

# THE SPOTTED TURTLE

The Newsletter of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park

Volume 20

May 2014

Issue 2



FRIENDS' VOLUNTEERS WORKING AT NEWLY DECORATED HURON FRINGE SHOP

# COMING EVENTS

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The Friends of MacGregor Presents:

Huron Fringe Birding Festival - May 23 - June 1

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MacGregor Point Provincial Park is located at the base of Ontario's Bruce Peninsula, a natural migration corridor. The Bruce is known for diverse and unique botany, landforms and shoreline habitats. It provides an ideal backdrop for our birding festival. Guided hikes, tours, workshops & evening presentations are designed for both novice and experienced birders. Local experts are your guides. Festival registration information will be posted at [www.friendsofmacgregor.org](http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org) Events fill quickly. For more information contact Matthew Cunliffe at 519-389-6231 or 519-389-9056 or email [birdfest@rogers.com](mailto:birdfest@rogers.com)

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Canada Day - Tuesday July 1

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A collection of Canadian based interpretive programs that are sure to be fun for the whole family! (Guest Presenters scheduled for the weekend before – details will be posted on [friendsofmacgregor.org](http://friendsofmacgregor.org))

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North American Butterfly Association Butterfly Count - July 14

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A group of dedicated volunteers will identify and count the butterflies of MacGregor Point and surrounding areas. For detailed information or to register as a volunteer please contact Matthew Cunliffe at 519-389-6231 or 519-389-9056.

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Parks Day - July 19

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A full day of events celebrating the natural heritage of our national and provincial parks through interpretive programming and events. Come join park naturalists and take part in Animal Olympics, Adventure Hunt 2012 or our annual Mystery Evening, there is sure to be something for everyone. Full details will be posted spring of 2012. For more information call Matthew Cunliffe at 519-389-6231 or 519-389-9056.

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Mystery Evening - July 19, August 5 & 30

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An evening of suspense, accusation and discovery. Come help the park staff piece together the clues, question suspects and ultimately solve this mysterious crime.

7:30pm, Visitor Centre (Campfire Circle).

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MacGregor's Got Talent - July 2 & August 16

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An evening dedicated to the many talents of our wonderful campers. Come down to the Visitor Centre (Campfire Circle) with your favourite song, joke, story, dance, activity or simply sit back and enjoy an evening of entertainment provided by your campsite neighbours. 7pm, Visitor Centre (Campfire Circle).

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Mingling with MacGregor's Mammals - July 26

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An evening dedicated to the many mammals of MacGregor Point. Join us for a fast-paced set of prop-talks focusing on some of the mammalian families found within the park! 7pm, Visitor Centre (Campfire Circle).

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The Friends of MacGregor Presents:

Wild for the Arts Festival - September 20 & 21

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This Friends of MacGregor event is a weekend of music, art and written word in a natural setting. Featured are; a campsite studio tour and art sale, book and author fair, music in the woods, children's activities and more! Free day use. Corporate Sponsors are Canadian Heritage, Ontario Power Generation and Ontario Parks.

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Witches in the Woods - October 18 & 19

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A family fun event! Camp, decorate your site and go trick-or-treating - all from the comfort of your campsite. For further information check [www.friendsofmacgregor.org](http://www.friendsofmacgregor.org) or contact Matthew Cunliffe at 519-389-6231 or 519-389-9056

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**HURON FRINGE SHOP**

The Visitor Center will be open every day from May 17 on from 11:00 AM until 3:00PM. Starting June 21 the hours will be 11:00 until 5:00 for the rest of the summer.

## Bees in the Trees

Thinking about MacGregor Point Provincial Park, whether as campers or day visitors, the insects that come to mind are likely mosquitoes, black flies, or the newcomer, Emerald Ash Borer, and butterflies, more pleasant members of the insect clan. Let's not forget the bees...even in forested areas, we are likely to see a variety that includes bumblebees, other solitary bees, and honeybees. For many insects, tree blossoms provide important sources of food, extra important when the trees flower early in a hungry season.

Honeybees inhabited at least one of the parcels of land now within the Park. In the centre section of the original Lake Range Lot 20, George Guyer, Senior, had an apiary. Lot 20 is the farthest north of the old properties, stretching from the high-water mark of Lake Huron to where the present-day Rotary Trail meets Concession 4, Saugeen. Two other owners held the waterfront land and the eastern portion. The whole lot contained about 105 acres; records from the early 1900s show George Guyer as owner of 10 acres, all cleared. His son, Charles, owned 30 acres beside him, with 5 cleared and 25 described by the assessor as 'slash' i.e. not marketable timber.

George Guyer had been a carpenter in Port Elgin; he and his wife Lucy (Hewitt) moved to Concession 4 in the latter part of their lives, residing there by 1871. Lucy was known as a mid-wife; both were 'community-minded'. By 1887, George was advertising his shingle machinery and engine for sale, but he lived here until about 1916.

Small by twenty-first century commercial standards, Guyer's honey operation was larger than a single family's needs with, at times, forty hives. The location provided access to fields inland on Concession 4, Saugeen and north toward Concession 6, and to water sources. The same creek that powered his shingle mill would have been one of those. Seasonal ponds and the leaves of plants provided other places for bees to gather water. Certain worker bees have the daily task of gathering water for honey-making. On early morning walks, we may see them at ground level on broad leaves of coltsfoot, plantain, or waterlilies.

Willow pollen is an early spring attractant for worker bees. Pollen is important as food for the growing population of the hive. In anticipation of the workforce needed for the main nectar flow, the queen lays eggs by the thousands. On a sunny day, pussy willow branches look alive with the shiny wings of worker bees.

Once hardwood trees begin to blossom, the worker bees are up in the canopy seeking pollen and nectar. From the red flowers of soft maple, to the pale yellow of sugar maple and ash, the delicate and fragrant flowers of basswood, they gather in later spring and early summer. The forest buffet also offers blooms on understory shrubs. Around here, forest-dwelling bees will harvest from fields of clover, alfalfa, and birdsfoot trefoil, venturing as far as six kilometres on a flight. George Guyer's bees would have the opportunity to visit peach trees on Concession 6, and more fruit trees than we currently see between the Park and Highway 21.

One of the Guyers' grandsons later wrote, "He often told me about how smart his bees were, how they all worked together to [make] honey. . ." Honeybees still do that, around the Lake Range.

Sources: *Roots and Branches of Saugeen [Township]*

*1871 Census, Township of Saugeen*

*1905 & 1911 Collector's Roll, Township of Saugeen*

*Port Elgin Times, Nov. 20, 1887*

Anne Duke Judd, a neighbour of MacGregor Point Provincial Park, is a writer and editor with an active curiosity about the past.

## **Board of Directors 2013 – 2014**

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Michael LaBlance

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Norah Toth

(**ex-officio, Recording Secretary**)

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WONDERFUL NEW DISPLAYS AT THE VISITORS CENTRE. COME SOON TO SEE ALL THE AMAZING CHANGES and RESOURCES!



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Saturday, June 21**

**3:00PM Visitors Centre**

**Come and have your voices heard and lend us your ideas!!!**

## Tanagers - colourful dwellers of the forests

One of our most colourful birds of the deciduous forests, is usually heard singing from the tree tops with occasional glimpses and flashes of red of the male, as he controls his territory while attracting females. Tanagers, are the species I am talking about. There are four species of Tanagers that are found in North America, two of which may be seen in Ontario, the Scarlet Tanager and the Summer Tanager. Of the other two the Western Tanager is a western species as its name suggests and the Hepatic Tanager is a southern species found in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. The Western Tanager has wandered east on occasion.



*Western Tanager*

Only one species, the Scarlet Tanager is a regular visitor to MacGregor Point Provincial Park. This beautiful fire engine red bird with black wings can be found high up in the forest canopy. Each spring it is a wonderful sound to hear this bird singing from the tree tops as it establishes its territory. Its song a "*Hurry, worry, flurry, blurry*" sounds like a robin with a sore throat. It builds a nest anywhere from 10' to 80' in the tree tops and feeds on insects found on the leaves of the trees. Tanagers have stout bills and feed heavily on insects during nesting season, gleaned from the leaves, but will forage in fruit trees if available.

The male Scarlet Tanager is quite distinguishable from the Northern Cardinal because of its black wings and no crest on its head. The female is a soft yellow and olive backed bird. All Tanagers are migratory and travel to Central America during our winter months.

This is another engaging article shared with us from Mike Pickup.

**Mike has recently published a new book, "Birding the Trails of MacGregor Point". Mike is generously donating the proceeds from the sale of this book to the 'Water Snake Pond' project and the rights to the Friends. Outstanding generosity! THANKS MIKE!!!!**



### *Scarlet Tanager*

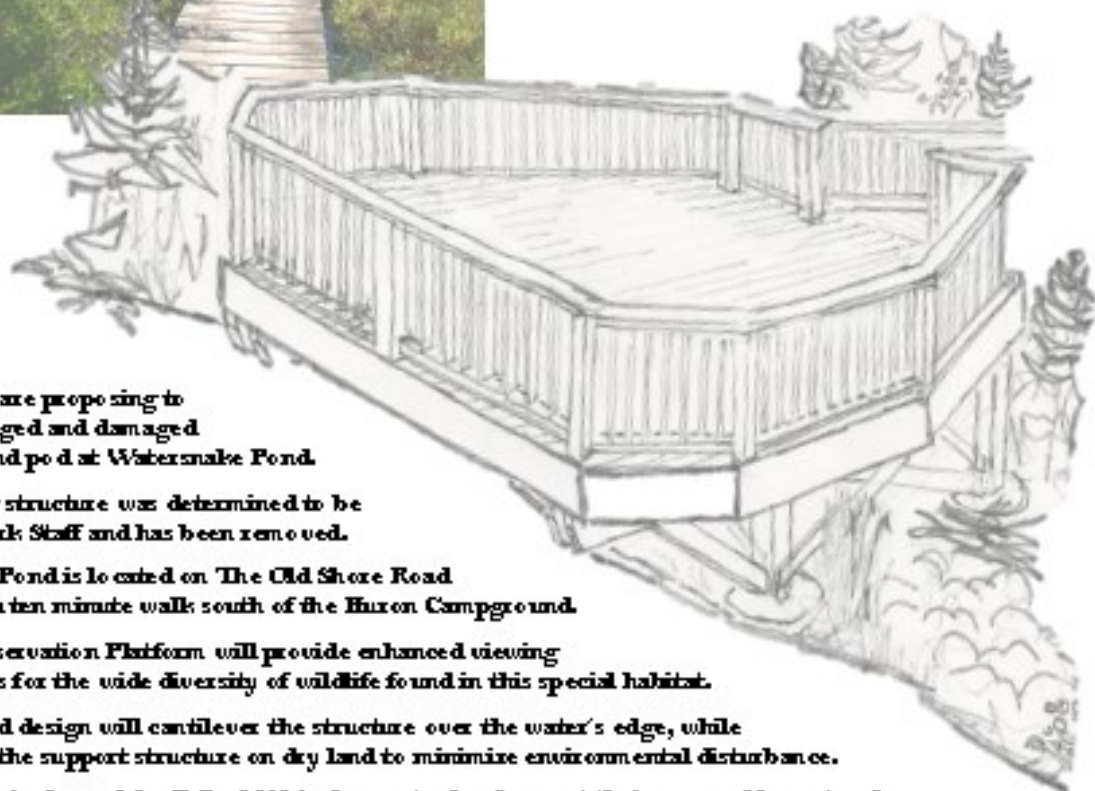
One spring, on my wife Vicky's, first visit to Point Pelee, the first bird that she saw was a male Scarlet Tanager sitting not more than 5' from the window of our car. Needless to say, that this bird, is one of her most favourite.

In the spring of 2013, both Vicky and I had the opportunity to see the Western Tanager that was feeding at the feeders of a residence near Stokes Bay. The bird was a regular visitor to the feeders, and when we arrived we were ushered into the house to view the feeders from their balcony, and sure enough it was not long before the bird showed up. The Summer Tanager is a rare visitor this far north. During spring migration, Summer Tanagers have been located in Kincardine at the Lagoons.



# Please Lend Your Support . . .

## THE FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR POINT PARK WATERSNAKE POND OBSERVATION PLATFORM



- The Friends are proposing to replace the aged and damaged boardwalk and pod at Watersnake Pond.
- The existing structure was determined to be unsafe by Park Staff and has been removed.
- Watersnake Pond is located on The Old Shore Road Trail about a ten minute walk south of the Huxon Campground.
- The new Observation Platform will provide enhanced viewing opportunities for the wide diversity of wildlife found in this special habitat.
- The proposed design will cantilever the structure over the water's edge, while maintaining the support structure on dry land to minimize environmental disturbance.
- Construction is planned for Fall of 2014 when water levels are at their seasonal lowest and construction impacts will be minimized.
- Help fulfill the Friends mandate to support and enhance the educational and interpretive opportunities in MacGregor Point Provincial Park.
- As of April 2014, we have reached approximately 65% of our \$6,000 goal. Help us raise the additional funds required to make this project a reality.

## Snapping Turtle *Chelydra serpentina*

Karen King

Images of strong, prehistoric-looking beasts are first to come to our minds when we hear about Snapping Turtles. Snapping Turtles are the largest turtle we have in Ontario, and they get their name from their notorious bite. This turtle can be easily identified by its large head, small plastron, and long tail which is *saw-toothed* along the upper side. These great turtles will range in size from 8 to 14 inches when full grown and an average adult can weigh from 5 to 16 kg. Any permanent body of fresh water, large or small, is a potential home for a snapper. This omnivore's diet includes various small aquatic invertebrates, fish, reptiles, birds, carrion and a surprisingly large amount of vegetation. Snappers are scavengers, and are a great friend to us because they keep our wetlands looking clean by eating all of the carrion in site. These turtles are widely misunderstood to be aggressive, when really their "snap" is purely defensive. Their plastron - the underside



of their shell - is very small and does not offer protection from predators. This large turtle can not fit inside of its own shell, so it must snap its powerful jaw as its only form of defense. Snapping Turtles are hunted for the restaurant trade in many parts of North America, and their meat is considered a delicacy. Our common Snapping Turtle that is seen so frequently at MacGregor Point is being considered for listing as an Ontario Species at Risk. A great way to help our declining turtle population is to help them off the road if you see them. The safe way to help a snapping turtle is to encourage it to snap at a stick, and then gently drag it across the road with that stick.

# Insects

Find and circle all of the Insects that are hidden in the grid.  
The words may be hidden in any direction.

Y M D B M Y R T F Z F V I Y S  
E Y O K U E C L N I P H G L T  
H D B R D T E W R A C T C F E  
U M E I F A T E O A D A T N N  
W O P P U G F E O R T F R O R  
A S N J I L E R R E X L J G O  
S Q C W Y T K L R F L L V A H  
P U L X Z C N P T H L W G R V  
H I H S O M I E A E S Y O D D  
O T E C E L N C C D E X X R P  
H O G M L C G T S J Q B L P M  
P K Q A R E P P O H S S A R G  
F B R W M X R A P H I D W N J  
B U M B L E B E E B Y N T U V  
Y T E K C I R C V E H T O M X

ANT  
APHID  
BUMBLE BEE  
BEETLE  
BUTTERFLY  
CATERPILLAR  
CENTIPEDE

COCKROACH  
CRICKET  
DRAGONFLY  
FIREFLY  
FLEA  
GRASSHOPPER

HORNET  
MOSQUITO  
MOTH  
SPIDER  
WASP  
WORM

**Please complete your membership renewal and mail to :**

**The Friends of Mac Gregor Point Park, R. R. 1, Port Elgin, ON N0H2C5 . The Friends membership extends one year from the month you join. \_**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address : \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR E-MAIL AS IT HELPS DECREASE MAILINGS**

E-mail: 

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**Would you like to be contacted to volunteer at any of the builds or fund-raising functions(i.e. BBQ's) \_\_\_\_\_ ?**

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.