Greenleaves

Newsletter of the Bruce Grey Woodlands Association

AUTUMN 2018

www.bgwa.ca

President's Message

Chris VanderHout

Hello members,

Autumn is here and so is my duty to prepare a message for our Newsletter. I'm happy to be coming into a more regular schedule after the busyness of summer and delighted to enjoy cool evening walks in the forest. You can pretty much feel the forest slowing down, with a promise of winter not far off. This is the time of year when I get into my forest and determine which trees have been stressed and in decline as part of my selection for improvement cutting/ firewood 3 years from now. I have a 7 year rotation planned so revisit a forest section that I did improvement cut 7 years ago. I see lots of growth in the process and it is exciting to see forest health continuing to improve.

Since our last newsletter, we had our summer bus tour and fall BBQ, both of which were great events. The bus trip was educational with stops at the Summerville seedling nursery, Luther Marsh, and learning about Mount Forest dam and wildlife habitats created through active management. I wish to extend thanks to Sandy Bunker and Jim Penner who planned and led the tour. All who went enjoyed themselves and left with new insights.

It was a pleasure to see so many people at our annual BBQ this year. We had a lovely warm day and had a look at the old water filtration system for Owen Sound. A special thanks to Cam Bennett for planning the day and to Ben Miller for sharing his wealth of knowledge about this historical

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TREEVIA IS BACK !!! • SAT NOV 17, 3-5PM

Our tree-themed evening of trivia and libations last year was such a success we are doing it again. Event-planner and Quiz-master Kevin Predon is assembling another fine social get-together for members, this year at Thornbury Village Cider House & Brewery.

REGISTER ASAP • $30/person, includes tasting flight and cheese plates • ONLY 28 tickets available

Priority Registration for members (& their guests) until Nov 2nd WWW.BGWA.CA/REGISTER

How about hosting a member tour of your wooodlands?!?

Contact Kevin Predon
519-270-0748

Next Board Meeting
Nov 14, 7-9pm
GSCA Admin Bldg
Inglis Falls Rd
Members Welcome!

GREENLEAVES

is published by Bruce Grey Woodlands Association (BGWA) and distributed to members to provide information, guidance, instruction, ideas and opinions related to trees, woodland ecosystems, forest management, and recreation in forest settings in (or relevant to Bruce and Grey counties.

Content of articles is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the views of BGWA.

BGWA's vision:

Promoting healthy forests and ecosystems in Bruce and Grey Counties through education, recreation and sustainable management practices.

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wonder. It was astounding to see the filtration structure and imagine the work that went into its building and what it would have taken to clean the expansive sand filters. It was especially interesting that they created pipe from hollowed spruce logs in that period. Our thanks to Mike Fry, the Grey Sauble Conservation Forestry Coordinator, for taking us on a guided tour of the arboretum. Those who attended did not leave with empty bellies and it was great to share both food and fellowship with other members.

In October, Ron Stewart and Kevin Predon represented the association at the Bruce Peninsula Biosphere Association Forest Fair. Thanks to them for sharing information and standing for healthy forests in Bruce and Grey counties. Also in October, members were invited to Lloyd Holbrook's property for a woodlot tour. These afford immense opportunities to learn what other people are up to in their forests, share ideas and socialize with other members. Thank-you Lloyd for opening up your property to members and hosting the event!

We will look forward to seeing you at the second Treevia night; an upcoming film showing and an owl prowl guided by our contact at SVCA- Donna Lacey! As you can see there is much activity to join. Working on our own projects and sharing experiences with other makes us all a richer group.

Wishing you all well,

Sincerely, Chris.

Editor's Comments

Malcolm Silver

Welcome to this Newsletter, the first quarterly issue at a new time of the year and to reflect the season. As may be seen elsewhere in this issue, the purpose of the Newsletter has been defined (see sidebar at left) and to encourage contributions the Board will offer an annual prize drawn from those who have contributed. Out with your pens, or start typing. Thank you to contributors in this issue.

BGWA NEWSLETTER: MAKE IT YOURS!

We are tweaking this publication to make it more of a member newsletter. There are all kinds of generic woodlot/ tree/woodland articles and publications to be found on the web; we are working to refocus "Greenleaves" to be of more relevance and interest to our members here in Grey-Bruce.

Great, you say, BUT the only way it will happen is with member contribution. BGWA is small; it exists and operates entirely thanks to volunteers. So please help it prosper and continue. The newsletter is an easy way for you to do so.

You don't have to be "a writer"... all you need is an idea or experience or tip or anecdote or whatever you like... our editor will look it over and polish it up (if need be) before it gets to publication! Anything to do with woodlands in Grey and Bruce is fair game. We also encourage submissions of woodland-inspired creativity (eg. poetry, visual art, etc).

As a token of thanks, each contribution gets one entry into an annual prize draw at the AGM for contributions during the preceding year.

If you would consider contributing content email communications@bgwa.ca. You will then receive a message about a month before each newsletter asking if you may have any ideas for that issue.

Rewilding: Replacing Silent Spring with a Raucous Summer

By Gary W. Kenny, BGWA Member

We'd been seeing them occasionally for several years: *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* – bald eagles, a pair of them. Sometimes they'd fly at tree-top level along the South Saugeen River that forms the western boundary of our farm. Perhaps they were engaged in aerial foraging for riverine prey. Other times we'd see them soaring high above the crop fields, likely surveying the ground below for rabbits and groundhogs.

This past summer we encountered them more frequently. Usually they were perched atop a particularly tall white ash tree overlooking a trout pond concealed in the quietude of the forest at the farm's southwest corner. There they would sit, at once looking majestic and fierce, eyes cast downwards onto the water beneath them. Perhaps they were waiting for an unsuspecting brown trout to the swim too close to the surface, or an incoming Great Blue Heron oblivious to the hidden danger.

Bald eagles are an apex predator and Canada's largest bird of prey. They once thrived along most rivers and large lakes in southern Canada. Habitat loss, persecution, and persistent toxins like DDT caused their numbers to dwindle. By the 1950s bald eagles were a very rare sight in much of Canada's southern reaches.

With the ban of DDT and increased habitat protection, the eagles are returning to southern Ontario. Their presence is helping to restore damaged and degraded regional native ecosystems as they impact, in a multitude of interconnected ways, the flora and fauna in their midst.

One of the reasons for the return of the eagles (and the return of ravens, fishers, peregrine falcons, wild turkeys, and other animals extirpated from the Grey-Bruce region several decades ago) is a controversial phenomenon called "rewilding." It's a concept that has in recent years been growing in popularity among conservationists, restorationists, ecologists, foresters and others concerned about the integrity and health of native ecosystems.

A fairly standard definition of rewilding is:

"…a progress approach to conservation. It's about letting nature take care of itself, enabling natural processes to shape land and sea, repair damaged ecosystems and restore degraded landscapes. Through rewilding, wildlife's natural rhythms create wilder, more biodiverse habitats." (Rewilding Europe) According to John Davis, Executive Director of the New Mexico-based The Rewilding Institute, rewilding is, in essence, "giving the land back to wildlife and wildlife back to the land. It is restoring natural processes and species, then stepping back so the land can express its own will."

A definition I particularly like is one championed by British writer George Monbiot. Known worldwide for his environmental and political activism, Monbiot calls rewilding a "trophic cascade" – "an ecological process that starts at the top of the food chain and tumbles all the way down to the bottom." (Trophic means relating to food and feeding.)

To explain the concept of rewilding in some detail, Monbiot cites what has become a classic example: the repopulation of Yellowstone National Park with wolves in 1995. Wolves had been extirpated from the park 70 years earlier. The story goes something like:

- Because of the long absence of wolves, deer had become over-populated and had grazed the park's natural vegetation to almost nothing;
- With the reintroduction of a few wolves, and as their numbers increased, the behaviour of the deer changed radically. They began to avoid some of the areas of the park where they could be easily cornered by the wolves;
- The areas the deer avoided began to regenerate, and denuded valleys quickly became forests of aspen, willow and cottonwood;
- The forests attracted many species of birds, and perhaps most importantly, beavers known for their ecosystem engineering and ability to create niche habitats for others species by damming rivers;
- The dams the beavers built created ponds that provided habitat for otters, muskrats, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and water fowl;
- The wolves also killed some coyotes thereby allowing the populations of mice, rabbits and other

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(Rewilding, from page 3)

small animals to grow. In turn that growth led to an increase in foxes, weasels, and birds of prey including eagles, hawks and ravens which preyed on the small animals or fed on the carrion left by the wolves.

At this level of the cascade, Monbiot says, things got really interesting. The wolves effectively changed the behaviour of the rivers. They began to meander less and to straighten out and narrow, resulting in less erosion and the formation of pools and riffles which also provided rich habitat for an abundance of wildlife. Steep hillsides were stabilized by more robust vegetation resulting in less erosion.

What began with a small number of wolves ultimately transformed not just the vast ecosystems of a huge park, Monbiot says, but also the park's physical geography.

"Through rewilding – the mass restoration of ecosystems – I see an opportunity to reverse the destruction of the natural world," Monbiot says. Rewilding is about "abandoning the Biblical doctrine of dominion which has governed our relationship with the natural world," Monbiot adds. It's amazing, he says, how swiftly nature responds when we stop trying to control it.

"Rewilding, in my view, should involve reintroducing missing animals and plants, taking down the fences, blocking the drainage ditches, culling a few particularly invasive exotic species but otherwise standing back," Monbiot says.

For some advocates of rewilding, missing animals include such megafauna as elephants and rhinoceros, which could be reintroduced in temperate parts of the world where they once existed. Perhaps that concept would extend to Canada and the reintroduction of the wooly mammoth, assuming scientists are able to clone the massive beasts using DNA found frozen in the tundra.

The potential benefits of rewilding appear to be significant. Naturally functioning ecosystems, like the one restored at Yellowstone, are better at providing us with clean air and water, preventing flooding and erosion, storing carbon, and helping us adapt to climate change.

Rewilding can boost local economies where alternatives are scarce. Nature tourism can flourish and local people can earn a fair living from nature-based enterprises. Such commerce can help revitalize both rural and urban communities.

Experiencing the thrill of wild nature can reconnect people with our living planet, leading to improved health and wellbeing and a shared sense of humanity and pride.

We need not only protect nature, Monbiot says, we also need to restore it. Many ecosystems – the basis of our natural wealth – are broken. Rewilding offers a historical opportunity to recover them, Monbiot adds. "Robust and connected ecosystems make us more resilient including to the impacts of climate change," he says.

Above all, rewilding offers a positive environmentalism, Monbiot says. "Environmentalists have long known what they are against; now we can explain what we are for. [Rewilding] introduces hope where hope seemed absent. It offers us a chance to replace our silent spring with a raucous summer."

Rewilding is not without its critics. The reintroduction of megafauna as a rewilding strategy is particularly controversial. Some scientists argue that the effects would cascade through the entire ecosystem and food web, affecting everything from plants and insects to small rodents, and might drive other endangered species to lower numbers. "We all remember 'Jurassic Park'," warns four scientists in a 2006 paper in Biological Conservation. "Pleistocene re-wilding of North America is only a slightly less sensational proposal," the scientists say.

The critics of rewilding deserve to be heard but limited space herein prevents that option. Two critical resources worth considering are: The Trouble with Rewilding https://entitleblog.org/2016/12/14/the-trouble-with-rewilding/ and Rewilding https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4743769/.

COMING EVENTS

NOV - Treevia (see details front page)
JAN - Owl Prowl **JAN - Movie Screening**
FEB - Annual General Meeting
MAR - Woodlot Conference

Brown Spot Needle Blight

from OMNRF

Folks in Dufferin, Bruce, Grey and Simcoe counties noticed that Scots pine in their area appeared to be dying due to their needles turning brown and falling to the ground in the early summer. Samples were sent to the pathology lab at the Ontario Forest Research Institute, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) and the causal agent was brown spot needle blight. We will have to wait and see the effects of severe needle loss on previously weakened and healthy trees.

Here is some information from the OMNRF web page (see ref, below) on this needle disease

Overview

Native to North America brown-spot needle blight is a disease that kills foliage and slows growth in pine. The disease causes brown needle spots, browning, and needle drop; most damaging on low branches and small trees. the disease seldom kills trees but can cause significant defoliation on 2- and 3-year-old needles with current year needles also being infected in severe disease years

Host species

Scots (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*) are most commonly affected, but all pine species are susceptible to infection.

Characteristics and life cycle

The disease overwinters on dead infected needles remaining on the tree and on the ground and is spread though spores distributed by wind, rain splash and contaminated equipment. Warm wet weather is required for spores to germinate and penetrate healthy needles. Most infections occur in late spring and can take several months for symptoms to appear; needle tip browning and spots begin to develop over the summer and into the fall. In late summer and into the fall fruiting bodies form on infected needles in the tree and on the ground

Symptoms and damage

Brown or reddish brown needles that drop prematurely are characteristic of this disease. Branches look bare from accelerated 2nd and 3rd year needle losses with only tufts of current year needles remaining. Damage is first noticeable in the lower branches. Yellow and tan spots appear early in summer, later coalescing into brown bands with yellow halos encircling the needle by late summer and fall. Resin is frequently found on spots. Infected needles commonly have dead brown tips, yellow and brown bands and green bases. In late summer, fall and into the following spring, black fruiting bodies can be seen

Reference

www.ontario.ca/page/forest-health-pests-diseases-and-severe-weather-conditions

Tree use in China & Ontario: A personal viewpoint

By Malcolm Silver, BGWA Newsletter Editor

Recently, during a 4 week tour to China & Tibet I had opportunity to observe the uses of trees in that country. Here I compare them to those in Ontario.

Reforestation: Through Forest Ontario, this province has committed to planting 50 million trees by 2025. The program was inspired by global efforts to plant billions of trees worldwide each year, but has been designed with Ontario landowners in mind and, to date more than 4,000 have been involved. It covers up to 90 % of total costs through subsidies and a landowner could even realize a savings on property taxes if 10 acres are planted or they increase the size of existing forests to more than 10 acres and thereby become eligible to participate in the government's Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program.

Once again (See GCWA Newsletter Summer 2010) a thing that really caught my eye in China & in the Lhasa area during trips by road or train was the massive reforestation program underway in that country with plantings marching up hillsides & across the country, mainly in uncultivated areas. Its government plans to plant 6.6 million hectares of forest in 2018. China, too, is taking this action to mitigate the impact of climate change. Its State Forestry Administration is working towards raising the country's territory covered by forests from 21.7% to 23% by 2020 & then to 26% by 2030. This massive reforestation project will see collaboration between the government and internal and external groups that know how to get the job done. Companies, organizations and talent that specialize in *greening work* are all welcome to join the campaign; the army is also involved in tree planting. Tree planting has been used to fight desertification in the Gobi, with mixed results. The most recent plantings may have more success because they are focused in regions already well suited for forests.

In 2018, that includes northeast Hebei province, Qinghai province on the Tibetan Plateau, and in the Hunshandake Desert in northern autonomous Inner Mongolia. China has spent 538 billion yuan ($US82 billion) on reforestation efforts over the past 5 years and plans to spend much more as it transforms much of its land into forests. To complement this effort one saw innumerable tree nurseries all over the country, but particularly in the Yangtze delta region.

Roadside trees in China: My longest road trip of more than 300 km in Shangxi province. was along a dual-carriage highway with directional roadways separated by a central row of trees. At either verge 3-4 other rows were planted, usually evergreens if with occasionally deciduous trees but always with an outer row of poplars. All of them but poplars had side branches removed to about 2 m so that snow from roadways could be shot between them.

Major roads in large Chinese cities are also dual carriageways with minor roads for electric motorcycles or parking on either side. Each roadway is separated from the other by a line of trees often with hedge plants between them. In smaller towns roads narrowed to two lanes without a central column, nevertheless trees were planted at curbs. In central Shanghai I saw massive plane trees (Plantanua genus) growing right at the curb with such trees having a a metal can at first branching with a tube winding down & around their trunks to their roots; presumable to supply water and nutrients. I was stunned by the size of trees being transplanted into the central line in some new developments.

Roadside trees in Ontario.

Here one finds concrete barriers or metal fences separating traffic directions on dual carriageways if, in some places, greenery is found. Trees seem unwelcome at verges, especially along most country roads. This creates a rather sterile drive

Again one only finds verge tree plantings in older parts of major or minor cities, if Toronto is currently planting a variety of species on streets while London actively does so, keen to preserve its moniker as *The Forest City*.

These variations in the 2 countries reflect differences in government & manpower. China has an authoritarian regime that owns most of the land; also, it has an unending supply of labor. Here, democracy reigns and our manpower is more expensive. Nevertheless, our city/road planners could learn much to make our cities, towns and highways greener than now.

Frankly, the Cryptomeria forests and magnificent old ginkgos (*Ginkgo biloba)* seen in China thrilled me.

Buds in your Woodlot

By Gerald Guenkel, RPF, BGWA Member

With leaves almost all gone, hardwoods are starting to look so bare; but as we all know, the trees are covered with buds ready to flush in the spring. When you look at the exterior of a bud they all look more or less the same, as series of bud scales in a bundle. It's what is wrapped under those bud scales that I want to address. Buds, depending on the tree species, have one of two ways of growing into next year's foliage.

Preformed growth is the growth pattern where all components for new shoot development are neatly tucked away in the bud, ready to go. In spring, the new shoot expands simply by telescoping out its already preformed primordia. Once this burst of growth is complete, it is usually done. This gives some tree species a jump in spring when more favourable moisture levels are present. Spruces, ashes, white pine, most oaks, true firs and hickories are some key genera with preformed growth.

Sustained growth pattern is in buds that set in the fall with only a portion of next year's growth developed. In spring, as shoot elongation occurs, new primordia develops to allow further growth. Interestingly, this growth continues all summer until the conditions for growth diminish; a very opportunistic growth. Maples, hemlocks, willow, birch and poplar have sustained growth patterns.

Beautiful things come in little packages! This bud is for you.

Source: Oliver, Chadwick Dearing, and Bruce C. Larson. *Forest Stand Dynamics*. Toronto, 1996.

Gerald Guenkel ,Registered Professional Forester. Woodlot Forestry Services see ElmStreetSolutions.com or contact Gerald@ElmStreetSolutions.com

Let Your Trees Be Thy Medicine

By Neil Baldwin, BGWA Director

Grey-Bruce is like a quilt of natural areas, farms, and settlements, all in close proximity to each other. Unlike city folks, we don't have to go far to connect with nature. Though sometimes we can overlook what is on our doorstep, or right there in our own woodlands!

What is truly amazing about these natural areas is that they offer immense benefits to mind, body and soul. As a professional Counsellor for 25 years, and an outdoors enthusiast for almost as long, I have a bias in favour of nature's role in bolstering our resilience. But scientific studies are showing how natural areas, particularly those populated by trees, offer a broad range of benefits including improved mood, better sleep, lowered stress and even enhanced immune system. It was the Japanese who pioneered the concept of *shinrin-yoku* (literally "forest bathing") based on the common-sense assumption that getting humans—who did, after all, evolve from a species which habituated in natural settings—reconnected with nature would be a healthy thing. It is, of course, a good thing, which is why we usually feel better after a walk in the wilds.

Now we are coming to better understand just how good it is for us, and why. In addition to the pleasing sight of trees and plants, studies hint we may be predisposed to a soothing psychological effect of being surrounded by earth- and green-tones.

There is surely a beneficial physiological effect to being in the company of trees, all of which respire oxygen into the environment. Recent studies have also explored how phytoncides, antimicrobial organic compounds found in the essential oils which pervade the forest environment, can enhance immune reaction. In addition to the oils, we also inhale beneficial bacteria and negatively-charged ions when in woodlands.

Shinrin-yoku is now entering the mainstream North American consciousness. Under the guise of "nature therapy", "forest bathing", and related terms, the practice merges spending time in treed natural areas with elements of mindfulness practice to derive maximum benefit. Don't rush. It's meant to be forest bathing, not a quick shower, so the more intentionally, leisurely and gently the time is spent the better.

Web search this topic and numerous studies and reports substantiate the benefits of time in treed natural areas. Some even go so far as to conclude more effectiveness than drug therapy in mildly depressive patients. The point is that it is not merely a case of "feeling" more content after time in nature. There is a growing body of evidence corroborating it with actual mental and physical interactions. Your woodlands have much to offer, to mind, to body, to spirit.

Sources:

The Nature Fix, by Florence Williams. W.W.Norton (2018)

Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness, by Qing Li. Viking (2018)

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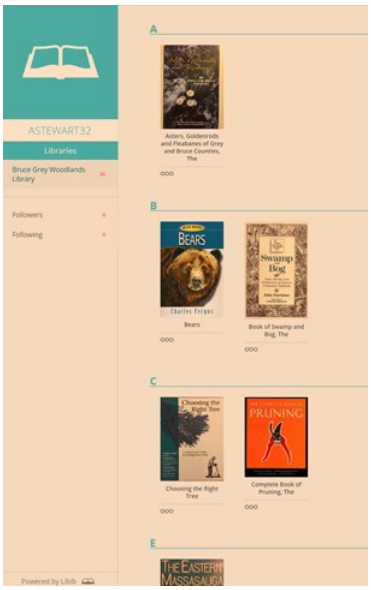
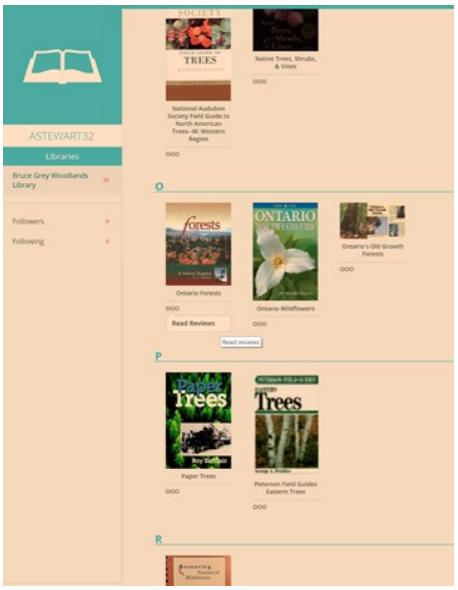
Members' Lending Library

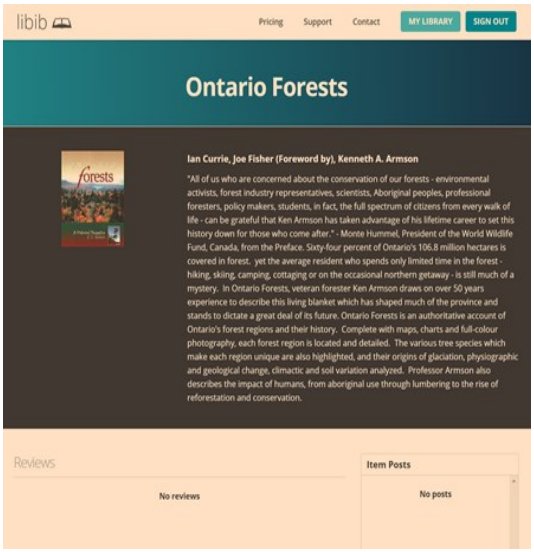
NEW!!!

By Alison Stewart, BGWA Director

We are pleased to announce that the Bruce Grey Woodlands Library is **now online in the members area**. There are currently 36 books in the library with videos to be added shortly.







Sample Screen Shots Above

Click on the 3 dots below the book image/title for more information on the book and to read reviews (as these get added).

To request a book simply email Alison at library@bgwa.ca. If you would like to donate any books or videos to the library please do not hesitate to contact Alison Stewart.

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