

Greenleaves

Newsletter of the Bruce Grey Woodlands Association

WINTER 2019



www.bgwa.ca

WOW!

12

PAGES

President's Message

Chris VanderHout



Hello members!

I am hoping that each of you had a good Christmas holiday and were able to welcome in the New Year in good health. At the moment winter has finally set in with steady freezing weather. It would be nice for it to stay around for a bit to enjoy more winter activities. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing through the forest are some of my favorite things to do at this time of year (when I'm not at the hockey arena coaching or watching my son play,

In mid-November, a good sized group of members joined together at the Thornbury Village Cidery, enjoyed some locally brewed beverages and shared an afternoon of Tree Trivia that was skillfully put together by Kevin Predon. Many thanks again to Kevin for that. It was a great gathering with many interesting facts about trees and their many connections to our culture. A good time had by all who attended!

Your director's have been meeting a few times over the past months working hard on a review of our constitution. Though not the most exciting of tasks, we felt it was time to look at it more carefully as it is our guiding document for the work we do together. Suggested changes will be presented at the upcoming AGM which we have also been preparing for. If you are able to attend, I look forward to seeing you

(Continued on page 2)

KEEP YOUR NEWSLETTER COMING... RENEW FOR 2019!

It's been a great year for BGWA events—be sure you are part of the next one!

Please save our volunteer board's time for better things than tracking you down 😊

PLEASE RENEW TODAY! bgwa.ca/renew Takes just 1-2 minutes and you're all done!

SAVE TIME ♦ GUARANTEE YOUR RATE ♦ RENEW FOR UP TO 3 YEARS ONLINE



Annual General Mtg
 Saturday, March 2, 10AM
 Grey Roots Museum
 details to follow by
 email or post, same mode
 as you receive this
 newsletter

Full-moon Night Hike
possible owl spotting
Mon Jan 21st 7 pm
Sulphur Spring
Cons Area
Register:
519-367-3040 x231

(President's Message, from page 1)

there.

As always prior to our AGM, we invite our members to consider helping-out on the board of directors. Most current directors have been working on your behalf for many years, and could use a well-deserved break. We stand for our forests and without the work done by the board, there is no association. The board meets every other month and, coupled with assisting at the odd event, it isn't a massive time commitment. Please contact me if you have any inclination to assist, as opportunities await!

This is edition of *Greenleaves* is special! Not only is it 12 pages rather than the usual 8, but the content has been contributed almost entirely by BGWA members – who are graciously helping us to offer you a newsletter which is for members, by members, and of relevance to the local area and its woodlands. The best way to ensure this continues is to play a small part yourself... please get in touch with Neil Baldwin (contact info back page) to discuss any ideas you have to add to the newsletter!

Wishing you all well,

Sincerely

Chris Vander Hout

This high quality metal 12"x18" sign is perfect for gate, fence or post! (printing on one side only)

\$15 each

available to current members

All 50 signs in last year's order sold out! We will be ordering another print run of signs. If you would like one (or more) please contact Donna Lacey after you have renewed your membership for 2019:

d.lacey@svca.on.ca

519-367-3040 ext 231



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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Editor's Comments

by **Malcolm Silver, BGWA Member**

Welcome to the first issue of *Greenleaves* for 2019 and every best wish for the coming year. Here you have a variety of thoughtful items of local interest and information and a brain-teasing crossword puzzle to tackle on cold winter nights, all brought to you by your fellow members. I hope it will encourage you to pick-up a pen, In particular, I would like to see *My Favorite Tree* become a fixture that many of you could contribute to.

My many thanks to contributors.

Taking in what the forest has to offer

by Rob Klea, OCT, Certified Forest Guide

When I studied forestry in the early 1980s, the concept of integrated resource management generated much excitement. The idea that employing collaborative and intentional forest management practices could reduce flooding, prevent erosion and siltation, and create access for those who wanted outdoor recreation was very appealing. Knowing that certain types of harvesting methods would improve the habitat for deer and moose, that roads built to take the timber to market could also create opportunities for hunters and outdoor recreationists, and that by leaving buffer zones along streams and lakes could improve habitat for fish was exciting. At this same time, groups of scientists in Japan were looking at forests in a completely different way.

The government of Japan had become concerned with the levels of stress that its citizens seemed to suffer. Stress was seen as a condition that impacted overall health and stress-related illnesses were costing its health care system a lot of money. The Japanese began to look at forests, not just for their commercial timber value, but for the role that they could play in enhancing the physical and mental health of citizens. Scientific studies that considered a variety of health indicators took place both within forested environments and urban settings where indicators such as cortisol levels, blood pressure, heart rate variability, immunity factors, and blood sugar levels were monitored and compared. Results showed significant health benefits for people spending time in forested environments compared to those in urban settings. As medical technology evolved, the results obtained provided a scientifically objective account confirming a variety of health benefits provided humans from the forest and as increasing evidence of the importance of spending time in nature evolved, the practice of going into the forest to obtain health benefits became known as *Shinrin Yoku* a term that literally means *taking in the atmosphere of the forest* or *forest bathing* where participants interact with the forest in a mindful way using all of their senses.

Indigenous cultures have long looked to the forest for medicines, and the idea of going into nature for healing and a sense of rejuvenation and renewal is not new. Healing retreats and spas within natural settings were commonplace in the 1800's and writers such as John

Muir and others hailed the healing powers of the natural world. The Scouting movement and the popularity of summer camps perpetuated the philosophy of nature providing benefits to growing minds and bodies. Dr. Kurt Hahn's work from the 1930s and 40s gave rise to the modern day Outward Bound movement, realizing that adventures in the wilderness provided participants with both spiritual and physical growth. The benefits to health and well-being created by these nature-connected experiences were very real but it was only when Japanese scientists began looking at the benefits through rigorous scientific and medical studies, that an understanding of the health benefits of nature shifted from a purely anecdotal to scientifically objective facts.

As understanding of the health benefits provided by nature evolved, it brought with it a parallel understanding of the importance of managing the natural world in a way that now includes recognition of its value to human health. From initial research in the 1980s, there is now overwhelming evidence of the importance of spending time in nature. Tangible health benefits such as lowered blood pressure, improved heart rate variability, lowered blood sugars, a reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression, and improvements in immune functioning are significant health benefits that can be obtained by breathing phytoncide-rich forest air.

Improvements in cognitive functioning such as memory and the ability to focus and complete tasks requiring creative problem-solving could be achieved by simply spending time in nature. A reduction in perception of pain and improved healing outcomes were reported when viewing natural landscapes or listening to the sounds of nature. Increased longevity and improvements in generosity and compassion can be linked to our relationship with the natural world.

Nature provides an essential "multivitamin" needed by all humans and is as important to our health and wellbeing as daily exercise, eating well, social interaction, and getting enough sleep. In a time when the average Canadian spends 93% of their time indoors and mental health problems are approaching epidemic levels, there has never been a more important time to *take in what the forest has to offer*.

Rob will be the featured guest speaker at BGWA's Annual General Meeting, Saturday, March 2nd, 10AM, at Grey Roots Museum.

Snowshoeing through the woods with Longfellow

by Gary W. Kenny, BGWA Member

*When winter winds and piercing chill,
And through the hawthorn blows the gale,
With solemn feet I tread the hill,
That overbrows the lonely vale.*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I wonder: When popular 19th century American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote *Woods in Winter* in 1839, were those *solemn feet* he speaks of fitted with a sturdy pair of snowshoes? I choose to think they were. How else would one of America's beloved *fireside poets* make his way in what I imagine was knee-deep snow in a wood somewhere in Maine, his birthplace?

I sometimes think of Longfellow when, outfitted with my indomitable Atlas 830 light-weight metal trail snowshoes, I experience the *deep solitudes* of winter woods here on our farm and recreational property; woods that, just as Longfellow writes, are *gladdened by embracing sunbeams that chastely play* when the sun is out, which isn't often these days; and when there's snow to snowshoe on, which isn't often these days, either.

A snowshoeing trek through woods in winter may not appeal to some, especially people like me who, at their core, are summer folk. It can be bone-chillingly cold, the deciduous trees have long since shed their leaves leaving only their bleak, denuded skeletal selves, the usually unrelenting silence can evoke feelings of loneliness and even with the underfoot benefit of snowshoes movement can be onerous. Summer and a well-trod, open footpath might seem better circumstances in which to wend one's way blithely and pleasantly through a forest environ.

Longfellow appears to have had similar initial misgivings:

*Alas! How changed from the fair scene,
When birds sang out their mellow lay,
And winds were soft, and woods were green,
And the song ceased not with the day!*

But the lyrical poet seems to have surrendered himself to the, at times, punishing embrace of ole' man winter any-

way (and probably did so many times), and was the happier for it:

*Chill airs and wintry winds! my ear
Has grown familiar with your song;
I hear it in the opening year,
I listen, and it cheers me long.*

What wonders did Longfellow discover when he ventured into woods in winter? He doesn't offer much in the way of specifics in his poem. Maybe he happened onto some of the sights, sounds, smells, curiosities, and surprises I typically encounter during my occasional snow walks, and of which I never grow tired. Consider just the visual aspects of winter woods. Far from being dreary, even on an overcast day they continually offer little nuggets that enchant. Often, they do so in places that wouldn't be easily accessible in summer when one's movements can be obstructed by a tangle of leafy underbrush and fallen tree trunks. Snowshoes make the going much easier, even over fallen trees where deep snow can form a bridge of sorts to carry the winter explorer to parts of the forest otherwise unreachable and maybe unknown.

On a recent outing I was greeted by a veritable exhibition of experiences that, despite their simplicity, left me awestruck in the midst of Nature dressed in its winter woollies. At the base of a slowly dying *Pinus strobus* (eastern white pine), its towering and still proud visage a testament to what it once had been, was a pile of fresh two-inch-long wood chips, the tell-tale sign of a recent visit by that most furtive of deep forest birds (and my favourite bird of all), a pileated woodpecker. And sure enough, about 15 feet up in the pine's deeply furrowed trunk is a deep, elongated hole expertly excavated by our woodpecker friend, doubtless in search of carpenter ants to meet its winter protein needs.

But wait! What's that sound that breaks the forest's silence? A series of shrill, piping calls reminiscent of the background soundtrack of some Tarzan movie. Alas, our woodpecker friend is not far away and signalling its claim to the wintry temperate jungle. Again Longfellow comes to mind:

*But still wild music is abroad,
Pale, desert woods! within your crowd;
And gathering winds, in hoarse accord,
Amid the vocal reeds pipe loud.*

(Continued on page 5)

(Snowshoeing from page 4)

Then visible in the snow are tracks – two white-tailed deer on the move. Perhaps they were in search of food. Maybe they were looking for a sheltered place to bed for the night. Or possibly, they were trying to evade the several coyotes whose tracks are intermingled with those of their own! And wait! What's this? At the base of the same tall white cedar is a patch of yellow snow. On further inspection, look up, waaaaaay up, yellowish stains run uninterruptedly up its trunk. Focus the eyes, and at about 30 feet in a crotch of the tree a burly gray ball becomes visible, a porcupine. It must have been there for some time given the amount of urine it had dropped from its lofty arboreal perch

Ah, and what's that fragrance, so refreshingly pleasant; *Thuja occidentalis* (eastern white cedar). Brushing against its leaves releases potent phytochemicals believed to have beneficial respiratory and other effects. I crush some between my fingers and the bouquet intensifies. Further along, the evergreen fronds of a Christmas fern peak through the snow. Despite the chlorophyll-killing sub-zero temperatures of night, their evergreen colour prevails. Christmas in the forest all winter long! And then another Longfellow lyric is triggered:

Where, twisted round the barren oak, The summer vine in beauty clung - a moonseed vine (Menispermum canadense) spiralling tightly up and around the trunk of, not a barren oak, but a nimble pagoda dogwood (Cornus alternifolia), it's tiered branches leafless but nonetheless pleasing to the eye.

I could go on, the exhibition didn't end there.

Do yourself a favour this winter. Combat any SADness (Seasonal Affective Disorder) you might be feeling by donning a pair of snowshoes (depth of snow permitting, of course) and venture into a nearby wood. You won't be disappointed.



**GREY-BRUCE
WOODLOT CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION**
"Forests to Fields"
SATURDAY, MARCH 30
Elmwood Community Centre

Registration & Displays 8AM-9AM
Starting at 9AM, presentations on:

- Mechanized Tree Harvesting**
- Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program**
- Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS)**
- Trailing Building in Woodlots**
- Bears on the Bruce Peninsula**
- Pesticide Use & Restrictions**

Register in advance \$25 (on the day \$35) includes coffee, snacks, hot roast beef lunch, dessert, draw prizes cash or cheque, payable at the door

**Advance Registration or Questions:
Donna Lacey 519-367-3040 ext 231 d.lacey@svca.on.ca**

New Science

by Malcolm Silver, BGWA Member

Divining roots: Revealing how plants branch out to access water. New research has discovered how plant roots sense the availability of moisture in soil and then adapt their shape to optimise acquisition of water. Roots are critical for plants to acquire water and soluble nutrients from the soil. Water is essential for plant growth, yet changing climatic conditions makes acquiring moisture from soil even more challenging. Plants are able to adapt to different soil moisture conditions by altering their root architecture, but up until now, it was not understood how this is done. Read full story: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/12/181222180749.htm

Tree-ring analysis explains physiology behind drought intolerance. Tree rings tell the story of what's happening physiologically as fire suppression makes forests more dense and less tolerant of drought, pests and wildfires, new research shows. The findings, published in *Global Change Biology*, indicate that as stands of trees became thicker over the past century, trees were forced to use progressively more of the heavier stable isotope of carbon for photosynthesis, indicative of increasing drought stress as they restricted the passage of gases into their leaves. Read full story: www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/12/181226132844.htm



“My Favourite Tree” by Tim Keeling, BGWA Member

This particular tree, an American Elm on my parent’s farm, Lot 9, Concession 6 in Sydenham Township (now Meaford) is obvious from almost anywhere on the farm, and clearly visible from Grey county Road 18 whether travelling east or west . It has the classic trunk and umbrella top or as some would say a fan shaped top. It has survived rain, wind, snowstorms, hot and dry summers, Ditch Elm Disease and lightning strike. Many of its peers have died all around it yet it continues to survive. Were it to die or suffer damage necessitating its removal I would be very sad as it is a a symbol of hope, strength for our struggling environment on this planet we call home, Earth.. We as people should all have something to look up to.

Members! Submit your favourite tree: newsletter@bgwa.ca

Editor’s Note, further to *My Favourite Tree* on previous page:

We once thought such survivors were protected by distance from Dutch Elm Disease spread but now appreciate certain elms developed resistance effected by the phenolic profile of their xylem & because Dutch elm disease pathogen develops within xylem tissues, the defensive chemistry of resistant elm genotypes appears to be one factor that limit colonization by both the pathogen and endophytes.

Refs.

Resistance to Dutch Elm Disease Reduces Presence of Xylem Endophytic Fungi in Elms (*Ulmus* spp.)
 Juan A. Martín et al , PLoS One. 2013; 8(2): e56987. Published online 2013 Feb 28.
 doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0056987

Solution to Crossword on back page

16 mftip	
15 cord	
13 wasps	17 raptors
11 firewood	14 greenock
9 thornbury	12 ironwood
8 chicot	10 whitepine
7 butternut	7 beaver
5 greenleaves	6 batterychainasaw
3 scotspine	4 elmwood
2 dogstranglingvine	1 aldoleopold
DOWN	ACROSS

It’s Not Just About Trees

by Art Wiebe, BGWA Member

It may seem odd to be discussing alternatives to woodlots, forests, plantations, and trees in this newsletter, but I think we are all concerned about biodiversity and complete ecosystems.

Without fire or human disturbance, our counties would likely be an unbroken sea of green velvet when viewed from a height on an early summer’s day. There would be all shades of green, broken by the colours of those whose time had come to flower. The shapes and colours of the leaves would lend infinite textures to the palette. There would be woodland warblers and all the other species needing unbroken forest cover. There would be no cowbirds. That’s the good news. There would also be no bobolinks, meadowlarks, savannah sparrows, Monarch butterflies, nor any other grassland species.

Current farming practices are taking away this habitat. Where once fields flourished out of a need for pasture, this habitat is diminishing. Dairy cattle, which used to go out to fields to eat, now get food served to them, much like a pizza delivery. Grassland birds, that used to flourish in the open pasture, are now faced with machines clear-cutting their habitat for hay and haylage during nesting season. With up to four cuts of hay annually it’s hard to see how many fledglings survive, particularly those with a short breeding season. Field crops are managed intensively. Ideally, only one species survives in our management practices. No birds or insects are welcome. Sadly, the fields with the greatest diversity are often the ones left unmanaged, as they await the developer’s bulldozer. Fields that are truly neglected soon return to

shrubs and colonizing tree species, abandoned by the grassland species.

Ontario once had significant prairie, when the land was cleared by unrestrained wild fire, and managed fire set by Indigenous people. The tiny remnants are witness to this. Tallgrass prairie grasses remind us of this history in the ditches around Bruce Power, the secondary roadsides near the Huron shore, the dunes at Sauble, or the shore at Baie du Dore, to name a few known to me. The heads of “turkey-foot” big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), the nutty panicles of switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*), the graceful tall drifts of the red-hued Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), soon followed by the pink-tinged Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) were once part of a larger landscape. Indian cordgrass (*Spartina pectinate*) favoured wetter open areas. Even imported forage grasses, dotted by our native and exotic forbs form a valued habitat for the open-land species of all phyla.

So spare a thought for that untreed, uncropped, field you may have control over. If you can, burning it periodically would save a vanishing habitat. More likely, you will be able to mow the colonizing shrubs (these may favour predatory birds.) If you have livestock, there is some support for delayed haying (until after ground-nesters have fledged) from Ontario Soil and Crop. Very few sounds are as reassuring that summer is really here as the bubbling of battling male bobolinks. Nothing reminds you of living in the present as being startled by the sudden flush of a family of meadowlarks in the early fall, as you revel in the variety of habitats we share with our friends and relations in the natural world we all love.

“A bad day outside is better than a good day inside.”

Blazing New Trails: A Process

by David Fritz, BGWA Member

Well here it is winter and what a time to be thinking of putting a trail in your woodlot...yes, the perfect time! Actually, by experience, before you start cutting and hacking, it's good to plan because as the old adage goes:- Well planned is half worked. Regardless, if you just purchased a woodlot or you've had it for a while, a trail will probably enhance your enjoyment and management of it. As you read this, you'll probably make some mental notes or comment to yourself yah, that's what I'd do. So, OK, let's get started.

Planning is **Essential**. The 5 W's come into play on any project, Who, What, Where, When and Why. If you are like me and would like to say I did it rather than I paid for someone to do it for me, you have the first W answered. The philosophy of having it done by someone else doesn't always work-out, like paying someone to exercise for you. I suppose doing some things yourself is just better, and you'll get more satisfaction by doing. Yes, you may need to hire someone to give you a hand with heavy lifting or get a back hoe in but the planning and route layout can be done by you.

The Where is of course tied-in with the What and Why.. If you can afford to hold-off for a full year and see the area in all four seasons, you might get some benefit. A trail that looks perfectly fine on an initial walk may

reveal an unwanted trait at a different time of year.

The What. What is the purpose, the end use of the trail? Nothing wrong with having a trail that is used for many reasons and the purpose will aid in the Where. If the purpose is for a year-round walking trail, best not route it through an area that holds water or takes a long time to drain in the spring. Do you want a trail that branches out from one main line or one that has a circular route? That's



Above: Summer Planning Below: Flagging the Trail



influenced by What and Where in trail blazing. If the purpose is to gather firewood or get logs, then How enters into it, as you'll need to think about the equipment that you'll use to get the wood out. A full-size tractor and trailer is going to need a wider trail than an ATV or a horse to pull out the wood.

Experience Review I'd like to talk for a minute on what I've done on our woodlot and that might help you with yours. I needed a trail to get-out firewood that was produced during the culling and management in the woodlot, the process will be on-going so I wanted a permanent trail, the same trail (some portion) is also used for year-round walking and as a nature trail. Some of it was constructed years ago by a previous owner so I used that old trail in my plan, no sense cutting a new one if an existing

trail can fit the plan; fewer trees to cut and less work. Some of the trail was constructed through an evergreen plantation. Therefore I removed only a minimum number of branches (in the same row), first just on the right, then just on the left of the tree trunks to make the trail winding within the row and changed rows so the trail would be winding more, yet OK to get an ATV

through in case needed. I utilized space where trees were missing in the rows due to natural attrition and planned the trail path where inferior and weak trees could be removed and let the better stock stand. I'm happy to report that very few trees actually needed to be cut to make the path in the hardwoods and no trees needed to be removed in the evergreen plantations. I was in the planning stage for a year before I started with the saw, changed paths a couple of times in the hardwoods, always flagged the proposed trail with flagging tape, had a couple of paths flagged with

(Continued on page 9)

(Blazing Trails, from page 8)

different colours, walked it several times, changed my mind on the path. After all the planning, I decided the best route would still need a hole made through a stone fence and a culvert in another area for my best layout possible. Yes, I believe that, planning is the most important stage in making a trail.

Timing of Trail Work. Too wet, too cold, too dark, too windy; OK some of this could be true. With safety in mind, slippery conditions are not the best when handling a chain saw; there are no extra points for frostbite; wind in the woodlot can make a hazard from above. Bugs in the bush can be more than just an annoyance if they detract your attention from the task at hand. If you cut the trail in a winter with heavy snow, you might leave many tripping hazards buried beneath the snow. Please do the trail blazing with safety in mind, it should be enjoyable, if it becomes a job, or if you get tired and you start to stumble, consider holding-off and start up again fresh.

Moving Forward. OK, you're going to blaze a trail yourself, you jotted down a few notes as to purpose, width needed, looked at the property using the internet, and now you're going to lay it out before you cut down trees. By experience, when you're walking the layout, take time to just move over a few steps in hardwoods; to the left or right, sometimes a different perspective can save you time and trees to be cut. I'd suggest: Walk it in the winter and spring, you can see further without all the leaves and doing most planning at that time will give you a good idea if the trail location will suit the intended purpose. In evergreen stands, moving over is beneficial too, you might see a better way to get the trail in without as much effort. If the trail is near or through a wet portion, you might not have much choice but to make a seasonal trail. Wildlife prefer winding trails so go around established trees, you might consider cutting branches in the same row of an evergreen plantation on the left side of the trees for a distance and then just on the right side to break up the line of sight.

If you build it here is another aspect. I find that most woodlot owners want to enhance the property for wildlife too. Wildlife will definitely use your trail and that too is a consideration. A person can't start planning early enough so if you are planting, consider a contoured tree row design with additional space between rows

where the trail is planned. It will make the future trail easier to blaze as the plantation matures and tree branches spread.

Synopsis To wrap up this article, blazing a new trail can be rewarding and once complete, will take little effort to maintain, normally just to clean up any dead fall or mowing the open grass areas if you want a park style trail.

I trust you found my article enjoyable and I wish you well in your path forward.



Top: Walking Trail Doubles as Access for ATV
Middle: Stone Fence Opening
Bottom: Mowed Portion of Trail

OPINION

Reckoning with our Stolen Woodlands

by Gary W. Kenny, BGWA Member

Most will have heard of the philosophical thought experiment that raises questions about our powers of observation and perception: *If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?* Here's another test, this one of our sense of historical and contemporary truth and justice. Do you know that, when we stroll through and admire the forests of Grey and Bruce Counties, we are walking on land that was effectively stolen? The question is not flippant. Who are the *real* owners of our region's woodlands?

Indigenous peoples (First Nations) have inhabited the Great Lakes region, including Grey and Bruce Counties, since time immemorial. Abundant game, fertile soils and plentiful water provided just the right conditions for the development of hunting, subsistence agriculture, and fishing. They had names: Odawa, Ojibwe, Mississauga, Oji-Cree, Potawatomi, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Oneida, Seneca, Haudenosaunee, Mohawk, Wendat, among others and were predominantly a woodlands people. While they tended to live in villages near a lake, river or stream, they were never far from the forest. Much of their food, shelter, clothing, weapons, and tools came from the woodlands around them. Many of their medicinal needs were also met through knowledge of the healing properties of trees and plants accumulated over thousands of years and passed from one generation to the next.

Moving, on foot and by canoe, was a regular occurrence in these societies. Contrary to popular belief, First Nations peoples did not wander the land in an arbitrary, haphazard manner. Their movements were deliberate and systematic, carefully attuned to the seasons and the sustenance and materials provided by different locations. Their cultures were elaborate, systems of governance highly developed, and spiritual practices rooted in and profoundly respectful of the natural world, including the forests. They organized themselves and lived differently than Europeans, but there was nothing *primitive* about them in the derogatory sense of that term. They lived lives of subsistence, a term often associated with poverty and backwardness by Europeans for whom progress in the form of continuing economic growth tended to be viewed as civilized living. Native peoples took only what they needed and avoided overindulgences associated

with the European newcomers (and their contemporary descendants!).

At the same time, romanticizing Indigenous peoples is probably not prudent. Stories handed down tell of conflicts, including wars, among different ethnic (tribal) groups. They may not have always treated the natural environment in the most sustainable manner possible all of the time; they were, after all, human. But their enduring sense of profound spirituality, inextricably linked to the land and all it represented, surely would have prevented systematic abuse and excess. For Indigenous peoples all living things, trees, animals, insects and even inanimate objects like rocks were infused with spirit. The Ojibwe people, for example, considered the flora and their crops gifts of the great Creator Spirit, *Gichi Manidoo*. They respected the spirit of each tree, shrub, and even grain of corn. In relation to the natural world, it was a fully integrative way of perception and understanding, largely foreign to the European consciousness which tended to be compartmentalized, reductionist, and dis-integrative. Native peoples understood themselves in a most visceral sense as being one with Nature, not over against or above it.

Before harvesting pretty much anything, hunters and gatherers made tobacco offerings to the Great Spirit and gave thanks to an animal they had killed, plants they had gathered, and trees they had cut. When we fell a tree with a chain saw, how many of us stop for a moment and give thanks to that tree for simply being a tree and for the uses and benefits it will provide? To do so would be, perhaps, a radical act, overturning our often arrogant sense of dominance over and control of Nature and identifying ourselves, as First Nations people did, as an intimate and inextricable part of it.

Treaties broken and dishonoured

Currently, approximately 75 Native communities inhabit the coasts of the Great Lakes, with many more living within the watershed. In Grey and Bruce, the Saugeen Ojibwe Nation reside in two *reserves*, Saugeen First Nation near Southampton, and the unceded Nawash First Nation at Neyaashiinigiimung (Cape Croker) on the Saugeen (Bruce) Peninsula. The total population, on and off reserve, is nearly 4000. The term reserves was coined by Europeans for the lands and forests that were set aside for Indigenous peoples through treaty negotiations, ostensibly out of generosity and concern for their welfare.

(Continued on page 11)

(Stolen Woodlands, from page 10)

In truth, the treaty processes, which were nominally about reaching agreement on how the region's vast forested lands could be equitably shared, were largely deceitful and manipulative, even worse.

According to Glenn Trivett, an Ojibway historian and teacher who lives in Mount Forest, Ontario, the treaties ended with language like, *as long as the sun shines* and *as long as the rivers flow*. A pipe was usually smoked to solemnize the deal. *Smoking the pipe (often mistakenly referred to as a "peace pipe") was a deeply sacred act and meant the highest level of sincerity*, Trivett says. *Language like as long as the rivers flow meant that, this agreement will be in effect forever*, Trivett adds. But forever is a long time. *Much longer*, Trivett says, *than Crown officials had in mind. Unbeknownst to Indigenous signatories of the treaties*, Trivett adds, *sealing the deal did not mean forever for the British*.

In his book, *No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous*, Athabasca University historian Sheldon Krasowski argues that Indigenous peoples did not intend to surrender their land through the treaty processes. Indigenous Chiefs wanted to share the land with settlers in exchange for treaty benefits offered by the Canadian government, including annuity payments, reserved lands, education, and sometimes assistance with transition to agriculture. *Treaty commissioners*, Krasowski says, *had a common negotiating strategy: they would discuss the benefits of treaties and ignore the hitches, including land surrender clauses. And yet*, he adds, echoing Trivett's words, Crown negotiators were following Indigenous protocols or customs that were led by [Indigenous] Elders [and were intended to establish] a spiritual bond between Euro-Canadian and Indigenous Peoples that continues to exist as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow. But were Crown officials fully aware of the solemn nature of the proceedings and the absolute, sacred seal of smoking the ceremonial pipe?

Convalescing the Indians to their deaths

In a March 2003 paper analyzing the historical economic factors affecting the development of Indigenous peoples in Canada, Trivett quotes the British at the time of intensive treaty making in the 17th and 18th centuries: *We [the British]...are invincible...we are dominating the world. Indians are dying in huge numbers from [European] disease... Sometimes we are giving them blankets...that have diseases on them to speed up the process...In two to three generations... there will be no more Indians*. For the British, Trivett says, *forever* meant about three generations or 75 years. That's

how long Crown officials thought it would take to achieve Indigenous erasure. The treaties, Trivett adds, were about convalescing the Indians to their *deaths*. Many of the entitlements written into the treaties for Native peoples were not envisioned as long-term investments, he says. They were put in place to make Indians comfortable until they passed away, leaving their land behind for the *taking*. For First Nations, Trivett adds, total surrender of their sovereign lands was never up for negotiation. Cooperative sharing of the land, yes, but not complete capitulation.

Many non-Indigenous landowners seem not to know much about the history of treaty making and violations in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada. With the upsurge in recent years of Indigenous activism associated with unresolved land claims and other matters of importance to First Nations peoples, and coverage of it in mainstream media, some are becoming aware, and are shocked by what they are learning. Whether ceded or not, the lands and forests of the Grey-Bruce region, including the 96 acres my spouse and I *own*, were once sovereign territories of First Nations people. In the act of deliberately consigning them to out-of-the-way reserves, their lands were taken from them by chicanery, deception and coercion.

Embracing the truth

How do we right this wrong? It is not a simple question of giving the land back although that is a fear many landowners perhaps harbour. While reparations involving land may be partly what is needed, First Nations peoples seem more interested in being listened to, and having the truth of the historical injustices committed against them fully acknowledged. *Learning about Indigenous peoples' historical and sacred bond with the land and the history of violation of their sovereign rights is a critically important place to begin the process of embracing the truth*, Trivett says. In the Grey-Bruce region, he regularly teaches courses for non-Indigenous peoples on Indigenous history and culture that delve into these issues. People who have experienced these teachings say they are liberating and empowering and in no way induce guilt or shame. Anyone interested in taking a course can contact me: rivercroft16@hotmail.ca

As an Indigenous friend once said to me, *it's not so much about the ownership of land as it is about learning how to equitably share and spiritually relate to the land that is of paramount importance to First Nations peoples*.

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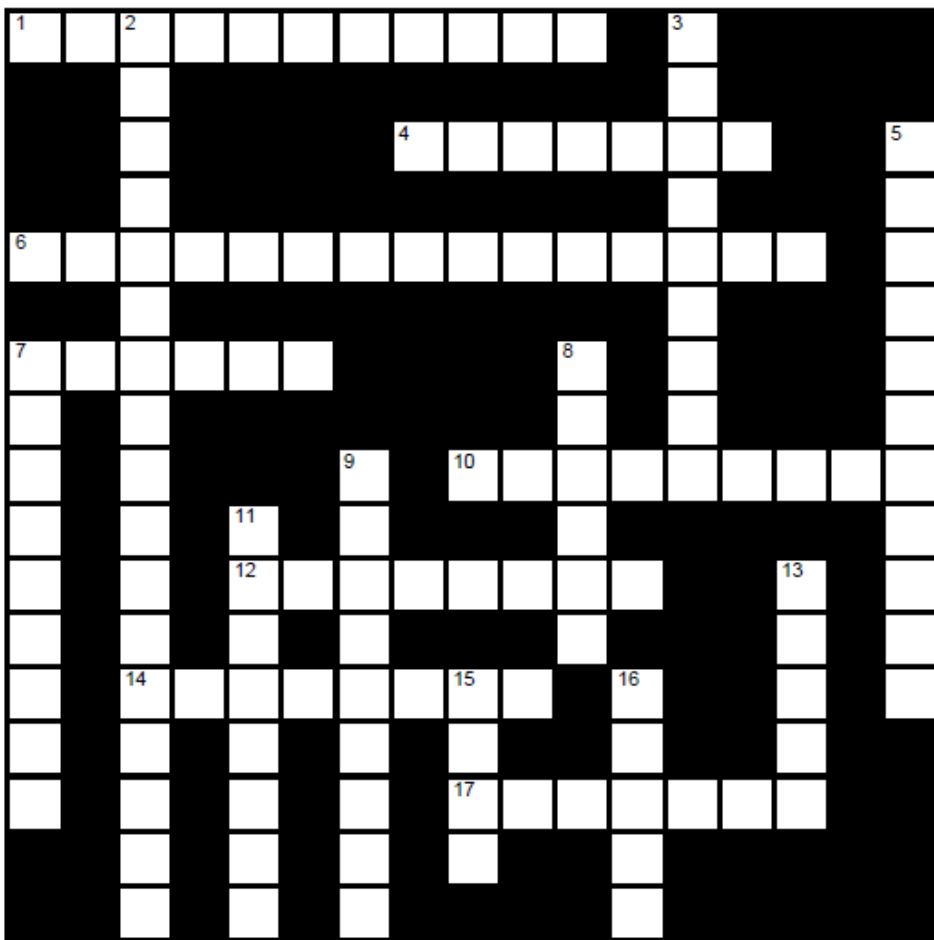
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Across

- 1 legendary conservation thinker (2wds) (11)
- 4 Bruce/Grey border community with a forestry friendly name (7)
- 6 a “green” woodlot tool (2wds) (15)
- 7 river in Grey county that flows over Eugenia Falls (6)
- 10 five needle conifer (2 wds) (9)
- 12 highest BTU local tree species (8)
- 14 forested swamp complex, west of Walkerton (8)
- 17 birds that include hawks and falcons (7)

Down

- 2 significant invasive species coming to Grey-Bruce (3wds) (17)
- 3 most undesired coniferous tree species in Grey- Bruce (2wds) (9)
- 5 you found this crossword in it! (11)
- 7 endangered tree species in Grey-Bruce (9)
- 8 dead standing tree (6)
- 9 location of most recent Treevia (9)
- 11 highest energy return on energy invested for heating fuel (8)
- 13 EAB biological control strategy (5)
- 15 contains 128 ft3 of wood, bark and air (4)
- 16 government program that reduces woodlot taxes (5)

Many thanks to member Gerald Guenkel for creating this themed crossword.

Solution on page 7