

Volume VI August 2013

Lieutenant Governor Visits MTRI!

His Honorable, J.J. Grant, the current Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia visited MTRI while on a tour of Southwestern Nova Scotia. His Honor, his wife the Honorable Dorothy Grant and Dr. Christopher McCreery received a tour of the MTRI facilities given by researcher Leah Veinot and Dr. Steve Mockford Chair of the MTRI Board of Directors. His honour also met with long time volunteers Harold and Diane Clapp, and new volunteers John Bottomly and Jocelyn Calvert who explained their work on Blanding's Turtles. Board members Peter Rogers, Andrea Wegerer were also present to greet their Honours.

His Honour was impressed with MTRI and the work being done and we were glad that he chose to visit us on his tour of the area.

"It was truly a joy to see first hand the wonderful work undertaken by the volunteers. ...Please convey our sincere appreciation to all of your volunteers"



SAR 2013 Stewardship Meeting

The 2013 Species at Risk Stewardship in Atlantic Canada Meeting was held May 15th-16th at the Old Orchard Inn in Wolfville Nova Scotia. Around 80 individuals attended the two day meeting which incorporated presentations, discussions and workshops. Individuals from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Quebec attended the meeting.

Presentations, discussions and workshops covered many topics including the successes of HSP and AFSAR projects; working with people towards effective conservation; fostering beneficial behaviours for conservation; developing and building hands on tools tailored to volunteers; program priorities; two eyed seeing; and effectively communicating science to your audience. Attendees included individuals from aboriginal organizations, NGO's, Universities and Government.

Woodlot Owner of the Year!

This year's Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources winner of the Western Region and Provincial Woodlot Owners of the Year are Georgie and Helen Uhlman of West Caledonia! Georgie was the first member of the MTRI pool of FSC certified woodlot owners, has been a strong advocate for the program, and welcomed visitors to his woodlot for many workshops and training courses over the past few years. Congratulations to Georgie and Helen!

Come to NSDNR's Provincial Woodlot Owner of the Year Field Day on October 5th and experience Georgie and Helen's beautiful woodlot for yourself! For more information, keep an eye on <http://www.novascotia.ca/natr/woodlot/woya/>

Last year, as many of you may know, another FSC pool member, Jim Crooker, was the winner of the Western Region Woodlot Owner of the Year.

MTRI Continues work on Eastern Mountain Avens!

MTRI in partnership with Nature Conservancy of Canada, Fernhill Institute, Nova Scotia DNR, Environment Canada and the Eastern Mountain Avens recovery team has continued to be involved in Eastern Mountain Avens conservation on Brier Island and Digby Neck. Many exciting new projects will combine to further the conservation of this globally rare plant that exists only here and in New Hampshire.



This spring MTRI helped census the gull colony that threatens some of the plants on Brier Island. Diane LaRue (MTRI Research Associate) will conduct a study on root structure and propagation funded by the Nova Scotia Museum. NCC and partners will be working on island history research, future management options, community involvement, plant health and vegetation management. If you want to get involved contact MTRI to learn about opportunities.

The Loons are Back!

The loons are back once again! The first round of surveys Found territorial pairs, nests and chicks! In addition this year we are focusing on adult survivorship by using spotting scopes to view leg bands of loons that were banded from 1995-1997 and 2009-2012. Already we have spotted several loons with leg bands, and even spotted an adult female that was banded in 1995!



Surveys by MTRI staff are being completed both inside and outside Kejimikujik National Park. In addition MTRI LoonWatch volunteers are monitoring lakes outside of Kejimikujik, following the progress of nesting pairs to determine the success of nests and chicks. In addition, on May 28th 2013 Kejimikujik hosted this year's first of two annual loon watch days (the first being at the start of the nesting season, and the second near the end of the summer to check for fledged chicks). Several nests were found during the survey along with two fluffy, one day old, chicks!



Lakeside dwellers and cottagers who have an interest in loons and are interested in becoming a loon watch volunteer can visit the MTRI website for Loon Watch volunteers at <http://www.merseytobeatic.ca/projects-freshwater-loonwatch.php> or can email Alicia Pray-Leslie at alicia.pray-leslie@merseytobeatic.ca

Community Forest Update!

You may remember that MTRI was one of the partners involved in submitting an expression of interest for a community forest in what was part of the Medway District formerly owned by Bowater Mersey bought by the government late last year.

Community forests are a relatively new concept in Nova Scotia, but are widespread elsewhere in Canada. They have the following four attributes in common: local control, community benefits, multiple use, and forest stewardship that promotes long term forest health. The Department of Natural Resources has now called for more detailed community forest proposals on Crown land in south west Nova Scotia. The group will proceed in developing the proposal, due on August 22nd, and would like to hear from people in and around the communities in the vicinity of the Medway District (Annapolis Royal, Bear River, Maitland Bridge, Caledonia, New Germany and East Dalhousie), particularly if you are willing to help with public outreach and community consultation in any of these communities.

To get involved, please contact: Will Martin: will@windhorsewoods.ca; Jane Barker: jane.barker@merseytobeatic.ca; or Tom Berry: trberry@eastlink.ca

Landbirds at Risk

Since early May, a team from Dalhousie University has been working through MTRI to conduct field surveys for Landbirds at Risk for the second year. The purpose of the study is to document locations where the species are breeding or potentially breeding and to quantify the habitat at these sites. The goal is to use the field data along with other information in a Geographic Information System (GIS) to create spatial models and maps of the bird's habitat in Southwestern Nova Scotia. The team have been visiting forested wetlands in southwestern NS looking and listening for Canada Warblers, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and Rusty Blackbirds.

The photo shows Laura Achenbach playing songs and calls of these species over a loudspeaker. This site on the Medway River had a pair of Rusty Blackbirds, the rarest of the three species and one that has declined by over 90%. Playback increases the chances of detecting these rare species. If the target species is nearby, birds usually respond to the playback by approaching or vocalizing, making it more likely to find the bird. Another Landbird at Risk the team is collecting information on is the Common Nighthawk. Look and listen for them flying overhead catching flying insects, especially near water, during the hour before and after sunset. If you have any sightings of these four species to contribute, need more information about identifying these birds, or would like to get involved in the project, please contact Laura at LandbirdSAR@merseytobeatic.ca.



Second Annual Science Conference – Save the Date!

The Second Annual MTRI Science Conference will be held on Friday November 1, 2013, at the NSCC campus in Bridgewater. Stay tuned for more information!

Turtle Time!

Once again dozens of volunteers at MTRI, Kejimikujik, and surrounding communities donated many hours to help protect Blanding's turtle nests. Volunteers spent their evenings monitoring known turtle nesting sites and watching the turtles as they went through the nesting process. Once a nest is completed it is protected from raccoons and other predators with a small wire mesh cage. Volunteers have also been busy radio tracking new turtles to locate unknown nest sites, particularly in the newly discovered area on the Medway River.



The season was off to an early start this year with the first nest recorded on June 1. Due to the weather, nights of successful nesting were sporadic this year and as of June 26th, volunteers had protected 43 Blanding's turtle nests across the known populations in Nova Scotia.

During nesting season all four of Nova Scotia's freshwater turtle species are commonly spotted on roads as they search for a place to lay their eggs. Please take care when driving and watch out for these vulnerable turtles. If you spot a Blanding's turtle or a Wood turtle, please report the sighting to www.speciesatrisk.ca/sightings or call 1-866-727-3447.