ISLAND NATURE TRUST

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

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April - The Storm Before The Storm

You have probably heard the expression "the calm before the storm". For us, May is a storm of a month. It's always jam-packed with activities: tree planting, Piping Plover monitoring, training new staff, and delivering Project Webfoot. This year is no exception - our May is looking crazy busy! April, however, is proving to be just as hectic. These days, we are busy preparing for our upcoming fund raising dinner.

Our 34th Annual Fundraising Dinner will take place on Friday April 20th and, for the first time ever, will be held at the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown. The evening will feature a buffet-style meal, a live and silent auction, our annual heron carving raffle, and our much-loved bucket raffle! Tickets for the event are $75, with ticket-purchasers receiving a $20 tax receipt, and are available by calling or dropping in to the Island Nature Trust office.

This natural wood birdhouse would be a lovely addition to any backyard. Donated by Dario Zanniner of Barn & Sea Creations

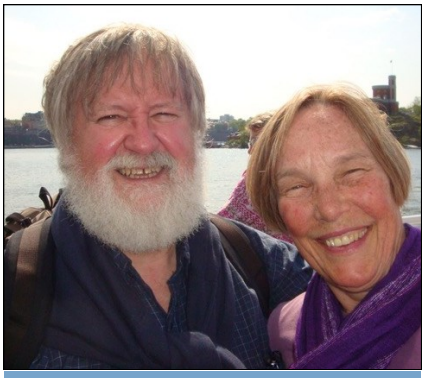
The quality of donations we receive for this event is astounding. Every year, many generous Islanders contribute to our dinner by donating their original art and reproductions, crafts, carvings, event tickets, handmade products and other items to be auctioned or raffled. Without their support, this major fundraising event couldn't go ahead. We have included just a couple of photos of donations we have received so far, but you will have to attend the event to see the rest of the beautiful items on offer that evening.

"The Yellow Dory" a beautiful, acrylic, Island scene donated by Richard Vickerson

See you on April 20th!

Supporter Profile

Liz Townsend & Harry Robertson: Seekers of Balance Between Land Use and Protection



Harry Robertson and Liz Townsend

Liz Townsend and Harry Robertson are pioneers – not in the traditional sense of land settlement, but because they were among the first Islanders to make the careful and significant decision to protect their land from development using legislative tools. As with any pioneering initiative, they faced a number of challenges along the way that required great persistence, patience and commitment.

When Liz and Harry Baglole purchased Murchison House on the shores of the Pinette River harbour in 1974, they quickly realized that many of the things that drew them to that place – historical significance, peace, glorious views of the bay and salt marsh, a wonderful mix of farmland and woods – could very quickly disappear should the adjoining property be subdivided for cottages. Since it was then owned by an American cottage development company, that was a real and imminent danger.

What followed was a long, stepwise and determined effort to conserve one of the few undeveloped, and possibly the only un-subdivided, coastal peninsula in the region. Liz and Harry began the journey by purchasing 109 acres from the developer in 1976. On her own by then, Liz began forest enhancement of the woodlot in 1982. Liz and her new husband Harry Robertson wanted to see the land protected in perpetuity under the PEI Natural Areas Protection Act (NAPA), while still honouring the farming heritage of the area. Dr. Angus MacAuley, Selkirk settlement pastor and physician, deeded 120 acres to his daughter who married Samuel Murchison, son of one of the original Selkirk settlers. The Murchison family lived and worked the land from 1823 until 1959.

When Liz and Harry applied to place a NAPA restrictive covenant on the property in 1988, they were denied because part of the land was still being farmed. Diane Griffin (then with Island Nature Trust) and Rosemary Curley (then with the PEI Government) documented and argued for the ecological value of the property, particularly protection for the extensive 3.4 km-long salt marsh, red sand shore habitat and 51 acres of woodland. Ten years after the original application, protection under NAPA of salt marsh, woodland and working farm fields was finally achieved. Using the Meacham's Atlas as their guide, Liz and Harry chose to name it the Holm Cove Natural Area.

Over the years, Liz and Harry have invested much of themselves in this beautiful acreage. There has been a woodlot planting project every year since 1983. The couple work closely with the neighbouring farmer who leases 65 acres of the farmland for cereal crops and builds the soil with manure from his hog operation. The soil in the 1970's was depleted – as the older farmer put it at the time, "a rabbit would have to pack a lunch to cross that land". Thanks to Liz and Harry's dogged determination, the land will remain undeveloped in perpetuity and look much the same as it did in 1823, even when it passes to new owners in the future. Islanders owe a great debt of gratitude to Liz and Harry for pursuing the vision they had and the legacy they have created for future generations.

A view of the undeveloped shoreline at Holm Cove

"I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anyone could ever want to own" - Andy Warhol

Our Lands

DeRoche Pond's Long History of Conservation

As this newsletter is printed, DeRoche Pond holds the distinction of being both the first and the most recent acquisition for Island Nature Trust. The parcel we call the Hickey – Beauregard property was purchased in March 1985; this past September, Island Nature Trust added a forested wetland onto it as our most recent purchase.

A rich wetland area in the DeRoche Pond Natural Area

The area around DeRoche Pond has long been recognized for its rich and complex mosaic of coastal ecosystems. In total, the area supports 15 distinct vegetation communities, ranging from the coastal beach and marram grass dunes through to sphagnum bogs, black spruce lowlands and aquatic plants in the beach barrier pond itself. As far back as the early 1960's it was investigated as a potential national wildlife area, because of the importance of these varied communities to migratory species of waterfowl and shorebirds. The Mi'kmaq used the DeRoche Pond area extensively. It lies between *Tlaqatik* "The place where people gather" (Tracadie) and *Katewpijk* "Eel trap place" (Savage Harbour), suggesting it was a very important area for the Island's First People.

Marsh skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*) found growing in the back dune of the DeRoche Pond Natural Area

Out conducting a bioinventory of our newly acquired parcel adjoining the DeRoche Pond Natural Area

While people management on the beach continues to be a delicate dance between responsible use and abuse, much of the rest of the land remains relatively untouched. Some hunters use the pond every fall and a few canoe it in the summer. Island Nature Trust monitors for species-at-risk including piping plover, Canada warbler and olive-sided flycatcher, all of which use the natural area. Other wildlife like the smooth green snake also thrive in the shrubby, dense vegetation of the back dune. We continue to battle purple loosestrife invasion of the pond and back dune.

Currently we do not have any volunteer Conservation Guardians for this beautiful and complex mix of habitats. If you love to canoe or bird watch, this might be a perfect fit!

Featured Contributor

Julie-Lynn Zahavich is INT's Stewardship Coordinator. She works with volunteers to monitor, protect, and restore our 43 Natural Areas across the Island. Julie-Lynn is also pursuing a Master's degree through Royal Roads University in Victoria, BC. She is studying habitat use by forest birds in PEI's fragmented forest landscape. You can contact Julie-Lynn via email at **julielynn@islandnaturetrust.ca**

Megan Harris, Executive Director
exdir@islandnaturetrust.ca

Barb McDonald, Executive Assistant
admin@islandnaturetrust.ca

Shannon Mader, Species-at-Risk Coordinator
projects@islandnaturetrust.ca

Leanne Tol, Farmland Birds Coordinator
landbirds@islandnaturetrust.ca

Last Call for Heron Raffle Tickets!

Our fundraising dinner is fast approaching and so is our annual heron raffle!

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

Dave Broderick of Alberton carved and painted this beautiful Great Blue Heron for us to raffle off and raise funds for natural area protection and stewardship.

Raffle tickets for the heron are $5 or 5 for $20. The draw will take place at the Annual INT Dinner and Auction on April 20, 2018.

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

Partnerships

Local Nurseries, Island Stock, Huge Benefits for Nature

When you've had access to an important tool for several years, you start to get complacent, thinking it will always be there when you need it. We could be guilty of taking our two fabulous local nurseries for granted. What in the world would we do without the provincial Frank Gaudet Nursery and the private non-profit Macphail Woods Nursery!

PEI is the most densely populated province in Canada and there are few Island places that have not felt the impact of human habitation at some time in the past. Island Nature Trust owns many acres of beautiful woodland, most of which is far from pristine. When we look to diversify the forests we own with tree, shrub and wildflower species once present but now gone, we go to our partners at these two nurseries.

The Frank Gaudet Nursery is managed by the Province and supplies trees, shrubs and dune grasses to watershed groups, schools and land trusts in PEI. While not a retail enterprise, they do sell wholesale to the nursery industry on the Island.

The Macphail Woods Nursery is managed by Gary Schneider and a dedicated team of dirt-loving, native plant enthusiasts. Gary saw a niche for locally-grown, locally-sourced but sometimes uncommon native plants and he began to fill that gap in 1991. Now Macphail Woods grows trees, shrubs, ferns and wildflowers for sale to the public, all native to PEI and many rare in the wild.

These two nurseries are key to forest restoration efforts across the Island. By using local seed, they retain the native genetic stock and eliminate the risk of inadvertently bringing in new pests, diseases or invasive species. They do all the hard work of germinating and nurturing along seedlings until they are of sufficient size and hardiness to transplant into their forever home. We cannot thank them enough for their energy, enthusiasm, skill and knowledge of all things green!

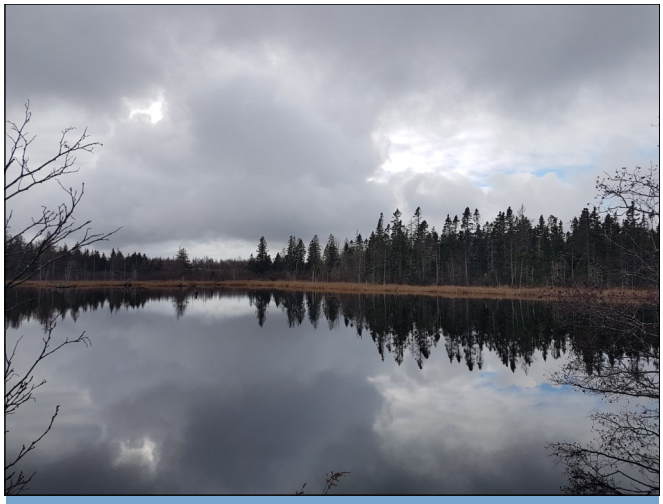
Volunteer Profile

Nancy Reddin & Linda Gaudet
Conservation Guardians

Nancy Reddin and Linda Gaudet had been friends long before they re-connected last summer at an INT invasive species training workshop. They had been involved in women's issues together in the 1980s, and both have been involved with INT in some capacity for the last while; Nancy by attending INT meetings and through the Conservation Guardian Program, and Linda as a Piping Plover Monitor for Boughton Island Beach. After reconnecting, Linda and Nancy decided to join forces as Conservation Guardians to monitor the Jenkins Complex Natural Area, one of INT's largest natural areas, located east of Charlottetown in Mount Albion.

In doing my interview to write this profile, I found it so interesting to observe the parallels that run throughout the lives of these two friends. Both Nancy and Linda are retired now but were professionals, on- and off-island, for many years, and both have a long-standing love for the outdoors that stems from early memories of time spent outside with family. Linda worked as a lawyer in western Canada before she returned to PEI to work for the province, developing a practice in the area of labour relations and eventually moving to the private sector. Nancy had a career in home economics and dietetics and worked in Ontario before returning to the Island. Interestingly, both women cite their fathers for instilling their love and respect for the natural world. Linda remembers her father taking her trout fishing as a girl, while Nancy recalls her father, a botany professor at Prince of Wales College, inspiring her initial interest in the flora and fauna of PEI.

Linda, Nancy, and I meet up every month usually, often with their husbands, Chris (Linda) and Pat (Nancy), and Linda's dog, Django, to walk through the Jenkins Complex Natural Area. Together, we monitor human and wildlife use, map trails and prune trees, and enjoy the sights and sounds of the many ponds and wetland features that dot the area. Linda says her experience with the Conservation Guardian Program has improved her plant and bird identification skills and helped her become more observant when she is out walking in nature. Nancy has enjoyed learning more about the natural area and is glad to play a role in protecting the legacy of the land donor, Harold Jenkins, and his father, who initiated much of the pond construction and restoration activities that continue today.



The calm waters at the Jenkins Complex reflecting a moody sky in December, 2017

It's always such a joy to spend time in the Jenkins Complex with Linda and Nancy. We always have an interesting chat, share a few laughs, and stop to enjoy a homemade snack along the way.

Thank you both for your commitment to the Conservation Guardian Program!

Getting to Know Our Common Forest Birds

Text contributed by: Julie-Lynn Zahavich
Photos contributed by: Donna Martin (DM) and Brett MacKinnon (BM)

According to *The State of Canada's* Birds, published in 2012 by The North American Bird Conservation Initiative, forest bird populations overall have declined by 10% since 1970. Changing forestry practices, degradation of wetlands, loss of insect prey, climate change, and habitat loss on wintering grounds are considered threats for many species.

In 2017, Island Nature Trust began an intensive study of the bird communities using forests in INT natural areas and the habitat features important for forest-nesting species at risk. INT staff members conducted early morning point count surveys in six natural areas, located across the Island, at 30 distinct locations. During our surveys, all species heard or seen were recorded.

The following species were the 10 most commonly detected during our 2017 surveys. Grab your bird book and follow along, and look and listen for these species next time you are in the woods! If you are interested, there are also phone apps available with all of these birds' calls, to help ID those that like to sing from the top of the forest canopy.

DM

1. American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) was detected at every point count location. Not surprisingly, Robins are known as habitat generalists meaning you can find them pretty much anywhere! Robins typically build their nests on horizontal branches in the bottom half of trees, but they are not picky and have been known to nest in gutters, eaves, and other outdoor structures. Their song is often described as "*cheerily, cheer up, cheer up, cheerily, cheer up".*

BM

2. Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) was detected at 29 of 30 point count locations. Red-eyed Vireos build their cup-shaped nests in forks of tree branches. Breeding males will sing constantly, with one male known to have vocalized over 20,000 times in one day. Their song is a series of short phrases with distinct pauses in between: "*look-up, way-up, tree-top, see-me, here I am*".

DM

3. Black-throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*) was detected at 26 of 30 point count locations. The Black-throated Green Warbler builds a cup-shaped nest in the forks of tree branches using moss, lichens, twigs, bark, spider webs, and grass. Males sing a persistent "*zoo-zee, zoo-zoo-zee*" during the breeding season.

BM

4. Northern Parula (*Setophaga americana*) was detected at 25 of 30 point count locations. Northern Parulas eat a wide variety of insects. They are often associated with mosses and lichens, which they use to build their hanging nests. Their song is a rising buzzy trill with a final sharp note.

5. Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*) was detected at 24 of 30 point count locations. The Ovenbird gets its name from the domed nest it builds on the ground, which resembles a Dutch oven. Their song is a loud "*tea-Cher, tea-Cher, tea-CHER, Tea-CHER, TEA-CHER*" that rings throughout the forest.

6. Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) was detected at 24 of 30 point count locations. Black-capped Chickadees, also called the Cheeseburger bird by many, are well-known among bird watchers and feeders. These hardy little birds stick around PEI all winter. They are found in all types of habitats and eat a variety of food, from seeds to insects. Chickadees place their nests within tree cavities that they excavate themselves. Their song is often described as "cheese-bur-ger", and their familiar call is a clear "chick-a-dee-dee-dee".

7. American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) was detected at 23 of 30 point count locations. Crows are often thought of as urban birds, but they are also common in all types of woodland. Crows form large family groups, and older offspring help to raise new young. Crows will eat just about anything, and build their stick nests in crotches of trees near the trunk. Their call is a loud "caw".

8. Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*) was detected at 19 of 30 point count locations. Golden-crowned Kinglets are small but tough—they stick around PEI all year long! They create small cup-shaped nests high up in trees and close to the trunk. Nests are lined with mosses and lichens. The Golden-crowned Kinglet's song consists of a series of "tsee" notes that gradually get faster and higher-pitched.

9. Hermit Thrush (*Catharus guttatus*) was detected at 18 of 30 point count locations. They often nest on the ground, hidden under overhanging branches or protected by low vegetation. Hermit Thrushes are noted for their beautiful song which is a series of long, clear, musical phrases, each on a different pitch.

10. Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) was detected at 18 of 30 point count locations. Black-and-white Warblers eat mostly insects that they forage for under tree bark. They build their nests on the ground near the base of a tree or log. Nests are cup-shaped and constructed with dry leaves, tree needles, and grass, and lined with soft materials like moss and feathers. Black-and-white Warblers have a high-pitched "weesy, weesy, weesy" song that sounds like a squeaky wheel.

Our Generous Donors in 2017

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Judi Allen & Dave McBurney
Jeffie Anderson
Dr. John & Christine Andrew
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Martin Arsenault
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Joyce Bayly-Inwood
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Dr. Jules & Patti Burgevin
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John Sylvester Photography

Our Generous Donors in 2017

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Womens Probus Club of Charlottetown

Eagle Adoptions:

West Kent Elementary

Endowment Fund:

Dr. Jean-Yves Dubois

In Memoriam Donations:

The names underlined are those that are remembered with donations from those listed below each:

Julie Carmichael Jackson
Clarence Ryan

Wendell M. Profitt
Doreen Bryanton
Lynn Duffy
Kathryn & D. Forsythe
Denise Gaudet-McPhail
Hon. Diane Griffin
Martin Halman
Reagh & Marina Hicken
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Ian MacGougan
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Tom Killorn
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Bill MacIntyre
Roland MacKinnon
John & Sherry MacLeod
Dan McAskill
Stephanie J. Mowry
Gertie & Henry Purdy
Ian Scott & Daphne Large
Ferne Taylor
Marie Whalen
Carole (Sally) Worth

Upcoming Nature Events

Apr 18, 20, 22, 28 — Owl Prowls at Macphail Woods — Celebrate the wonderful world of owls at the Macphail Homestead in Orwell! Light refreshments will be served in the Great Room of the Homestead at 6:30pm. At 7:30pm, a slideshow on owls will commence, followed by a guided walk around the woods to call in nearby owls. Admission is free, donations welcome.

April 20th—INT's 34th Annual Fundraising Dinner— Tickets are available at the INT office or by calling 902-892-7513

April 22nd — Happy Earth Day!

May 1st— Prehistoric PEI — Will Beckett, Island Filmmaker and photographer, will be the guest speaker for Nature PEI's monthly meeting on prehistoric history of PEI. The meeting will start at 7:30 PM at Beaconsfield's Carriage House, corner of West and Kent, Charlottetown. Admission is free.

May 12th — Birds and Breakfast — Join other birders beside the fireplace in the Great Room for at hot beverage and breakfast treats to start your day out right! Then walk the trails of the Macphail Homestead with Fiep de Bie, looking at year-round residents and returning migratory birds. Wear your boots, and bring binoculars if you have them. The Macphail Homestead will be open at 7am to serve a free "early bird" breakfast. Donations will be gladly accepted to help cover costs.

May 12th — Nature PEI's Flower Fly Pinning Workshop — This free workshop, led by John Klymko, will help participants to learn how to pin, label and store flower flies and other insects. The workshop is at 1 to 4 pm, tentatively at the Forests, Fish and Wildlife Office at 183 Upton Road in Charlottetown.

May 26th – Nature PEI's Bain Bird Count – This is the Society's spring bird count which documents the movement of migrating birds to PEI. The counts can take place anywhere on the Island between midnight and midnight during this day. Birders are encouraged to form teams and participate in this event. For more information, please contact Dan McAskill at 902-569-4351.

Board of Directors

Island Nature Trust is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors of 12 to 16 members. Each member serves up to two three-year terms. Board members participate in a number of committees that help guide the work of Island Nature Trust.

Thank you to Dr. Dan Coffin, who left the board this month. Thank you, Dan, for your time spent serving on the INT board!

Executive:

Judi Allen	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	University of Prince Edward Island

Remaining Board Members:

Sharon Clark
Joyce Dewar
Laura Kell
Michael Walsh
Carol Horne
Adam Hood
June Sanderson

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

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Island Nature Trust

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Cheers to INT!

Year 3 of our 5-year funding campaign with PEI Liquor Control Commission is underway! In 2015, Island Nature Trust won a 5-year commitment for a fundraising campaign with the PEI Liquor Control Commission. Called "PEI, Ours to Protect", the campaign runs for 6 weeks in liquor stores every April and May through to 2020. In that 6-week window each year, we hope to raise $20,000 in funds for conservation, as Islanders raise their glasses! How appropriate that the final year is also the target year that countries the world over have set to protect 17 % of the land mass and 10 % of waters as natural areas! Please help us reach our target of conserving more ecologically significant old forest, wetlands and coastline. Products of participating liquor distributors are identified with a bottle tag and a shelf marker. Now is the time to stock up for your summer visitors and those wonderful evenings with family and friends!