



## Property Spotlight: Hamilton Reserve, Norgate Inlet

By Brooks Greer, Land Protection Program Manager

The Georgian Bay Land Trust's most recent acquisition is a beautiful 3-plus acre island in the Norgate area, south of Byng Inlet/Britt, and north of the community of Bayfield. The Crown land throughout this area is part of the Northern Georgian Bay Shoreline and Islands Conservation Reserve. The GBLT also recently acquired another property in the immediate area, Kenerick Reserve, to Hamilton's east and nearer mainland.

With the exception of the Hotham Island Reserve in the North Channel, Hamilton and Kenerick are the northernmost, and hence most remote of all the Georgian Bay Land Trust properties to date. Their acquisition represents some initial and good "profile" for and awareness of the GBLT in the Norgate and Kenerick neighbourhood - and may prompt other land donations. The island has been identified as a Priority 2 area in the Nature Conservancy of Canada's updated Eastern Georgian Bay Natural Area Conservation Plan because of its contribution to suitable habitat for reptile species at risk. More specifically, Hamilton has five vegetation communities which include shrubbed rock barrens and pockets of shoreline

mineral marsh. In combination, these two provide habitat that likely supports Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, Eastern Foxsnake and Five-lined Skink.

### Says donor Patricia Hamilton:

*"One of the things that has given me a great deal of pleasure over the years of owning a Georgian Bay island has been witnessing the survival of young pines in the most unlikely places; it is an heroic struggle in that thin soil. When we first bought the donated island there were no trees on the back part of it, they had been burned off at some earlier date. So it is very rewarding to now see pines of a good size populating that part of the island."*

*"I think the conservation of our natural environment is one of the most important challenges facing us as the world becomes ever more heavily populated. So Bill and I and our family are all delighted that this island will remain in its natural state."*

The GBLT has been lucky once again to be the recipient of another treasured family island. We are delighted that the Hamilton family is preserving this property with the GBLT.



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# New GBLT Board Appointments

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By Peter Cooper, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Cognashene cottager



It is a pleasure to announce the following appointments to our board:



David

David Browne shares his Sans Souci cottage with his wife, Joanne, and their four university-age boys. The Brownes kindly hosted an organizational awareness event this past summer that attracted over 200 people. David is a keen outdoorsman, naturalist and alpine skier who is very dedicated to the well-being of Georgian Bay. He is President of Martin Merry & Reid Ltd. and will be using his business acumen to assist the GBLT with its financial and investment matters.

Peter Koetsier has been a cottager in the Honey Harbour area for most of his life and a supporter of the Georgian Bay Land Trust for more than ten years. He is married to a Bay girl, Wendy Wingfelder, and they have two daughters. He has been a member of the Honey Harbour Association since the 70's. Peter is the Senior Vice-President of Albarrie Canada Ltd. and brings a strong background in strategic planning and finance to the GBLT.



Wendy and Peter

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## Nonstop Norm

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By Janet Lougheed, GBLT Director of Development



In 2007 Norm Playfair was looking at retiring in a few years. Being a "planner", Norm thought he should think about doing some volunteer work for his favourite place: Georgian Bay.

He investigated the different lake-centric organizations and settled on the GBLT. Norm appeared on the scene and quickly dove into stewarding our properties. I knew from a report from Wendy Cooper that Norm and his buddy Jamie Hunter had gathered hardware and put up signage on Sandy Island.

In the fall I got a call from Norm who I had finally met during the summer. He said that he and David Roffey had sailed past Sandy Island and they didn't think the GBLT was going to raise the money needed to purchase it. He wanted to help. Help meant both of them pledging \$10,000 to the Sandy fund and asking others to do the same. Norm wrote letters and did follow up calls. David and I had a meeting with Brian Chapman who put together a donor list - and off they went. They raised well over \$50,000 for our project. David is elusive but very productive (I nicknamed him "the Artful Dodger"). I am still trying to talk him into doing more fundraising, at which he is very effective.

But it didn't end there. Norm called in January 2008 and suggested a community Paddle Around Sandy Island to celebrate our large new property. We publicized the event and over 30 people turned up to kayak around the island. This was brilliant because the island itself is quite densely forested, not to mention huge, for walking and quite inaccessible by large boat. The kayak was the perfect way to see the front of the island which is riddled with shoals, and to make way through the sandy wetland areas. I did ask Wendy when we acquired Sandy "did we just get another swamp?" She replied "it's a Coastal Wetland, Janet."

It didn't stop there either. Each year Norm and I discuss an event to educate our communities about Georgian Bay. We had a walk on Giant's Tomb - really well attended but with some logistical difficulties. Norm decided after that we needed to limit the variables. He came up with the idea of History Talks about Georgian Bay. He then again engaged his friend Jamie Hunter who is Curator of the Huronia Museum. For the past two summers up and down the Bay we have had talks on lumbering on the Bay, the long gone Camp Wakunda on Franklin Island and have been treated to the most fantastic old archive photos of Georgian Bay.

With the market going bust in 2008, Norm has put off retirement for a little while but he still is working hard for the GBLT. He represents the kind of commitment that has made a tangible difference to preserving land on Georgian Bay. Since Norm came on board we have acquired over 1000 acres of property and over 90 additional stewards. He hasn't done this alone but he has made a huge difference. Thanks Norm.



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## Board Retirements

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We wish to thank Graeme Burt and Jen Kernaghan who are stepping down from our board and joining our distinguished group of Advisors. Graeme served on the Board of Directors since 2007 and was on the regenerate GBLT task force. Jen served on the Board of Directors for over 4 years and she assumed the roles of Chair of Communications and Fundraising. Jen also kindly hosted a number of events for the GBLT and continues to assist us with our fall auction.

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## Umbrella Islands

*"A special place since my childhood and for our guests. Hats off to those who have made this possible."*

Bruce McKelvy & David Moake

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## Time for Nature:

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### Celebrating Georgian Bay through the eyes of a Nature Conservancy of Canada employee during their 50th anniversary

By Teva Harrison, Nature Conservancy of Canada



I work in the Toronto office of the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). This means that although I work to protect nature, I spend most of my time in the city. This summer, to celebrate NCC's 50th anniversary, all staff across the country took *Time for Nature* – time away from our regular jobs to go spend a week enjoying nature.

I didn't grow up in Canada, so I didn't grow up with the Group of Seven. Since I'd never visited the Canadian Shield, I didn't really understand what was special about their paintings until I started working at NCC. Looking at photographs in NCC's archives, I was struck by the colours and weight of the Shield. I was fascinated by images of twisting pines, glaciated rock formations, and creeping lichens. Then I went back to the Art Gallery of Ontario to look again at the Group of Seven paintings with fresh eyes.

I'm a painter, but lately I have trouble finding the time to paint. I had the idea that what I'd like more than anything would be to spend my week in nature having a quintessentially Canadian experience, painting in Georgian Bay. To make it even more relevant to NCC's 50th, I hoped to paint lands that NCC had helped to conserve.

With a vague idea about painting for a week on conservation lands, and no idea where to start, I called Janet Loughheed at the Georgian Bay Land Trust to ask for advice. I thought she might tell me where I could camp, and which properties might be accessible. She laughed, and told me she'd be delighted to help me. I had no idea at the time that I'd called the absolute best person possible. She took care of every detail, from picking me up at the marina, to organizing a lovely place for me to stay, and arranging for the GBLT summer students, Paige and



Paintings by Teva Harrison  
left: "Approaching Southeast Wooded Pine Island by Canoe", right: "Walking the Lizard"

Catriona, to show me around. This was really special, because Paige and Catriona each grew up spending every summer on the Bay. They took the time to tell me stories and talk about the history of the area, and to

show me things I would never have noticed on my own. On top of that, back by the cottage, Brooks showed me a Massasauga rattlesnake, which I certainly wouldn't have had a chance to spot on my own.

I was excited by the opportunity afforded me by the *Time for Nature* project to visit this area, to look closely, and to feel the essence of the place. I was fortunate that I arrived just after the Canada Day long-weekend, when nearly everyone had gone. The islands were empty which allowed me to spend hours alone with nature. I let my focus shift to the horizon. I listened to the wind across the water, and the birdsong in the morning. I walked, swam and wrote in my journal. Eventually, I painted.

It felt like no other place I've been especially because I rarely take so much time alone in nature, being quiet with a place.

Huge thanks to Janet, Brooks, Paige and Catriona for being so welcoming to me, and for sharing your Bay. It's a really special place.



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## 2012: A Summer Review

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by Janet Lougheed, GBLT Director of Development and Go Home Bay cottager



Last summer we had over 300 people attend GBLT events that were both educational and cultural. We want to thank all those people who opened their homes, offered their own personal time to host walks, history talks, West Wind movies and organize a Symphony Quartet.

We raised over \$5,000 from our summer events including a Symphony Quartet put together by Natalie Kemerer and her family and hosted by our favourite politician, Bill Davis. The music was fantastic and of course we had the great Bill Davis speech that topped off the afternoon event. Dave Sharpe roasted a pig for the PaBIA sailing rendezvous on the rainiest day of the summer. Dave and those sailors were a tough group and were in great spirits in the gale force winds. We were in McGregor Bay, Iron City and Pointe au Baril showing the West Wind movie, the documentary on Tom Thomson.

The dynamic duo of Jamie Hunter and Norm Playfair put together a great history talk hosted by Sue Vale in Cognashene

that included wine and munchies. Jamie took us through the history of logging on the Bay and showed photographs from the Huronia Museum that depicted the huge stacks of logs that were drawn out of the bush every winter. A visit to the museum would make an entertaining and educational outing at any time of year.

Last, but not least, GBLT's own *Rock Star*, Nick Eyles, gave us tours in Pointe au Baril and Cognashene on GBLT properties. We learned about erratics and how the glaciers changed our landscape, and viewed potholes on Georgian Bay.

These events were well attended by our community members who are interested in discovering why Georgian Bay is fascinating in so many different ways.

Thank you for supporting us! Look for more "Nick Talks" and events in our June GBLaT and the summer Landscipt.

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## Doors Open Ontario – Georgian Bay

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by Marianne Braid, Honey Harbour



On June 16, 2012, Georgian Bay Township successfully created another unique cultural, and economically beneficial, element for this spectacular municipality.

I was pleased to sit on the "Doors Open – Georgian Bay" planning committee, an incredible group of citizens with different backgrounds and life experiences who came together to organize this event.

Additionally, when asked to participate as an artist, I was thrilled. I love to paint and especially like to try to capture the mystique that is Georgian Bay...the movement of the water... the characteristic granite with its lichen...the iconic windswept pines. Georgian Bay has left an indelible mark on my life.

I experienced a personal perspective of Honey Harbour as I sat on the veranda of the charming Honey Harbour Hideaway with my paintings, networking with visitors from as far away as London, Ontario.

What had set our community's Doors Open apart from the rest of Ontario this year was that each location of historic value featured a different artist who lives in Georgian Bay, or who celebrates its beauty through his/her work. I don't know if we

started the theme, but it will be a recurring theme for "Doors Open Ontario" in its 2013 cultural program.

*Doors Open - Georgian Bay's* closing reception with music, refreshments and a silent auction, took place at the Delawana Inn. An original print of A.J. Casson was auctioned off to support the Georgian Bay Land Trust, the Honey Harbour Historical Society and the Georgian Bay Historical Society.

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Lizard Island

*"Beautiful changing weather,  
warm water, lots of laughs.  
Thanks for all the great  
work you do."*

Debbie Barclay

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## "60 for 60"

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by Chris Baines, Cognashene



Another 60th birthday party to attend!

If this statement provides you with the same sense of apprehension that it did for many in Cognashene this past summer, listen up.

It all started with an assessment of those friends we knew that were hitting the big six oh in 2012. When we had totaled it all up there were actually 12 of us who would be celebrating this "three score" milestone. Imagine attending a dozen or more of the same parties hearing the same things...

After considering what we really wanted to do we decided that:

- a) no one really needed or wanted a gift or card
- b) everyone wanted a quick "in and out" event
- c) we all wanted the event outside in a beautiful, scenic location
- d) we wanted to raise money for a good cause

We decided that a tasteful party in the afternoon on a Georgian Bay Land Trust property would be the perfect solution all around for both the "birthday kids" and their guests. Dress was to be nautical and gifts would be graciously accepted by the GBLT (we liked the theme of "60 for 60").

As it turned out, at the last minute we had to change venues to a nearby cottage due to inclement weather but we did hit the rest of our objectives and raised over \$1000 for the GBLT. We



*Some of the 60 year old celebrants: Jane Lotimer, Joan Baines, Jim Lisowski, Cathy Cooper, Doug Simpson, Paulette Samson, Margaret Eaton-Kent, Suzanne Bennett, Chris Baines*

received great feedback and it was an easy and relaxed way to have "one party for all".

Perhaps this is an idea that more could adopt (with specific restrictions and permissions from the Stewards!) in other areas of the Bay to celebrate a special occasion or milestone.

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## Lacing up for the GBLT:

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### Team GBLT participates in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon Charity Group Challenge

by Patrick Stark, Team GBLT Captain

Waking up before dawn and heading to a downtown parking lot to stand in the rain for an hour before running 5k may not seem like a fun time, but that's exactly what the super-tough "Team GBLT" did on October 14th, 2012.

Team GBLT, comprised of 13 participants, ran the 5k part of the Scotiabank Charity Challenge. We raised over \$15,500 to support the GBLT and help protect the place we all love.

We had a few standout performances both in fundraising, and in running. Frederick Dalley single-handedly raised \$6,775, almost half of the team total. Sonora Carabetta (running in the under 14 category) finished in a smoking fast time of 26:13 and placed 71st out of 3,108 female runners!

After such a successful inaugural event, we're looking forward to next fall. We're going to have more participants, raise more money, and run even speedier times! Watch for further information through our GBLAsTs and the summer newsletter.



*Some of the Team GBLT participants (l-r): Laura Gibson, Fred Dalley, Sonora Carabetta, Brooks Greer, Janet Loughheed, Carolyn Bowden*

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# Tom Thomson Comes to the Land of the Group of Seven

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by Zoe McDougall, McGregor Bay

I absolutely LOVE the work of Tom Thomson so when I heard that the GBLT was bringing his documentary to McGregor Bay, I was pleased to host our presenter, Laura Gibson.

McGregor Bay is a small water-based community in the North Channel of Lake Huron. It is approximately 11 miles wide by 14 miles long. We are about 72% American owned with most of our seasonal people haling from Michigan and Ohio. Some of our American families have cottaged here since the early 1900's!

Our MBA (McGregor Bay Association) has a wonderful working relationship with the local seasonal church, in that we rent back the Parish Hall for all of our activities. The hall is such an

active place that the MBA and church boards must plan their summer calendars carefully to avoid double booking. The hall, on the south shore of Iroquois Island, holds 100 people, and is the centre of our community. For Tom Thomson's arrival, we had 60 in attendance. People of all ages attended this wonderful documentary. I looked over at a squeaking noise at one point, and saw my friend Brian feeding his baby in a booster chair. He was not going to miss this movie just because a babysitter was hard to find!

The documentary was a huge success in our community. A big thank you to the GBLT for a memorable evening!

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## Bayscapes Art Auction

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by Carolyn Bowden, Chair, Bayscapes Art Auction; Cognashene cottager



*Dave Henry & Katherine Cape*

Friday November 2nd, 2012 marked the 8th annual Bayscapes Auction at the Capitol Event Theatre in Toronto. The event was attended by over 250 people, including local and internationally renowned artists, volunteers, honorary chairs Ed Bartram and John Hartman, as well as many new and old friends of the Bay. Live music, tasty hors d'oeuvres, and a wide variety of art pieces and unique experiences created quite the buzz. The much anticipated 1956 Shepherd "Runabout" definitely had the crowds talking; it's presence inside the Theatre could not be missed! With thanks to our generous bidders, we raised \$72,000 that will go towards preserving the Bay that we all love.



*Barb Zimmerman & Steve Flynn*

Many thanks to those who donated items for the Cooler Bag Raffles. Those who purchased raffle tickets were able to choose from many themes including boating, entertainment, spa, and cottage. Congratulations to those who won the wonderful assortment of items and experiences in each bag! A big thank you also goes out to the artists for donating their time and wonderful works of art, and the many committee members and volunteers that made the night such a huge success. We look forward to seeing you at the Bayscapes Photography Auction in 2013!



# Georgian Bay Query: How Were Potholes Formed?

By Nick Eyles, Professor of Geology, University of Toronto, GBLT Director and West Carling cottager



To most of us, a pothole is something that heralds the appearance of spring, a spine- shuddering obstacle to be avoided when driving in late winter. Radio stations have competitions for the 'largest pothole in the GTA.' To geologists they are altogether something else; an unusual (but common) ice age feature formed along the beds of powerful rivers flowing under an ice sheet several kilometres thick. As such they are called 'glacio-fluvial bedforms.'

Ice sheets are built much like gorgonzola cheese with a complex internal plumbing system of connected shafts and conduits that takes meltwater from the surface of the ice sheet (that melts in summer) down through the ice to its bed. There, the pressurized water helps the ice sheet slide over its bed. Potholes are vertical (or near vertical) cylindrical shafts drilled into bedrock by high-energy turbulent meltwaters falling down shafts in the ice and then flowing across its bed as 'subglacial' rivers. These powerful flows carry cobbles and boulders of harder rock such as granite that get caught in vortices where they act as drill bits in a powerful hydraulic drill. Subglacially-cut potholes are very common around the margins of Georgian Bay and across the limestone plains eastward to Kingston. It was here that the glacier flowed over rock, whereas to the south, on sediment, much subglacial meltwater infiltrated into the glacier's bed and was moved as groundwater.

Eskers are related features. These glacial landforms are sinuous ridges standing up to 20 metres above the surrounding landscape and commonly tens, sometimes hundreds, of kilometres long. These record meltwaters flowed in large "subway-size" tunnels at the base of the ice sheet and eventually waned to fill the tunnels with sand and gravel which are progressively exposed as long ridges as the ice sheet eventually thins and retreats. Huge networks of interconnected eskers cover much of Canada's northern Shield and are sites of active exploration for diamonds and other minerals carried along by the subglacial rivers. Potholes often act as traps for 'heavy minerals' and gold; many gold-rich 'gutters' cut in rock are known from the Caribou gold mining area in central British Columbia.

The most numerous examples of glacial potholes found anywhere in Southern Ontario occur in Rockwood Conservation Area just off on Highway 7 north of Guelph. There the hard mid Silurian Amabel dolostone (that elsewhere forms the cap rock to the Niagara Escarpment) is widely exposed along the floor of the Eramosa River. The bedrock surface displays numerous open potholes; as many as three hundred occur in the area north along the river towards Everton. The largest is the famous Devil's Well (N43° 36.71' W80° 8.42'). Excellent examples also occur at Warsaw Caves (44° 26.98' N 78° 7.00' W) just east of Peterborough and at Hell Hole Caves (44° 23.45' N 76° 59.47' W) north of Napanee. Potholes Provincial Park (47° 57.42' N 84° 16.13' W) on Highway 101 east of Wawa contains many thousands. The

Limerick Dam in the Ottawa Valley site north of Renfrew (45° 35.17' N 76° 40.21' W) is a favourite as it shows hundreds of potholes cut into translucent white marble.

Potholes are not unique to glacial rivers but are also a feature of large rivers flowing on rock. They can be found, for example, in the Niagara Gorge (on the hiking trail at Niagara Glen) on bedrock surfaces cut by an early (and much larger) Niagara River.

**Do you know the location of a pothole on Georgian Bay? We will be announcing a pothole contest in the upcoming Summer Landscript. Individuals will be asked to submit their photos for a chance to win a prize donated by geologist Nick Eyles. Stay tuned!**



# Iron City and The Georgian Bay Land Trust



By Gregg Scott, Iron City Fishing Club



*Early 1900's: Dining Hall; Swimming at the front bay; Tents*

The Iron City Fishing Club was founded in 1881 by three Methodist Episcopal ministers: two from Pittsburgh, PA and one from Titusville, PA. The first encampment was at Monahan's Point at the confluence of Sparrow Lake and the lower Severn River. The encampment lasted eight days and the club president maintained an official record of the catch. The total amounted to six hundred and twenty five pounds (625 lbs.) of bass, pickerel, pike, catfish and musky. A fishing club was born!

For eighteen years the members searched for a safe haven located in a beautiful natural environment to call their summer fishing camp. In 1884, 1885 and 1887 they went as far afield as Long Lake and the Les Cheneaux Islands in upper Michigan. In 1888 they headed to Trout Lake near North Bay, in 1896, Maple Lake near Parry Sound and many years in between back to two locations on Sparrow Lake. In 1897 they found their way to Go Home Bay.

Georgian Bay seemed to be the environment for which they were searching. The members remained there through 1899 when the new owner of the land decided to charge rent for their campsite. This action caused the members to engage an Ojibway guide, Jerry Monague, to lead them north to Moon River Basin by sailboat in search of a location that Jerry had recalled as a young boy. During their return from Moon River Falls, the party noticed a large sandy beach. The site seemed so

desirable that they returned to Go Home to summon the club officers. Upon their return with the officers a couple of days later, it was at once determined that this was the location for which the members had been searching.

The site was acquired in 1900 and the present day clubhouse was erected in 1901-1902. This was a major commitment by the membership to the Georgian Bay location.

For many years Iron City operated primarily as a fishing club with its members camping in platform tents. During the 1920's and 1930's, numerous cottages were being erected at Iron City, just as was the case on islands between Moon Bay and the Sans Souci area. After the decline of the tourist industry on Georgian Bay in the 30's, you would think development would also decline. There was a lull for a number of years, however, cottage development in the Sans Souci area came bounding back and continues to date.

With wilderness slipping away, members realized it was time to become more involved on the local level to see if we could help determine our future on Georgian Bay. The Sans Souci Copperhead Association (SSCA) was the obvious place to start. Iron City and many of its members continue to support the SSCA today.

In 1991, the Georgian Bay Land Trust (GBLT) was founded by Sans Souci summer resident Wally King and other like-





*Iron City Fishing Camp today*

mindful cottagers along the Eastern Shore of Georgian Bay. Their goals were clear; to protect and preserve the properties in perpetuity that make up this unique archipelago along the Eastern shore of Georgian Bay and the North Channel. This is exactly what long time Georgian Bay residents, both summer and year round, needed to help protect this environment that is so loved by all.

During the early 2000's, a number of events happened that brought Iron City and the Georgian Bay Land Trust closer together. I attended a nature hike on Frying Pan Island led by Sandy Phillips, a friend and GBLT founding member, as well as Wendy Cooper, the then Executive Director of the GBLT. Wendy was so knowledgeable on the natural environment of Georgian Bay that I couldn't resist asking her if she would be interested in leading a nature hike at Iron City on our newly constructed nature trail that was completed in 2000.

She accepted and we arranged two hikes for the following summer. The hikes were very informative and a great success. About the same time Iron City member Donald Lawson was appointed to the GBLT Board. Not too much later Iron City's business manager, James Beatty, joined the Board. During the summer of 2004, Iron City hosted a fundraising picnic to raise awareness and support for the work of the GBLT. Subsequently, a number of GBLT representatives have come back to Iron City for more nature hikes, a history talk and most recently, the screening of the documentary "West Wind: the Vision of Tom Thomson". Iron City is so pleased with our relationship that the Club has chosen to include the GBLT in our annual charitable giving.

The Georgian Bay Land Trust has exceeded all expectations with their work on the Bay. In fact, it is our view at Iron City that they not only exceed all expectations in preservation but also give back to the community in spades. For this we are thankful!

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### **Southeast Wooded Pine**

***"40 years on Georgian Bay.  
These islands are my favourite  
destinations."***

**Patty Cuttall Busby, Saw Log Bay**

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## ***Kids Rock!***

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### **A new summer experience for the children of Georgian Bay!**

*by Ali Ballantyne, Go Home Bay*

Georgian Bay has been the place I have called home ever since I can remember. Family, friends, and regatta have been and will continue to be life-changing experiences. After spending all my summers in Georgian Bay, I have a strong desire to give back to Go Home and be able to preserve the unique archipelago that has molded who I am. I completed my first year studying conservation at the University of British Columbia and then spent most of last summer shadowing the GBLT interns, Paige Stewart and Catriona Boyd. After a couple weeks of volunteering with the stewards, Janet Lougheed, the Director of Development at the GBLT, came up to me with a proposal that she had been considering for quite some time.

Understanding that children are the future of Georgian Bay, Janet asked if I would be able to create a Kids Game Day for next summer. Since then I have been planning a day at American

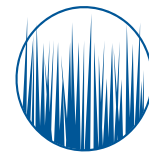
Camp where the Georgian Bay young people will be able to interact with each other and meet new kids around the Bay.

The games will be set out in stations, and each station will have its own theme. To arrive at each station, the children will have compasses and will be able to learn how to use them as they go from station to station. The game activities will range from creating maps of the Georgian Bay area and the protected islands, "fishing" out the Asian Carp of a fake land (fishing for fake Asian Carp?), to playful trivia about the Georgian Bay Land Trust and what we are protecting. We may even be able to get some live specimens of reptiles for the kids to have a hands-on experience.

Hope to see you all there for Kid's Day at American Camp! More information will be available through GBLasT and next summer's newsletter.



# Protecting Disjunct Coastal Plain Flora on Georgian Bay



by Mark Carabetta, GBLT Executive Director

During the past summer I was fortunate to meet two generous supporters of the GBLT, Peter and Cynthia Kemerer, who in 2011 donated a conservation easement on their property. The Kemerers' Georgian Bay property is on Bone Island in Cognashene. The extensive wetland habitat found on Bone Island provides habitat for a high diversity of reptiles and amphibians, including several species at risk. It also supports a number of uncommon plants. Thanks to the Kemerers' donation of a conservation easement on their property, this biological diversity is now protected.

The Kemerers often spend their summers on Georgian Bay and the fall months on the Atlantic coast, on Trinity Bay in Newfoundland. Both eastern Georgian Bay and the Atlantic coast are areas rich in plant diversity. Cynthia Kemerer describes their land on Trinity Bay as being "jammed with interesting plants." Clearly the Kemerers have an affinity for beautiful natural places with rich, diverse plant life. Even the front yard of their "winter home" in Toronto is full of lush, native plants.

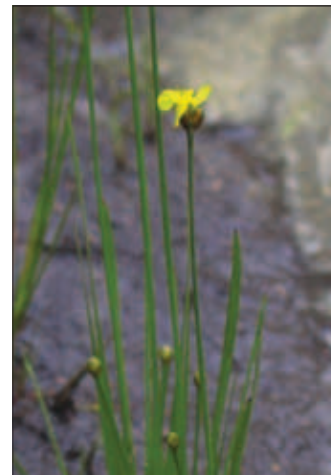
While speaking to the Kemerers about their annual travels, and about plants, we discussed an interesting phenomenon that can be observed on Georgian Bay. A number of plant species whose ranges are otherwise restricted to the Atlantic coastal plain can be found along the shores of eastern Georgian Bay, including on Bone Island, and in several other locations on the Great Lakes, but nowhere else in the world. In botanical terms this is known as a disjunct distribution - where two or more groups of plants are closely related but widely separated from each other geographically. Some of the plants that occur in these unique habitats of Georgian Bay are found only on the Atlantic coastal plain and the Great Lakes and fit the strict definition of a disjunct species, while others have an affinity for the coastal plain but can be found elsewhere.

Scientists have been studying the disjunct coastal plain flora of the Great Lakes region since the phenomenon was first described nearly 100 years ago. It is believed that following the last ice age, these species migrated from the Atlantic coastal plain into areas along the shores of the post-glacial Great Lakes and connecting rivers. Birds may have carried out further dispersal of seeds. The shoreline of the Great Lakes, and the connection to the Atlantic coast, has changed drastically since the last ice age, but these plants have persisted in areas of suitable habitat on eastern Georgian Bay, primarily along sandy and cobble shores of lakes, marshes, beaver ponds and slow-moving rivers.

One can tell by the names of some of these plants that they were first described on the Atlantic coast. One of the more recognizable is Virginia meadow beauty, which has a distinctive flower with four purple petals and bright yellow anthers.



*Virginia meadow beauty*



*Carolina yellow-eyed grass*

Another is Carolina yellow-eyed grass, a small yellow-flowered plant of coastal marshes and bogs. Other Atlantic coastal plain plants found on Georgian Bay include dwarf umbrella sedge, Eaton's rosette grass, stiff yellow flax, ridged panic grass, small water-wort, Smith's Club-rush and Tuckerman's quillwort.

Areas that support Atlantic coastal plain flora on Georgian Bay face many of the same pressures as other types of shoreline flora, such as cottage development, off-road vehicle traffic, dredging and elimination of natural water level fluctuation. An additional difficulty, unique to this group of plants, is that they are disjunct, which means that if a local population is wiped out for any reason, it is very unlikely that there will be nearby seed sources to help re-establish the population.

The GBLT is working to protect areas that support Great Lakes coastal plain flora, as well as other habitats of eastern Georgian Bay, within its growing system of nature reserves. It is the generosity and awareness of the Kemerers, and so many others who support the GBLT, that makes this important work possible.

## References

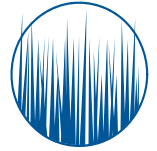
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*Photos by Janet Novak*



# *Dolomedes tenebrosus* – Georgian Bay Dock Spiders

by Barb Zimmerman, Go Home Bay



## Look at the SIZE of that thing!

Most people with a dock in Ontario know right away what I am talking about because we have all made the exclamation many times while getting in or out of boats. The “things” are the mini-monster stuff of nightmares that lurk lake and dockside. The dock spider or “wharf widow” found in Georgian Bay is scientifically known as *Dolomedes tenebrosus* and, unsurprisingly, is Ontario’s largest spider. As with most animals, once you learn something about them, you realize they are very cool.

Their major coolness, or what principally differentiates dock spiders from other spiders, is their method of catching prey. Somewhere along their evolutionary path, dock spider ancestors began dispensing with web building and set off to perfect fishing skills. Apparently, some brilliant proto-*Dolomedes* discovered that a spider could use the surface of the water as a web rather than bothering to make one and having to endure the endless inconvenience of web maintenance. What dock spiders do is hold on to a dock, rock or something secure on the land with their back legs while extending their front legs out over the surface of the water. The water transmits vibrations of struggling or approaching prey in virtually the same way as a web functions. Specialized hairs on their legs can interpret the likelihood of various vibration patterns being a tasty insect struggling on the water surface, or even a small fish or tadpole. Once detected, the dock spider pounces and

grabs its prey, quickly paralyzing or killing it with a shot of venom injected by its fangs –as do other spiders. Dock spiders “fish” at night probably because there is a great deal of aquatic insect action happening, such as emerging hatches of mayflies, but also because nighttime is when their main predators, birds, are asleep.

*Dolomedes* sp. “dock” spiders, of which there are five species in Ontario, evolved other neat tricks associated with using the water surface as their web. They can walk and run on water and they can hide underwater. Their bodies are covered in hydrophobic hairs that allow them to use surface tension to stand on water. These hairs also trap air so that for a time, they can breathe underwater using the same type of book lungs that all spiders have.

Interestingly, there is another animal that spends time underwater and uses air trapped around its body by hairy filaments as a predator escape mechanism: the emperor penguin of Antarctica. Emperor penguins, however, do not use air trapped around their bodies by specialized hair-like feathers to breathe and allow them to remain underwater hiding from predators as do dock spiders. Incredibly, emperors are able to expel this trapped air under their feathers to form a coat of tiny bubbles which reduces drag and gives them an extra burst of speed for their explosive exit from the water on to the ice –an

exit that needs to be extremely quick to reduce the chance of being snatched by the leopard seals that lurk around the edges of the ice waiting to pick off penguins. Dock spiders trap air under their hair to escape birds whereas emperor penguins do it to escape leopard seals.

One more interesting adaptive trick managed by the dock spider revolves around what to do with its eggs when there isn’t a web. I am sure that most readers of the GBLT newsletter have already observed the solution: they wrap their eggs into a silken bundle and carry the package around in their fangs for about three weeks, and continue to enjoy the fact that they will never have to build and maintain a web but can hang out at the dock instead.

*(Author’s note: Although these dock spiders used to scare the bejeezus out of me, since I started working in the Amazon, they have become about as scary as kittens.)*



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