



Friends of  
**Mashkinonje**

# THE WETLANDS

Volume 5 Issue 2

July 2005

## OBSERVER

Home of the Black-billed Cuckoo, Mink, and other interesting species



### BOARDWALK COMPLETE

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

*“Thank you for the labour of the dedicated Friends, the students and staff at Cambrian College and Bayview Excavating; another thank you for the financial contributions of the Friends, individuals, Economic Partners Sudbury East / West Nipissing and Fryer Forest Products, Nadon Lumber and Sturgeon Brush; and thank you for a wonderful Mashkinonje Spring”*

Dr Peter Beckett	wes Beech
Harley Lang	Kristen Erkila
Liz Lang	Jolene Kuchma
Angela Martin	Ben Peters
Gary Martin	Mike Wilkinson
Chuck Miller	Mark Garrett
Tom Browne	Lindsay Carson
Brian Tomczuk	John Closs
Rob Wheeler	Joe Hamr
Wayne Hynes	Alan Cartier
Kevin Cameron	

### Cottongrass Fen (\$250)

Diane Bourdon  
Dan Busch & Cendrine Gemberling

### Tamarack Swamp (\$100)

Monetville Women’s Institute

### Muskrat Marsh (\$50)

### Moose Bog (\$500)

Economic Partners SEWN  
Harley & Liz Lang  
Welcome Lodge  
Collins Barrow Maheu Noiseux  
Due North Marketing  
Sturgeon Falls Brush

## FROM THE MUNICIPALITY OF FRENCH RIVER

By Debbie Law

The bountiful natural beauty of Mashkinonje Provincial Park is evident to any nature enthusiast. The opportunity for growth in local “eco-tourism” is definitely a positive point in this project and its value can’t be overlooked.

The Council of the Municipality of French River encourages all positive growth and has agreed to work together with Ontario Parks, West Nipissing and the *Friends of Mashkinonje* to participate in the preparation of a “Memorandum of Understanding”.

This “understanding” will define the roles each partner will play in the different stages of development and maintenance of this wonderful tourist attraction. Once the “Memorandum of Understanding” is clarified, things will undoubtedly continue at a faster pace. We look forward to assisting with the progress of this project in whatever manner most suitable.

The Council of the Municipality of French River recognizes and congratulates the persons who have dedicated countless volunteer hours toward the creation of this park and understand the importance of their desire to see this dream become a reality.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE *FRIENDS OF MASHKINONJE*

By Angela Martin

This has been the most exciting year for those involved with Mashkinonje. As mentioned in our previous newsletter, we began work in the park. The Loudon Peatland Trail has held importance for me because of what is at the end of the trail. The Loudon Peatland is phenomenal and now we have access to it and so does the general public. You may think it crazy, but as I watched the enthusiastic students of Dr Josef Hamr’s, Cambrian College class putting down the decking, I had to cry. We were finally finishing an important link in the trail. It was so nice to see the students smiling, eager to learn, and happy to work. It was wonderful. I would like to thank Harley Lang for designing the boardwalk and being there for every part of its construction, Liz Lang for helping Harley with every step, my husband, Gary for working 14 days when he could have been building our docks, Wayne Hynes, Kevin Cameron, Alan Cartier and Tom Browne who helped to make our dream come true. This is the beginning of something great that we can share and many will appreciate for years to come.

Our second adventure is underway now. We have awarded the contract to complete the Loudon Peatland parking lot to D&J General Contracting. The design can be seen in our July 2004 *Wetlands Observer*. We are looking forward to the completion of the entire trail, because we have many more adventures to embark upon.

Again, I would like to extend a special thank you, to all who have helped the *Friends*.

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## A TRIP TO THE PEATLANDS WITH THE MONETVILLE WOMEN’S INSTITUTE

The first group to hike across the new boardwalk to the Loudon Peatlands was the Monetville Women’s Institute. Fifteen people made the hike plus baby Ava St Louis. The evening was pleasant. The leaves had not yet grown, enabling us to see more of the plants, birds, scat and dens. When we reached the ridge overlooking the Peatlands, we had a rest and enjoyed the view. We realized that the daylight was fading and we should start back. The young folks decided to move at their own pace and made it back to the boardwalk, only to have to wait for the rest of us.



Thank you to the Monetteville Women's Institute for initiating this first official hike over Harley's boardwalk.

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## IN SEARCH OF THE ELUSIVE WHAT-YA-MA-CALL-IT!

By Marlies Schoenefeld, Sudbury Naturalists

It was a cold and windy morning with a forecast of rain! Does one go canoeing, in this? Yes, Naturalists do it.

A group of seventeen intrepid Naturalists from North Bay, Killarney, Mashkinonje and Sudbury met at Angela Martin's place where each new arrival was thoroughly examined by Angela's Sniffer Dog. We were all going to paddle and bird watch on Muskrat Creek. This area is part of the West Arm of Lake Nipissing and joins up with the French River complex.

Muskrat Creek flows through a great wetland of cattails and emergent water plants. It is flanked by the rocks from the Grenville formation which we know so well from the French River area. Pine, birch and poplar cover some of the rocky shore. It was lovely paddling in the creek, past great cattail thickets. In the open water lily leaves had reached the surface, some buds were visible and floating all about were big chunks of lily roots, the snack food for beaver and moose. Near the shore there were scent mounds of beaver to mark their territory.



At times birding became tricky since the wind was still gusting and would push you around if you stopped paddling while using binoculars to follow some bird. An osprey was the first bird to delight us; next came the Caspian terns, the common terns, cormorants and loons, a pair of mallards, a great blue heron and many red-winged black birds, swamp sparrows, song sparrows, white-crowned sparrows, white-throated sparrows and a flicker and a hairy wood pecker. The warblers were smaller and well hidden, but their song gave us the answers to who they were: black-

throated green, yellow-rumped, black and white and a red-breasted nut hatch.

We had lunch on a rocky island and chatted and laughed and enjoyed each others company. The last bird we saw hung around for a long time, it was a Northern Harrier which hunted above the cattails and let us enjoy several close-up views.

We paddled back the same way we had come and accepted an invitation from our leaders to walk the board walk of Mashkinonje Provincial Park.

A brand new structure made of hemlock planks, crossing a beautiful wetland to lead you through the woods to a magnificent bog. The Friends of Mashkinonje have raised funds for this wondrous board walk. This marsh cries out to be included in BSC's Marsh Monitoring Surveys. All that is needed is a volunteer who loves amphibians. The rewards for surveying are beyond belief. Free concerts by a band of frogs who imitate instruments from a hillbilly band: comb, banjo plucks, snores and drum rattles and a chorus of hums by toads. It is just the thing for you, right!?

Thanks to our leaders Chuck Miller and Angela Martin I must say that what started as a "cocooning" day turned into a day of adventure and discovery of a great new place to revisit many times in the future "Mashkinonje Provincial Park", our youngest park in Northern Ontario.

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## MASHKINONJE PARK FIELD TRIP- SUNDAY, JUNE 5<sup>TH</sup>

By Diane Bourdon

Renowned American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, once said, “Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature. It will never fail you.” Such was the case, when a dozen Ontario naturalists gathered at Angela and Gary Martin’s Welcome Lodge for a day hike at Mashkinonje Park.

The field trip, one of many activities planned by the Nipissing Naturalist Club for Ontario Nature/Nature Canada’s conference in North Bay, began with a delightful discovery of a Cecropia moth (*Hyalophora cecropia*), also known as the Robin moth, resting by the docks. The giant silkworm moth of the family Saturniidae has a wingspan of 12-15 cm (~7 inches) and is Ontario’s largest Lepidoptera. The discovery was all the more gratifying once it became known that the moth is nocturnal and rarely seen during daylight. It lives in adult form but a mere 7-14 days and has no mouthparts with which to feed. Once mated, the female expires within a day or two of laying her eggs, whereas the male goes on courting a little while longer.



Angela and our trail guide, wetland ecologist, Peter Beckett, then spoke of the park’s history, topography and operational plan. Although thunderclouds loomed overhead, nothing could ‘rain on our parade’ that day. The mere thought of hiking through a park not yet open to the general public and walking in the footsteps of First Nations ancestors who traded chert and other commodities for centuries on this land was exciting and humbling.

As we crossed the newly built, hemlock boardwalk, Peter drew our attention to Bullhead Lilies, Arums, Gales, Sedges, and other wetland flora that made up the Loudon marsh. We then entered hardwood forest where Wild Sarsaparilla, Nodding Trillium, Bluebead Lily, Pink Ladyslipper, Canada Mayflower and Blueberry dwell. Peter described the numerous Mosses and Lichens that adorned the granite outcrops. He explained that these plants are among the first to grow on rocks and that they create the organic matter, which makes the habitat more suitable for seed-bearing plants to take root.

Putting our faith in Peter’s immense knowledge of the land, we forged ahead on an uncut trail through thickets and brush. We discovered a Porcupine den under a granite slab, fresh Bear scat, a Hairy Woodpecker guarding its nest, Forest Tent Caterpillars, a Great Blue Heron and a Sandhill Crane along with numerous songbirds. As we reached the granite table overlooking the peatland, two boisterous Osprey circled overhead.

Despite the occasional downpour and limited time available to discover more wonders, all who attended were grateful for the opportunity to discover this natural gem.



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### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Marlies and Dieter Schoenefeld, Deb Johnson, and Annette Hoop

## FRIENDS OF MASHKINONJE- SUMMER BIRD FESTIVAL

July 9-10, 2005

The bird education evening held on June 29<sup>th</sup> at the Monetville Community Center was a fun event for everyone. There were 24 in attendance, some from Sturgeon Falls, others boated in from half way down the West Bay of Lake Nipissing and the Dokis. Angela greeted everyone with a brochure from Science North listing the plants that butterflies are attracted to, packets of wildflower seeds from Nature Canada, a new bird checklist from the Nipissing Naturalists Club and a carrying bag. Angela told people of nature and bird watching clubs in the area, province and country.

Randy Moratz from the Sudbury Naturalists came and gave an excellent presentation on the birds we should be on the look out for. Randy told us of some of their variations, what habitat to find them in, special behavior traits and their bird calls. When the leaves are on the trees, one can become familiar with a call but never see the bird. Some folks were excited to learn what bird their favorite call came from.

Thirty two people found 118 species of birds. For a complete list, see page 6. The Friends would like to thank everyone who took part. It was fun and it gave each of us a better understanding of our natural environment.

### *Friends of Mashkinonje Picnic and Annual General Meeting*

Sunday, August 21, 2005

**Location:** Welcome Lodge, Musky Island Rd. off Hwy. 64 South

**11:00 am** Annual General Meeting and Election of Officers (members only)

12:00 – 1:30 pm *Silent Auction*

12:00 Lunch: Corn Roast, Sausage on a bun, Desserts, or bring your own

2:00 pm *Hike into the park*

For further information, contact Liz Lang: (705) 898-2108, Angela Martin (705) 594-1153

#### **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**

Killarney, Ontario

#### **CONTACT US**

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

[www.nipissing.com/mashkinonje](http://www.nipissing.com/mashkinonje)

or contact us at:

Friends of Mashkinonje

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Monetville, ON, P0M 2K0

[mashkinonje@hotmail.com](mailto:mashkinonje@hotmail.com)

*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*

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**FRIENDS OF MASHKINONJE**

**2005 SUMMER BIRD FESTIVAL**

**118 SPECIES – 32 OBSERVERS**

Common Loon	Black Tern	Marsh Wren
Double-crested Cormorant	Caspian Tern	Winter Wren
Am. Bittern	Common Tern	
Great Blue Heron		Veery
Green Heron	Rock Pigeon	Hermit Thrush
Canada Goose	Mourning Dove	Am. Robin
	Black-billed Cuckoo	Gray Catbird
Wood Duck	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Brown Thrasher
Mallard		Cedar Waxwing
Am. Black Duck	Barred Owl	European Starling
Gadwall		
Am. Wigeon	Common Nighthawk	Nashville Warbler
Northern Shoveler	Whip-poor-will	Yellow Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Green-winged Teal	Belted Kingfisher	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Redhead		Pine Warbler
Lesser Scaup	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Black-throated Green
Ringed-neck Duck	Downy Woodpecker	Blackburnian Warbler
Common Goldeneye	Hairy Woodpecker	Am. Redstart
Hooded Merganser	Black-backed Woodpecker	Northern Waterthrush
Common Merganser	Northern Flicker	Ovenbird
Ruddy Duck	Pileated Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
		Canada Warbler
Turkey Vulture	Eastern Wood-Pewee	
Osprey	Alder Flycatcher	Chipping Sparrow
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	Savannah Sparrow
Northern Harrier	Eastern Phoebe	Song Sparrow
Broad-winged Hawk	Great-crested Flycatcher	Swamp Sparrow
Red-tailed Hawk	Eastern Kingbird	White-throated Sparrow
Bald Eagle	Philadelphia Vireo	Dark-eyed Junco
Am. Kestrel	Red-eyed Vireo	
Merlin		Indigo Bunting
	Blue Jay	
Ruffed Grouse	Am Crow	Bobolink
Am. Coot	Common Raven	Red-winged Blackbird
Common Moorhen		Eastern Meadowlark
Sandhill Crane	Tree Swallow	Common Grackle
Killdeer	N.Rough-winged Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird
Greater Yellowlegs	Bank Swallow	Northern Oriole
Spotted Sandpiper	Cliff Swallow	
Least Sandpiper	Barn Swallow	Purple Finch
Wilson's Snipe		Am. Goldfinch
Am. Woodcock	Black-capped Chickadee	Pine Siskin
Ring-billed Gull	White-breasted Nuthatch	Evening Grosbeak
Herring Gull	Red-breasted Nuthatch	House Sparrow

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