able to have this trail where people can get out in nature regardless of who they are” said Angela Martin, president of the Friends of Mashkinonje, at the trail’s opening.

On September 12 with the wind rippling vegetation across the marsh on a gorgeous afternoon, and through the efforts of many volunteers, the Friends of Mashkinonje officially opened the barrier-free section of Mashkinonje Provincial Park’s trail network.

The park has an extensive trail system that traverses the various wetland landscapes of Mashkinonje, including its provincial significant peatland, located at the western end of Lake Nipissing. The park is located equal distance from Sudbury and North Bay along Highway #64.

The upgraded section of trail starts at the Loudon Peatland trailhead which is located about 10 minutes south of Lavigne, Ontario. The barrier-free trail is a 600 metre section that has been redeveloped, levelled and surfaced with fine gravel to make a surface more welcoming for people who require smooth surfaces and gentle slopes: small children, seniors and especially those with strollers and wheelchairs. It also has a number of interpretive panels that describe the forest and wetlands that people can see during the walk.



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The trail includes accessible parking, washrooms, and a picnic table at the trailhead. There are several rest stops with benches every few hundred feet along the trail, an elevated boardwalk crossing a marsh, eventually leading to a well-appointed lookout platform that provides views across the marsh. An interpretive panel explains the adaptations of beavers to their aquatic environment, which is appropriate, as a large beaver lodge sits in the middle of the marsh below the lookout.

The trail was built by the local community with major support from the Friends of Mashkinonje, the Municipality of French River, Economic Partners of Sudbury East – West Nipissing, the Sudbury East Board of Trade, and the physical

effort of the students and teachers of École secondaire de la Rivière-des-française.



Trans Canada Trail

Trans Canada Trail has adopted Mashkinonje trails to be part of their network. This trail system is between the Blanding's Pond parking lot on the west side of Hwy 64 just north of the West Arm Narrows bridge, to the Martin Pond parking lot off Musky Island Rd. The Trans Canada Trail takes in part of the Samoset Trail, the Heron Trail and part of the Martin Pond Trail – approximately 7 km.

New Interpretive Signs

26 new interpretive signs mostly found along the Loudon Peatland Trail were added to the park in 2012. The Friends of Mashkinonje decided on the sign locations, created the sign design, wrote ups, took the photos in the park and engaged an artist to replicate the park environment. These signs are truly Mashkinonje signs!

Thank you Economic Partners Sudbury East West Nipissing for your support.

We will feature at least one of the new signs in each of our next newsletters. The sign below can be seen at the barrier free lookout.



The Blanding's Pond sign at the south entrance on the east side of Hwy 64 was paid for by the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. Cottage Country Builders built the sign structure and owner Lyle Brubacker contributed his time and expertise.

Thank you Lyle, Carl, Harley and Virgil for your good work!



Watching the Pond

By: Chuck Miller

“The first requirement of pond watching is finding a good pond to watch!”

The Martin Pond Trail provides such an opportunity. The trail is a 4 km loop and is moderate difficulty. The trail begins at Martin Pond access, off a short access road at 325 Musky Island Road – the drive way is partly across private land so please respect private property.

A favourite pastime is watching ponds – this is perhaps most rewarding in the fall and spring; as animals explore in the spring and prepare for winter and waterfowl conglomerate during migration.

Woodland ponds are often created by beavers creating dams in slow-flowing streams in wooded areas. These dams are built of twigs and limbs and made waterproof with the addition of mud. The flooding causes large mature trees in the flooded area to die and sediments rich in nutrients to accumulate at dam sites. The dams also hold water creating new aquatic habitats as well as creating shoreline conditions that allow trees and shrubs that flourish on moisture to establish. The beavers thus create a diversity of habitats for other insects, plants, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.

The diversity of habitats plus the mix of cover and open areas makes them places to maximize wildlife viewing opportunities. The dead trees attract woodpeckers – which in turn create holes that are used as winter shelter by smaller birds such as chickadees. The shoreline shrubs attract warblers while newly-established cattails attract red-winged blackbirds. The open water attracts great blue herons, mallard ducks and Canada geese.



The ponds become habitat for painted turtles, frogs, toads and salamanders. Bull frogs and turtles overwinter in the mud at the bottom of the ponds and spring peepers can be almost deafening in the spring. The abundance also attracts mammal such as otter, mink, muskrats and racoons.

Nutrient rich mud at dam sites promotes the growth of plants such as blue flag iris, Joe-pyeweed, grasses, rushes and sedges.

In the winter check the beaver houses for wolf tracks in the snow.



The Martin Pond Trail

The Martin Pond Trail is 4 km long and moderate in difficulty. If hiking counterclockwise the first lookout at Martin Pond occurs less than 1 km along the trail at a beaver dam rich in vegetation with a good view of a beaver house – there is a bench at this location. When approaching the pond do so carefully especially in the fall and spring as it is a favourite open water area for ducks and geese.

The trail then proceeds west – where it intersects with the Pebble Beach Trail. In less than 1 km you will come to a second look out of Martin Pond – overlooking some standing dead trees in a cattail marsh. This is a nice place to stop for a snack and watch the marsh from an elevated bedrock ridge. The trail then proceeds east past the intersection with the Heron Trail to an overlook of another wetland before circling back to the access point.





Making Your Wilderness Dreams a Reality

Canoe Raffle Winner

Dianna Maynard, Dianna’s grandsons encouraged her to buy the winning ticket. Enjoy!!!



Halloween Hike

By: Angela Martin

One can never tell during the fall, rainy season but the day of our hike was perfect and really comfortable for hiking. Eight people took the 4 km hike along the Martin Pond Trail. This trail was named after us, after we showed the people completing the park life science survey 13 years ago, the best lookout spot.

Access to this trail and the north part of Mashkinonje is a small road off the south side of Musky Island Rd. We have now met government regulations and will be upgrading this road, building a parking lot and adding signage. There are two 4-km trails in the north park that have historic value, travel along the lake and link to longer trails. There are over 30 km of trails west of Hwy 64; something for everyone. The east side of the Martin Pond Trail is part of the Trans Canada Trail through Mashkinonje.

A hike in the fall provides different colors, textures and no bugs! The most interesting was the bright orange slim mould and the dog lichen. The dog lichen in the photo is unusual because it was growing at the base of a tree trunk, normally found on the ground. It is very pretty!

For those interested in photography, this is a good time of year to take photos: the bright colors are accentuated by the brown leaves and sculptured, frozen puddles are unique in the woods.



AGM & Picnic

We have always been lucky on our picnic days, the sun has always shone! The previous year was reviewed and the 2012–13 Board of Directors was elected. The business was followed by a picnic, Blanding's turtle celebration cake and a silent auction. Fun was had by all with several entertaining moments! Wish all of you were there.



2012 Mashkinonje–North Monetteville Christmas Bird Count Summary

Saturday January 5, 2013

What a pretty day for our Christmas Bird Count-CBC. The sky was blue and the sun shone over us. We have 4 regions within our circle, covered by 6 field observers with 4 feeder watchers. One group drove all day while the other 3 groups drove through the morning, gathered for lunch then hiked or snowshoed in the afternoon. The latter groups were looking specifically for Black-backed Woodpeckers; although none was found, in the days preceding the CBC, Gary Martin saw one on his property that could be recorded.

The birds that were counted were less than the average of the previous 10 years but not the lowest year counted. The number of species however was the lowest in our CBC history. An observation made by all the field observers was fewer people are feeding birds. Those people who feed birds have a rewarding experience. Seeing birds in the winter brightens your day!

- A Barred Owl was new for the CBC, found by Cal Osborne and Sandra Arseneau north of Lavigne.
- This is the second time a Northern Cardinal, found by Randy Moratz in St Charles and 12 Red Crossbills, found by Gary & Angela Martin feeding on Duck Creek Rd. have been found on count day.
- Gray Jays were counted at the Lang feeder and during Gary Martin's hike.
- American Tree Sparrows were found at 2 locations; St Charles and the Martin feeder.
- Bald Eagles were sighted by a feeder watcher and Angela Martin in the West Bay–West Arm area. This is the 4th time Bald Eagles have been counted.
- Snow Buntings were found in most regions with St Charles having the highest numbers.
- All regions had Pine Grosbeaks.
- Chuck Miller was delighted to see male Evening Grosbeaks on the red Sumac fruit.
- Species with particularly low numbers were: Ruffed Grouse, Downy Woodpeckers and Northern Raven.
- Species present in every previous CBC but missed on the 2012 count were House Sparrows and Northern Shrike.

It is always a nice day getting out in nature and enjoying local bird life. You don't need a reason, just enjoy!



50th Anniversary of the Mashkinoje Provincial Park

Word Search – Birds

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

WORDS

Horned Grebe

Greater Scaup

Northern Shrike

Sedge Wren

Veery

Swan

Falcon

Turkey

Bobolink

Hoary Redpoll

Eagle

Goshawk

Sandpiper

Grouse

Gull

Snowy Owl

Cuckoo

Pipit

Thrush

Finch

Gray Jay

Loon

Pelican

Heron

Ovenbird

Dove

Nuthatch

Vireo

Waxwing

Events 2013

All events meet at the Loudon Entrance,
Hwy 64 1km south of Musky Island Rd.
For information contact: Angela Martin
705-594-1153

Cross the Park Snowshoe

Saturday February 9th, at 9:30 am

Earth Day Hike

Sunday April 28, at 9:30 am

AGM and Picnic

Sunday August 18th, at 11 am

Mashkinonje 50th Anniversary

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

Halloween Hike

Saturday, October 26, 2013

Appreciation

When we started to work on Mashkinonje in 1998, it was a local initiative. Nothing has changed; most of you have been on board for our whole journey. We still need and appreciate your support. We could not have created what we have today without you and we should all be very proud of our accomplishments.



Thank you *Ontario Parks* for allowing us to make Mashkinonje an integral part of our life.



Making Your Wilderness Dreams a Reality



Thank you *Daniel D. Longlade, FCA, Collins Barrow* for completing our financial statements and tax return, you are a life saver!

Thank you *Due North Marketing* for hosting our website and spreading our joy to the world.

Thank you *Jay Tee Graphics Ltd.* for finalizing the page layout and pdf creation.



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Thank you *Economic Partners – Sudbury East West Nipissing* for supporting many of our projects.



TD Friends of the
Environment
Foundation

Tip

In winter if you do decide to venture out on to the ice – be cautious when travelling on pond ice – due to weak areas caused by beaver movement under the ice; flowing water; and shell and shelf ice created by changing water levels – leaving sheets of ice unsupported and suspended above air spaces.

2012 Donors

Muskrat Marsh \$50

Cal Osborne & Sandra Arseneau
Colleen & Gerard Carriere
Jim & Madelyn Cooper
Andrew Martin
Dan & Cendrine Busch
Rip & Elaine Drobeck

Tamarac Swamp \$100

Gail & Dave Geis
Ted & Grace Price
Bob & Rae-Anne Timony

Cottongrass Fen \$250

Saenchiur Flechy
Apollo String Duo

Moose Bog \$500

Chuck Miller
Harley Lang

Andrew lives in Toronto and donates to the Friends of Mashkinonje through the United Way and payroll deduction, thank you very much.



CONTACT US

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

www.mashkinonje.com

or contact us at:

Friends of Mashkinonje
496 Musky Island Rd.,
Lavigne, ON
P0H 1R0
friendsofmashkinonje@yahoo.ca

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Thank you for being a Friend