



THE
**SPOTTED
TURTLE**

The Newsletter of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park

Volume 19 Issue 3

August 2013



Students and teachers from Rankin Inlet and G.C. Huston enjoy a presentation at the amphitheater.

COMING

EVENTS

Aug. 6 – Mystery
Evening

Aug. 17 –
MacGregor’s Got
Talent

Aug. 20 – Mingling
with MacGregor’s
Mammals

Aug. 31 – Mystery
Evening

Sept. 20—22—
Youth Summit for
Biodiversity

September 21 &
22—WILD FOR THE
ARTS

Sept. 30 - deadline
for Oct. Spotted
Turtle

Oct. 31 – draw for
Huron Fringe raffle

President’s Message

As the newly appointed President of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park I look forward to the coming year of events, activities and projects. As many of you are aware, this is not my first term as President. It was 20 years ago that I first took on this role when we were first established as a Friends organization. My family and I have been active at the Park ever since. I am certainly proud of what has been achieved over this period and am sure we can accomplish even more in the future.

Mike Pickup and Dave Cheer have both retired from their positions on the Board or as committee members. I thank them for their contributions over the years. They will certainly be missed from their active roles on the Projects Committee.

The Board had two vacancies to fill this year and I would like to welcome new Board member Kerry Jarvis and returning Board member John Cummings. Kerry has recently retired and moved into the area, but is certainly not new to the Friends, having been an active participant and an event leader in the Huron Fringe Birding Festival for many years. John was previously on the Board and we welcome him back. His wit, humor and contrastingly, businesslike approach to the Friends is much appreciated.

As a long standing member of the Friends it was my privilege to be asked to accompany Keith Early and Matt Cunliffe to show Bradley Fauteaux, Managing Director of Ontario Parks, some of the projects the Friends have completed for MacGregor Point Provincial Park over the years. We had a great morning, and Brad’s appreciation for the works performed and cooperation achieved between the Friends and Park Staff was sincerely expressed. Brad and his family spent the first weekend of Birdfest in the Park, attended some of the events, and spoke at the Birdfest Banquet. He has since followed up this visit with a second during which he showed several directors and officials

from Ontario Parks and MNR what MacGregor Point has to offer and the success of co-operation with groups such as ours.

From a community perspective, we were pleasantly surprised to receive a donation from the Saugeen Shores Cycling Club in the amount of \$250.00. This was an expression of their appreciation for the work performed by the Friends in coordinating and implementing the construction of the Rotary Way Link Trail. This extension completed the multi-use trail loop, effectively connecting the Trails of MacGregor Point to the Saugeen Shores Rail Trail. We are especially appreciative of a donation of this size from a relatively small but dedicated group. Our Past President, Peter and I were presented with the cheque and given a photo opportunity in the Saugeen Shores Beacon Times newspaper.

Speaking of bicycling, the Friends were proud to announce the release of a Bicycle Trails Map at the Annual General Meeting. The brochure-styled publication has a full colour front highlighting some of the accomplishments of the Friends and a detailed map of the trails on the back. This map, combined with the proposed trail node signage should eliminate some of the confusion encountered by many when reaching a junction in the trails and not really knowing for sure which way is home. The map will be available in the Park and community as well. Be sure to get a copy for yourself.

We've accomplished a lot, but there is much more to do. We encourage you to get involved, either as a participant, as a Board or committee member, or as a project helper. Talk to the Huron Fringe Shop staff or contact any Board Member directly if you would like to get involved.

Doug Martin

HURON FRINGE SHOP

SUMMER SALE

BEGINS AUGUST 23

**15 % OFF EVERYTHING IN THE
SHOP**

History of the Friends -Part 2

As a follow-up to Norah's first report in the Spring Issue on the formation of the Friends, I will continue with a look at some of the Friend's accomplishments from the early part of our 20 year history to the present.

With incorporation in 1993, the first thing the Friends wanted to do was make their presence known. It was decided that the best way to achieve this was through Publications, Events and Projects.

Publications:

Our first publication was a children's colouring book. I recall our enthusiastic approach to this publication when we wrote on the back cover "This is the First in a Series of Publications from the Friends of MacGregor Point Park". It caught the eye of Ontario Parks Staff in Peterborough who were quick to comment on our optimistic outlook. It must be a real collector's item now as I am sure very few of them exist today. While we have produced many promotional brochures and posters for specific events, we have yet to follow up on book publication. We will have to address the one and only status of this inaugural publication in the future.

While not a book, the Friends have recently produced a Map that features the Bicycle Trails of MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Our publication history may be rather short, however, I feel we truly shine when it came to events and projects.

Friend's Events:

During the early years, events included a combined Pancake Breakfast and Up with the Birds Hike in June, a Corn Roast in August, Meet a Friend at Summer's End in September and Snowfest in February.

The first pancake breakfast was held at the Maintenance Building. While not exactly a fine dining atmosphere, it felt like we were really part of the Park. There we were, sitting on picnic tables in the huge building with the garage doors open, all the time surrounded by the equipment that made the park operate. It was like having a backstage pass. We knew we were in a spot many Park visitors would never see. That was certainly a benefit of membership!

The Corn Roast was well attended by Friends members and campers. It was encouraging yet somewhat intimidating in those early years to see a lineup that stretched across the parking lot while we were waiting for the water to boil. I don't recall any complaints and eventually everyone left well fed. The first year we held the corn roast at Day Use Beach. Access to this area was free at the time and we were hoping this would encourage participation from the community. The location proved to be somewhat difficult to find and in subsequent years, it was moved to the Visitor Centre.

Meet a Friend at Summers End was our attempt at creating an endless summer. With most campers returning home with the start of school, we wanted to give everyone an opportunity to revisit at a time when a quiet peacefulness fell over the park as autumn approached. We had a dinner that was enjoyed by all with a choice of fish baked on the barbeque or turkey with the trimmings.

Snowfest was our attempt at encouraging participation in the Park during the off-season. This was well before the introduction of Yurts. Events included skating on Turtle Pond, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and dog sledding. Dog sledding was a truly enjoyable experience. I am not a dog lover as my wife can attest, however, in this case, I truly admired their enthusiasm and was thrilled at the opportunity of personally operating a sled pulled by three eager Huskies. I am not sure who was really in control, but we did manage to get to Nipissing Campground and back while staying on the trail with only a few sniff breaks.

These early activities grew as time progressed. Our 'Up with the Birds Hike' evolved into The Huron Fringe Birding Festival which now consists of approximately eighty events held over two extended weekends each spring. Tradition has been maintained though as I have continued to lead the Friend's original birding hike under the same name each year as one of the events of the festival. The Meet a Friend at Summer's End Dinner is now part of Wild for the Arts, our weekend event that includes the talents of many local artisans in a natural environment setting.

These events and the occasional Friend's Barbeque were a start at fundraising. From day one we knew that a retail outlet would fill a need for members, campers and visitors while allowing us to generate revenue necessary to truly support and enhance the Park. The Huron Fringe Shop was established as our out-

let for books, clothing and park related souvenirs. The Park graciously donated a corner of the Visitor Centre for this purpose and we gradually grew in size consuming more and more of their valuable space. We didn't have the competition of the Park Store in the early years as it was only an outlet for campfire wood and ice at that time. Despite having a limited customer base, we quickly rose to annual sales in the order of \$30,000 which generated a profit of about \$10,000. This was quite a substantial sum however, it became obvious that support from outside sources would be required if we were to take on large projects. *We will talk about some of these projects in the next issue of the Spotted Turtle.*

Ontario Power Generation's Deep Geological Repository

This fall, an important hearing will take place beginning Sept 16, which will determine if Ontario Power Generation (OPG) can responsibly move forward with a licence to prepare a site and construct the proposed Deep Geologic Repository (DGR) for the permanent storage of low and intermediate-level waste and spent fuel. The DGR would be located at the Bruce nuclear site in Kincardine, Ontario adjacent to where this waste is currently stored on a temporary basis above ground. A Deep Geologic Repository will store and isolate the waste in a secure monitored facility, 680 metres underground, surrounded by multiple barriers of solid, stable rock to protect Lake Huron, surface water and the environment. The site is immediately adjacent to Inverhuron Provincial Park and is approximately 12 kilometres south of MacGregor Point .

The public hearing provides an opportunity for participants to hear about the DGR project and the results of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and to provide their views to the Joint Review Panel. Any person may attend the public hearing as an observer; however, any participant who wished to make written and or oral submissions had to state their intent to participate by July 5, 2013.

OPG advised the Friends of MacGregor Point Park of the process June 28, 2013 and requested our support of the project. After careful consideration, the Board declined the opportunity. It was felt that lobbying for or against the proposal was beyond the scope of our mandate and could potentially jeopardize our agreement with Ontario Parks. We encourage you as individuals to familiarize yourselves with the proposal and use the opportunity to comment if desired.

Alicia Fortin -one of our Natural Heritage Educators, hired with Friends ' funding.

Hi!

My name is Alicia Fortin and I recently finished my first year in international development studies at the University of Guelph. I am very happy and excited to be working at the MacGregor Point Visitor's Centre this summer! Last summer I worked as a cleaner at the park which allowed me to familiarize myself with MacGregor Point and its structure. This year I am looking forward to learning more about the wildlife that dwells in or passes through the park.

The programs and trails at MacGregor Point were an important part of my childhood, from school trips to family visits to turtle pond and musical performances at the campfire circle. I know now that a significant portion of these experiences were available to me because of the dedication of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park. I'm very grateful to be given the opportunity to experience all of these familiar aspects of the park in a whole new way through my summer employment by the Friends.

I have already begun to read and learn more about life in the park, and I have been learning new things about species, some of which I was familiar with and others that I had never heard of. I enjoyed reading about the moody 'teenage years' of newts when they traverse out of the water and become red poisonous "efts" before returning to the water upon reaching maturity. I also didn't realize deer can reach speeds of 70 km/h, or that beavers are the largest rodents in North America (the largest on record weighed 110 lbs). These last few facts are some that I plan on incorporating into my presentation in Mingling with MacGregor's Mammals which will be coming up later in July. That is just one of the many programs that I am excited to participate in. I'm also looking forward to maintaining the Friends website as well as taking part in the annual Mystery Evenings.

In general, I'm regarding this as a great chance to learn about the environment around me and to assist others in doing the same. Sometimes with our abundance of infrastructure and technology it's easy for us as humans to see ourselves as separate from (and superior to) the rest of the natural world. However, the more reading and activities I take on with this job, the more I'm convinced that is not the case at all. I would like to assist other people in coming to this realization as well!

Parasitic wasp slays emerald ash tree borer near

Grand Bend, ON

July 05, 2013

By: The Sarnia Observer

Ten years and tens of millions of dead trees later, scientists figure they've found a kryptonite—a tiny, stingless wasp that can bring down the almost invincible emerald ash borer.

A protected forest near Grand Bend is new ground zero for the first Canadian effort to control ash borers with a parasitic wasp, which slays the tree killer by laying eggs in the borers' larvae.

The wasp, its Latin name is *tetrastichus planipennis*, is in the trial stage here and it could be years before it can be widespread enough to rescue the ash tree population from extermination.

Even so, this wasp "is a huge step in bio-control" of the voracious ash borer that's been out of control since it was discovered in North America a decade ago, said Barry Lyons, a scientist with the Canadian Forest Service who is spearheading the research with Natural Resource Canada.

"The ultimate hope is that this parasitoid will knock back the population of emerald ash borer" to the point that some ash trees can recover and thrive again, he said.

These wasps are tiny — at 3 mm long, about the size of the edge-end of two stacked dimes — and are harmless to humans.

The third of three summer "plants" of the wasps took place this week in the Lambton woodlot, managed by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority.

About 12,000 of them have arrived in little blocks of ash wood from a Michigan lab managed by a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

One reason the Canadian Food Inspection Agency approved their test use is that the chances the wasp will cause collateral damage are "very remote," Lyons said.

"This particular species . . . is very host-specific. In all the tests that have been done on it, it has never attached to any other species (native or non-native to North America)," he said.

But it's no quick fix, either.

Michigan researchers began releasing the wasps in some parts of that state in 2007. And even though the wasps did exactly what they were supposed to do, and better than expected in some areas, only now are some trees there starting to bounce back.

Likewise, it may be years before *tetrastichus planipennis* is deemed ready for widespread use in Canada, even as more ash trees in more regions fall to the ash borer's destruction. Ash borers were found for the first time this week in Grey County, near Meaford.

"Bio-control is a long-term proposition. There's no silver bullet," Lyons said.

But bio-controls do offer hope for the trees that remain and for their potential reintroduction as a nursery species.

In the meantime, London and many other municipalities are cutting down many ash trees in boulevards and parks, while protecting high-value ash with relatively costly injections of an insecticide called TreeAzin.

Residents of ash-infested areas are also prohibited from moving firewood and ash products across non-infested zones.

Ash borer control through quarantines and cull zones has proven so ineffective the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has decided to throw its limited resources into monitoring areas where the bug hasn't yet spread.

Its new plan for next spring is to consolidate a patchwork of regulated zones into one expanded mega-zone — stretching through most of Southern Ontario, from Essex to Parry Sound to Ottawa, and across the border into the westernmost parts of Quebec.

That means firewood and ash products for logging may then be transported anywhere within the area but not outside of it.

We all Need a Tree!

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one ton truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation.. His face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

'Oh, that's my trouble tree,' he replied 'I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children.. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again.' 'Funny thing is,' he smiled,' when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.'

Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance. We all Need a Tree!



Yellow Warbler

Photo by Carole Lupton

Coyotes Vs. Wolves

-Questions answered by **Brent Patterson** , Research Scientist, Adjunct Professor, Trent University, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resource, Wildlife Research and Development Section , Trent University

Question: Are coyotes native to Ontario? **Answer.** No, coyotes aren't native to Ontario, but over the last 90 years they have moved north and east and now inhabit all of eastern North America. Human-caused changes to the landscape, including removal of their large predators like wolves, facilitated this range expansion.

Question: What is the genetic makeup of coyotes in Ontario? **Ans.** When coyotes first arrived in Ont. they hybridized with eastern wolves along the southern edge of wolf range in Ont. As a result of this hybridization with eastern wolves, **All** coyotes found in Ont. Today carry some wolf DN.A. . . . Between 66-82% of the genetic makeup of contemporary eastern coyotes is attributed to western coyotes with the remainder coming from either Eastern wolves or to a lesser degree, domestic dogs. There's little or no evidence of contemporary hybridization with dogs, rather the genetic material from dogs we see in Ont. Coyotes today likely results from a small number of hybridization events with dogs while coyotes were colonizing towards Ont. . Because of this hybridization with wolves, the eastern coyotes typical of southern Ontario tend to be larger and perhaps more i.e. greater tendency to live in packs), than coyotes in their historic western range.

Question: Should eastern coyotes be referred to as "coywolves"? **Ans.** The eastern coyote, in its present form, has been established throughout southern & central Ont. Since the first half of the 20th century. There's nothing "new" about its presence here and the coyotes we find in southern Ontario in 2013 are morphologically & genetically the same as they were shortly after their colonization of this province. . . . Their genetic makeup, coupled with behaviour & physical characteristics that are closer to western coyotes than to wolves, make use of the term "Coywolf" both inappropriate and misleading. When the media or other individuals try to play up this idea of a new or "super" breed of coyotes they are trying to fabricate hype & sensationalism out of what is actually old new. Attempting to rebrand the eastern coyote as a "Coywolf" serves 2 primary purposes. - it generates hype & publicity for magazine articles, documentaries & individuals - Given the general view of coyotes as vermin across much of their historic range, some people interested in gaining additional legal protection for coyotes feel that a name with "wolf" included in it is likely to garner more attention & sympathy from both the public & policy makers.

Question: Some people say that as a result of this hybridization, coyotes are becoming more aggressive, less fearful of people, more aggressive in attacking livestock; that the species is changing? **Ans.** As per above, there is no basis or evidence to support the suggestion that "Coyotes" at a population or species level are changing in Ont. Furthermore, wolves are typically less tolerant of people and developed areas than coyotes, so it seems very unlikely that hybridization has made Eastern coyotes more tolerant of people & developed areas. Finally, hybridized coyotes in their historic range also live in urban areas & sometimes come into conflict with both people and livestock producers.



Students from Rankin Inlet and G.C. Huston use dip nets to study pond life.

Rankin Inlet - G.C. Huston Student Exchange

On May 9th, the staff at MacGregor Point Provincial Park had the honour of providing a curriculum-based program for a special group of youth. The grade 7/8 class from G.C. Huston Public School in Southampton, was hosting a 7/8 class from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, Canada. The program focussed on ecosystems and the importance of the interconnected relationships between the various creatures that reside within the park. A theme that the staff members have covered many times took an interesting turn when some of the students from Rankin Inlet explained that they had never seen trees before this trip! Staff and students had a great morning exploring the shoreline and wetlands of the Park. The Ontario Parks slogan for this year is “Memories Start Here” and for this special group, we really think it did. Providing this program was certainly a highlight of our year.

Sincerely,

The Visitor Centre Staff

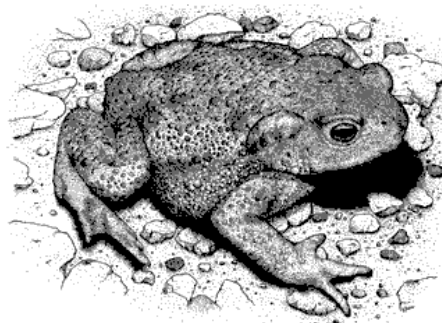


2013—2014 Friends of MacGregor Point Park Directors and *Past Directors*:
 back row, Jim Coles,(vice president)* Stewart Nutt, Bruce McKechnie,
 Jim&Jane Keiffer Norah Toth(* & recording secretary,* Norm Bishop *: 2nd
 row, Kerry Jarvis(new director), Peter Harrison (Past– President), John
 Cummings (Ontario Nature), Michael Rea (Fund raising), Doug Martin
 (President), Front row, Linda Mason(Newsletter), Lana Baldwin
 (Corresponding Secretary Absent: Bev Carlisle(Treasurer, Andrea & Michael
 LaBlance (Store Supervisors)

American Toad

Karen King

The only toad found in MacGregor Point Park is the American Toad. Its distinguishable call is a trilling advertisement 10 to 30 seconds or longer. These toads may be brown or reddish in colour, and 5-10 cm long. American Toads have short legs, stout bodies, and thick skins with noticeable warts. These qualities differentiate them from the other frogs found in the area. American Toads are mainly nocturnal and are most active when the weather is humid and warm. An interesting fact about American Toads are that their adult form is purely carnivorous, while their tadpoles are considered herbivores because on aquatic vegetation. An adult toad will eat a variety of insects including snails, beetles, slugs and earthworms. Toads have the amazing ability to shoot out their tongue to catch their prey. They also use their front legs to grasp the food and push it into their mouths. Glands on a toad will secrete bufotoxin, a poisonous substance used as a defence. The poison the toad secretes is human



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The Flight of the Woodcock - Mike Pickup

Sandpiper : *family scolopacidae*

American Woodcock : *scolopax minor*

Yes, the American Woodcock is considered to be a shorebird in the birding fraternity. Information on the species is found under sandpipers, in all field guides.

The “necklace bird” as it is often referred to, is a large rotund bird with a long bill and large bulging eyes placed high on its head and a leaf like feather pattern to camouflage itself, while perched on the ground. It has a buff coloured belly with plain tanned coloured wings and its preferred habitat is not on the shore, but in damp woods near water. It is often found in open dry, woods, abandoned fields, conifer plantations, bushy areas and mixed forest. This species is very inconspicuous and secretive in the damp undergrowth of the forest and only comes out in the open to perform its annual courtship display.

An excellent place to view woodcock is in MacGregor Point Park. Here one can see and hear the aerial display of this beautiful species. As the sun goes down take the drive down the main park road, from the Gate House to the Tower Trail parking lot. As darkness envelops you this nocturnal shorebird becomes more active. Sit and listen for its nasal “beezp, beezps, as the woodcock calls on the ground. On the forest floor, its calls become louder and then, it suddenly bursts from the ground erupting in flight, ascending 20’ to 30’ feet above the ground with the whistling sound of its wings. At the top of its ascent it will then turn back to the ground with a bubbling, twittering song on its descent and land in approximately the same spot it started from. This courtship display is used to attract females to its territory.

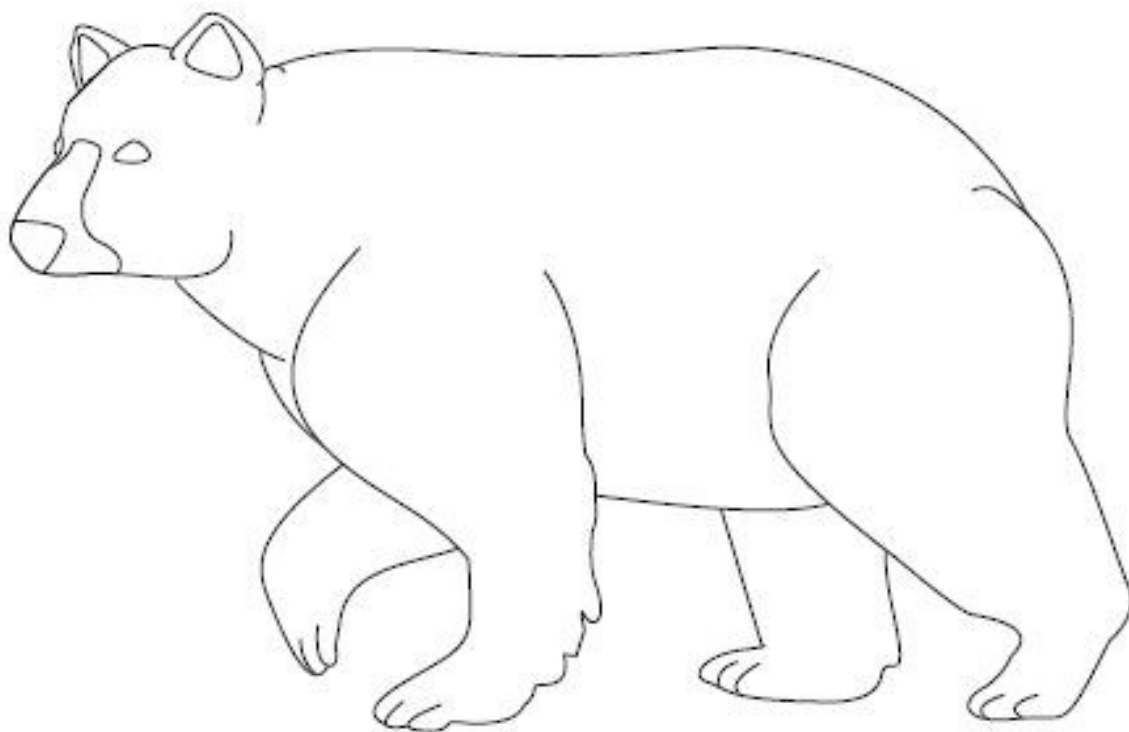
Driving slowly along the road, you may see many birds sitting on the shoulders or even in the middle of the road. Stop and watch its fantastic aerial display and if you hear the nasal “beezp” of the species you know it is on the ground. Wait and you may see it take flight. As it takes off you hear the whistling sound of its wings and as it descends you will hear its bubbling, twittering song on it returns to the ground.

This year in the spring of 2013 my wife and I made this drive, watching and listening for the calls of the woodcock. We actually found a bird at the Lake Ridge Trail parking lot performing its courtship display. What a pleasure to see and hear this bird. Taking this drive each spring lets us know that migration has begun, and that warmer weather is soon to be upon us. If you have not had the opportunity to bird in the evening, then try going out to look for the American Woodcock. It is an experience that you should not miss and that you will thoroughly enjoy.

MAMMALS

visit our Resource Library in the Campsite24 Visitor Centre

BLACK BEAR



COLOUR ME!

I am covered in a shaggy coat of fur. The colour of my fur can be black, dark brown or very light brown. I can weigh over 200 kilograms.

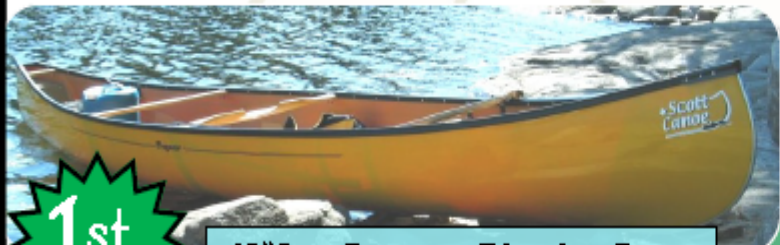
DRAW MY HABITAT!

I live in the forests of Ontario. I have long claws to climb trees and rip open old logs. I eat things like nuts, berries, grubs, plants, animals and honey.

TO HELP CELEBRATE THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF FRIENDS OF MACGREGOR POINT PARK A COLLECTION OF RECIPES ARE BEING GATHERED AND WILL BE SOLD AT THE HURON FRINGE GIFT SHOP NEXT SEASON.

2013 Huron Fringe Draw

Presented by
The Friends of Macgregor Point Park



1st

10" Scott Prospector Fiberglass Canoe

Pick up your tickets **TODAY**, at the **Huron Fringe Gift Shop** or from the Friends board members.

1 for \$2.00
5 for \$5.00



2nd

Bike kit: Rogue Camelback (2L),
Blackburn Voyager 3.3 Front Light,
Blackburn Atom SL Computer.

3rd



\$200 Ontario Parks Gift Certificate

Lottery License #: M674333. Draw will be held on October 25, 2013.
Winners will be posted on the Friends of MacGregor Website: www.friendsofmacgregor.org

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 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: _____

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.

Your Friends of MacGregor Park membership includes Wi-Fi access while at the park. Your Wi-Fi password can be obtained from a staff member at the Visitor Centre's nature store.