



M V F N

WHIP-POOR-WILL

mississippi valley field naturalists newsletter

Proud Sponsors of the Environmental Education Projects Programme

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Seeing Our Natural World Anew

Rarely do we get the chance to show the wonders of our great out-of-doors to someone from a distant land. But such was the good fortune of our club, the Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists. We invited two highschool girls, I-i and Suebassa (just guessing at the spellings), exchange students from Japan to come along on a short canoe trip one Sunday in late August.

And what a glorious day it was! The temperature was ideal, and a light breeze played on the waters of Bobs Lake. We set out in six canoes keeping to the shoreline, and ducking in and out of the many bays. Our spirits soared high as the billowing clouds.

And the birds soared, oh, the birds. As naturalists turned teachers we excitedly pointed out to our guests all the ones we could see or hear. Loons with young chortled and swam closer to investigate us; ospreys sat their nest or put on magnificent performances, skreeing, wheeling, gliding on the wind, although we didn't see any actually catching a fish (that would have been just too perfect); gulls fished too; turkey vultures rode the thermals; and the black ducks quacked too infrequently so I quacked. The girls laughed, they liked that.

The girls liked lots of things it turned out: learning to paddle a canoe, picking water lillies, taking a dip in the lake when we stopped for lunch, songs we made up using their names, whistling Japanese tunes, and our attempts to say a few words in their language. We could communicate in English, but speaking was not the first order of the day. They told us how much they enjoyed this beautiful lake with the language of all people: their smiles, avid interest, helpfulness, and delightful laughter. These girls

who live near big urban centres were seeing our southern Ontario backwoods for the first time in their lives and loving it. It was all new to them and the point wasn't lost on us; I believe we started "seeing" our natural world in a different light, a sort of rediscovering of everything we've taken for granted for years. The appreciation was mutual.

And, there was something new to behold (for most of us), a bay full of wild rice. Paddling through it was surreal. We had split up, and at a distance only the hats of our companions showed above the rice stalks. Disembodied heads scimming over a waving sea of green. We tried the rice itself although it was not quite ripe, and found the flavour agreeable.

The whole day was agreeable, the sun, the open water, the companionship, and best of all witnessing the wonder and joy of two girls discovering the natural beauty that is our heritage. I'd love to know what they actually brought away with them from the experience. I know I'll remember this day as a day of learning to see our lakes and forests, flowers and animals for the first time. And I hope that every time I go into nature it will always feel new.

~ Joel Byrne

midnight puddle
so full of moonlight
some spills out

paddles suspended...
drifting closer
to a turtle-shingled log

heavy morning dew...
a spider sloshes
through its web

~ Joel Byrne

Mississippi Valley Field Naturalists Board of Directors Meeting ~ August 7, 2003

Committee Reports

- Jim Bendell reported that he has written to the Ministry of Natural Resources regarding the conserving of bears, wolves and coyotes as deer population controls.

He has sold Keddy and Martin books, and given books to the Almonte Library.

He has informed Council of Lanark Highlands of environmental concerns, especially with by-laws and the new road #9 proposed by OMYA.

Jim has written on the environmental features of Lanark County to be used in a guide to the area for the Economic Development Council of Lanark Highlands. He has also helped with developing a business plan for local trails.

He is a member of the OMNR committee on the Mazinaw Lanark Forest management plan, and involved in planning for inventory and management of the community forests of Lanark County. He is also on the Environmental Advisory Council of Lanark Highlands.

- FON Report: Pip Winters reported that the FON is looking for Volunteers for Nature projects in this area; they usually seem to be in Western Ontario. Their Fall meeting will be at Charleston Lake. Cliff Bennett has a collection of info on the FON, their bursaries for camps, etc., for us to look at. MVFN will seek to host a FON Regional Meeting in 2004 at the Mill of Kintail.

- Environmental Issues: Mike McPhail reported that he will be monitoring the website of EBR (Environmental Bill of Rights), a web site dealing with Ontario's actions on environmental matters. Other items of interest were B.C. logging, Ontario plans for larvicide spraying, the dangers of Malathion, and more info on West Nile and mosquitoes. Mike McPhail also reported that he will be discussing plans for energy-conserving means of waste disposal in Almonte with Councillor Ed Wilson, and he also noted that the Rideau Environmental League will shortly be asking MVFN to produce a questionnaire asking candidates for municipal election their views on environmental matters.

- Program: Tine Kuiper presented the program for the coming year which has been worked out by her committee, and noted that Mike MacPherson still has the key to the church hall.

- Membership. Eileen Hennemann reported by email that we have 125 members: 81 paid and 44 not paid. These last have been politely requested to pay or be removed from the email list.

Other Reports

EEEP: Cliff Bennett reported that this project needs more promotion; no one has been applying for it. Perhaps we should divide the \$2000 into two or more smaller bursaries. We can get advice on such matters from the Noreen Young Bursary. Janine de Sallaberry will look into this further.

Rural Safe Water Grants: Cliff Bennett is on a committee involved with all matters of water safety, purity, collection, etc.

Andy Brown of Almonte is in charge of grant applications.

Land Trust: Cliff Bennett reported that all applications for incorporation are in.

Breeding Bird Atlas: Cliff Bennett reported that the club finished the Appleton square with good results.

Addendum: Moved by Cliff Bennett, seconded by Jim Bendell, that the MVFN support Friends of Recreational Trails (FORT) proposal to Trans Canada Trails. Passed by email August 24, 2003

Addendum: Moved by Eileen Hennemann, seconded by Reiner Hollbach, that Janine de Sallaberry be appointed as a member of the Board of Directors of of MVFN. Passed by email, September 11, 2003.

EEPP GRANT HELPS MISSISSIPPI MILLS STUDENT TRIP TO MONTREAL

Penguins seemed to be the favourite attraction for 63 students from Naismith Memorial Public School and their 25 parent and teacher supervisors as they explored the Natural History Biodome in Montreal on May 2. The group progressed through educational experiences in four different biodomes, tropical, polar, forest and marine.

The field trip was organized by teacher Lee Ann Lyons, who applied for and received an Environmental Education Project (EEPP) grant from MVFN. As a follow-up project, the children produced a well organized and informative booklet on their experiences.

Included in the booklet were individual student short essays on their personal learning experiences, supplemented by photographs, artwork and pictures. Ben Reside was fascinated by the winter flounder which swam sideways but had both eyes on the one side.

Descriptions of the four species of penguins presented were written by Jessica Smith and Jimmy Schonauer learned about sea urchins and their life in high water and in tidal pools.

The booklet was presented to MVFN as the required project completion report. It was reviewed by the Board of Directors at their August meeting and all comments expressed wonderment at the quality of work put into the publication and of the environmental learning that seemed to have taken place.

This booklet will be highlighted in an upcoming issue of the MVFN newsletter.

Mrs. Lyons concluded with special thanks to MVFN for their financial support. She reported the trip as one of quality with excellent learning opportunities for all.

~ Cliff Bennett

20 THINGS YOU CAN DO FOR WILDLIFE

Kids, teachers, parents, community leaders!

You can take action to protect Canada's wildlife and the places they need to live.

1. Visit a local wetland with friends and discover the unique plants and animals that live there.
2. Create a wild garden to shelter and feed wildlife at your home, work or school.
3. Coordinate an "eye-spy" nature hike and see who can spot the most wild plants and animals. Give bonus points for identifying wildlife correctly.
4. Erect bird feeders at a school and post the pictures and names of native birds at nearby windows.
5. Install and use a composter for food scraps at your home, work or school.
6. Read about Canada's Species At Risk and teach someone else what you've learned.
7. Organize a letter-writing campaign and ask local politicians to protect wetlands and old-growth forests threatened by development.
8. Advocate to preserve your local woodlands.
9. Join a volunteer wildlife monitoring program.
10. Ask your local field naturalist group to host a bird and bird-song identification walk in your community.
11. Organize a lunchtime lecture series featuring local environmental activists, scientists, or authors.
12. Teach a wildlife photography or painting class for students of all ages.
13. Organize an environmental fair for students. Invite local businesses to offer "green" prizes for the most interesting projects.
14. Choose "Climate Change and Wildlife" as a topic for a school project or letter to your local newspaper.
15. Learn to identify frogs by their songs and mating calls. Adopt and protect a nearby pond or marsh.
16. Join a naturalization project in your community and bring a stream, wetland or field back to its natural state. Hold a "garbage-free" community picnic to celebrate your accomplishment.
17. Visit a local wild area and draw the animal tracks you find there. Go to the library and identify the animal tracks.
18. Display information about birds, fish or animals at your local library or community centre.
19. Host a wildlife film festival in your community and distribute information about restoring wildlife habitat.
20. Ask your municipality to proclaim National Wildlife Week.

Questions? Contact the Ontario Region Coordinator, Liz Sauer.

(416) 739-5830 / Wildlife.Ontario@ec.gc.ca. Environment Canada Canadian Wildlife Service Outreach and Education Section 4905 Dufferin St. Downsview, Ontario M3H 5T4

NEW SHOP FOR ALL NATURE LOVERS

Coinciding with the Scarlet Maple Tour on **October 4th & 5th**, the **Nature Lover's Bookshop** will open at 62 George Street in **Lanark Village**. It will have the most comprehensive stock of nature related books in Eastern Ontario.

In addition to books related to birding, forest plants, animals, astronomy, insects, cycling, canoeing etc, you will find maps, local heritage books, select gardening and cookbooks as well as nature related gifts. And for children, there are educational and fun books, as well as related "toys" such as ant farms/bug villages for the young botanists-to-be, metal detectors for the budding rockhounds, scopes for the young naturalists, and so on.

Your suggestions regarding books or products that you think are a "must" for the store would be gratefully received by **MVFN member** Mary Vandenhoff at 278-2939. There will be also some grand opening specials.

No one is more knowledgeable than the field naturalists and the dream is for the **Nature Lover's Bookshop** to be your book heaven!

FALL CHORES FOR GARDENERS

- Bring in clay pots and garden ornaments, so they won't break from fluctuating winter temperatures.
- Sharpen lawn mower blades and pruners.
- Turn off outside water faucets. Drain garden hoses.
- Clean garden tools for winter storage.
- Clean fallen leaves and debris from gutters and down spouts.
- Rake leaves onto compost pile or run through lawnmower for use as plant protecting mulch.
- Use pine needles, oak leaves or cedar chips to protect plants during winter months.
- Cut back fall annuals like mums, asters and pansies after they bloom.
- Get rid of weeds. By pulling weeds in the fall before they go to seed, you can help reduce the number of seedlings next year.
- Trim tall grass away from trees and corners of your home to discourage small rodents from nesting there.

~ Maria MacRae, Backyard Habitat Programs Coordinator,
mariam@cwf-fcf.org

MVFN BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2003-2004

- Sandy Atack** **PRESIDENT** (member of all committees)
MM Steering Committee for Community
Official Plan (alternate Rep)
Programme Committee - gifts
- Mike MacPherson** **VICE PRESIDENT**
Chair, Finance Committee
Insurance and Incorporation Portfolio
Member, Nominating Committee
- Cliff Bennett** **PAST PRESIDENT**
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Community Official Plan (Representative)
Breeding Bird Atlas Coordinator, Appleton Square
Environmental Education Projects Programme,
(EPPP) Facilitator
Nominating Committee
Rural Clean Water Project representative
- Elizabeth (Billy) Wiles** **SECRETARY**
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- DIRECTORS**
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LH Environmental Advisory Committee Rep
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- Janine de Salaberry** GRANT COORDINATOR (EPPP) Environmental
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- Eileen Hennemann** Membership
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- Tine Kuiper** CHAIR PROGRAMME COMMITTEE
- Pip Winters** FON Representative
- Franziska Von Rosen** Community Stewardship Council,
Lanark County Representative

OTHER MVFN REPRESENTATIVES & APPOINTMENTS

- Paul Frigon** Mississippi Mills Environmental Advisory
Committee Representative, and
Friends of Recreation Trails (FORT)
- Christine Birkett** Webmaster
- Frank Roy** Keddy books sales/Perth area
- Sarah Coulber** Programme Committee
- Chris Hume** Programme Committee
- Roberta (Bobby) Clarke** Programme Committee

MVFN 2003 Fall Program

Indoor Program

Meetings at Almonte United Church at 7:30pm
unless otherwise indicated:

September 25

Speaker: Theresa McClenaghan, Canadian
Environmental Law Association (CELA)
Host: Janine de Salaberry

October 16

Speaker: Michele Andre-St Cyr
Turtles and their need for protection
Host: Jill McCubbin

November 20

Speaker: Michel G Vermette
Department Fisheries and Oceans: Species at Risk
Host: To be determined.

December 6

Christmas Party
Location and programme to be determined

Outdoor Program

September 14

Fall Nature Walk ~ Mystery Lake Ramble
with Amelia Ah Yu and Shaun McLaughlin
Host: Jim Bendell
Details on website

October 5

Fall Canoe Trip: Bennett Lake
Meet Union Hall, 9:30am
Host: Cliff Bennett

December 27

Christmas Bird Count
Host: Cliff Bennett

Thank You

*Many thanks to those who
contributed articles and information
for this newsletter.*



Brought to you by.....

*This newsletter is produced by the Mississippi Valley
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sions from members and various publications. Please
submit any suggestions, comments, or corrections, and
content submissions, to Eileen Hennemann, Box 1522,
Almonte, ON K0A1A0 or email standes@magma.ca*