



Volume 17 Number 2

May 2011

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 27- May 30 and June 2 – June 5 - Huron Fringe Birding Festival
- May 27- Festival's Sponsor
Breakfast

- May 28- Banquet at Piper's Glen

June 18- Friends of MacGregor Point Annual General Meeting- 6PM-
Visitor's Centre

June 28 – 8:00PM – Lesley Hales- a research scientist with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Lesley will be talking about her research related to migration routes for bats in Ontario and the impacts of wind turbines and White-nosed Syndrome on local bat populations.

President's Message

Spring is a time of many changes. Sap begins to run, flowers bloom, birds arrive and leaves grow once again on trees. We also have had changes at Friends of Macgregor. Norah Toth, a long-time park employee, and a friend of this Friends' group retired. I can remember when Norah first arrived on the scene at Macgregor Point. Her energy and her ability to communicate well to everyone associated with the park was outstanding. She has many gifts and one, which benefited this organization, was her ability to find grants that supported the goals of the Park and the Friends of Macgregor. Norah's ability to work with people, staff and volunteers alike was exemplary. Every student who worked at Macgregor benefited from her leadership and all left with skills and personal growth that would benefit them throughout their life. Thank you Norah, for sharing so much of yourself with us. We miss you already and are really happy you will be staying with the Friends as recording secretary.

We also welcome back summer staff to Macgregor Point. Matt Cunliffe returned as Senior Park Biologist and has taken on many of Norah's responsibilities. We are happy to have you back Matt, and wish you and your staff the best as you continue to offer visitors excellent service and programs.

Spring also brings the Huron Fringe Birding Festival. Be sure to visit the park during this time to enjoy the many hikes and outings offered. We continue to look forward as the Friends embark on new initiatives. Installing a bird blind is the next major project and we hope to begin its construction this fall. Thank you to each member of the board for your leadership and support of Park activities. Your efforts are appreciated.

One final thought. Mike Pickup has been a long time supporter of the Friends of Macgregor Point and a member of the board for many years. At the writing of this article he is embarking on a new phase of his recovery and soon will be transferred to a rehabilitation facility in London. Mike, we miss you and know that the 'Friends', along with your many friends, are excited about your progress and wish you continued improvement these next few weeks. Your seat at the board table eagerly awaits your return.

Stewart Nutt

HELP US BUILD A BIRD BLIND

Bird watchers will be delighted to know that a blind is planned for the Ducks Unlimited Pond in the south end of the park. Environmental assessments have been completed and construction will begin in the fall of this year. This is an outstanding location for birding and the blind should add considerably to the enjoyment of both the experienced birders and beginners alike. The blind is to be built on the opposite side of the wetlands located on Tower Trail to where the existing viewing tower sits. This is a quiet and serene area, and the location will allow observers the opportunity of viewing at close range many of the species that live or migrate through the park.

The Friends of MacGregor Point Park are working to raise the \$25,000 necessary to complete the blind. To date about one half of the necessary funds have been found. We would encourage our many friends and visitors to make a contribution to assist with this project. All donors who give \$100 or more will be recognized at the site.

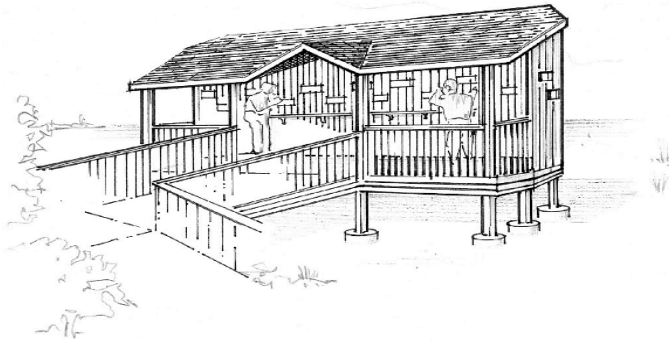
What is a Bird Blind?

Often what is known as a bird blind in North America is called a bird hide in the United Kingdom. A bird hide is a camouflaged shelter which is used for the observation of wildlife - in our case it will be used primarily for bird watching. A bird hide (or blind) is strategically located in a wetland area where birdwatchers and others can observe wildlife without causing any disturbance.

Our vision of the blind is of a structure which is built around 30 feet into the wetland area with a long ramp providing access. It will be roofed and have three sides. Within the sides will be small openings which allow birdwatchers, photographers and others to view wildlife in the Ducks Unlimited wetland.

To date, the Friends have raised over \$16,000 of the \$25,000 required to complete this project. Construction will occur in the fall of 2011. Consider a donation to the bird blind or hide as one of your charitable donations for 2011.

An information folder about this project is available at the Visitor Centre.



A male Scarlet Tanager returns to the Saugeen Shores area last week.

Staff Changes at the Visitor Centre

With the retirement of Norah Toth from the MacGregor Point cluster of parks there have been some changes in 2011 at the Visitor Centre.

Matthew Cunliffe is picking up Norah's duties that related to the Friends of MacGregor Point, the volunteer program in the park, resource management projects and overseeing the interpretive and educational programs in the park. To assist Matt with program and staff coordination, Tom Church will be serving as his right hand man. Happily, Dustin Cook will be returning with his ever increasing resource knowledge.

As the Visitor Centre and our programs transition this season, the public may notice changes. Matt and his staff will be adjusting some of their programming as there will be an increased number of staff who are young and new to nature heritage education. We trust that you will be patient as they get their feet under them.

Before Norah left she was able to get permission for the Friends to make adjustments to the footprint of our Huron Fringe Shop. Visitor Centre staff are excited about the possibilities this layout provides the Friends. We encourage you to support the Friends through your purchases. All revenue from the store is invested into park interpretive and educational programs and projects.

HURON FRINGE BIRDING FESTIVAL

Planning is mostly completed for the 2011 Huron Fringe Birding Festival, the 14th consecutive event, which takes place over two four day weekends (Friday May 27 to Monday May 30 and Thursday June 2 to Sunday June 5, 2011) at MacGregor Point Provincial Park.

The program is released and participants are sending in their pre-registrations.

There are about 80 hikes and events including a bus tour geology event, wildflower events, photography events and of course lots of birding events led by experts from near and far.

A new feature of the HFBF is an off-site banquet on Saturday evening May 28, 2011, in the hall at Piper's Glen Golf Club, just east of Port Elgin.

There will be a chicken buffet dinner supplied by a local caterer, followed by a unique presentation featuring Ethan Meleg, John Haselmayer and Mark Wiercinski in an entertaining discussion of their Baillie Birdathon, where together they recorded 174 bird species in a 24 hour period. This event is selling quickly. The cost is \$25.00, which and includes the banquet and presentation (\$30.00 after April 15).

New this year is the start of our electronic communication initiative in order to reduce our ecological footprint and improve our efficiency. Many previous participants agreed to receive electronic communication about the

Festival, and have received brochures and pre-registration forms as e-mail. We hope to build on this effort to include all electronic on line registration in the future.

Complete Festival passes, weekend passes and single event tickets are available. Pre-registration is preferred and forms are available on the Friends of MacGregor Point Provincial Park website www.friendsofmacgregor.org .

For more information send e-mail to birdfest@rogers.com or fompp@bmts.com . Or call the park at 519-389-6231 or 519-389-6232. Write to HFBF, Box 290, 525 Highland Road West, Kitchener, ON, N2M 5P4

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival is organized by a committee of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park., co-chaired by Norah Toth and Jim Duncan, with a very strong committee as follows: Bette Jean Martin, Fred Jazvac, Anne Cathrae, Doug Pedwell, Judy Duncan, Carole Lupton, Arlene Richards, Norma Nanni, Margaret Anderton and Mike Pickup, with assistance from John Cummings and Stewart Nutt.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2011 Festival.
Jim Duncan, co-chair, HFBF

Sponsors Breakfast

Sponsors for the Huron Fringe Birding Festival will enjoy a thank you breakfast served by the Huron Fringe Birding Festival Committee. Twelve corporate sponsors are invited to attend. Their sponsorships help to ensure that festival fees remain competitive and affordable for both novice and experienced birding and nature enthusiasts.

Birdfest Fritatta is a popular breakfast item and the sponsors will have been well fed! After breakfast they will be presented with certificates of appreciation; they were also given the opportunity to join a birding and nature hike led by John Cummings, a past festival chair.

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival committee, the Friends board and the Wild for the Arts committee appreciate the contributions of all our sponsors. Each one allows the Friends to enhance educational and interpretive experiences at MacGregor Point.

The Huron Fringe Birding Festival is a premier festival in Ontario and offers more activities than any other festival in Canada. Scheduled to take advantage of the end of spring migration and the beginning of nesting birds setting up and announcing their territories, the festival has been offering both indoor and outdoor activities to attendees for 15 years. In 2011, the schedule includes 81 events which cover topics from geology, archaeology, sparrow identification, plant identification and photography skills. Of course, birding hikes and field trips both inside and outside the park are also featured.

Plans for 2012 will begin in July of this year. If you haven't already attended events during the festival, watch for the release of the program at the beginning of February, 2012.



Renovations to Huron Fringe Shop nearly complete.

COME AND VISIT THE NEWLY RENOVATED HURON FRINGE SHOP
REMEMBER THAT THE SHOP MERCHANDISE IS HST EXEMPT
ALSO REMEMBER THAT IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR



YOU GET A 15% DISCOUNT—spread the word!

Hosting at MacGregor Point (Part two) by – Clarence Bos

In the last issue we told you how Ingrid and I became part of the family composed of campground and Visitor Centre hosts at MacGregor Point Provincial Park.

Our first experience was being campground hosts. For many campers the hosts are the face of the park. We prominently display our “*Welcome to our Site*” shingle and regularly walk our beat (the sites for which we are responsible). We meet and greet the campers, especially if they are sitting outside their tents or RVs. We keep the host site bulletin board up to date and put up activity posters for the staff. We sell wood when the gate and the store are closed. We collect and turn in beer and liquor bottles helping to raise money for *Friends* projects. We act as the eyes and ears of the staff. Over time, Ingrid and I got into the habit of carrying garbage bags with us whenever we walked or biked. Each time that we serve as campground hosts, we enjoy that satisfying feeling that comes with knowing that we leave the park a cleaner place.

Campground hosting is a very social experience. If you enjoy meeting and helping people while you are living in and taking care of a beautiful natural environment, perhaps campground hosting is a job for you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Stewart Nutt

Vice-President – John Cummings

Treasurer - Dave Cheer

Secretary – Frances Glencross

Projects - Mike Pickup
LaBlance

Huron Fringe Shop- Andrea & Michael

Fund Raising - Michael Rea

Director-at-Large - Peter Harrison

Newsletter - Linda Mason

Recording Secretary – Norah Toth

Ontario Parks Liaison –Matt Cunliffe

. The deadline for submissions for the Spring newsletter is July 15, 2011. We welcome articles and photos. e-mail address is masonfam@bmts.com Postal address is: Linda Mason, 529 Creekwood Drive, Southampton, N0H 2L0

It is that time again, the birds are singing, the weather is beginning to clear, and its membership renewal time to the Friends of MacGregor Point Park for the 2011 year! Attached is a form that you can readily use and mail back to the park at the address found below. We wish you a wonderful and exciting 2011 year!

Please complete your membership renewal and mail to :The Friends of MacGregor Point Park, R. R. 1, Port Elgin, ON N0H 2C5 . The Friends membership year extends from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____ **please give us your
email, as this will reduce mailing costs for the newsletter

Payment by: Cheque _____ Visa _____ Mastercard _____

Card Number: _____ Expiry: _____

Signature: _____

Membership Category:

Individual - \$20 _____

Family - \$30 _____

Donation in addition to membership _____

Total _____

Official Tax receipts will be issued for all donations.