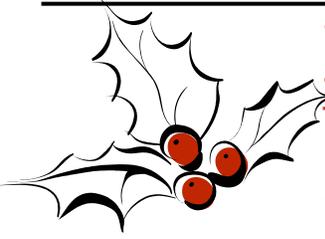


The Beacon

DECEMBER 2015



Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2016 from our 'Presqu'ile family' to yours



Board of Directors

- Pete Alker
- John Cockburn
- Bev Cook — *Corp. Secretary*
- David Crouch — *Treasurer*
- Janine McClintock
- Phil McRae — *Vice-Chair*
- Steve Sinclair — *Chair*

The Friends of Presqu'ile Park

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**Wrap up the year
by making your
donation to our
Environmental Fund**

Donate Now

Expanding is a key word to describe how The Friends of Presqu'ile has operated this past year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to commend our members and all of our volunteers for their continued passion to make a difference at Presqu'ile.

As an organization, we have managed to increase our efforts to deliver against our Vision and Mission. It has been clearly demonstrated that we view Presqu'ile as a valued and irreplaceable asset that should provide learning, recreational, and conservation opportunities for all.

Environmental Initiatives

Momentum is increasing as we explore more opportunities where The Friends can support Environmental Initiatives across a broad spectrum of activities.

The research activities we have supported provide insight into ways in which we can help the environment,

learn, and, in turn, teach important lessons.

In 2015, a major effort was undertaken to restore the Panne by removing Scots Pine, an invasive species.

A new threat in the Emerald Ash Borer was identified by the Park Staff and we supported their efforts to protect some of the endangered Ash trees around Jobes' Woods Trail.

Our support over the past three years for the turtle research project has taught us about habitat re-connectivity and the need for joining the major Park initiative to install underpasses and also to provide critical fencing (*see page 3*).

Kids 'n Nature expands

A key activity for The Friends has always been, and will continue to be, our various education programs. Expansion in 2015 saw support for the various regional school board programs.

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(Continued from page 1)



Campers explore the dunes

Photo: Krista Neilly

We were able to hire two **Kids 'n Nature** interpreters from May to October who delivered outreach programs in classrooms, and at the local library, and then provided follow-up in-Park interpretation. Programs were delivered to over 2200 children in 2015.

All four of our **Kids 'n Nature** Summer Camps were fully subscribed and each offered a different theme. Some children came on multiple weeks and their reviews make us proud (*see page 4*).

Volunteers are appreciated

All of these activities can only be accomplished as a result of the significant fund-raising that takes place through the generosity of literally hundreds of volunteers. If you are one of these folks that have worked so hard raising funds, I want you to know how very much our volunteers are appreciated.

Additionally, you should know that we are now leveraging your hard-earned funds whenever possible, through pursuit of matching-grant funding. In 2015, we received a \$25,000 grant from the Federal Government, (National Conservation Plan) in support of the Panne restoration as matched-funding for our volunteer effort and financial contribution.

How to make a difference

Volunteers and members are the backbone of everything we do and there are many opportunities ranging from trail monitoring and maintenance, to fund-raising, and to important committee work. Thank you to those who pitch in, and, to those of you who may be considering what you can do, please contact us at info@friendsofpresquile.on.ca.

In closing, I would like to remind you that donations are also an important part of our overall operations.

The Friends' website provides information on how to make electronic donations through CanadaHelps, or alternatively your cheque may be mailed to The Friends of Presqu'ile, PO Box 1442, Brighton, ON, K0K 1H0 (please follow this link: [How to Donate to The Friends](#)).

Happy holidays and all the very best to you and yours for 2016.

Sincerely

Steve Sinclair
Chair, The Friends of Presqu'ile Park

The Friends of Presqu'ile Park is a non-profit charitable association of volunteers dedicated to enhancing the educational, interpretive, and scientific research programs at Presqu'ile Provincial Park.

Thank you ... to each and every one of the over 250 volunteers who helped with our major fund-raiser, the Christmas at Presqu'ile Arts and Crafts Show.

We all had so much fun ... the proceeds will go towards our financial support for education in the Park. This includes the interpreter salaries and costs for our **Kids 'n Nature** School Group Program, **Kids 'n Nature** Summer Day Camps, and also helps with the Natural Heritage Education activities. The Friends spend over \$60,000 per annum for this support.



Photo: Ted Amsden

The road to conservation: update

In the September 2015 edition of The Beacon we forecast *'that the day we have all been waiting for was quickly approaching. Much of the mitigation has already been purchased, including approximately 1/3 of the fencing needed (approximately 2400 metres) as well as two reptile and amphibian crossing structures (tunnels) to be installed this fall and next spring.'*



Well, we are happy to say work on the installation of the two tunnels started at the beginning of December. As the photos show, the tunnel sections have been installed and surrounded by concrete to stop any chance of collapse. To keep traffic flowing this had to be completed in two stages.

Securing funds for the final stretch of fencing is looking positive. Hopefully in the spring we will be in a position to begin the installation of the two types of fencing as we reported in the last edition of The Beacon.

Next season should be exciting with researcher, Sean P Boyle, and his team continuing to check how effective this installation is in reducing the mortality rates on this stretch of Park road.

Over the past three years Sean's research has shown that 10-20 turtles, 100-200 snakes, and 2000+ frogs are killed on Presqu'ile Park's main road every year.



Photos: Steve Springings

This project receives support from The Friends' Environmental Fund.

Four winners of Christmas at Presqu'ile raffles

Four tickets were drawn at the end of our Christmas at Presqu'ile Arts and Crafts Show, and the winners have been notified by telephone. Congratulations to the following:

Pat Leblanc, Brighton – **Painting, In the Dark**. Sherrie Greig
Elizabeth Sceviour, Belleville – **Intarsia, Nuthatches on a Tree**, Larry Granger
Janice Lynch, Belleville – **Wooden Ferry**, Dave McClellan
Dianna Cronin, Peterborough – **Pottery Vase**, John Bandurchin

and... The Lucky Draw winner: **Linda Glover**, Trenton – **Christmas Wreath**

We thank the artists who donated their work and everyone who supported our raffle. All proceeds from the show and the raffle will go towards The Friends' educational programs and environmental projects in Presqu'ile Park.

When you support Christmas at Presqu'ile, The Friends' Lighthouse Gift Shop, our BBQs, and Raffles, ALL of the proceeds remain in Presqu'ile Park.

Kids 'n Nature Summer Day Camps

'Amazing! Fantastic! Can't wait for next year!'

These are comments we hear again and again from kids and parents about our Kids 'n Nature Summer Day Camps at Presqu'ile Park. We are thrilled to be back for our 6th summer with 4 different themed camps.

Campers will enjoy learning about Presqu'ile's natural and cultural history as they explore 5 different habitats through hiking, games, crafts, and educational activities.

Getting to and from the Park is easy: the bus picks you up and drops you off daily at King Edward Park in Brighton.

We offer four, five-day (Monday to Friday) camps for **8- to 11-year-olds**, each with a different theme:

July 11 – 15: Water World

Splash, dash, and learn. Discover the creatures that live in the lake, the marsh, and the surrounding habitats. Explore aquatic habitats by looking at the science of water quality through pond study.

July 25 – 29: Super Survival

Walk like a fox, hear like a deer, and watch like a hawk. Use your stealthy skills to survive in the forest. Understand how nature works through orienteering skills, shelter building, and plant identification.

August 8 – 12: Forest Adventures

Hone your awareness skills as you journey through the forest, discovering the power of plants, the language of birds, the senses of mammals, the appetites of insects, and the connections between them all.

August 22 – 26: Shipwrecks and Pirates

Arr matesy! Explore Presqu'ile's naval history by decoding a pirate's maps, scavenger hunting for buried treasure, and building a lighthouse. Investigate the importance of Lake Ontario in the past, present, and future of the peninsula.

We will accept a limited number of **12- to 14-year-olds** to each camp week. While they will be alongside the younger age group, they will participate in more challenging activities and leadership opportunities.

Cost per child per week is \$125.

For more information and registration forms, please contact **The Friends of Presqu'ile Park**. Telephone **613 475 1688, ext. 3**, e-mail kidsn.nature@hotmail.com, or visit our website www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca.

We had positive feedback from our campers and several of them are already looking forward to returning in 2016.

COMMENTS FROM PARENTS OF OUR 2015 CAMPERS

'The boys had the most amazing time. They learned so much about Presqu'ile, and reptiles, and nature. Bradley was amazing. They even loved the bus ride. They will be back next year!'

'My girls loved the camp and will definitely be going next year too. They wanted me to sign them up for next year ...'

'My overall experience dealing with this particular camp was amazing. The counselors that were working with the kids were very professional and courteous. I would definitely recommend this camp to anyone with children. Awesome job and thank you for the experience.'



Photo: Krista Neilly

*We cannot always build the future for our youth,
but we can build our youth for the future.*

Nothing beats getting out into the Park

... you might come across a ghostlike visitor from the Arctic

While it has been pretty mild for winter so far, there are signs that winter has arrived at Presqu'ile. At least two Snowy Owls have arrived at the Park.

Seen here in this recent photo by Gary McPherson, we can tell it is a young bird by the amount of black barring. Young birds are darker than adults and females are darker than males. A pure white owl is likely an adult male, while all others show some dark feathers.

This particular owl normally stays out on Gull Island hunting ducks for dinner but a very similar bird spent Sunday afternoon of Nov. 29th sitting on top of Presqu'ile's Lighthouse, blithely ignoring both thrilled onlookers and an outraged gull that repeatedly swooped over its head.



Photo: G McPherson

I didn't see the lighthouse bird but its picture made the weather network and various other social media outlets. Perhaps a star is born? You can see its picture here: <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/photos/view/animals/great-day-at-presquile-provincial-park/24402172>

This occurrence brings a couple of thoughts to mind.

In this digital age, I can find out way more of what is happening in the Park by the number of photos that get posted or sent my way, than I can if I am just looking myself. It is great to have all those eyes and cell phones out there but I hope that digital voyeurism doesn't replace the real thing.

There really is no substitute for getting out into the Park, or other wilder places, and making your discoveries. Having a Black-capped Chickadee scolding you from a few feet away on a crisp, sunny day is a delight that pixels can't match.

So certainly enjoy all the images that the modern world can bring you of Presqu'ile and its creatures, but don't forget to get out and enjoy nature in person. You might even see a Snowy Owl.

David Bree, Senior Natural Heritage Education Leader



Fred Helleiner's Birding Reports are posted every week on our website.

Please check our Calendar of Events for 2016 on the next page.

Make a note of those items that interest you. If you would like to become more involved and volunteer, please get in touch with Nancy Sutton, our Volunteer Coordinator, at 613 475 9817.

For more information e-mail info@friendsofpresquile.on.ca.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2016

(Calendar is subject to change — please check our website to confirm dates and information.)

February 13: NatureWorks Winter Soup Hike, from 1:00 pm

See how much life there is in the dead of winter on this 90-minute guided walk, followed by a hot bowl of soup and a slide show. \$5 person/\$8 family. Registrations required - to make your booking please telephone 613 475 1688, ext 2.

March 19 and 20: Waterfowl Weekend, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

World-class waterfowl viewing during the spring migration. Volunteer naturalists will help you view and identify over 25 different species of ducks, geese, and swans. Also check out displays and children's activities in the Nature Centre. Join The Friends for BBQ lunch fund-raiser at the Lighthouse, on Saturday and Sunday, from 11:00 am. The Lighthouse Interpretive Centre and The Friends' Gift Shop will be open.

May 21 and 22: Warblers and Whimbrels Weekend, starting at 6:30 am

View the elusive Whimbrels and many colourful Warblers as they migrate to their northern nesting grounds. Enjoy guided nature walks, bird-banding, and evening programs. Join The Friends for BBQ lunch fund-raiser at the Lighthouse, on Saturday and Sunday, from 11:00 am. The Lighthouse Interpretive Centre and The Friends' Gift Shop will be open.

June 4: Annual General Meeting at Stonehedge

June 11 and 18: Spring walks

Guided nature walks on Saturday. Check out our website for more information and for when The Lighthouse Interpretive Centre and The Friends' Gift Shop will be open.

July 11-15, 25-29 and August 8-12, 22-26: Kids 'n Nature Summer Day Camps, for boys and girls

July 1 to September 5: Summer Interpretive Program

Programs will be posted on our website, www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca, and throughout the Park, every week. Daily family programs (except Wednesdays) - guided walks, children's programs, evening talks, and campfire sing-alongs. Every Saturday lunchtime, The Friends will hold a BBQ, near the amphitheatre, from 11:00 am. The Nature Centre, Lighthouse Interpretive Centre, and The Friends' Gift Shop will be open daily.

July 29 to July 31: History Weekend, 10:00 am to 10:00 pm

Relive Presqu'ile's storied past and take part in events. See War of 1812-14 re-enactments. Participate in old-fashioned field games, children's boat-building bee and regatta, ghost walks, a history play, and more.

September 3 and 4: Monarchs and Migrants Weekend, starting at 8:00 am

Bird-banding, Monarch tagging, and guided nature walks celebrate this weekend of fall migration.

September 10 to 24: Fall Interpretive Program

Friday video presentations and guided hikes on select weekends. The Lighthouse Interpretive Centre and The Friends' Gift Shop will be open weekends.

November 5 and 6, 9, 12 and 13: 25th Christmas at Presqu'ile Arts and Crafts Show

Fine arts and crafts on sale, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm daily, at the Christmas House (Nature Centre). Visit the Tea Room at Stonehedge and enjoy our famous rum cake and hot drinks. Our signature artists will be on hand at the Lighthouse Art Gallery, and The Friends' Gift Shop will be open, from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Free entry to the Park and free admission to the show. Free parking.

The Friends' Gift Shop will be open for Waterfowl Weekend and Warblers and Whimbrels Weekend.

We are open otherwise by appointment.

For more information, please call **613 475 1688**.

Unless otherwise noted all events are FREE.

A valid park permit is required to enter the Park.

For more information on events, visit **The Friends of Presqu'ile Park's website** at www.friendsofpresquile.on.ca or contact **Presqu'ile Provincial Park** at **613 475 4324, ext 225**.

Views expressed in *The Beacon* are not necessarily those of The Friends of Presqu'ile Park or the Editor. Some articles are published to give a viewpoint and to encourage discussion. We welcome suggestions and constructive criticisms, and also your articles and photographs, for inclusion in the newsletter.

Mail copy to **The Friends of Presqu'ile Park** at: **PO Box 1442, Brighton ON, K0K 1H0**
or e-mail: info@friendsofpresquile.on.ca

Edited by Jenny Alker. Thanks to all of our contributors, and to Fred Helleiner, for their help with *The Beacon*.