

HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS' NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER '88 to FEBRUARY 1989

No. 53



return address:

Halifax Field Naturalists
c/o Nova Scotia Museum
1747 Summer Street
Halifax N.S.S. B3H 3A6



HALIFAX • FIELD • NATURALISTS

- OBJECTIVES:** To encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history, both within the membership of HFN and in the public at large. To represent the interests of naturalists by encouraging the conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources.
- MEETINGS:** First THURSDAY of every month at 8.00 pm in the Auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax.
- FIELD TRIPS** are held at least once a month *****and it is appreciated if those travelling in someone else's car share the cost of the gas.
- MEMBERSHIP:** Open to anyone interested in the natural history of Nova Scotia. Memberships are available at any meeting of the Society, or by writing to: MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, HALIFAX FIELD NATURALISTS, c/o N.S. MUSEUM. Please note that as and from January 1, 1989 fees be increased as follows:
- | | | |
|----------------|---------|----------|
| Individual ... | \$10.00 | per year |
| Family | \$15.00 | " " |
| Supporting ... | \$20.00 | " " |

All memberships cover Halifax Field Naturalists fiscal year
JANUARY 1, to DECEMBER 31.

Members receive HFN Newsletter and notices of all meetings, field trips and special programs.

EXECUTIVE 1988:	President	Michael Downing	823-2081
	Treasurer	Bernice Moores	422-5292
	Secretary	Ursula Grigg	455-8160
	Past President	John van der Meer	
	Membership	John van der Meer	

DIRECTORS: Bonita Baker, Doris Butters, Maud Godfrey, Doug Linzey, Sifford
1988: Pearre, Clarence Stevens, Colin Stewart

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		Publicity	Doug Linzey	445-4943
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HFN NEWSLETTER is produced by courtesy of the Nova Scotia Museum
HFN is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act.
HFN is a member organisation of the Canadian Nature Federation.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

HFN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY - MARCH 2 - 1989

Annual business will include Election of Officers for 1989. It is not too early to think about nominations for the President, Treasurer, Secretary and Board of Directors. If you would like to serve, or wish to nominate another person (with that person's written consent), please call Michael Downing, President, at 823-2081, or mail your nominations to:

Nominating Committee
Halifax Field Naturalists
c/o N.S. Museum
1747 Summer Street
Halifax, N.S., B3H 3A6.

Following the business meeting and election of officers, MICHAEL DOWNING and COLIN STEWART will present a slide illustrated talk on "The Hiking Trails of Nova Scotia: a Means to Nature" After which we can all get together over tea and cookies.

BUT BEFORE THE A.G.M. WE HAVE
CHRISTMAS TO CONTEND WITH -
HOW ABOUT GIVING A YEAR'S
MEMBERSHIP IN HFN TO A
FRIEND, AS A REASONABLY
PRICED PRESENT???

(but don't forget
the new fee price:
\$10 single
\$15 for a family)



ALSO - OF COURSE - THERE ARE OUR
LAPEL PINS IN COLOURED ENAMEL
FEATURING OUR NEW LOGO....
THEY SELL AT \$5.00 EACH.

AND THE HASTI-NOTES -
OUR MEMORIAL TO HFN'er
AILEEN MEAGHER.-
(2 each of 6 design
and envelopes at
\$4.00 per pac

HFN NEWS

FROM THE EDITOR -

The January 1989 issue of HFN Newsletter will have a New Look - the Computer Look. While not quite being dragged kicking and screaming into the 20th century, we are definitely being nudged fluttering and whimpering into it. Bonita Baker has agreed to put the copy onto computer; Stephanie will "flow it", also by computer, and Ursula will serve as Science Editor.

None of which effort will be of much use without input from our members..... Please send in your contributions by 25 January on any aspect of nature, science-related articles, field trip reports, nature notes and observations, book reports, or a write-up about a conference or interesting meeting you may have attended. Pen and ink drawings are also always welcome.

To all those who have contributed to the newsletter during 1988 we wish to express our sincere thanks. Another aspect of our quarterly - often overlooked - is the need for help on collating, folding, stamping and mailing. John Strong would be grateful for help in that direction; he can be reached at 477-1351.

While on the subject of volunteers - to keep our Volunteer List up to date, if you have offered help of ANY sort in the past and are still available, please indicate that when you renew your membership. Thanks again.

And, of course, January is the start of HFN's fiscal year. DUES ARE DUE!! The date in the upper right hand corner of the address label indicates that your membership expires on December 31 of that year.

It appears that some members have paid the increased 1989 rate for the 1988 year. Bernice will apply such overpayment to 1989 dues, noting on the labels "You have a credit balance of \$..." Those concerned can reduce their payment for '89 by the amount indicated on the label.



CANADIAN NATURE FEDERATION NOTE -

Jim Wolford of Wolfville, an out-of-town HFN member, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Nature Federation. Jim teaches biology at Acadia University; has done field work for the Canadian Arctic Resources Committee and for the Canadian Wildlife Service. He is immediate past president of the Blomidon Naturalists Society and an active member of the N.S. Bird Society, as well as an HFNER. Congratulations Jim!

WELCOME NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS -

B.A. Roberts
 F. David Millar
 David Bessonette
 Denault Blouin
 Patricia L. Chalmers
 Siobhan and Meghan Hanley
 Mary J. MacDonald
 Barbara O'Shea
 Jeanne Comeau
 Ilga Leja
 Marjorie Mackay
 Catherine Ross
 Linda and Jim Ross
 Eleanor and Omar Simonyi
 Gordon I. Yeadon
 Eleanor and Peter Wangersky



THE HALIFAX PUBLIC GARDENS SIGNS PROJECT
Final Report --OR-- Act III,



(see Jan-April issue of HFN News-
letter for Opening Acts)

Well - dear and gentle readers - for those of you who have been through the Public Gardens lately, you will of course have seen (and - we hope - admired) the 100 shiny, brown and cream signs standing proudly on their matt-black posts identifying the tree or shrub behind them.

In the January/April 1988 newsletter you MIGHT have read of the triumphant and work-filled day of installing 87 of these signposts, with rented gas-powered post-hole driller, and a cast of hundreds, and of the delicious corn/hamburger Barbecue afterwards, in Point Pleasant Park.

However, between these two situations - the signs now successfully in situ, and the original 'turning of the sod' as it were - the mists and travails of the Dark Ages reigned.

Firstly there were snags with the signs themselves: innovative materials, spelling errors, letters falling off and varnish deteriorating in the Nova Scotia winter weather. As the dark season progressed, and we sporadically attached batches of signs here and there (as they intermittently rolled off the sign-factory floor) Public Gardens staff and commissionaires jovially informed us that our 'never-fail marine epoxy' was, indeed, failing, and that the signs were dropping like autumn leaves. Sadly, and in great shame and disarray, we surveyed the once happy battlefield, now strewn with leprous looking objects, lying in the snow and mud. (The 'Klear-Kote' used to spray the signs and protect them from the weather, was having a funny relationship with the damp N.S. winter and producing lovely, scabby-looking white blotches).

All the signs were not yet made, and/or glued to their pre-treated three quarter inch plywood backings. As the long winter took hold, we had to wait for the ground to thaw, and research to be completed as to why the Klear-Kote was turning white and why the letters were cracking and pulling off.

At this point there was only one consolation - the posts had been perfectly made and installed and 13 of them still eagerly awaited installation.

The Board of Directors appointed a committee consisting of Stephanie Robertson, Colin Stewart and Bernice Moores, whose duty it was to ensure the carrying out of our obligations under HFN's contract with the City. As a result of several committee meetings, a faint glimmer of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel replaced the total darkness to which we had become accustomed. Then Colin's employment and student commitments all but eliminated his sign committee time. Bernice and Stephanie were now the only runners,

plodding on for a frustrating and considerable length of time, finding that the signs were developing a life of their own. Some actually disappeared, were never seen again and had to be remade; some decided to clone and produce a twin. The number of different categories became horrific signs with spelling errors; signs with letters falling off; signs with faulty letters; signs with faulty varnish; signs with no plywood backing; missing signs; doubles of signs, and a few (believe it or not) perfect signs - and all possible combinations of the above. It was very tempting to say, and occasionally was - "Whose idea WAS this, anyway?" One tree had died, leaving a forlorn and lonely post; one tree was removed by the City; one post was wrongly placed and we had to wait for spring leaves to sprout before replacing it, etc.....etc.....etc!

What to do with all this mess? The very reputation of Halifax Field Naturalists was at stake!

Firstly, Colin and Stephanie went round the gardens one soggy spring day and removed all the existing signs (easy - one tug did it..... not very vandal-proof!) Secondly, the sign company very generously repaired letters, remade signs and recoated them with more Klear-Kote, but under different atmospheric conditions. This second step took all winter and spring with many trips to Burnside, returns, and rechecking of signs. Thirdly - a final reassembly began with more glueing to the pre-cut, pre-treated plywood. All the while dreading the final, necessary, unsolved step - how to successfully attach the signs to the posts already in the ground - each post anchored solidly with about 50 lbs of concrete!

Many huddles: much research: a regrouping of ideas and then..... SUCCESS! One of the many construction companies contacted had as its president, Ackie Ackerlund - a long-time HFN'er and all-round Good Man. He was willing to tackle the situation with his wealth of experience and knowledge of materials, and his immense Burnside warehouse - the space of which he freely donated to Bernice and Stephanie for the many final, FINAL reassemblies and recheckings of signs.

His solution - to spot weld longer steel plates onto the smaller existing ones already attached to the posts, bolt the signs to these plates, and 'peen' the bolts to prevent easy removal as N.S. souvenirs.

Completely new plans had to be drawn up for all this extra activity. With the help of entirely new maps containing only the plants to be labelled, and dividing the gardens into quadrants; more new volunteers, including stalwart and experienced friends of Mr. Ackerlund; Greco pizzas; fizzy drinks; Maud Godfrey's cookies and Doris Butter's sandwiches, the job was completed in four (count them F-O-U-R late July evenings).

The main players were 12-year olds, Stephen Robertson and Geoffrey Archibald; Alan, Chris and Stephanie Robertson; Michael Downing, Lesley Butters, Regina Maass, Philip ??? Clarence Stevens, Peter MacLeod, Doris Butters, Etta Parker, Isobel Wainwright, Bernice Moores, Derek Eaton and ... Vince MacMaster, dentist, who - with all his drilling experience - helped with the post-hole digger.

First evening: the last posts were installed and some re-located.

Second evening: the welding! Paul Sanford, master welder, was recruited by Mr. Ackerlund and donated his very expert skills - for which many heartfelt thanks. Ackie brought along a portable generator to power the welding machine, and two more very skilled people to whom we are most grateful - Art Brown and Don Denham. In two hours one hundred accurately pre-drilled and painted steel plates, were attached to the small top plates of the sign-posts. This ran so smoothly that the extra volunteers were able to place and bolt all of the 25 signs in Quadrant #1, while other quadrants were still being welded.

Third evening: allocating the correct signs to the remaining three quadrants and taking into account the proper sized bolts to go with each sign. (Another factor to consider throughout all this chaos - there were two sizes of signs; two sizes of bolts and two sizes of backings!) Each quadrant had a chief organizer and a body of workers - Ackie's core group, our regulars and Peter MacLeod. That evening all signs were bolted and most of them peened.

Fourth evening: double-checking results; painting backings where necessary (brown); painting remaining posts (black), and switching two signs that had been incorrectly placed.... the peening had worked well - they were very hard to remove. The smoke tree sign and post, concrete and all, was wrenched out of the ground by Bird Society member Peter MacLeod, aided only by a spade, and reset in its proper place in a hand-dug hole.

And all during this summer of 'blood, sweat and tears' Sinikka Jauahianen, a visitor from Finland, was beavering away every day in the NSM re-identifying and mounting the 100 specimens now in the Museum herbarium. Alex Wilson of the NSM became our consulting botanist and on more than one occasion our main booster and morale builder

Stephanie Robertson

A HEARTFELT "THANK YOU"..... from STEPHANIE
ROBERTSON and BERNICE MOORES TO EVERYONE
WHO HELPED WITH THIS PROJECT IN ANY WAY
WHATSOEVER.



NATURE NOTES

..... Richard Bollard, a student in Pierre Taschereau's Biology course, found a Moon-wart grapefern (*Botrychium lunaria*) at Conrad's Beach this past summer. Apparently this very rare fern had previously only been found in Victoria County, C.B. Now, however, it seems that Nova Scotia has at least two of this rarity. (See Charmaine's report elsewhere in this newsletter).

..... "Three Coins in the Fountain"? - well, not exactly, but three red-gold sovereigns in the Medway. - one in the evening sky and two clear-round reflections in the Medway River stillwater at Lesley's cottage. But only for a few seconds. By the time I had sorted Lesley out from her tidying of the wild-garden -patch to come and look, it was a golden orb and one rippled reflection in the water. A minute or two after that: one clear orange-red globe sinking quietly into purple haze, with a whisper of wind through the woods.

..... Ursula had an unusually close sighting of a male marsh hawk one afternoon in mid-September during a field trip to one of our local marsh areas. Fog developed on what had started out as a fine, clear afternoon, rolling in to give about 15ft of vision. She was still in the carpark, just getting into her car when the bird loomed out of the mist; instead of working in its usual wide circles it was quartering close to the ground about 12/15ft above and in front of Ursula. It remained for several seconds until becoming aware of her - then looking up, it tilted its wings without obvious effort .. and disappeared.

..... With most of the flower beds cleared and the trees fast shedding their leaves, in late October, the Public Gardens begin to develop a very 'winterised' look. However, one beautifully warm and sunny afternoon Doris passed about two dozen black ducks basking in the grass, all facing the sun -- with the exception of one resolutely facing the other way! An independent spirit, or just a chilly rear?

.....Remember the 'cuckoo spit' with a little green bug inside, which we found on an early summer walk? No one new what it was, but a bit of research in the NSM Science Lab library indicated that it was the nymph stage of the froghopper or spittlebug (*Philaenus spumarius*). "Eggs are laid in late fall or early spring in crevices or inserted into suitable plant tissue. The nymph emerges and feeds on the sap of the plant, taking in more water and sugar than required and forcing the extra out through the anus, forming the spittle in which it shelters. Nymphs moult five times (instars) within the spittle before becoming adult. They are very active when disturbed. The adults are such alert and prodigious jumpers that they are seldom seen."

.....*Aralia*, commonly known as Devils Walking Stick - an autumn bloomer - was in flower late in September in the Public Gardens; instantly recognisable by its nice, new HFN sign..... Bernice noticed another *Aralia* near the little building in Camp Hill Cemetery; and this one had even more flower clusters on it.

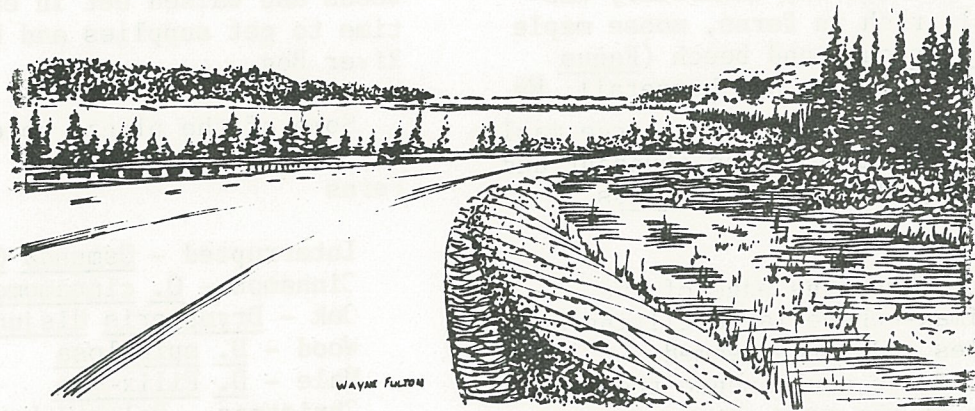


CONGRATULATIONS
AND GOOD WISHES

to

CLARENCE STEVENS and PAMELA RHYNO
on the occasion of their marriage.
We wish you every happiness
throughout the years.

FIELD TRIPS



A WEEKEND IN CAPE BRETON TO VISIT THREE ECOLOGICAL SITES.

MACFARLANE WOODS

Date: Saturday, July 16, 1988
Place: Mabou, Inverness County, Cape Breton Island
Leader: Bob Ogilvie, Special Places Curator, NSM
Weather: Sunny and warm
Participants: 14 and 2 children

For one of the more ambitious outings of the Halifax Field Naturalists' season, a diverse collection of nature enthusiasts made their way to the Mabou-Lake Ainslie area June 16 and 17 to see three important ecological sites in the Mabou area of Cape Breton: Macfarlane Woods; Black River Bog; and the Piper Glen Ecological site near Scotsville.

The first was Macfarlane Woods, a 100 acre forest patch containing a climax stand of sugar maple, beech, and birch. The site has been donated to the province and will be proclaimed formally as Nova Scotia's second ecological preserve in late August under the Special Places Protection Act.

The HFN group (most from the mainland but with one from the area) met late in the morning at the provincial picnic park on Highway 19 north of Mabou, then drove to the site, situated about 10 km south of Mabou. Macfarlane Woods straddles a ridge and the climax forest is on a level portion at the top. Bob Ogilvie led us along one of the boundaries of the property, which also is the edge of the mature forest. The Nova Scotia Museum is keeping close control of access to the site, both to preserve it and to avoid visitors interfering with botanic study sites. Future plans include special approved access.

We entered from a back corner of the roughly triangular property where it abuts the road, and ascended a gradual slope through relatively open spruce, many of which on the lower slope were dead, presumably due to spruce budworm. The woods were quite open and the understory was conspicuously rich in ferns, moose maple (Acer pensylvanicum) and beech (Fagus grandifolia) saplings, and horsetail. We passed through a section where large maples dominated, still with spruce abundant and ash (presumably white ash, Fraxinus americana).

As we approached the edge of the spacious climax--where large tilting and crooked maples and birch seemed characteristic--we could sense the coolness and darkness of the more mature part on which we were verging. On the edge, the forest wasn't spectacular. The maple, and ash, and even the birch were large but hardly virgin timber, and the overstory was fairly open. But even where we were the forest was distinctive--so different from the pine/spruce forests we see over much of the Province. This site is one of the few places where we can see this type of forest. Bob Ogilvie noted that the site isn't unique in itself but by preserving it, in a hundred years or so, it will be, as other stands like it are cut. The stand hadn't been cut in generations and some virgin trees were suspected to occur in the stand. The site has an old land snail fauna, suggesting that if it had been cut, it probably had a long time to recolonize.

The walk was relatively easy, across rich organic and spongy forest floor and occasional wet patches and small rivulets. Soil in the area is thin. Temperature was ideal.

Some of the interesting plant finds were: one-flowered shinleaf (wintergreen) (Moneses uniflora), both white, and red baneberry (Actaea pachypoda and A. rubra) and a collection of ferns listed below.

The group was evidently more interested in botany than critters; the only animals of note were the six-legged, pesky variety.

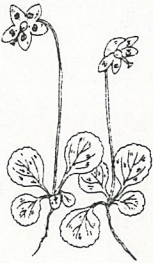
we thought we heard the black-backed woodpecker, known to occur in the area, that Joan Waldron of the NSM was eager to find.

The crew lunched in an old part of the woods and walked out in early afternoon, in time to get supplies and head for Black River Bog.

Some of the plants noted:

Ferns

Interrupted - Osmunda Claytoniana
Cinnamon - O. cinnamomea
Oak - Dryopteris disjuncta
Wood - D. spinulosa
Male - D. Filix-mas
Christmas - Polystichum acrostichoides
Rattlesnake - Botrychium virginianum
Beech - Dryopteris Phegopteris
Bracken - Pteridium aquilinum
Lady - Athyrium Filix-femina
Hay-scented - Dennstaedtia punctilobula



Horsetails

Wood horsetail - Equisetum sylvaticum?

Flowering Plants

Twisted stalk - Streptopus amplexifolius
Buttercup - Ranunculus sp.
Meadow rue - Thalictrum polygamum
Red baneberry - Actaea rubra
White baneberry - A. pachypoda
Wild strawberry - Fragaria sp.
Dewberry? - Rubus pubescens?
Wild raspberry - Rubus sp.
Wood sorrel - Oxalis montana?
Striped maple - Acer pensylvanicum
Pale Touch-Me-Not (Jewelweed) - Impatiens pallida
Wild Sasparilla - Aralia nudicaulis
One flowered shinleaf (wintergreen) - Monesis uniflora
Heal-All - Prunella vulgaris
Partridge-berry - Mitchella repens
Twinflower - Linnaea borealis



Pat Stewart

A WEEKEND IN CAPE BRETON TO VISIT
THREE ECOLOGICAL SITES
MacFARLANE WOODS; BLACK RIVER BOG; and PIPER GLEN.

Date: Saturday/Sunday: July 16/17, 1988
Place: Piper Glen Ecological Site, nr. Scotsville, C.B.
Leader: Bob Ogilvie, Curator of Special Places, with NSM
Weather: Overcast and Warm.
Participants: 13

Plant List: Piper Glen

On Sunday, 13 of us met to go into the proposed ecological site - Piper Glen. It was overcast and warm, but the rain held off.

Alongside the road before entering the woods we found nut-bearing hazelnut bushes.

Bob gave us a brief introduction to the site. Like MacFarlane Woods this is a typical mixed mature forest but a relatively small one - only 67 acres, part Crown land, part privately owned. The site contains an attractive river valley.

Early settlers held bagpipe and fiddle concerts in the area.

The trail through the woods led among beautiful maple and paper birch trees mixed in with white pine and beeches. We noticed that the smaller beech trees were all badly affected by beech bark disease, but the larger trees looked healthier.

Beneath the trees the ground was covered with ferns; we noted rose twisted-stalk bearing berries, and several colourful mushrooms which attracted the attention of the photographers in the group.

The path down into the river valley was so steep and treacherous that we had to hold onto a rope stretched from tree to tree. But we all made it down in safety and were rewarded by the sight of a magnificent waterfall.

Halfway up two fishermen were casting their lines for trout.

Some of the plants in the valley were probably accidentally introduced by humans, for example dandelions and plantain. However.....we very thrilled to find a Leafy White Orchid (Habenaria dilatata) a large meadow rue and a very fine and rare fern: Alpine Woodsia

This proposed Ecological Site is a beautiful place and I, for one, would love to see it preserved. Thank you, Bob, for taking us there.

White Spruce	White Pine
Balsam Fir	Mountain Maple
Red Maple	Beech
Paper Birch	Hemlock
Mountain Ash	
Rattlesnake fern	Christmas fern
Wood fern	Common Polypody
Sensitive fern	Male fern
New York fern	Alpine Woodsia
Braun's Holly fern	Tree Clubmoss (<u>Lycopodium obscurum</u>)
Staghorn clubmoss	
Clubmoss (<u>Lycopodium</u>)	Lichens
Sphagnum	
Mushrooms (patch of earth tongues).	
Indian Pipe	Indian Cucumber Root
Starflower	Pyrola (or Shinleaf)
Violet leaves	Rose Twisted-stalk
Baneberry (red/white?)	Clintonia
Lady's Slipper	Wild Sarsaparilla
Wood Sorrel	Spotted Coral-root
Scented Liverwort	Goldthread

In the valley:

Dandelions	Buttercups
Cow Parsnip	Peppermint
Horsetail	Baneberry - white
Dock	Meadow Rue
Bedstraw	Thistle
Ox eye Daisy	Jewel-weed
Goldenrod	Wild Strawberry
Clover -(red and white)	Sedge
Broad-leaved Plantain	Gooseberry
Blackberry	Herb Robert
Leafy White Orchid	Hairy Lettuce
<u>Mimulus Moschatus</u> (with yellow flowers)	

Regina Maass



In MacFarlane Woods Bernice and Colin found leaves of two species of Prenanthes - one of them being P. trifoliata, commonly known as gall-of-the-earth, the other P. alba - white lettuce or rattlesnake root

LAWRENCETOWN BEACH - DUNE BOG AND SALTMARSH.

Date: Saturday, August 6, 1988 Participants: 14 including two
Place: Lawrencetown Beach area. non members, and one child.
Weather: Sunny but cool (welcome relief on one of summer's hottest
days); with fog hovering just offshore,
Leader: Dr. Joe Harvey, Dalhousie Biology Department.

We gathered first at the N.S. Museum, then proceeded to Lawrencetown along various routes. Before setting out for the marsh, we gathered on the boardwalk (built to minimise dune erosion from foot traffic) at a vantage point which afforded us a view of the dunes and their plant life, to hear a talk by Dr. Harvey on the formation of the local ecosystem.

Basically, the area is a glacial landscape, with the drumlins still occupied as farms, as they have been for many years.

Now protected from the open sea by the formation of the present dune, the lowlands have become a marsh, providing a rich habitat varied by degrees of drainage and salinity as the incoming tides mingle with the outflowing Lawrencetown River. Our aim was to explore this 'low energy' habitat - as contrasted with the 'high energy', surf-beaten, ocean side of the dune, which understandably contains fewer organisms.

Before reaching the marsh we encountered a three-foot ditch, but managing more or less easily to cross this, we pressed intrepidly on, squishing through a waterlogged landscape rife with sedges and other wetland plants. We passed a drowning spruce grove - reminiscent of the area's history as farmland - and under Dr. Harvey's guidance examined the rich marsh plant life.

The verdant growth is interspersed with areas of barren mud - anaerobic blobs of stinking muck supporting no life. Surrounding these barren spots are habitat zones, characterised by gradations in acidity and salinity, and easily distinguished by the differing colours and types of their vegetation.

The bird life was mainly evidenced by the variety of tracks on the mud pans, though a few willets vocally heralded our

progress. A muskrat house revealed no sign of an occupant.

Feet thoroughly soggy from our wetland wandering, we made for shore.

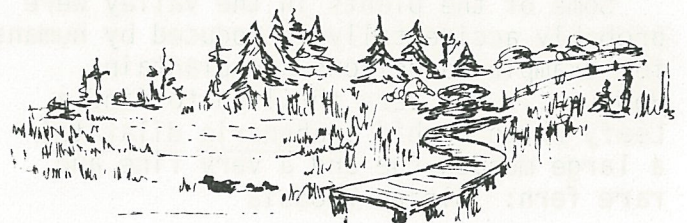
After this first-hand view of marsh life, we walked a few yards up the road to inspect a freshwater bog with its characteristic vegetation, the pitcher plants being the most obvious features. This was wetland at its wettest, better viewed from higher ground!

Back on the beach side of the highway, we were delighted to discover several fairly uncommon orchids and one specimen of a very rare fern - Moonwort grapefern (*Botrychium lunaria*). This last occasioned a stop and a gathering-around to watch while Colin's ever-present camera recorded the valued find.

While traversing the site of a former railway spur parallel to the dune, we paused (at a spot immortalised by Buster Keaton's Centennial film journey across Canada!) to note the effect of the former sand mining of the dune, a practise discontinued due to the resulting serious erosion.

The walk ended at the beach. After a comfortably cool - though wet - sociable and informative afternoon, it was time to get back to the sweltering city.

Charmaine Wood.



KEJI PARK WEEKEND TRIP

FOR ONCE WE HIT THE JACKPOT! TWO FIELD TRIP REPORTS OF THE SAME OUTING!! BOTH SHOULD BE INCLUDED, AS EACH, AT LEAST IN PART, COVERS A DIFFERENT ANGLE OF A PLEASANT WEEKEND. SO - AFTER AGONISING OVER SOME HEAVY HANDED EDITING - HERE FOR YOUR ENJOYMENT ARE THE RESULTS.



Editor.

Date: August 27/28, 1988

Participants: 10 - including two 12 year olds.

Place: Kejimikujik National Park, Queens and Annapolis Counties, N.S.

Weather: Hot and sunny at Keji (dull and rainy in Halifax)

Leader: Stephanie Robertson.

Lesley Butters assured me, that miserable Saturday morning, that the weather at Keji is always better than in Halifax. She was right. We arrived at Keji at 10.40 am, and waited in warm sunshine for the rest of the participants. John Brownlie was to guide us on the river that afternoon, so after everyone had assembled, we decided to go on Keji's Fern Walk, through a leafy arbour right from the Info Centre. After easily identifying the first three ferns (Cinnamon, Bracken and New York) our attention was soon diverted by the plethora of mushrooms and fungi on the "Fern Trail" Some I had never seen before, but with the sharp eyes of our two 12-year-olds, the very smallest of species was easily spotted.

course there were the various yellow to bright orange slime moulds. Also beautiful tree fungi that looked like wet, polished mahogany, but were hard, tough and dry. Two or three species of amanitas were seen; some boletii and one large one full of holes like a Swiss cheese! Halfway up the track we sat and shared our lunch with a small, inquisitive squirrel.

When almost back to the bridge and the Info Centre, a very small frog was gently caught for closer inspection, then let go for his (presumed) trip down a damp trail to the river.

In the afternoon we met with John Brownlie, rented canoes, and off we went to see turtles and water plants. On the way to the turtle area John pointed out a beaver lodge on the river bank, with lots of stored food branches near it. At the turtle site we saw many medium-small painted turtles. Staying as still as possible in our four or five canoes among the water lilies, the turtles were surprisingly curious about us as they paddled close, taking long looks (had someone fed them so that they expected handouts?) John showed us how to eat the jelly-covered new leaves of *Brassenia schreberi*, a member of the water lily family, the jelly of which can only be seen when the curled-up tiny leaves are taken from the water. An acquired taste, slightly tangy. The children liked them.

Having no 'mushroom expert' along, the following layman's description might provide a good puzzle for those of you who are fungi fanatics. Keep in mind that lunchtime loomed near. There were thick, flattish, concave 2-6" cookie-shaped ones - even to being cracked around the edges and on top, and slightly golden-looking as though they had just come out of the oven! There were funny 4" double ones that looked like empty hamburger buns sprinkled with sesame seeds. The children spotted some that were unbelievably tiny - 1/8" to 1/4" high including the stem - that looked like tiny russula, except that the caps were a bright dark green. (Since the time of writing I have been informed that this species was the green-headed, jelly club-mushroom, *Scotia viscosa*). Then, of

On down the river past hardy red maples and oaks and 300-year-old hemlocks, to look for the Blandings turtle - a rare and acid-rain endangered species. He must have found a good place to shelter from the hot sun, because he was not to be found. We did see a small clump of milk vetch growing on the river bank, which - oddly enough is the only site in the Park where it is known to exist.

We paddled back, returned the canoes, then went off to Lesley Butters' cottage to set up tents, take a swim in the river and share a potluck supper. On the way, a placid and hungry porcupine having a good feed along the grass verge next to the woods, was admired from our stopped cars; and at the edge of someone's private pond, right in Kempt village, we spotted a great blue heron, in his usual statue-like pose.

After an evening at the outdoor theatre at Jake's Landing, we drove back to our tents and a cool, damp night with a heavy mist which soon burned off in the morning... Breakfast over, we divided into three groups - one bunch going on a blueberry walk, one on the Micmac Memories petroglyph walk and one to stay and clean up.



..... and now - to use a phrase -
Over to DENAULT....

Kejimkujik definitely is not skateboard territory. So when I asked Matthew, my 12-year old son (whose skateboard and trail bike seem to have replaced his feet this year) to come along with me for the weekend he agreed - if we could take his trail bike. Can't go anywhere without wheels these days it seems.

We arrived first at the Information Centre in the Park and waited for others to join us; we then went off for a short hike along the Fern Walk. We were impressed by the care Parks Canada has taken to design both the trail and the interpretive booklet that goes with it.

That afternoon we met with John Brownlie again for the "Flowing Waters" program. Armed with pond nets and water traps, we joined other park visitors to learn how fish and water insects adapt to the slow waters and turbulent riffles of the river. Taking off our footwear, turning over rocks and using the scoop nets we gathered a host of small creatures to look at more closely. They were much easier to study when collected in shallow white trays and we could gather round on the river bank. Included were water scorpions; caddis fly larvae; the nymphs of dragonflies, mayflies and damselflies; water mites and diving beetles. John explained how the sluggish catfish prefer warm waters, while small trout prefer the cooler. Trout are territorial, and like to stake out a territory behind large rocks, where the turbulence is less, and it is easier to catch insects.

After two hours or so we wended our way back to the packed cars for the drive back to Halifax. A marvellous weekend! Thank you John Brownlie and Lesley Butters.

Stephanie Robertson



About the time we reached the marker for the Sensitive Fern we heard shouts from across the Mersey; Matthew and Steven had discovered the floating bridge which crosses the river. We followed, crossed the bridge and took the Beech Grove hiking trail which circles a drumlin. The boys hooted ahead in the woods as we walked up the path, discovering mushrooms we could sometimes identify and others which mystified us. By the time we stopped for lunch where the trail flattens out and winds among birches at the top of the drumlin, the day was getting warm. Afterwards we switchbacked down the trail through a grove of giant hemlocks and along by Mill Falls - which I found unexpectedly dramatic and powerful in a part of Nova Scotia I'd always thought of as flat and placid.

Back at the parking lot, the itch for wheels hit the boys (Steven had brought his trail bike too) so they rode around while the rest of us sat in the sun, waited for more Field Naturalists to arrive, and planned our next move - a canoe trip with John Brownlie. The sun was now hot, the sky deep blue. river the adults paddled slowly along on the lazy current - to the music of the boys in their own canoe practising zig-zag navigation.

Just where the Mersey flows out into the lake, we curved in along the boggy edge of the land, hushed - barely paddling - and watched for little noses sticking up through the grassy surface of the water. The boys quickly got hooked on the age-old game of turtle hunting, and squealed with amazement when one turtle did the neat trick of eye-balling their canoe from one side, submerged, and then resurfaced on the other side for a complete view.

Supper at Lesley's cottage finished

That evening a few of us headed back to the Park for the Evening Program at the Outdoor Theatre on how the plants, flowers, and trees in the Park seed themselves. However, this was no ordinary botany lesson: accompanying a show of often uniquely beautiful and revealing slides of local flowers and their seeds (how different the iris blossom is it from its seed!) there was a narrative of life through the seasons in Keji based on the letters of a young woman who was a member of one of the first white families to settle the area. The presentation concluded with a fashion show: Scouts and Guides, Cubs and Brownies from the local community dressed up in seed costumes. Some appeared on stage in clusters that then split into four little persons, an airborne seed appeared on stage with wings and a propeller beany, a seed pod shyly walked up on stage and then spilled a bag of marbles (or was it Smarties?) for seeds.

Then on Sunday morning, following a chilly night

After breakfast, when I asked the boys if they wanted to go for the "Micmac Memories" guided walk they both said they'd rather go biking. (Turns out they found a piece of trail-bikers' heaven: a sand and gravel pit close by.) I was pleased to have some time to myself, especially for this walk.

The rippleless surface of Keji, "Place That Swells" in Micmac, shone like grey mercury through the parking lot trees as we started off from Merrymakedge. As we listened to our guide, Christian, talk about Micmac religion and tools in the first clearing, my attention wandered to the lake: suddenly a female loon popped up on the surface, and was followed instantly by its mate; they slid by our clearing, checked us out silently and then sunk, almost as if sucked, below the surface.

Through a series of questions and answers, quite skillfully involving everyone including the children, Christian explained how the Micmac survived: on sweet beech nuts (so that's where the gum got its name!), on acorns (wash the bitterness out, then mash into a paste, add berries and animal fat, make into cakes), on spring hemlock needle tea, violet flowers and leaves, Indian cucumber root (Oooo, yuk!, says one child after tasting a sample). For meat, small game and moose. Like the buffalo for the Plains Indians, the moose was an especially sacred animal and every part of it was used in their culture—although moose eyeball lollipops for the kids do seem like something of a whiteman's invention. Among other things, I was also quite surprised to learn that while moose are native to Nova Scotia deer are not, only having been introduced as a game animal to the Province in the '20's. (The deer proliferate, the moose decline.)

Finally, we reach the site everyone's been waiting for: the petroglyphs. Two large flat fingers of smooth stone stretch out into the lake from a clearing on the shoreline. This rock is soft, so we must take our shoes and socks off to walk out on it—shoes would scuff and erode the marks, which are but lightly scratched on the surface of the rock.

However, before we are allowed to go out on the rocks and make rubbings on special paper considerably provided by Parks Canada, Christian tells us a little story. Every year, he says, the Park asks visitors not to leave "autographs" on the rocks. Every new mark obscures or obliterates an old mark, and the oldest marks, the ones made before white man came, are disappearing no matter what because of time and the action of ice. Therefore, he asks, please don't mark the rocks.

"Now," he adds somewhat disappointedly, "I've said this before during summer. Perhaps people weren't listening, but anyway after I said it a month ago I discovered "1988" carved on the rocks. Two weeks ago, I spoke to another group and said that I hoped I did not find another "1988" on the rocks. After that tour, there was another "1988" to be found. I hope, he concludes, that when we leave here today I do not find a third "1988" on the rocks.

The petroglyphs we find on the rocks appear dim, but rubbings reveal the images more clearly: Animals from the time before the white man came; an octagonal sun-wheel—a universal symbol; a man perhaps a Micmac with a heart (topped by a tiny cross) in his chest—the missionaries have arrived; a schooner—the fleet's in.

We learn other details on the rest of the walk about pottery and porcupine quill work. But the story has a sad end: 100 years after the missionaries and the schooners arrive, one quarter of the original Micmac population survived. The walk concludes at a small tribal burial ground in the pines. Some graves are unmarked, stone markers on others appear to have been vandalized.

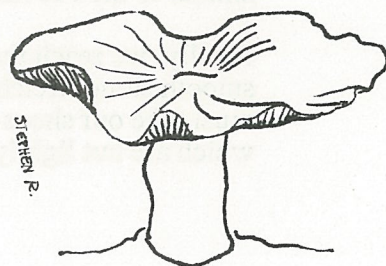
Christian comments that the little stick tripod and the small heap of ashes beneath it standing just inside the gate was probably left there recently by Micmacs who had returned to make a fire offering to the memory of those buried there. Some things, it seems, thankfully, can never be destroyed.

The weekend, my first with HFN, seemed a gift of good weather, friendship, and discovery. Although I'd been to Keji often before, I'd never taken advantage of the interpretive programs the Park offers. And so I'd never known how much Parks Canada's wealth of knowledge and experience could increase one's appreciation for the details of the environment in which we live. (Nor, thanks to Steven and Matthew, had I known of the abundance of bike-able trails that thread throughout the Park. Wilderness wheels! *WOW!*)

— D. Blouin



One of 12-year-old Steven's sketches:



THE WOODLAND EXPERIENCE IN MOUNT UNIACKE PROVINCIAL PARK.

Date: Saturday, October 15, 1988
Place: Mount Uniacke, Waverley, Hfx. Co., - a joint field trip with Nova Scotia Museum
Weather: Perfect. Sunny, warm, clear; temperature about 18°C with a slightly cool breeze.
Leader: Alex Wilson, Curator of Botany, NSM
Participants: 20 adults, 3 'young fellas' and one-month-old Peter..... augmented at Uniacke House by a group of 19 NSM participants.

Formalities over, we set off for Uniacke House through streets glowing with autumn colour - one of the most colourful areas being Magazine Hill in Dartmouth, where red maples blazed in the sunshine against the rich dark green of spruce. "Young, vibrant growth tends to be richer", said Alex.

For many of us Uniacke House is simply the building itself and the lawn down to Lake Martha, named for R.J. Uniacke's first wife. Alex introduced us to a very different aspect of the estate - thick woodland, pastureland and the Mount itself, all only a small part of the 2300 acres which now belong to the Province and are administered by Nova Scotia Museum. The policy towards the estate is changing, more emphasis being put on the park itself. Little by little the Museum staff hope to restore the grounds to something approaching the original concept - a country home and farm in a parklike setting.

Illustrations of the 19th century show the area surrounding the house as much more open, with a fine view over a 'ha-ha' to the pasture beyond. A ha-ha is an ingenious method of presenting an unbroken view across a laid-out garden or lawn (pleasure grounds surrounding the house) to open countryside, without permitting grazing animals to wander into the garden. A three to four foot ditch is dug along the edge of the planted area and lined with stones effectively presenting an unclimbable wall. Beyond the ditch the ground slants gently upwards to eye-level, creating the unbroken view.



The Museum staff may also develop a trail system through the woodland and up the Mount. At present there is no well-defined trail.

Before setting out, and while Alex was giving a brief history of the estate and outlining the aims of the NSM, we heard the raucous call and lively drumming of a pileated (?) woodpecker. En route through the woods Alex pointed out witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) - the only Canadian tree or shrub which blooms in autumn - and drew our attention to the inconspicuous golden yellow flowers with their twisted strap-like petals. More noticeable was their bright golden foliage contrasting sharply with the rich red of neighbouring huckleberry bushes. Across the lake a loon called, and those with binoculars soon spotted him(?) swimming close to the opposite shore.

We passed a pocket of oaks, introduced by the Uniackes from Ireland and referred to as "Irish Oaks", though in fact they are the English *Quercus robur*. Old specimens of White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) also grow along the first part of the trail.

Squelching through a boggy bit, Alex pointed out how bright and clear the green of sphagnum moss looked once the Cinnamon and Royal Ferns had died down. Part of the estate is a bog/barren, but where we were was a mixed woodland of maple, beech, pine, spruce and hemlock. At one point bright orange fungus with black spots attracted the enthusiastic attention of Bev Saunders - "witch's butter", said our guide.

Among the remnants of spring plants we found the dead brown stalks of Pink Moccasin flower (*Cypripedium acaule*) - only the sepals remaining after the seedcases had blown away. Skirting a swale running in from the lake, we took to higher ground bushwhacking heroically (I thought!) through dense scrub, whipping conifer branches and the dead trunks of 'widow-makers'. "Widowmakers" explained our guide, was the term coined for standing stumps, rotten inside, which when a man leaned against them for support, gave way, often falling on the man behind!

Despite the rough going we soon reached the base of Mount Uniacke - a steepish cone some 600ft high, the rough, uneven ground thickly carpeted with the most amazingly beautiful, vivid green bryophytes, mostly the leafy liverwort *Bazzania*. The knoll is covered with spruce (probably red, but without a microscope it is almost impossible to define the minute differences between red, black and hybrid spruce). Many of the trees were 90ft tall.

The group scrambled up the mossy hillside through a healthy young growth of spruce and balsam fir. About two-thirds of the way up I stopped to rest and sat in a patch of sunlight till the rest of the party came down. I could hear a chickadee calling nearby. The group formed again and we headed back to the house along virtually the same route but with Alex trying to avoid some of the tougher spots. Looking a little out of place, we found a beautiful Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) and several thriving saplings - self-seeded from the Uniacke House garden.

By this time we were ready for our picnic lunch which we enjoyed in warm sunshine beside Martha's serene and sparkling lake.

After our break Alex gathered us together again and led us in the opposite direction, pointing out some of the special features of the garden. In particular he mentioned the sundial made by the London maker, Dolland, in the early 1800's, which once stood on a pedestal on the lawn, but is at present carefully housed at the NSM in Halifax.

During the summer months a plastic model is installed in its place on the lawn.

Leading us down the sad remains of the long, curving ha-ha, through a stretch of woodland, over a small stream and up the hillside pasture crowned with hardwood, Alex explained more of the plans being considered for restoring the estate. As we came out of the woods a screeching blue flash indicated an irate bluejay. Strewn under the row of oaks at the edge of the field were dozens of small branchlets which appeared to have been chewed off by some animal. Too high for a deer, it was probably a porcupine.

From the top of the pasture, and aided by Alex's notes and some period illustrations, we gained a better view and a much clearer idea on how a more accurate restoration could be carried out.

This being the official end of the walk, we thanked our leader and the custodian of Uniacke estate, Alex Middleton, who had also given up his Saturday in our interests. We sauntered back - some heading for home, while others remained behind to tour Uniacke House itself. A perfect day.

Doris Butters.



WITCH-HAZEL



NEXT DEADLINE

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THE ODOROUS KISS OF AUTUMN WALRUS.

The nose is not dead yet. Well yours could be, if you jog along Spring Garden Road behind city buses every morning. But for most of us, our noses are just dormant, waiting to be awakened by the fragrant kiss of some springtime wildflower. For those of you who have not yet been kissed on the nose by a wild lily-of-the-valley, you're in for some great adventures.

I would like to share with you now an adventure of mine which opened my eyes to the pleasure of the nose.

Several years ago I was employed in surveying the coast of Baffin Island by boat to observe and record the abundance of wildlife in the area. One day, we were trying to locate a walrus haul-out site. As we motored along, I scrutinised the rocky shoreline for signs of reddish hides sporting flashing white tusks. The pair of Bushnells hanging about my neck soon percame a permanent feature of my face. I didn't want to miss the haul-out site. My Inuit guide, Simeonie Alainga, suggested I relax a bit - "Have some tea and bannock. I will let you know if there are any walrus nearby."

"But, you're not even looking for them" I replied.

"Ah, I will smell walrus long before we see them", said Simeonie confidently, laying a finger alongside his brown, wind-tanned nose.

I took this to be a challenge - my Bushnells (high magnification, high quality, fully coated optics with ultra-violet filters) against an Inuit nose. With a quiet snigger I patted by trusty Bushnells and kept searching.

My eyes were red and bleary when Simeonie glanced across to me with a smile, "I can smell walrus close now. Probably just beyond that point of rock." Sure enough, a low islet of rock appeared. Reddish-brown lumps popped up all along the curved back of this little island. Then the lumps bobbed, bumped and jostled into the sea and swam away, leaving only the then strong odour of walrus.

That was the odorous kiss of the autumn walrus. It forced me to take a new interest in my nose and in sniffing. I began to test everything around me for its aromatic value. At home I sniffed my food before eating, books (especially new ones) before reading, and socks before dressing in the morning. It's a good habit to get into to.

Returning from a walk in the woods, my pockets would be full of evergreen needles, alder buds, mosses, lichens, bayleaf and mushrooms. I would carry bits of nature around with me so that they could be tested and compared with other bits. Rotting hemlock wood is one of my favourite snuffs - makes you feel a real part of the earth - but what a mess in your pocket!

Personally, I like sniffing. When I encounter something new to me in nature, my vision of it is not complete until I have given it a good snort. And, when I sniff something very distinctive, a smile comes over my face, together with a sense of understanding and comradeship.



Last winter, I traced the tracks of a red fox across an open meadow of snow. She paused here and there to check out a mouse tunnel or sniff at yesterday's snowshoe hare tracks. Then she circled a small fir seedling, scented the territorial post, and carried on. On hands and knees, a nostril-full of this scent just blew me away - off into a foxy world of mouse smells and rabbit chases.

In that instant, the bond between man and nature became a little stronger.

John Brownlie

FRIENDS OF SPECIAL PLACES - A NEW PROGRAM -

The Nova Scotia Museum is developing a special program to give interested people an opportunity to become involved in monitoring, management, and public awareness activities for the preservation of designated ecological sites in Nova Scotia.

It is becoming increasingly obvious that as Nova Scotians we must set aside as many as possible of these natural, unmodified ecosystems. Such sites not to be used for outdoor recreation other than the study of natural history, but to preserve samples of typical or unusual habitats and protect both rare and common species found there.

Volunteer help is needed in a multitude of jobs - assisting with monitoring sites, management, patrolling trails, inventories of the plants and mammals in these special places, typing, organization and in helping



to promote public awareness of Nova Scotia's natural history. The Friends of Special Places Program is still in its early stage of formation and we would welcome any suggestions from potential members.

Folders explaining the program in detail will be available at upcoming regular HFN meetings. If you are interested, please fill in the form on the folder. Bob Ogilvie and I can then arrange a meeting with all potential volunteers.

I feel that this project can be a valuable and exciting experience and any help offered - no matter how small - will be greatly appreciated. I myself find the planned program a very stimulating one and with the help of yourself and others, I have high hopes for its success.

Etta Parker.