



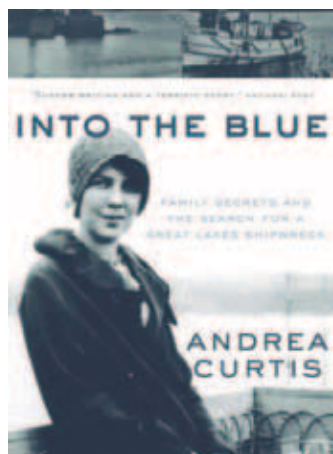
## Congratulations to our King Family Bursary Winners

By John Hartman, Britt

This past January, the GBLT launched the inaugural King Family Bursary Program, a program that awards two individuals each with \$3,500 for a project that further advances GBLT's mission of promoting appreciation of the eastern shore of Georgian Bay and its unique environment. As a selected juror, along with geologist Dr. Nick Eyles and Cottage Life editor Penny Caldwell, I was hoping to see applications from visual artists, musicians, writers, and scientists, all with proposed projects that would broaden our perceptions of the Georgian Bay coast. I wasn't disappointed in the least. With over 35 applicants - and only two bursaries to award - our work was cut out for us. There were many potential winners and we would have liked to award ten bursaries if we had the funds. It is our hope that at least some of the applicants who were not selected will still find a way to do their work.

We are pleased to award the first bursary to Andrea Curtis. Andrea is writing a work of fiction for young adults based on the story of two teenagers' survival at sea after the wreck of the 'S.S. Asia,' a passenger and cargo steamer that went down in Georgian Bay in 1882.

From Andrea: "I'm delighted to be one of the first recipients of GBLT's King Family Bursary. As a lifelong Pointe au Baril cottager, Georgian Bay plays a vivid role in my imagination, my writing and my family life. I believe that keeping its stories, characters and history alive for other generations is



Andrea's first published book



Andrea Curtis, Photo by Karri North



Timothy Laurin - *Constructed Memory~Beach*, Intaglio with Chine Colle, 2009

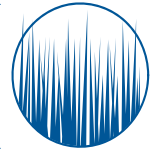
deeply intertwined with the fight to preserve and protect its water, land and living creatures. Thank you for this opportunity to keep telling those stories!"

The other bursary is awarded to Tim Laurin who will create a series of photo-based etchings, using both historic and contemporary photographs of Georgian Bay, and the stories of people living on Georgian Bay.

Says Tim of his award, "I am so honoured to receive this bursary and very excited for the opportunities that this will allow me. My goal is to create works that capture the inherent beauty and wonder that make Georgian Bay a unique place."

We too are excited about seeing the completed works of each of the winners later in the year, and to next year's applicants.

# Crown Lands, Conservation Reserves and GBLT in the Pointe au Baril Area



By Brooks Greer, Land Protection Program Manager

Covering some 2,366 hectares (5,846 acres) along the north shore of Pointe au Baril's Main Channel from Sturgeon Bay west to the shore of Nares Inlet, the *Pointe au Baril Forests and Wetlands Conservation Reserve* (C302) is a very large, yet largely unknown, tract of crown land at the Pointe's northern extremity.

The PauB Reserve is host to 50 different vegetation communities, including forests of jack pine, red oak, white pine, trembling aspen, white birch, red maple and white spruce. Numerous wetlands, including swamps, marshes and peat lands can be found in bedrock depressions and along the shoreline. The high diversity of the Reserve provides habitat for a number of rare plant and animal species including Eastern foxsnake, Eastern Massasauga and several at risk turtle species. The topography varies from densely forested rolling upland terrain to expansive interior and shoreline rock barrens.

This Reserve, and the many other crown properties in the area, is managed under the direction of the District Manager and the Parry Sound Area Supervisor of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Parry Sound District.

Adjacent to the Pointe au Baril Conservation Reserve (CR) on the mainland to its north, is another tract of crown land of even more massive size, the *North Georgian Bay Shoreline and Islands Conservation Reserve* (C117), covering a gigantic 17,107 hectares or 42,300 acres. A newly designated CR, C117 came under the regulation of the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA) in May 2012.

The two Reserves to PauB's north combine to represent a truly significant area of preserved terrain. Compare Georgian Bay Islands National Park at 1,347 hectares or 3,328 acres - less than half the size of Pointe au Baril Forests and Wetlands CR - and *one tenth* the size of North Georgian Bay Shoreline and Islands CR.

Other crown lands of size in the Pointe au Baril area are (alpha numerals are MNR identifiers, and will specify the properties or property types on the mapping site indicated below):

- C127: Shawanaga Island White Pine Forest, 2,523 acres, is a "recommended CR". Its "regulation has been deferred pending resolution of issues."
- E39g-2/GBS: Hertzberg Island, 620 acres - refer to mapping website. Hertzberg is an "EMA" or Enhanced Management Area. Activities within an EMA need to comply with the Public Lands Act, rather than the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA).
- C115: Upper Shebeshekong Wetland, also very large at 13,106 acres - refer to mapping website
- E39g-2: Big McCoy Island, 72 acres - EMA per Hertzberg I. above

The Ontario MNR's budget, staff and overall resources have been severely reduced in recent years, and it can probably be said

that their actual active "management" of these Reserves is quite minimal. In terms of land use, the MNR's mapping website: ([www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/LUEPS/2ColumnSubPage/STDU\\_137972.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/LUEPS/2ColumnSubPage/STDU_137972.html)) often says little more than "The area is used for a variety of traditional uses, including hunting" or "To provide and encourage provision of a wide variety of resource production and recreation opportunities." Additionally, some of the larger Georgian Bay shore crown reserves (Shawanaga I., North Georgian Bay, Upper Shebeshekong for example) are being managed in cooperation with First Nations.

According to Kim Benner, MNR District Planner, Parry Sound, "camping is permitted in the PauB Conservation Reserve (CR), and generic permitted uses for Reserves are found in their Statements of Conservation Interest. Specific application within CRs is included in the Statements as well. Activities for regulated CRs must comply with the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA)."

Statements of Conservation Interest for specific CRs and crown lands can be found on the MNR website. Although it is confusing trying to wade through the regulations for specific local crown lands, it would be safe to say that respectful and low-impact use is permitted on all of them.

By cottage association membership, the Pointe au Baril area is home to the largest seasonal community on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay. Interspersed within this relatively densely populated region are generous expanses of province-owned crown lands. In addition to protected crown lands and crown Reserves, Pointe au Baril is also currently home to ten Georgian Bay Land Trust preserves. Cumulatively these conservation lands provide a critical corridor of rich natural habitat along the coast where flora and fauna are allowed to thrive undisturbed by residential or commercial development.

As a private charity, the GBLT owns its properties and can specify use policy per the sensitivities of those individual properties. Due to its comparatively small size, and via a growing team of dedicated volunteer stewards, the GBLT works to keep its lands in their natural state. Two land use restrictions are common across all GBLT properties: overnight camping and fires are not permitted. The province has looser and more permissive policy covering their massive crown holdings, and sadly very few staff on the ground to implement and enforce their policy, despite many high-traffic crown properties. It is incumbent on visitors, on all of us, to tread lightly on these beautiful and vulnerable properties. The entire Georgian Bay coastline and all its inhabitants, human and otherwise, will continue to profit from conservation properties.

*Reference: Pointe au Baril Forests and Wetlands Statement of Conservation Interest, Ministry of Natural Resources, Parry Sound District 2005*  
*Thanks to Kim Benner, MNR Parry Sound*



# Property Spotlight: Tadenac Coastal Lots

By Jeff Hunter, Sans Souci



On July 28, 2013, I was invited to take part in the Tadenac Coastal Lots paddle near Indian Harbour in Southern Georgian Bay. What a day it was! After battling through some rough seas to get to the cover of Indian Harbour, our group of paddlers assembled and ventured off to explore the GBLT properties. The paddle took us south between Gunn Island and the mainland, east through to protected bays, north over the first portage to a very large beaver pond, west through the beaver pond and over the final portage back to Indian Harbour.

This was the second time I had explored the Tadenac Coastal Lots, and found myself just as impressed and in awe of the area as I had been the first time. The extraordinary variety of geological formations and the diverse flora and fauna makes this trip worthwhile to anyone who appreciates the beauty and uniqueness of the Georgian Bay landscape. I have observed five deer, countless turtles, ducks, geese, many spawning garpike, two very tall sandhill cranes, one Massasauga rattlesnake and many bear signs – thankfully without an encounter with the latter!



*Tadenac Bay west shore*

This event was a lot of fun, and as a new GBLT Steward of the Russell Reserve in Port Severn, it reminded me, and reinforced in me, the need to work towards preserving the place we've all come to respect and enjoy.

Thanks to Jim and Peter Cooper, Janet Loughheed, Norm Playfair, Jamie Hunter, Paige Stewart and Bill Loughheed for a memorable day. I look forward to doing the same trip again next year.



*White-fringed orchid in Virginia Chain Fern Bog*

*The acquisition of the Tadenac Coastal Lots was completed in January 2013 as a "bargain sale". The Lots comprise a generous 66 acres of diverse upland, coastal and wetland property; one happy outcome of acquiring the Tadenac Lots is that they now link our Holton Reserve in the north to the Harris Easement in Indian Harbour, combining to form over 100 contiguous acres of GBLT-protected lands - all of which is adjacent to the massive 3,700 acre privately owned and protected Tadenac Club to the east.*

*The Tadenac Lots contain several notable natural features including an Atlantic Coastal Plain Meadow Marsh in the middle section, and a Virginia Chain Fern Bog in the south. These vegetation communities support the rare Carolina Yellow-eyed grass and the beautiful White-fringed orchid respectively. The property's extensive rock barrens and mineral marsh communities are ideal habitat for both Eastern fox snake and Massasauga rattlesnake.*

## Good News For Donors of Ecologically Sensitive Lands



The federal government has taken a substantial step in promoting land conservation in Canada. The decision was contained in the federal budget of February 11, 2014. The budget line reads: "Encouraging additional donations of ecologically sensitive land by doubling, for income tax purposes, the carry-forward period for donations of such land."

The change will benefit those individuals and families who cannot presently take full advantage of the tax benefit and need to spread the credit over a longer period in order to realize its'

full advantage. Presently, a land donor with land that qualifies as an ecological gift, who gifts land or does a conservation easement, can claim the value of the gift against personal income. For individuals, a tax credit at the rate of 15% is applied to the first \$200 of the donor's total gifts for the year and 29% is applied to the balance.

Individuals can now spread the credit over 10 years. This is a significant step towards conservation of ecologically sensitive lands in Canada.

# Summers at Camp Franklin: "If desired, you may merely loaf!"



By Jamie Hunter, past curator of Huronia Museum

In fifty years of talking to people on Georgian Bay, I have heard some great stories, and this one about a unique adult camp is one of my favourites. I learned about Camp Franklin from friends, some of whose parents attended the camp and subsequently married. The story is far from complete and if you can add any details, photos, or reminiscences, I'd like to hear from you.

Camping on Georgian Bay is certainly not new. The First Nations camped along its shores for millennia, and after the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 that opened up access to Crown Land, campers and enthusiasts began to enjoy the Bay like never before. Camping arrangements occurred in all manners, from tents to corporate fishing camps to mansions. The Dodge family from New York built palatial cottages in Severn Sound and the Campbell family from Toronto built an exquisite cottage at Longuissa that still stands today.

The Christie family was one of the early families who came to Georgian Bay to establish lumber operations. It was common for the owners of lumber mills to pitch tents and build cottages so their families could enjoy the recreational opportunities Georgian Bay offered. The Christies built mills at Port Severn, Sturgeon Bay and Parry Sound, and when they sold their lumber interests they kept their cottage property in Parry Sound and passed it on to the next generation.

It was brothers Peter and William Christie who decided to expand the family cottage and they transformed it into a camp for adults. Just after the First World War they established the camp on Franklin Island and later added two additional camps, Camp Champlain at the mouth of the French River, and Camp Tigh-na-Beinn on an island in Baie Fine. Remote as it was, getting to Camp Franklin was half the fun – by road to Dillon and then boat to the island, or by train to Parry Sound and boat to the island, or the train to Midland or Penetanguishene and then the steamer to Camp Franklin.

Camp Franklin was a special interest camp exclusively designed for adults 17 and older and was open to campers seasonally from June 1st to October 1st. Prospective campers had to join the Minwandum Club and strict camp rules had to be observed. Members were required to: "...wish to make sport wholesome, clean and amateur; admire nature and desire to understand more of her manifold life and absorb more of her strength and beauty; and aspire to think positively, constructively and charitably at all times toward all life." This was quite a commitment! Absence for three consecutive years from Camp Franklin nullified membership. The Minwandum Camping Association Ltd. had offices at 105 Victoria Street and later on Bloor Street not far from Avenue Road in Toronto.

Campers rented their accommodations and could choose from five person tents, six person tent bungalows, two or three person cabins, fifteen single cabins and four lodges at costs that varied from \$3.00 a day to \$18.00 per week depending on your choice. Bedding was supplied for an extra \$2.00 per week. Altogether the camp could comfortably house 300.

Camp Franklin was a community unto itself and operated a post office, a store that sold fresh fruit, confectionaries, ice cream, fresh pasteurized milk, soft drinks, fishing supplies and camera supplies. Laundry facilities and church services were offered. A resident medical student took care of minor ailments and accidents. Generators provided electrical lighting on the premises. Camp Franklin stabled forty horses, managed extensive gardens that produced fresh vegetables, operated two large motor launches and a two-masted schooner, the Shebeshekong.

The recreational opportunities were many, but campers were advised: "Camp Franklin is not a rest home yet all the activities are optional. If desired, you may merely loaf!" The sports program offered the early risers fishing excursions at 6:00 am and saddle parties at 7:00 am. Breakfast was served at 8:15 am.



Five person tent



Canoeing in front of camp



At 9:00 am the real choices for the day began: canoe instruction, riding lessons, sailing instruction, boat rentals, nature study hikes and art classes. Resident artists were selected to provide classes and these included such notables as Nicholas Hornyansky, a well known Toronto artist and member of the Ontario Society of Artists and associate of the Royal Canadian Academy.

Lunch was served at noon and was followed by music and singing, tennis, sailing, riding and badminton. As the season warmed, swimming and life saving instruction were popular. Dinner came at 5:45 pm and the daily mail was distributed at 6:30 pm. At 7:00 pm baseball, quoits, sunset saddle parties and soft light photographic hikes were offered. At 9:00 pm a bonfire and dance were held until 10:30 pm with lights out at 11:00 pm. The camp boasted of a mystic organization for its members called the Shrouded Shades of Shebeshekong. It was known as the mystic circle of the Minwandum Club. Initiation into the club occurred each Monday night in July and August at the "Council Ring".



*Happy campers*



*Mystic Circle*

Camp Franklin was a camper's paradise until the late 1930s when, due in no small part to the depression, it went into receivership. Its assets were sold and the Dunn family of Parry Sound bought the property. They restarted the camp in the late 1940s and operated it for about 20 years into the early 1960s when it was sold to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The buildings fell into disrepair and the camp was soon forgotten. Today the sand beach on Franklin Island is a popular destination for boaters, campers and cottagers, but it's nothing like the adult destination operated by the Christies known as Camp Franklin.

*Author's note: please send any additional information that you would like to share about Camp Franklin to the Georgian Bay Land Trust with Camp Franklin in the subject heading to: [info@gbt.org](mailto:info@gbt.org)*

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## Putting Down Roots

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By Linda Swainson, Cognashene



During our years on the Bay between 1989 and now, (how we landed here is another longer story, but connected to the whole idea of roots) we have transitioned from being vacation renters, to seasonal renters, to Georgian Bay cottage owners to captive custodians of the place we have come to love so deeply. We have, indeed, put down roots in the one place in the world that we return to every summer with breaths of relief and thankfulness for the beauty and serenity of this place.

Our connection to Georgian Bay transcends the physical pleasures of being here, of lazing on the dock, or watching the full moon shimmer on the lake on a mid-summer night, of slipping through the water on a summer afternoon or kayaking down an unexplored channel that opens into a bay of water lilies unfurling in the sun. More, it is the inexplicable sense of timelessness, of connection to a place and time beyond us, farther back than we can remember, farther forward than we can fathom, but yet somehow, here now, feeding our roots so that while we grow and take from this place we also add something back into its collective spirit. When I am out in my

kayak, watching my paddle dip into the water, listening to the quiet, I think about the Native Americans who came here before us, and the early explorers, all of whom were the custodians for a time of what we now treasure.

As water and sun are to the trademark trees that cling to the rocks, prospering where we think it impossible for anything to grow, so the rock, the water and the air of Georgian Bay are to us, giving us ground out of which we reach to many other places in the world, while being rooted here. On a perfect summer day, I sit on the warm granite rocks with family and friends, listening to the waves, blinded a little by the sun stars on the water but trying to see the fine line on the horizon where the water ends and the sky begins, and I think that somewhere there, in that place, emanates the magic that feeds us.

I could go on but doing so threatens to pull me into a vortex from which I find it hard to escape! Such is the magic of the Bay that even 500 miles from it, where I sit now in Connecticut, and 2500 miles away when I am in Texas part of the year, it never fails to pull me in.

# Scientific Research and Education on Georgian Bay: Part 1 – The Early Days



By Bill Loughheed, Executive Director

In 1901 there were but 3 field stations for the study of biology in all of Canada. One was on the Pacific coast and one on the Atlantic. Of particular interest to us was the third one situated on Georgian Bay. The “Georgian Bay Biological Station” was the first environmental/ecological research station on all of the Great Lakes.

It all began in the fall of 1900, when a petition was presented to the Federal Minister of Fisheries asking for assistance for the proposed biological station, indicating that the chief study would be the propagation of bass. After much effort, a very substantial grant of \$1500 per annum was obtained from the Dominion (Canadian) government through the Department of Marine and Oceans (DMO).

Situated some 15 miles by water north of Honey Harbour at Go Home Bay, professors, scientists and their students performed the very first ecological studies of the flora and fauna of this coastline and performed daily environmental monitoring. The scientists, mostly from the University of Toronto, travelled to this remote community by coal-fired steamers such as the Waubic shown in the photo on the next page. Their residency usually lasted from May 15th until the third week of September. This was a hardy breed of dedicated scientists, not intimidated by wilderness, who dragged along with them their most promising students.

Mail and supplies were collected by rowing out to the steamer as it passed by these wilderness shores or by collecting weekly supplies often by rowboat at the steamer dock some 2 miles distant.

Dr. R.R. Bensley, the first Director of the station, described the laboratory as follows in his 1902 report to the University of Toronto and the DMO:

“It has an ample floor-space of 20x40 feet, and is divided into a general laboratory and four small rooms, the latter being used respectively as photographic, glassware, chemical, and private rooms. It is provided with an excellent equipment of chemical reagents, glassware, special apparatus and chemical balances. The main laboratory is provided with twelve work-desks, which are

accommodated in and between the window spaces, the centre of the room being occupied by a large aquarium-table, with water connections, so that aquatic forms may be kept alive while under observation.”

The large aquarium in the centre of the laboratory, which by 1903 was continually fed with fresh water, was critical for scientific studies including determining conditions optimal for hatching. Thankfully, by this time, women were being accepted into the world of scientific endeavour as evidenced by the female student at the far right of the photo below.

It should be understood that the research station was a centre for serious academic research, funded at today's equivalent of \$35,000 per annum. This money was indeed a good investment. By 1893, four hundred commercial fishermen operated on Georgian Bay with over 150 boats, 15 tugs and 1.5 million yards of gill net. (DMO report, 1910) So even back then, ecological pressures were very significant.

The station's research data had many important uses, not the least of which was to inform and to set commercial and sport fishing regulations. By so doing, the research performed here at this small remote station played a critical role in saving many of the fish species of Georgian Bay.

The baseline studies done by the fledgling Georgian Bay Biological Station provided the first systematic study of the flora and fauna of the region where species were identified, microscopically examined, dissected, categorized and studied. As we know, these types of baseline studies are a critical and necessary step in species conservation and habitat stewardship.

Despite the introduction of commercial fishing in 1835, circa 1905 there was an “absolute abundance of fish” according to the scientists at the station, so much so that specimens for biological study could be collected “by the simple use of hoop-nets, hand seines and cheese cloth nets (for fry)”. One of the laboratory's first endeavours was directed towards observing and understanding the spawning habits of largemouth and smallmouth bass. The controlled scientific documentation and quantifying of bass nesting behaviours was responsible for moving the opening day of bass season to July 1st. According to Professor B.A. Bensley, this probably helped save this population.

In 1902, comparative studies were made of adult fish and their feeding source (stomach contents). The young and immature of each species were examined for growth rate studies. In 1903 research was conducted on roe and identification of species-specific predators of various roe. In this regard, Professor Bensley describes the hatching pond developed by the station: “A hatching pond for bass was last fall prepared, and twenty-nine bass of different ages were placed therein. If they winter successfully, their



*Scientists and students at work in the Biological Station on Georgian Bay, circa 1905*





*The Biological Station at Go Home Bay circa 1905*  
 Photo Credit: Professor CHC Wright

spawning operations are to be carefully studied. The preparation of another hatching pond for bass is contemplated next season that the effect of food and environment may be determined, as well as the growth from year to year."

Over many years, the station performed work in many areas of science. A meteorological station was established with daily measurements of precipitation, wind speed, wind direction and temperature being taken. A hydrological survey of the area was conducted. In-depth studies were conducted on aquatic insects, crustaceans, mollusks, flowering plants, as well as migratory and resident birds. Faunistic studies looked at inventories, habitat and behaviours.

Entomologist Dr. E.M. Walker performed the first systematic studies on the insects of the Georgian Bay coast and later

received the Royal Society's Flavelle Medal for outstanding scientific achievement.

### Research Today and the GBLT

What began over 100 years ago has seen a re-birth. In 2001, the GBLT joint venture with the NCC initiated an inventorying of species on Georgian Bay's eastern shore culminating in the 2005 "Ecological Survey of the Eastern Georgian Bay Coast" co-authored by the GBLT's Wendy Cooper, and supported both operationally by the GBLT and in part through the fine fundraising of our land trust. This was a huge accomplishment.

The next episode in this series will take you through some of the everyday life experiences of these pioneer scientists of Georgian Bay.

*Stay tuned for Part 2 of the Biological Story and for a report from GBLT's new field "Stewardship Station".*



*Steamer Waubic passing by the Biological Station at Go Home Bay,*  
 Photo Credit: JW Ball

## Blanding's Turtles in the Georgian Bay Archipelago



Over the course of summer 2013, Chantel Markle from McMaster University, under the direction of Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser completed a survey intended to produce a model that accurately predicts islands in the Georgian Bay archipelago that provide suitable habitat for the Blanding's turtle. The survey was carried out on two GBLT-owned properties (Sandy Island and West Lookout) and two properties on which we hold and monitor conservation easements respectively (Three Bears and Towers Point).

West Lookout was the only property that actually yielded a specimen of Blanding's turtle during the survey, but all the properties had at least one species. Several other listed at-risk turtles were identified: Northern map (at Towers Point and Three Bears), Musk or Stinkpot (Towers Point) and Snapping (Sandy Island). Non-listed Painted turtles were spotted at both Sandy and West Lookout.

Chantel points out in the preliminary report that Blanding's may have been at her survey spots but "evaded our surveys", in particular at Sandy Island whose vegetation and geography suggest the presence of Blanding's on the inland Nada Lake. The extreme low water levels may have played a part in this.

The GBLT will continue to invite opportunities for scientists to conduct studies on our properties and share the findings with the Georgian Bay community.

To see Chantel's entire preliminary report, please go to [www.gblt.org](http://www.gblt.org).



# Nature Photography

By Paul Mather, GBLT volunteer



*photo by Paul Mather*

There I was, flat on the ground zooming in on a rattlesnake. I know it could feel my heart beating into the earth as it stared at me, coiled only a couple of feet away, hoping that my lens was long enough to protect me. I took only a couple of pictures and then slowly crept back, out of range. I let him go on his way and thanked him for the interruption. I will never forget this experience. I have never felt so close and humbled by nature as I was at that moment.

Whether professional or amateur, photographers like to control their environment. We set up lights, position our subjects and move obstacles. "Say Cheese!" That is fine in a studio but nature usually just happens. Sometimes we get to move a twig, add a bit of light or encourage animals to visit a "stage" but most of the time we just have to make do with what we are given. The trick is to foresee and optimize the natural environment that we will be photographing in. There are several ways to prepare equipment, location and ourselves so that we are ready for that perfect shot.

Number one, always carry a camera. No exceptions!

By understanding and respecting our subject we can capture an image that reflects nature as it is, rather than a staged look. Use a wide-angle lens to show where the plants or animals live and then zoom in. We do not want to stress our subjects as this could injure them and in some cases cause them to injure us. This is most important when photographing animals but it is also important for vegetation. Moving a dead twig may be okay, but be careful. Sometimes moving things may damage the live plant or other plants around it. If it grows in the shade, leave it in the shade. I like to take close-ups of flowers, as I love the detail and variety in each plant. Rather than getting really close, I tend to use a telephoto lens. This allows me to minimize the disturbance of the vegetation. There is a slightly different rationale when I photograph rattlesnakes and bears but the principle is the same; respect the animals and their homes.

Visit the location at different times of day and throughout the year. This will assist in picking the best time to show up. Lighting is usually best just after sunrise and close to sunset. This is not to say that we stop taking pictures for the rest of the day. In bright sunlight, use the natural shade or an umbrella to reduce the glare. If it is too shady, use a white reflector or white LED flashlights. A flash may scare an animal away and is often too harsh for flowers unless bounced off a white reflector or diffused.

By knowing more about our subjects we will find them more often and be able to predict their movements during our "shoot". Try to get eye-to-eye with the subject. Get on the ground (or mud) so that the camera is level with the primary focus of the shot and remember the "rule of thirds". Sometimes we can encourage animals to come to a "stage" where we have set up our camera in the best location, but be careful not to inadvertently attract a predator. Chipmunks and birds love seeds - but so do bears. Use just a few. We can also plant flowers that attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, and create ponds for frogs and snakes.

Try to isolate the subject by having the background out of focus and a contrasting colour. Setting the aperture wide open, e.g. f3.5, will provide a narrow depth of field, but will make it difficult to focus. Close down the aperture until most of the subject is in focus and still have the background out of focus. Ensure that the eyes of animals or the center of flowers are in focus. If they are out of focus the image as a whole looks wrong.

Have fun and don't forget to take pictures of people too! We are all part of nature.



*Marsh Skullcap, photo by Paul Mather*



# Georgian Bay Query: What has happened to the Purple Martins?



By Patrick Tafts, GBLT Volunteer

For many years Georgian Bay cottagers have enjoyed the company of their Purple Martin colonies. These birds migrate from South America every spring, often returning to their previous nesting sites. For those unfamiliar with the Purple Martin, it is the largest North American swallow, just under 8 inches long. Adult males are black with a glossy deep blue sheen and a slightly forked tail. Adult females are generally lighter coloured with pale under-parts. Purple Martins are on the noisy side and have various pleasant-sounding chortles and chirpings. Cottagers have noticed a significant population decline over the last several years. In fact, purple martins are among the many insectivore avian species with declining numbers in Canada. What is happening to our birds?

It is interesting to note that historically the Eastern Purple Martin struggled as a species due to competition with other birds. The ancestors of the Eastern Martins nested in natural cavities (i.e., old woodpecker nests, cliff edges, etc.). Their numbers plummeted with the introduction of the European Starling and House Sparrow in the mid 19th century. These 2 species competed with the Martins, sometimes aggressively (e.g. Starlings were known to kill the Purple Martin babies and then throw them out of their nests) for nesting sites. The Purple Martin population was helped by human intervention. Over several decades the Martin has had hundreds of thousands of people erecting all manner of houses for them. The Eastern species is now totally dependent on these human-provided nesting sites. Chances are that if these sites disappeared, so would the Purple Martin from northeast North America.

But there are bigger problems that these birds are facing. The Purple Martin is an aerial insectivore (i.e., they catch/eat avian insects in flight) and is therefore affected by any population changes occurring with these insects. Over the past two decades the Purple Martin population in eastern North America has fallen by 50%. The Purple Martin is not alone, though. The Common Night Hawk, Bank and Barn Swallows, Chimney Swift, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern King Bird, Whip-poor-will and more species are also experiencing significant declines in their populations and all share one feature – the reliance on flying insects as a food source. Although there are no programs to monitor flying insect population changes, there is a growing concern among entomologists that aerial insect numbers are in decline. Reasons for this decline are not yet fully understood, but insects' breeding habits and breeding success are very sensitive to fluctuations in water and air temperature as well as other climatic changes. Also, early or late hatchings, due to changes in the onset of spring, may no longer be in synch with many bird species, including the Purple Martin that evolved their migration and breeding schedules to coincide with these expected food sources.

Are Purple Martins able to adapt their migration patterns to the changing weather patterns and timing of their food source? There has recently been research on this led by Kevin Fraser at York University. His team attached tiny backpacks containing tracking devices onto Purple Martins and tracked their migration patterns for 5 years. They found that birds left their wintering homes in Brazil for their breeding grounds in North America at the same time every year, *regardless of weather changes*. Their findings led them to believe that the Purple Martin: "cannot compensate for short term changes in the timing of spring. Long distance migrants are further away and less likely to get signals they might need of changes of weather up north."

The current highly erratic weather patterns are playing havoc with many living creatures' very existence. This is a very complex issue with no easy solutions. One can only hope that the bird species affected can adapt to these changing conditions.

What can we do at the cottage to help? Take the kayak, not the motorboat. Keep your Martin houses clean and ready. Even if the Martins don't come, the Tree Swallows might and if you get Barn Swallows in the boathouse, try to get along with them. A tarp for the boat, perhaps?

Sources:

[www.bsc-eoc.org/download/bwciwi08.pdf](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/download/bwciwi08.pdf)

[www.cbc.ca/news/technology/birds-migrating-at-wrong-time-for-warmer-climate-1.1337461](http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/birds-migrating-at-wrong-time-for-warmer-climate-1.1337461)



Purple Martin. Photo by Arthur Morris

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## Blessing of the Boats and Waterways

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By Rick Hayward, GBLT Communications Chair



A major celebration in many parts of the world, the blessing of fishermen and the fleet is an ancient tradition going back hundreds of years. In its second year, the Jesuits of English Canada and priests from the Martyrs' Shrine in Midland will board a yacht on June 7, 2014 and offer an invocation over the waters. After the popularity of last year's inaugural Blessing, over 40 boats are expected to line up along the harbour shore to have their boats blessed in hopes of good luck for the boating season.

The early Jesuits traveled from the coasts to the interior of Canada over the St. Lawrence River, the Ottawa River, and Lake Nipissing until they reached Georgian Bay. It was a journey that took 30 days to complete. Almost 400 years later the Martyrs' Shrine stands as a reminder of those early explorers. By blessing the waters that surround the Shrine, the ceremony pays homage to those early missionaries, and sanctifies the passage for neighbours on the water.

In conjunction with the Blessing of the Boats and Waterways, Parkbridge Marinas and the Martyrs' Shrine will host their annual Commodores Dinner on June 6, 2014 with a community fundraiser. This year the GBLT will be the recipient of a portion



*Ontario's Jesuit Provincial head Father Peter Bisson, Father John McCarthy, and Martyrs' Shrine Director Father Bernard Carroll bless the passing boats*

of the proceeds, along with the Martyrs' Shrine. The GBLT and the Jesuit community behind the Martyrs' Shrine both share an interest in creating partnerships with individuals and organizations who share an interest in the conservation of Georgian Bay. Boating is a large part of the tourism and culture of the Midland area and this community outreach initiative is one more success story.

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## Kids' Conservation Quest

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Last August we ran the inaugural session of a new GBLT kids' educational program on American Camp Island. Under the supervision of summer students Paige Stewart and Catriona Boyd, with "game architect" Allie Ballantyne, her cousin Jacquie, Glenda Clayton from the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve and the kind help of the Cognashene recreation staff, more than fifty kids from up and down the shore participated in Name That Bird, Species at Risk Bingo and Rattlesnake Safety.

Kids' Conservation Quest is a half-day of activities intended for 8 to 12 year olds. The aim of the program is to teach some fundamentals of nature lore and the importance of conservation to the future stewards of Georgian Bay. The format of the program is a series of stations; each staffed either by a GBLT staff member or camp counsellor, through which the "Questers" are cycled. Each station has a different conservationist or nature-related theme presented in a lively and interactive way; a station stop takes about 15 minutes, the groups then rotate to the next station in the sequence. We will be rolling out our new program in the southern reaches of Georgian Bay and the Pointe au Baril area during summer 2014.

**On Thursday August 7th the GBLT summer students will host a Kids' Conservation Quest session on the Lizard in Cognashene, starting promptly at 10:30.** Bring a bagged lunch and plan to stay until 2 pm. Parents are welcome!



*Summer Student Paige Stewart and the Questers*



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## Grenville Volunteer Award: Cathie Bowden

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By Janet Loughheed, Director of Development



It seems to me that some of the best things happen at lunch. In early 2008, I asked Craig Bowden to have lunch with me as a thank you for assisting with fundraising for the GBLT. I suggested he bring his wife Cathie as they had just moved to Barrie where I live. It was a great lunch and I talked about plans at the GBLT. At some point I mentioned our need for a newsletter editor, and Cathie immediately said, "I could do that".

That was the understatement of the year. Not only could she do that, but Cathie completely transformed our newsletter. She looked at this not as just an editing and story collection job; she had a big picture for the newsletter. Cathie has the good critical eye and a feel for what people will be interested in reading. She canvasses all her contacts to see what they would like to see in a newsletter.

No topic or volunteer writer gets turned away. Carefully considered and positioned (oh yes, she does layout too), Cathie gives maximum profile to an article. Initially Cathie came to our Communication committee meetings, but then decided the staff

really was the best resource for volunteer writers and topics. She also joined staff meetings to get an idea of what was needed to turn out a first class newsletter.

Under Cathie's guidance we changed from 3 to 2 editions per year, and pages went from 4 to 12. Our focus became all encompassing. She introduced the "GB Query", answering questions that have arisen from time to time to which no one seemed to have the answer. My personal favourite was the green flash. I knew nothing about it, but I now have seen it and I look for it every time the sun sets.

Cathie takes great pride in appealing to every single stakeholder. No idea is rejected, but all are reviewed and carefully slotted into each edition. There is no doubt that Cathie Bowden is an outstanding volunteer and deserving of the GBLT's Grenville Volunteer Award. She has provided a steady stream of great information for our supporters and friends.

Thanks Cathie, you have made us look good, kept us interested but most importantly organized us all to create the best newsletter on Georgian Bay. We will continue to try to live up to the gold standard that you have set for yourself and GBLT staff.

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## Welcome Summer Students

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**Lindsay Potts** is a second year Biology student at McGill University, hailing from Toronto. She is passionate about wildlife and conservation biology, sparked by the wonder she experienced growing up as a cottager on Georgian Bay. "American Camp is my family's favourite picnic spot

and so becoming a Conservation Intern, working to protect these and other properties, feels like coming full circle. I am so excited to be involved with the GBLT this summer, coupling my love of the Bay with Biology!" The past two summers she worked as a lifeguard and swim instructor at YMCA Geneva Park, where she taught and played with kids (and adults) of all ages. Lindsay has already worked for the GBLT as a volunteer, stewarding in the Alexander Islands. She is a member of the McGill Ultimate Frisbee team, a representative for the McGill Biology Student Union, can strum "You and I" on the ukulele, and was voted "most likely to voluntarily live in the woods" by her high school graduating class. She loves meeting new people and is eager to get to know more of the Georgian Bay community this summer.



**Thomas Tawaststjerna** is an 18-year-old graduate of the National Ski Academy in Collingwood. Next year he will be attending Dalhousie University where he is enrolled in the Business Commerce Co-Op Program. His family cottage is located on Arthur Island in Cognashene.

Thomas worked at the Cognashene Recreation Program for three years and then spent a summer working construction in the Honey Harbour and Cognashene area. Georgian Bay has been a big part of his life since he was born. Participating and working at the Recreation Program gave him a great appreciation for the surrounding Georgian Bay areas. He's looking forward to this summer because he will be able to share and learn information about the important role the GBLT plays in protecting our coastal communities. He's excited about spending time at the Georgian Bay Land Trust properties including American Camp, his favourite place to swim.

## Upcoming Events

Thursday, July 24, 2014

### Screening of Edward Burtynsky & Jennifer Baichwal's *Watermark* Film

7 pm. Honey Harbour Catholic Church.

\$12 suggested donation.

*Watermark* is a feature documentary film that brings together diverse stories from around the globe about our relationship with water: how we are drawn to it, what we learn from it, how we use it and the consequences of that use. We see massive floating abalone farms off China's Fujian coast and the construction site of the largest arch dam in the world, the Xiluodu, six times the size of the Hoover. We visit the barren desert delta where the mighty Colorado River no longer reaches the ocean, the water-intensive leather tanneries of Dhaka and fly over our unique archipelago, Georgian Bay.

### GBLT's "Geology of Georgian Bay: 2 billion years of change" Rock Walk Series

hosted by GBLT rock star, Nick Eyles.

Bring your walking shoes, a picnic lunch and come spend the afternoon learning about the unique geology of Georgian Bay. Arrive early (11 AM) to enjoy your picnic lunch.

Thursday, July 31

1 PM; The Pancakes, Carling Township

*\*Meet at the docks on the Pancakes at 11:00 am. Be prepared to moor. Please boat pool if possible.*

Thursday, August 7

1 PM; Painted Rocks, Bayfield

*\*If you wish to convoy as a boat flotilla with us to the Painted Rocks, meet with your boats at the Bayfield Boat Club at 11:00 am.*

Nick Eyles is Professor of Geology at the University of Toronto. He has authored more than 150 publications on environmental geology and is well known for his work with the CBC as a host of *Geologic Journey* – World a five part "Nature of Things" series with David Suzuki. Nick was recently recognized by the Royal Society of Canada and awarded the prestigious McNeil Medal for his outstanding promotion and communication of science to students and the public across Canada.

Thursday, August 7, 2014

### Kids' Conservation Quest Program

10:30 am to 2:00 pm on the Lizard, Cognashene

Please bring a bagged lunch and arrive promptly at 10:30 am.

A free program for kids ages 8 to 11 where they will learn about the natural environment of Georgian Bay and have fun! Kids will be teamed up and cycled through stations where they will be taught basics about conservation, species at risk and the flora and fauna local to Georgian Bay.

Honey Harbour, the Ojibway Club and the Sans Souci and Copperhead Association (SSCA) will also be running sessions at their respective camps; please stay tuned to their newsletters and websites.

More details will be available at [www.gbtl.org](http://www.gbtl.org).

**Landscript Editor:** Cathie Bowden ..... [bowden.cathie@gmail.com](mailto:bowden.cathie@gmail.com)  
**Executive Director:** Bill Loughheed ..... 416.440.1519 ext 101  
**Director of Development:** Janet Loughheed ..... 416.440.1519 ext 104  
**Communications-Development Administrator:** Laura Gibson ... 416.440.1519 ext 102  
**Land Protection Program Manager:** Brooks Greer ..... 416.440.1519 ext 103  
**General Information** ..... 416.440.1519 ext 102

## Tribute Gifts

Received from January 1 to April 22, 2014

### In Honour

Jamie & Gillian Coyles  
Sandy Phillips

### In Memory

Catherine (Cay) Bate  
George Bryson  
Neil Campbell  
Laura Hamilton  
Mel Hodgins  
Peter Holman

George Kilpatrick  
John Kilpatrick  
Eleanor McCoy  
Anne Hamilton Morris  
Charles Springer



## Running: A Family Affair

### 2014 Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon

October 19, 2014

Have fun, get fit and help protect Georgian Bay's natural beauty at the same time! For our third year in a row, we have signed up for the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon's Charity Challenge. There is a 5k, half-marathon or marathon – something for everyone!

Simply register for the Charity Challenge and start collecting pledges in support of GBLT. Alternatively, pledge a runner or a team.

More info at [www.gbtl.org](http://www.gbtl.org).

## Thanks to our generous sponsors



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**Georgian Bay Land Trust**  
920 Yonge Street, Suite 609  
Toronto, Ontario M4W 3C7  
email: [info@gbtl.org](mailto:info@gbtl.org)  
[www.gbtl.org](http://www.gbtl.org)