



ISLAND NATURE TRUST

September 2016
Issue 134

Island Nature Trust Quarterly

Dedicated to the protection of Natural Areas on Prince Edward Island since 1979

Inside this issue:

- Supporter Profile: Chuck Perret & Gloria McKinnon-Perret* 2
- Our Lands: The Perret-McKinnon Natural Area* 3
- Old Wapane'kati Forest on PEI – Does it Exist?* 4
- The 22nd Annual Bennett Birding Classic* 5
- Volunteer Profile: Dwaine Oakley* 5
- Stewarding Natural Areas with Future Generations in Mind* 6
- A Celebration of Autumn in Island Nature Trust Natural Areas* 7



Experience Autumn on PEI!

Here we are into September. Those creatures who head south for the winter are starting to do so. For those of us who spend some time studying them, we have a chance to catch our breath... or so you'd think. I'm looking at my calendar for September and October and wondering how it filled up so quickly with events!

This newsletter is full of snippets on exciting upcoming weekend activities perfect for resisting the urge to hi-

bernate. Starting September 17th and running almost right through to October 29th there are walks, canoes, beach cleanups and birding events that are sure to entertain and educate you outside on this beautiful Island.

Come celebrate autumn with us, while you have the chance... 'cause you know what comes next in the seasonal lineup!

Summer Highlights



To celebrate the end of a busy field season, INT staff took an afternoon to try out paddle boarding in Victoria-by-the-sea



We visited many of our natural areas and saw signs of wildlife!



We hosted a successful shorebird workshop in Morell and saw many species on the sandflats at St. Peter's Harbour



We spent a day making piping plover signs with some grade 4 students from Souris Regional School



Piping Plover Guardian, Lois, sent us this series of photos of a young piping plover learning to fly at North Lake. This year, 3 piping plover chicks fledged from a nest at North Lake

Supporter Profile

Chuck Perret & Gloria McKinnon-Perret: A Love Affair on the Wild Coast of Cable Head



Gloria and Chuck ready for a chat around their kitchen table

On a bright late-August day when the sky carries that special fall blue and the north coast waves make music with the rocky shore, Chuck and Gloria welcome us into their summer home in Cable Head East. As I've come to expect from these two retired teachers, they have thoroughly prepared for our meeting by laying out framed historical photographs and property maps on the kitchen table. Shortly, we are traveling back through time to the 1960s and what brought the couple to this land in the first place.

It is a strange set of coincidences that led the two from Connecticut to this place, starting a generation

before with Gloria's family. Gloria's mother and father were both from the Island – Rhoda Murphy from Morell and George McKinnon from Forest Hill. How funny that they only crossed paths in distant Massachusetts when they were working at the same state school! Their shared Island connection drew them back and Gloria recalls a childhood of exciting summer visits with her grandmother in Morell.

Chuck and Gloria married in 1959, not too many years after Chuck returned from military service flying an F-86 fighter bomber for the US Air Force during the Korean War. The very next year, they headed north to visit Gloria's Island family and in three short weeks had bought their first Island farm from Joe MacLean. Chuck laughs as he recounts the family's reaction to the purchase. Gloria's mother was mystified and perhaps a little alarmed; she rarely ventured east of Morell, and was convinced it was a barren land of bandits and endless winds (it's possible she was correct on the latter)! But the solitude and wild landscape was exactly what attracted the pair to the area. Chuck loved the coast views and wide expanse of open land, as well as the dark nights with few lights to block the star-shine. During their summers here, he would walk the distance to Schooner's Pond Run every Sunday, collecting any garbage as he went.

When the pair first arrived in 1960, the shore fisheries were still prevalent along the north coast, with one just adjacent to them at "The Crick". These spots where fishing shacks dotted the shore and small fishing boats were hauled up the beach every night were slowly being replaced by deep-water harbours like Naufrage and Red Head. In the intervening years, while Chuck and Gloria renovated the old farmhouse, they were witness to many changes on the landscape. Fishing shacks were replaced with cottages and farmland with spruce trees. When the couple looked out their window, they could no longer see the wide expanse of coastline. As time marched on, they decided to protect the landscape they loved by donating it to Island Nature Trust. That incredible act of generosity will ensure that a view of the wild Cable Head coast endures and the rugged coastal plants, like mountain cranberry and black crowberry, have a refuge from development.

Thank-you Chuck and Gloria for this incredible natural legacy!

Our Lands

The Perret-McKinnon Natural Area, Cable Head East: From Rocky Shore to Raised Bog



A view of the ocean from the Perret-McKinnon Natural Area

It's not often that we receive such a gift of land spanning so many different habitat types!

At the shore, the sandy – cobble beach supports a pair of endangered piping plover some years. Above the high-water mark there are the low-growing coastal shrubs that stoutly face those bitter north winds in February. Among them here are some uncommon encounters like mountain cranberry and black crowberry. From the shore you can follow the mowed paths that Chuck Perret still maintains up to Cable Head East Rd and across to the largest portion of protected land. Just beyond a thin section of field – Chuck's old landing strip – upland forest plantation starts with a small wetland section midway. At the very back is another habitat jewel: a raised bog. Here are all of those acid-loving, nutrient-depleted specialty plants like leatherleaf, sheep's laurel, our native rhododendron and hare's tail cotton-grass. And if you stop to look for the tiny but detailed, you will be rewarded: here also is the small bog cranberry and the delicate but deadly (to insects) round-leaf sundew!

Altogether this natural area covers 174 acres and is open to the public.



Bayberry growing along the coast at Cable Head East



The Perret-McKinnon Natural Area is a rare piece of undeveloped land on PEI's north shore

Featured Contributor



Megan Harris is INT's Executive Director. She works on all INT projects, but focuses on land acquisition and land management. When she is not in her office or in the field, Megan is spending time exploring PEI and the Maritimes with her children. You can contact Megan at exdir@islandnaturetrust.ca

Barb McDonald, Executive Assistant
admin@islandnaturetrust.ca

Shannon Mader, Species-at-Risk Coordinator
(On maternity leave until May 2017)

Julie-Lynn Zahavich, Stewardship Coordinator,
Acting Species-at-Risk Coordinator
plover@islandnaturetrust.ca

Chelsey Folsom, Field Technician
chelsey@islandnaturetrust.ca

2017 Heron Raffle

Dave Broderick of Alberton carved and painted this beautiful, life-sized Great Blue Heron! Every year, Dave donates a heron for us to raffle and raise funds for natural area protection and stewardship.



You could win this hand-carved and painted Great Blue Heron!

Raffle tickets for our heron are \$5 or 5 for \$20.

The draw will take place at the Annual INT Dinner and Auction in April, 2017.

Tickets are available at the INT office in the Ravenwood building on the Experimental Farm in Charlottetown, or by calling 892-7513

Partnerships

Old Wapane'kati Forest on PEI – Does it Exist?



Out here on this wee sandstone island it is easy to think of ourselves as separate and apart from the rest of the Maritimes. And yet we have many things in common with our mainland neighbours, including remnants of old forest.

Over the coming year, expect to hear more from us at Island Nature Trust on old trees and old woodlands, better defined and understood thanks to a new and exciting partnership with friends at the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute in Kempt, Nova Scotia.

MTRI staff spent time with us in August and will be here again in October, training INT staff on some of the standard methodologies the conventional forest industry uses to measure old growth trees. We are using these as a basis to refine and help describe what our old forest ecosystems look like and how they function.

Thank-you Amanda, Tommy, Colin and Alain, for sharing your knowledge and passion for the Wapane'kati (Mi'kmaq for "land of dawn"), or Acadian, Forest!

"MTRI is a non-profit co-operative with a mandate to promote sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity conservation in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve and beyond through research, education, and the operation of a field station."

Find out more at: www.merseytobeatic.ca

Volunteer Page

The 22nd Annual Bennett Birding Classic

It is time again for the Annual Bennett Birding Classic! The Bennett Birding Classic is a joint event of the PEI Natural History Society and Island Nature Trust. This year the Bennett will take place on Saturday, September 24th. Over 24 hours, teams will criss-cross the island in search of as many bird species as possible.

Every year, competing teams find a good variety of species and are sometimes treated to a rare sighting! Like Team Dodo in 2014, who were lucky enough to observe 3 Sandhill Cranes in a field along the Darnley Basin. Observations collected by teams contribute to what we know about fall species on PEI.

Individuals may enter a team or join an existing team. Teams collect pledges, all of which go towards protecting and managing bird and wildlife habitat on PEI. If you would like to enter or join a team, or would like more information on the event, please contact us!

For the first time ever, we are also hosting a youth birding event on the same day! If you know a budding birder who may be interested in attending, check out the 'Upcoming Nature Events' section on the next page or get in touch if you have questions!



Sandhill Cranes captured by Shirley Gallant during the Bennett in 2014

Volunteer Profile



Dwaine Oakley

Island Nature Trust President

Dwaine Oakley is the Learning Manager for Holland College's Wildlife Conservation Technology Program. He is also a long-serving member of the Island Nature Trust Board of Directors and, for the last year, has been INT's President. Dwaine joined the INT board six years ago. In that time, Dwaine has facilitated many events and given countless presentations for INT and other environmental groups on the Island. He is always willing to give up an evening or a Saturday to share his passion and knowledge of Island birds and wildlife!

Dwaine is an avid birder and outdoorsman. He is our go-to guy for any sort of bird-related questions that we can't answer in-house. He is also the organizer for our Adopt-a-Kestrel Nestbox program, which is run in collaboration with the Holland College Wildlife Conservation Technology Program.

In September, Dwaine is departing from our board. He will be missed, but we have no doubt that he will be back to help out in one way or another. And on the bright side, he will have more time to spend with his new puppy, Sage!

Thank you, Dwaine, for all you do for nature education on PEI!

Island Nature Trust Projects



Wire cages protect young trees from meadow voles



Our ED, Megan, planting trees in Norboro



Our field tech, Chelsey, picking purple loosestrife at Deroche Pond

Stewarding Natural Areas with Future Generations in Mind

Contributed by: Megan Harris

Island Nature Trust is coming up to a big anniversary in just a few short years: in 2019, we will celebrate our 40th anniversary as a private land trust! We acquired our first land for protection in 1985 and since then have secured over 3,700 acres in 42 natural areas across the province.

As we continue to build on this base, we must strive to be exemplary stewards of the land we have already been entrusted. Some of our natural areas are relatively remote, while others sit up against subdivisions or farmland in rural communities. In every location there are management needs that range from addressing encroachment of invasive species to limiting illegal activities like tree-cutting or ATV access and increasing the resilience of the natural landscape to climate-driven challenges.

With the assistance of funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada and the PEI Wildlife Conservation Fund, we are resurrecting our Conservation Guardian program, as one means of being more effective stewards of our land. Conservation Guardians are volunteers, often neighbours of our natural areas, who commit to visiting and reporting on the state of the land throughout the year. In turn we provide them with whatever training they wish to gain, from forest or shorebird identification to invasive plant awareness to tree-planting and pruning skills. So far this year we have enlisted seven Guardians, planted 550 native trees and shrubs, protected them from grazers (meadow voles and snowshoe hares), worked to control invasive purple loosestrife and wild cucumber in two natural areas, pruned winter damage to past plantings in one natural area, and identified a number of other management issues needing action. We have shared our shorebird identification and tree pruning knowledge. And we have met many of our neighbours in the process of it all.

We have three years' dedicated funding to develop a long-term stewardship plan for our natural areas and we would love your input and support. Join us in exploring some of our less accessible natural areas in the coming weeks. We have three big and exciting events listed on the next page! By 2019 and our 40th anniversary we hope to guide you through all 42 of our protected landscapes!

Notes & News

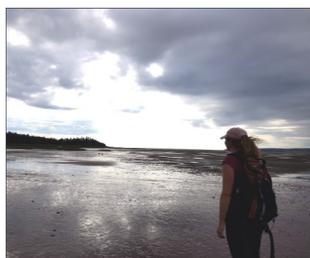
A Celebration of Autumn in Island Nature Trust Natural Areas

September and October are fantastic months in PEI: it's often sunny, temperatures are warm but not too warm, humidity is tolerable and there are few bugs – perfect outdoor weather! This October we're very excited to offer guided tours of three of our natural areas that truly shine in these months.

Pitcher Plant Huntin' in MacKinnon's Bog Natural Area, Cardcross - Saturday October 8th

(rain-date Oct.9)

Autumn colours in a bog are stunning, with bright red pitcher plants, yellow larches, white lichens and green black spruce backlit with that incredible blue sky and sun low on the skyline. Come out for a guided walk and learn more about this unique, sometimes harsh environment where plants can be carnivorous to compensate for nutrient-poor soils. Be prepared for a 2 hour walk. **Things to bring:** rubber boots, camera



Mud Walk of the Tidal Flats to St. Peter's Island Natural Area, Rice Point - Saturday October 22nd (rain-date Oct. 23)

PEI is situated in the migration corridor for a number of shorebirds and waterfowl. October is a great month to see a diversity of birds resting and refuelling in our wetlands and shorelines on their way south. Join us as we walk the tidal flats from Rice Point to St. Peter's Island and hear about the rich natural and human history associated with this place. Be prepared for a 3 hour hike. **Things to bring:** water shoes or sandals, binoculars

Paddling the Percival River Salt Marsh Natural Area, Alaska - Saturday October 29th (rain-date Oct. 30)

The Percival River is a beautifully undeveloped long estuarine ecosystem in western PEI that locals cherish but few others have explored. Plan on learning more about the salt marsh habitat protected in our Alaska properties from the vantage point of a canoe or kayak. The shallow waters at the mouth of this river are teeming with life and a magnet for wildlife; of course, nothing beats the colour of *Spartina* salt marsh grasses in the fall! Be prepared for a 3 hour paddle. **Things to bring:** canoe or kayak (some extras may be available, please contact us), life jacket, binoculars



To register and for information on times and meeting places, please give us a call or keep an eye on our Facebook page!

Upcoming Nature Events

Sept 15th—Island Nature Trust AGM – The meeting will include a recap of the last year's activities, presentation of the Hon. J. Angus MacLean Natural Areas Award and a presentation by Leanne Tol on "Factors affecting the breeding success of endangered African penguins on Robben Island, South Africa". Meeting starts at 7:00 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

Sept 17th—Beach Cleanup at Spry Cove Beach— Join us for a beach cleanup. Meet at the end of Spry Point Road at 9:00AM. INT will supply bag and gloves. Plan to stop at the Cardigan Farmers Market on the way back.

Sept 24th— Twenty-Second Annual Bennett Birding Classic— Join a team or enter your own, and spend 24 hours searching for as many bird species as possible on PEI. Teams will compete to break the autumn record of 107 species found in this count. Call or email INT to register or for more information.

Sept 24th— Youth Bennett Birding Event— Calling all budding birders! Meet at Canoe Cove Beach facilities at 9:00AM. Pick up at Canoe Cove at 11:00AM. Parents welcome! Birders under 5 years old must be accompanied by a parent. Participation by donation. Call of email INT to register.

Oct 4th—The fascinating micro-world of lichens – How to get to know them. Frances Anderson will be the guest speaker for Nature PEI's monthly meeting. Meeting starts at 7:30PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown.

Board of Directors

Island Nature Trust is governed by a Board of Directors of 12 to 16 members. Each member serves up to two three-year terms.

Our board members attend regular monthly meetings and sit on a variety of committees that oversee and guide the many activities of Island Nature Trust. Committees include: Communications, Fund-raising, Land Management, and Youth Engagement. Our committees are open to non-board members as well so, if you are looking to become more involved with INT or if one of these committees catches your eye, please get in touch!

Executive:

Dwaine Oakley	President
Randy Dibblee	Vice-President (Nature PEI)
Rob MacKay	Treasurer
Donna Gill	Secretary

Group Representatives:

Luke Peters	PEI Wildlife Federation
Linda Berko	Museum and Heritage Foundation
Kevin Teather	UPEI Biology Department

Remaining Board Members:

Sharon Clark
 Carol Horne
 Will Horne
 Kathleen MacNearney
 Sandra McConkey
 Paul Smith
 Michael Walsh

We are...

Island Nature Trust is a non-profit, private registered charity dedicated to permanent protection of natural areas on Prince Edward Island. We acquire lands through purchase and donation for protection and help private landowners protect their own properties through legislation and promotion of good land management practices. We also protect species-at-risk, restore lands and undertake public nature education.

Donations are always welcome.

Contact Us:

Ravenwood, Experimental Farm
 PO Box 265
 Charlottetown, PE
 C1A 7K4

Phone: 902-892-7513

Fax: 902-628-6331

E-mail: admin@islandnaturetrust.ca

Find Us Online:

www.islandnaturetrust.ca



@peinaturetrust



Island Nature Trust



islandnaturetrust

Support Island Nature Trust



We have a beautiful, brand new, donation box!

Our new donation box will be travelling with us to all of our upcoming events. Any donations are welcome and greatly appreciated. All funds raised will go towards natural areas protection and stewardship on PEI.

Many thanks to our generous friend and expert carpenter, Ben Hoteling, for constructing our donation box for us. Ben is a former INT President and retired Learning Manager for the Holland College Wildlife Conservation Technology Program.