



Friends of
Mashkinonje

THE

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**WETLANDS
OBSERVER**

Home of the Pine Marten, the Ermine, and other interesting species



WONDERFUL NEWS - UNDER CONSTRUCTION

By Chuck Miller, Park Superintendent
Killarney / French River / Mashkinonje / W. Sandy Island / Manitou Islands Provincial Parks

Wonderful news - the Louden Basin Peatlands Trailhead is under construction and a boardwalk across the first marsh should be complete by the end of March.

The beginning of the realization of the Mashkinonje Project is reason for celebration. Many people have long seen the potential economic, cultural, educational, and health benefit of the park. In October under the leadership of Mayor Claude Bouffard and Councilor Debbie Law of the Municipality of French River and with the support of Mayor Joanne Savage and John Dobbs of the Municipality of West Nipissing the municipalities passed resolutions to support the realization of the Mashkinonje Park.

In challenging economic times funding the realizations of dreams can be difficult but with the leadership support of the project; member of the community have come forward with the donation of times, skills, materials and minimal funding to make their community a stronger and better place.

In late fall all road access approvals from MTO were in place and by December Provincial Environmental Assessment comment periods expired with no objections. The first step was to install a culvert for the Trailhead parking lot. The rush was on as the snow came early this year. Harley and Liz Lang provided a backhoe; Bob Timony, Bayview Excavating provided gravel, Don Viau and Rick Thomas delivered gravel from the Municipality of French River; and Ontario Parks came up with a culvert. The Mashkinonje Project was underway.

The Friends of Mashkinonje followed up with a site clearing weekend. Headed up by a generous donation of equipment and supervision by Harley Lang of Lang's A1 Clearing; the very hands on Board of the Friends got to work with tractor, wood chipper, brush saws and chainsaws. At the same time preparations are underway on the marsh to build up the ice to support heavy equipment.

Harley's resourcefulness was also put to work in the late fall by Ontario Parks (20 rolls of flagging tape, a few air photo's and a small honorarium) to locate, mark out and GPS the other 30 km of trails in the park This work is complete – so there is still lots of work ahead.

In the New Year, Fryer's Forest Products, a community based sawmill, made an offer to the Friends of Mashkinonje to provide (hemlock) wood to the project at a favourable cost. The Friends liked the price and the plan is to get 100m of boardwalk in place by driving piers from the ice surface with heavy equipment. Fisheries and Oceans Canada have reviewed the plans and there should be no impacts on fish habitat. Time once again to meet with Harley to make it happen.

I extend my thanks to the leadership and volunteers of the community. There are still lots of work to be done but you are clearly demonstrating your desire to make your community a stronger and better place through direct action. Wonderful news!



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE *FRIENDS OF MASHKINONJE*

By Angela Martin

This year will be a year to remember. We have worked long and hard and now our dreams are coming true. It has been 8 years since the first park meeting and now we can finally start working in Mashkinonje. These first steps are truly momentous. By the spring we hope to be able to hike Mashkinonje trails and be able to share what some of us have enjoyed with all of you. There will be 30 km of trails. These trails will help provide us with a healthy lifestyle both physically and mentally. We

will be able to enjoy and learn about our wonderful area and some of our cultural history. At a later date we would like to construct interpretive signage and design maps for you. Mashkinonje will add a new dimension to what our area has to offer. These first steps will deplete most of the money we have taken years to accumulate. It is important to us that you continue your "Friendship" and encourage family and friends to join the *Friends of Mashkinonje*.

The *Friends of Mashkinonje* would like to extend a special thank you to **Chuck Miller**, our Superintendent and Ontario Parks Liaison. Although Chuck is employed by Ontario Parks, he takes part in all the *Friends* activities and supports the park in every way, far beyond the call of duty. Thank you for being a Friend, Chuck!

TRAILS FLAGGED

The Peatland trail was flagged and GPS'd last year. In the late fall, Harley Lang flagged the trails in the western half of the park as per the Park Management Plan. Over four days, Harley hiked 62 km to prepare the most scenic and environmentally sound 30 km for the public. Our spring project is to brush these trails plus those to the Peatlands and install permanent markers. It is a major project, but we are going to try our best. Then, I think a celebration will be in order.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At our Annual General Meeting before our summer picnic, we elected our new board of directors. Dr. Peter Beckett, Wetlands Biologist from Laurentian University is our new vice president. Peter has been a dedicated supporter of Mashkinonje from the very beginning. Thank you, Peter. We would also like to thank Danielle Lemieux, our retiring VP. Danielle believes in Mashkinonje, but her duties as Principal of the French River High School and owner/operator of Saenchiur Flechey leave her little time for anything else. Danielle said she is here for us until she can free up time to get involved again.

We would like to thank all the returning directors for their dedicated hard work.

FOM DIRECTORS

President

Angela Martin

Vice President

Dr. Peter Beckett

Secretary/Treasurer

Liz Lang

Members

Carmelle Girouard

Bob Wilson

Chuck Miller

Friends/Ontario Park

Superintendent

Parks Liaison

Killamey, Ontario



RAFFLE

The FOM held their first raffle this year. Our thanks to



SUMMER PICNIC

The summer picnic is always a fun event and many people shared it with us. We had fresh corn on the cob, sausage in a bun, and great homemade desserts. All the while enjoying the sunshine on the front lawn at Welcome Lodge, over looking the north shore of Mashkinonje.

Stacey Pettigrew joined us from the Sudbury Health Unit with a presentation on West Nile Virus followed by a discussion. At the end of the afternoon, we had some laughs with the silent auction. Friends took home some nice and practical auction treasures.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

2004 marked the third CBC for the Friends of Mashkinonje. We began in December with an excellent Birds of Winter presentation by Randy Moratz from the Sudbury Naturalists at the Lavigne Golden Age Club. Randy described the history of the Christmas Bird Count, the species to watch for, and some of the fun aspects of our previous counts. Thank you, Randy. It was very well done!

The Mashkinonje-North Monetteville CBC was one of 2000

counts held worldwide by the National Audubon Society, and one of 100 held in Ontario. In the winter when a blanket of snow covers the ground, birds brighten up our world. So even when with weather isn't very nice, as on our bird count day, bird watchers enjoy the activity of counting birds and sharing their findings with their friends. On January 2nd, 17 field observers and 25 feeder watchers took up the challenge. In total, 32 species and 1950 individual birds were counted. The new birds found on this count were Great Gray Owls, Northern Hawk Owls, Bohemian Waxwings and a Song Sparrow.

WORK DAY

It was planned that we have a work day on December 11th to clear the Loudon Peatland Trail parking lot and the trail down to the first wetland. Seven volunteers cleared scrub, cut down trees, and fed the wood chipper. This was all done within the survey stakes put in by Ontario Parks. The snow was deep and the work was hard, and our labour of love turned into a weekend of hard slogging. This was in preparation for putting in the boardwalk while the wetland is covered in ice (to protect the area) and for spring excavation of the parking lot.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ruth Hauta, of Samoset Lodge

Tod & Susan Porrett, Norm Leppan, Dr. Richard Denston, Ev & Stan Eisenhour, Sheldon & Julia McGregor, Reel & Rose Demore, Bernadette Piette

The Friends would like to thank the many generous supporters.

Moose Bog (\$500)

Harley & Liz Lang
Welcome Lodge
Collins Barrow Maheu Noiseux CA
Bayview Excavating
Due North Marketing

Cottongrass Fen (\$250)

Saenchiur Flechey
Shuswap on the Nipissing
Diane Bourdon
Peter Street
Chuck Miller

Tamarac Swamp (\$100)

Lakair Lodge
Samoset Lodge
Carmelle Girouard
Ted & Grace Price
Motorola
Mustang Survival

Muskrat Marsh (\$50)

Canadian Geographic
David and Beth Schnurr
T-Fal
The Lodge at Pine Cove
Pat & Bill Aikenhead

Beaver Pond (Volunteers)

Dr Peter Beckett
Harley Lang
Liz Lang
Norm Lang
Angela Martin
Gary Martin
Chuck Miller
Dave Martin
Kristen Puhvel
Kevin Cameron
Zachary Cameron
Evelyn Eisenhower
Carmelle Girouard
Laurean Corriveau

Thanks to the Golden Age Club, Lavigne, and the Monetville Community Centre for allowing us the use of their meeting facilities.

Thanks too to Dean Lisk of the *Tribune* from Sturgeon Falls and Martin Parker of the *Nugget* from North Bay for sharing our good news.

Did you know?

Female turtles lay their eggs in a sandy place in the early summer. The sex of turtles is determined by the temperature of the nest. If the nest is around 25°C, males will emerge. If the nest is around 30° C, females will hatch. We have Blandings, Painted and Snapping turtles in Mashkinonje. Watch for the females on the roads in June.

Upcoming Events 2005

Feb. 13, Snowshoe into the Peatlands
May 15 Earth Month Canoe Trip
July 9/10 Summer Bird Count
August 21 Picnic and Annual General Meeting

CONTACT US

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

www.nipissing.com/mashkinonje

or contact us at:

Friends of Mashkinonje

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For anyone who wishes to know more about the world that surrounds us, the Mashkinonje Provincial Park is a great place and will remain that way for decades to come. Protecting this area in its natural state is our goal. Your continued support will help us share our wonderful wilderness.

Thank you for being a Friend

Thank you for being a Friend of Mashkinonje