



Friends of
Mashkinonje

THE WETLANDS OBSERVER

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Home of the Bobcat, the Three-toed Woodpecker, and numerous other species



NEW BRIDGE/ NEW TRAILS

By Chuck Miller, Park Superintendent

Killarney / French River / Mashkinonje / W. Sandy Island / Manitou Islands Provincial Parks

When you are involved with Mashkinonje on a daily basis you sometimes forget just how much work gets done in such a short time!

About 30km of new trail is now open to the public; a canyon has been bridged; trails are now easier to find because of a new entrance sign; and many wet areas have been hardened - and all this has happened since June!

Those visiting the new trails this fall have been seeing lots of signs of wildlife including rare birds, hares, bobcats, wolf, bear and moose.

On the top of my "to do" list this winter is to fill a thermos with tea, pack a lunch and snowshoe to Harley's magnificent new bridge on the Coastal Trail. The bridge came about with financial assistance from the *Shell Environmental Fund* and a lot of hard work by volunteers. The bridge itself will prove to be a destination - but add the view - and you have a great place for a hiking destination and lunch break. While sitting on the bridge enjoying the scenery, you may also begin to ponder how one gets two 400 pound steel beams to such a location without heavy equipment!

The Loudon Peatland Access now has a new entrance and should make the park easier to find. Crews this fall successfully opened the full 30 km of trails at Mashkinonje (including substantial summer storm clean-up).

The Municipality of French River sponsored a project with Human Resources Development Canada to hire 3 staff to harden the trails where they cross wet areas. Many areas have been hardened. Special thanks to Lucie Rochon at the Municipality of French River, Harley and Erik as well as the crew Tamara, Lise and Myles.

WOW – all this work done! “Is there anything left to do?” you ask.

Yes - lots! Access points, maps, signs, wheelchair access, lookouts, and washrooms are in our plans for the near future. If you want to become involved and help out, contact the Friends of Mashkinonje.

WE NEED TO NAME THE NEW BRIDGE

The Shell Environmental Fund made it possible for the Friends to build a footbridge to complete the Coastal Trail. The footbridge is located approximately 1.3 km south of Pebble Beach, where the interior series of beaver ponds empties into Lake Nipissing. We had to traverse two bedrock ridges, a distance of 22 feet. The bridge design and construction was carried out by Harley Lang and he did a fabulous job.



We need to name the new bridge and we are asking you for help. If you can think of a name please email your thoughts to mashkinonje@hotmail.com by Friday March 23rd, thanks.

We hope you will all visit the bridge this year and experience the wonderful view.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT By Angela Martin



It has been 2 years since we started working in the park and what a difference has been made! Mashkinonje is taking the shape of something that we can all be very proud of. Almost everyone who is reading this has played a part in bringing Mashkinonje to fruition. We started with a beautiful chunk of land with provincially significant wetlands on a northern lake in the Canadian Shield. We are lucky for that alone but we have worked with Ontario Parks, local municipalities including the most prominent, the Municipality of French River, SEWN Economic Partners and other funders and local people to have a beautiful provincial park with 35 km of trails. There is much left to accomplish but the base is there.

We hope to have a trail map out by summer. Our *To Do List* includes two parking lots, installation of two privies that are more expensive than you can imagine, trail signage, a lookout tower ... the list goes on. We have come a long way but we need for you to continue supporting the Friends, so that we can complete our provincial park. I have written the remaining portion of this newsletter but I don't find it necessary to write my name after each article. Thank you and I hope will enjoy and learn from our newsletter.

JULY 17 STORM - CEDAR WAXWING

The days leading up to July 17th were very windy. One of our guests brought us a Cedar Waxwing nestling that had fallen from its nest. When we investigated further, we saw that the nest had two other nestlings and they were filling the nest. The nest was on a high Red Pine branch over the lake. It was obvious we could not put the young Cedar Waxwing back. The young bird was lucky that it had been blown onto land and not into the lake. If you see a young bird, the best thing is to leave it where it is because the parents will look after it on the ground. I don't know why, but I put it in a safe sheltered place beside the house. We fed it insects, worms, fresh blueberries and raspberries.

The next day, July 17th was windy all day. At 5pm I saw the gale coming over the lake, never expecting what was to happen in the next few minutes. Tops of trees were broken off, but in most cases the whole root balls of the trees were lifted. As most you are aware, there is not much soil over the bedrock in the area and the roots go down into the rock crevices as much as they can. The root systems were no match for this storm. Some clusters of a half a dozen pines were toppled in one gust. In one area of the park, it looked like a domino effect; the top of one White Pine was resting on the root ball of another White Pine.

A hydro crewman told us that our area had been the hardest hit in Sudbury District. A couple of hours after the storm, I went looking for the Cedar Waxwing nestlings because the Red Pine with nest had fallen through the roof of one of the cottages. I couldn't see the nest or the young; I thought that all had been launched into orbit. On the 18th, one of the Cedar Waxwing parents and the safe nestling beside our house were calling to one another. I took the nestling and perched it on a low branch of the pine, it once called home. The parent came and fed it dragonflies, lots of dragonflies, then a berry for dessert. The young Cedar Waxwing slept for sometime, I couldn't stay to see how long - duty called.



Ours was not the only birding incident that occurred during the storm. Marlies and Dieter Schoenefeld had been watching a Ruby-throated Hummingbird with young in her nest. After the storm, everything was gone.

One hates to see our natural environment and the majestic White Pines ravaged in such a violent manner. You may have heard of the saying "when one door closes another door opens". We had to clear trails and cut some of the trees. Now you can see the trees in a different way, you can count the rings and see how old it is, some were as old as 130 years, smell them and watch to see what creatures are drawn to them. The

trees will decay and in the process create food and habitat for other life, open the forest floor for more trees to grow and return their nutrients back into the soil to fuel more growth. We shall just have to watch the evolution.

POISON IVY TREATMENT

If you think you touched poison ivy, look around for a plant with orange flowers, Jewelweed, Touch-me-not family. Some folks call Jewelweed the poppy plant because when you touch the fruit, the seeds pop out. The juice from the Jewelweed stem counteracts the poison ivy oil and can bring even advanced poison ivy blisters under control.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND PICNIC

The summertime annual general meeting and picnic always turns out to be a fun event. Our AGM lasts only a half hour, giving members the opportunity learn about the Friends of Mashkinonje accomplishments and re-elect the Board of Directors. If there is anyone who would like to get involved in a directorship roll, please contact me (Angela).

The picnic was the best part. We had a scrumptious meal prepared by Gary Martin, and Carmelle Girouard whipped up her magic for dessert. Carmelle's masterpiece was a half chocolate and half vanilla cake iced to represent the park, with mammals, birds and amphibians and a lake with fish. All the while, Cal Osborne was keeping us on our toes with a duck call announcing the silent auction winners. We would like to thank the silent auction contributors; we know all of you could not be present but your generous gifts were appreciated that day and still are being appreciated now by the winners. While all of these festivities were going on, we were blessed with a beautiful day. The sun was shining and we were warm and happy inside.



Our summer picnic is never complete without a hike in the park. This year Norm Lang took us to Lapin's Beach on his pontoon boat. (Thank you, Norm.) We landed on the sandy beach, some of us disembarked with no shoes onto the rippled sand and into the warm water. We hiked the 1.4 km trail and saw a beautiful beaver pond. The Lapin's Beach Trail is a very nice trail, just watch near the lake - there is poison ivy. There was laughter on the boat ride home, a sign of a wonderful day.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

We found two new species of birds for our Christmas Bird Count; Three-toed Woodpecker and Red Crossbills. Sheldon McGregor and I each found different Three-toed Woodpeckers; Sheldon's was a female, mine a male and both were found on the east half of the park. We are at the southern range of these northern woodpeckers. Serious birders keep a life list of the birds that they have seen and many don't have the Three-towed Woodpecker. Three-toeds look similar to the Hairy Woodpecker with which most of us are familiar, only its back has horizontal black and white strips and the male has a yellow patch on his head rather than red. Sheldon also found a Black-backed Woodpecker, just like the Three-toed only their backs are all black. We are also at the southern range of the Black-backed. These northern woodpeckers like to inhabit areas that have been burned. We have noticed them on dieing conifers with needles that are still green. I suspect that both species arrived here because of the damage done by the July 17th storm. As mentioned earlier, there are many downed trees. I also found a small flock of Red Crossbills along the Peatland Trail, over the boardwalk and to the left, along the tall pines. A few years ago, Randy Moratz and I saw White-winged Crossbills in the same area.

Cal Osboure, Sandra Arseneau and Brent Turcotte found the only Rough-legged Hawks.

Randy Moratz and his daughters Tegan and Kyra found the only Red-tailed Hawk. The previous two groups each found a Northern Shrike. Marlies & Dieter Schoenefeld found a Pine Grosbeak. The cone crop has been plentiful this year and many northern species of birds have not had to fly south to get the food they need to survive the winter. There are very few grosbeaks and redpolls in the area this winter.

The collection of this data is done for the National Audubon Society and is used for scientific purposes and to build an historical data bank. For the participants, it is a pleasant day out in nature followed by a warm evening meal with friends. What more can we ask for?

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Nancy and Andy Kennedy,
Ruth and John Wilson and Laura Schnablegger,
Gail and Dave Gies,
Jim and Madelyn Cooper, and
Michelle Taylor

UPCOMING EVENTS 2007

March 4th **Around the Park Snowshoe**
Meet: 9:30 a.m. Welcome Lodge
May 26th **Birds, Blooms & Bugs Hike**
Meet: 10 a.m. Welcome Lodge
August 19th **AGM & Picnic**
Meet: 11 a.m. Welcome Lodge

FOM DIRECTORS

President

Angela Martin

Vice President

Dr. Peter Beckett

Secretary/Treasurer

Liz Lang

Member

Carmelle Girouard

Chuck Miller

Friends/Ontario Park

Superintendent

Parks Liaison

Killarney, Ontario

The Friends would like to thank the many generous supporters.

Beaver Pond (Volunteers)

Dr Peter Beckett
Harley Lang
Liz Lang
Angela Martin
Gary Martin
David Martin
Chuck Miller
Evelyn Eisenhour
Carmelle Girouard
Laurean Corriveau
Tom Brown and Kathy McManus
Tom Murison

Moose Bog (\$500)

Harley & Liz Lang
Welcome Lodge
Dan Longlade- Collins Barrow CA
D&J General Contracting
Bayview Excavating
Due North Marketing

Cottongrass Fen (\$250)

Saenchiur Flechey
The Lodge at Pine Cove

Tamarac Swamp (\$100)

Fryer Forest Products
Carmelle Girouard
Rip and Elaine Drobeck
Dan Busch and Cendrine Gemberling
Ted & Grace Price

Muskrat Marsh (\$50)

Norm Lang
Roseanna Rigo and Rav Sweezev

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

A special thanks to TJ and Monique Quesnel of *Due North Marketing*. They have provided our website free since we set it up and now they have given us our very own domain name www.mashkinonje.com. Today a website is essential and our own domain name makes it easier for people to find us. This allows us to put all our funds into the park.

Thank you for your donations to the silent auction:

Carolyn Rafuse, Woods Canada, Hawaiian Tropic, and Sheldon McGregor



Our thanks to Stephen Romaniuk for his photo of the Mashkinonje Peatland. Notice the boardwalk in the lower left.

CONTACT US

We hope you enjoyed our newsletter. To view past editions,
visit our website or contact us at:

www.mashkinonje.com

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